



# Community Needs Assessment

Puget Sound Educational Service District

Early Learning

<https://www.earlylearningwa.org/>

# Introduction

## Overview

Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD) Early Learning Programs have long demonstrated a commitment to serving the diverse needs of families across King and Pierce Counties. Conducting a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) every three years is both a federal requirement (45 CFR §1302.11) and a strategic opportunity to ensure that services remain responsive, targeted, and equitable.

This CNA provides a detailed overview of demographic, educational, health, nutritional, and social service needs of eligible infants, toddlers, preschool-aged children, and expectant mothers. In addition, it identifies the work and training schedules of parents, surveys other early childhood services available in the community, and highlights both community strengths and resource gaps. The findings will inform program planning, service priorities, and continuous improvement efforts for the 2023-2027 cycle.

## PSESD

PSESD is one of nine Educational Service Districts created by the Washington State Legislature in 1969 to serve as a regional delivery system for early learning and K-12 services. In this role, PSESD links Puget Sound public and private schools and early education centers with state agencies to coordinate and leverage regional resources. PSESD's Service Area encompasses King and Pierce County, plus Bainbridge Island School District. It includes 35 school districts and more than 200 private schools.

# **PSESD Early Learning Programs**

Within its Early Learning Service Area, PSESD provides free, high-quality early learning services through the federally funded Early Head Start and Head Start programs and the state-funded Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP). Throughout this report, PSESD's Early Head Start, Head Start, and ECEAP programs are referred to collectively as PSESD Early Learning Programs.

## **Head Start and Early Head Start:**

The federally funded Head Start program provides grants to public and private non-profit and for-profit agencies to offer comprehensive child development services to low-income children and families.

- Early Head Start serves pregnant women and children from birth to age three.
- Head Start serves children ages three to five years old.

Eligibility for Early Head Start and Head Start programs is based on income and other vulnerability factors:

- Children from families at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) are eligible for enrollment.
- Up to 35% of enrolled families may have incomes between 100% and 130% of the FPL.
- Up to 10% of enrolled children may be considered "over income," qualifying based on additional needs, such as:
  - Developmental delays, disabilities, or other special needs.
  - Environmental risk factors, including family violence, substance dependency, child protective services involvement, incarceration of a family member, homelessness, foster care involvement, or receipt of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).



## **Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP):**

ECEAP is a state-funded program that provides free comprehensive early education experiences for children aged three to four. ECEAP providers are contracted by the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) (formerly the Department of Early Learning).

Eligibility for ECEAP is based on income and additional factors. Children are eligible for ECEAP if they:

- Are from families at or below 36% of the State Median Income (SMI)
- Are eligible for Special Education Services (Individualized Education Plan (IEP))
- Are from a family experiencing homelessness
- Are an **Indian Child**, up to 100% SMI, or
- Were previously enrolled in specific Birth to Three programming.

Up to 10% of children may be from families above income eligibility ("over income") if they have developmental or environmental risk factors that could affect their success in school.

PSESD plays a regional coordination role for its Early Learning Program providers through grant management and by serving as a liaison with state and federal agencies. Beyond providing Early Learning services through direct and subcontracted partnerships, PSESD offers a range of early childhood education and support services, including training, technical assistance, and professional development for early childhood staff, family resource coordinators, teachers, paraeducators, related service personnel, and administrators.

As of 2022, the PSESD Early Learning Service Area includes 110 program sites:

