

Children in the States

WASHINGTON

September 2015



Child Population

1,602,721 children lived in Washington in 2014; 42 percent were children of color.

- 58 percent were White
- 21 percent were Hispanic
- 4 percent were Black
- 7 percent were Asian
- 8 percent were two or more races
- 1 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native
- 1 percent were Pacific Islander

Child Poverty

More than 1 in 6 (17.5 percent) of Washington's children were poor in 2014, a total of 276,044 children.¹

- Washington ranked 17th in child poverty among states.²
- 1 in 13 children lived in extreme poverty at less than half the poverty level.
- The youngest children were the poorest age group. Nearly 1 in 5 children under age 6 were poor; more than 2 in 5 of the poor children were extremely poor.

Children of color in Washington are disproportionately poor.

- More than 1 in 3 Black children, nearly 3 in 10 Hispanic children, and nearly 2 in 5 American Indian/Native Alaskan children were poor in 2014, compared to nearly 1 in 8 White children.

Child Hunger and Homelessness

Child poverty in Washington leads to unacceptable child homelessness and hunger.

- Nearly 31,000 Washington public school students were homeless in the 2012-2013 school year.
- In 2014, 2 full-time minimum-wage jobs were necessary to be able to afford a fair market rent two-bedroom apartment in Washington and still have enough left over for food, utilities and other necessities.
- More than 23 percent of children lived in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2013. More than 26 percent of children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2011-2012. Washington ranked 32nd of 50 states in child food security and 6th in percent of children overweight and obese.
- Nearly 27 percent of Washington children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their nutritional needs on an average month in FY2013.
- Nearly 89 percent of Washington children receiving a free and reduced-price lunch during the school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2014 – ranking Washington 36th of 50 states in ensuring that children have adequate summer nutrition.

Child Health

Although the majority of Washington's children have access to health coverage, that does not guarantee enrollment in coverage or access to care, which can jeopardize their education and their future.

¹ A family of four was poor if it was living on less than \$23,834 a year, \$1,986 a month, \$458 a week and \$65 a day, and extremely poor if living on less than \$11,917 a year, \$993 a month, \$229 a week and \$33 a day.

² The state ranked 1st is the best for children for that outcome and the state ranked 50th is the worst for children.

- In 2013, 88.0 percent of eligible children participated in Apple Health or Apple Health for Kids, Washington's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In FY2013, a total of 768,387 Washington children ages 0-18 were enrolled in Apple Health, and 44,073 in Apple Health for Kids.
- Nearly 95,000 Washington children ages 0-17 (5.9 percent) were uninsured in 2013. The state had the 24th highest rate of uninsured children among states.
- In 2012, 67,000 uninsured children ages 0-18 were eligible for Apple Health or Apple Health for Kids but not enrolled.

Early Childhood and Education

Lack of early childhood investments deprives children of critical supports in the early years and reduces school readiness.

- In 2013, the average annual cost of center-based child care for an infant was \$12,332 – 14.1 percent more than the average annual in-state tuition and fees at a public four-year college in Washington.
- Washington did not have a waiting list for child care assistance in early 2014.
- On average, 40 percent of Washington's 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in public or private preschool from 2011-2013. Only 29 percent of children from families with incomes under 200 percent of poverty were enrolled.
- Washington's state-funded preschool program only met 9 of the 10 quality benchmarks set by the National Institute for Early Education Research in 2013-2014.

Washington's schools fail to educate all children, closing off a crucial pathway out of poverty.

- In 2013, 60 percent of Washington's fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 52 percent were unable to compute at grade level.
 - 75 percent of Black fourth graders could not read at grade level and 71 percent could not compute.
 - 81 percent of Hispanic fourth graders could not read at grade level and 76 percent could not compute.
- 79 percent of Washington public high school students graduated on time in 2012, placing Washington 30th among states. 57 percent of Black students and 79 percent of Hispanic students graduated on time compared to 80 percent of White students.
- Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to drop out of school. During the 2011-2012 school year, 8 percent of Washington public secondary school students received at least one out-of-school suspension, placing Washington 14th among 48 ranked states. For Black and Hispanic students, the percentages were 19 percent and 11 percent, respectively.

Children Facing Special Risks

Many vulnerable children need treatment, services and permanent families.

- In Washington, 7,132 children were abused or neglected in 2013 – 4.5 out of 1,000 children.
- On the last day of FY2013, there were 10,339 Washington children in foster care.

Too many Washington children are involved in the juvenile justice system.

- 1,062 children and youth were in residential placement in 2011. 16 percent of the children in residential placement were Black, 23 percent were Hispanic, and 48 percent were White.
- 24 Washington children were in adult jails in 2013.
- Washington spent 3.7 times as much per prisoner as per public school student in FY2012.

Washington ranked 4th out of 41 ranked states in preventing child and teen gun deaths.

- A total of 35 children and teens were killed by guns in Washington in 2013—a rate of 2.0 out of 100,000 children and teens.