Early Head Start sites

**23**

Head Start sites

**27**

22 Center Based  
5 Family Child Care

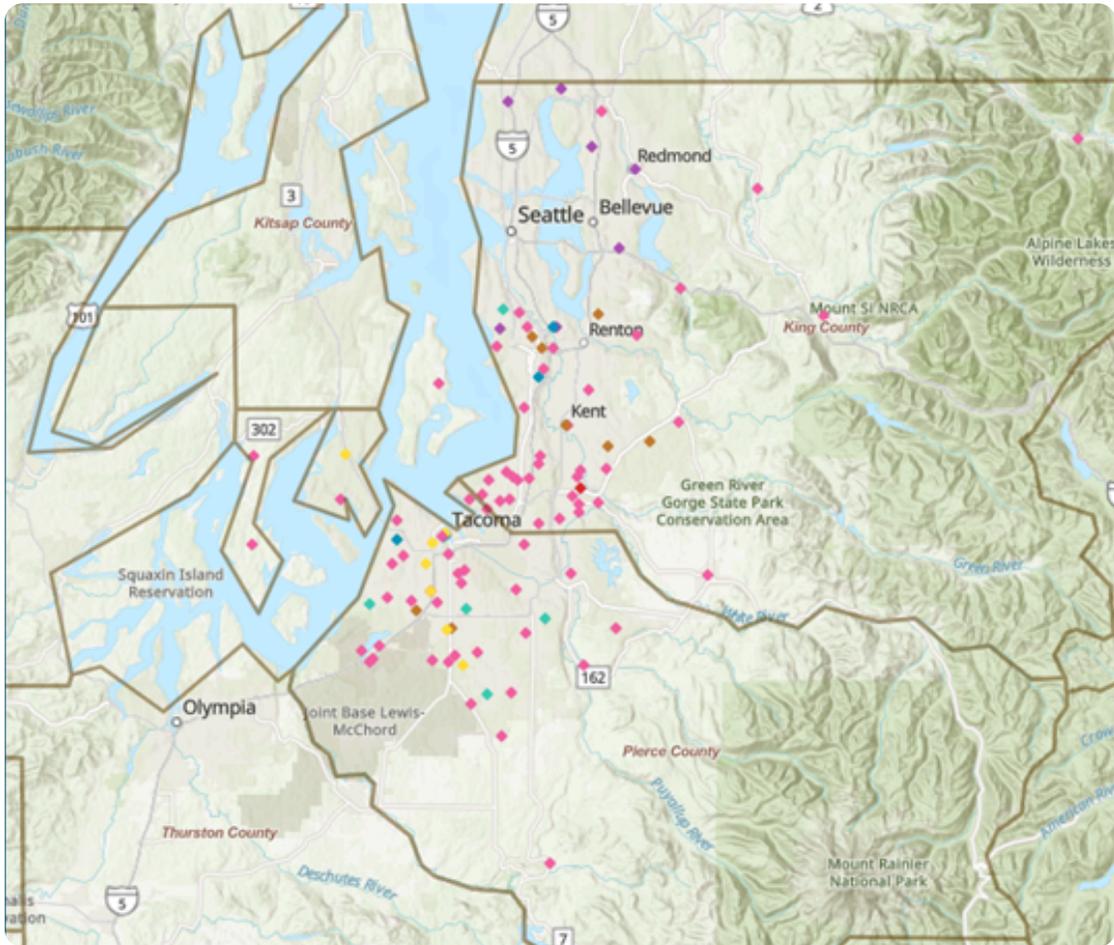
ECEAP sites

**87**

Sites w/ multiple programs

**22**

### Exhibit 1: PSESD Early Learning Program Sites - Map



Source: GIS, Esri, PSESD Data 2022

\*Note: This map does not include the following Family Child Care Homes:

Site Name	Location	Program Type(s)
A Happy Home	Kent	HS, EHS
A Mother's Quality Day Care	Kent	HS, EHS
Kid's Heaven	Kent	ECEAP
Little Rainbow Day Care	Puyallup	HS, EHS
Love N Laughter Childcare	Kent	HS, EHS
Pathways Enrichment	Tacoma	HS, EHS

# Methodology

The data presented in this report were thoroughly researched and collected from a variety of credible sources, carefully analyzed for patterns and trends, and prepared for presentation. The report covers the following key areas:

- **Demographics:** Includes data on the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of individuals, families, and children within the Service Area.
- **Education:** Examines adult educational attainment, K-12 school test scores, and student absenteeism rates.
- **Health:** Provides information on disability rates and types, birth statistics, infant and child mortality rates, obesity prevalence, and access to healthy food (including identification of food deserts).
- **Social Assistance:** Reviews participation rates in various social assistance programs, enrollment of non-citizens in public benefits, and the number of children involved in the child welfare system.
- **Child Care:** Summarizes the number of child care programs, their total capacity, and the availability of financial assistance for families seeking child care.
- **Housing and Transportation:** Analyzes housing affordability challenges and transportation access within the community.

# Geographies

## PSESD Early Learning Service Area Overview

Early Learning's Head Start and Early Head Start programs serve children and families throughout King and Pierce County, Washington. The service area includes 32 school districts, broken down into three summarization regions for reporting purposes: North King, South King, and Pierce County.

## **North King County**

North King County is characterized by higher median household incomes, lower poverty rates, and generally greater access to educational and health resources compared to other regions. Communities such as Bellevue, Issaquah, Lake Washington, and Shoreline reflect a diverse and growing population, including a significant number of immigrant and multilingual families. Key features:

- Higher rates of bachelor's degree attainment.
- Greater access to licensed child care facilities and early learning programs.
- Rapid housing costs increases have created challenges even for moderate-income families.

## **South King County**

South King County is notable for its racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity. It has a higher concentration of economically disadvantaged families compared to North King, with significant needs related to housing stability, food security, and access to affordable health care. Districts such as Kent, Renton, Federal Way, and Tukwila serve large proportions of children from immigrant and refugee backgrounds. Key features:

- High rates of transitional bilingual students.
- Higher child poverty rates than North King.
- Large working-class population with many parents employed in service, manufacturing, and transportation sectors.

## **Pierce County**

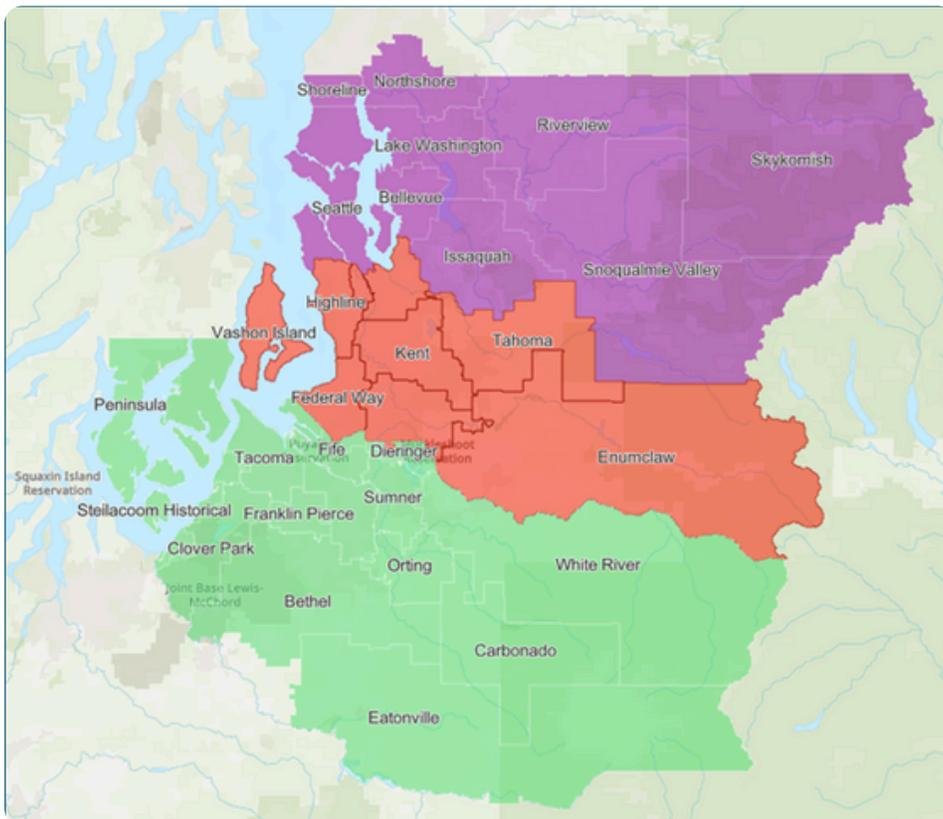
Pierce County includes a mix of urban, suburban, and rural communities, anchored by the city of Tacoma. Pierce County faces notable challenges with child poverty, health disparities, and housing affordability. However, it also benefits from strong community-based networks, a growing early childhood education workforce, and a robust network of health and social service providers. Key features:

- Significant population growth in suburban and rural areas.
- Higher adolescent birth rates compared to King County.
- Strong collaboration between public health, school districts, and early childhood agencies.

## Exhibit 2: School Districts by Region, PSESD Service Area - Table

North King County	South King County	Pierce County
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bellevue School District</li> <li>• Issaquah School District</li> <li>• Lake Washington School District</li> <li>• Mercer Island School District</li> <li>• Northshore School District</li> <li>• Riverview School District</li> <li>• Seattle Public Schools</li> <li>• Shoreline School District</li> <li>• Skykomish School District</li> <li>• Snoqualmie Valley School District</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Auburn School District</li> <li>• Enumclaw School District</li> <li>• Federal Way Public Schools</li> <li>• Highline School District</li> <li>• Kent School District</li> <li>• Renton School District</li> <li>• Tahoma School District</li> <li>• Tukwila School District</li> <li>• Vashon Island School District</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bethel School District</li> <li>• Carbonado School District</li> <li>• Clover Park School District</li> <li>• Dieringer School District</li> <li>• Eatonville School District</li> <li>• Fife School District</li> <li>• Franklin Pierce School District</li> <li>• Orting School District</li> <li>• Peninsula School District</li> <li>• Puyallup School District</li> <li>• Steilacoom Historical School District</li> <li>• Sumner-Bonney Lake School District</li> <li>• Tacoma Public Schools</li> <li>• University Place School District</li> <li>• White River School District</li> </ul>

## Exhibit 3: School Districts by Region, PSESD Service Area - Map



# Data Sources

This Community Needs Assessment draws upon a variety of publicly available and locally collected data sources to ensure an accurate and comprehensive representation of community demographics, service needs, and available resources. Primary data sources for this report include:

- **U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2018-2022/2022 5-Year Estimates, 2020 Census Data**
- **Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) 2022 and 2023 population reports**
- **Washington State Department of Health vital statistics and reports**
- **Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Data (2021–2022), Report Card Enrollment Data (2022)**
- **King County Equity and Social Justice Indicators reports**
- **Pierce County Community Indicators**
- **Child Care Aware of Washington data on licensed child care supply**
- **Kids Count Data Center (Annie E. Casey Foundation)**
- **Local City and County Reports (e.g., Tacoma, Kent, Federal Way annual reports)**
- **PSESD Early Learning Program internal records, including enrollment, eligibility, and waitlist data where applicable**
- **Puget Sound Regional Council Opportunity Index Tracts**

Where sub-county or district-specific data were unavailable, countywide or statewide estimates were used as proxies. All data were selected to reflect conditions during the period from 2018 through 2023, the most recent available at the time of writing.

# Data Visualization and Geographic Analysis

To provide a clearer understanding of community conditions across the service area, data in this assessment are presented using a variety of visual formats. Where applicable, maps are used to display data geographically, allowing for the identification of spatial patterns and disparities within King and Pierce County. These visualizations help highlight differences between neighborhoods, school districts, and other local boundaries, offering valuable insight into the geographic distribution of need.

In addition to the static maps included in this report, an interactive online mapping tool is available to enable deeper exploration of these geographic trends. Users can examine specific metrics at a more granular level, supporting data-informed decision-making and localized program planning.

Beyond maps, most data are also presented through charts and tables. These formats are used to distill complex information into more accessible visuals, helping to identify patterns, track changes over time, and compare key indicators across demographic groups and geographic regions. Accompanying narrative summaries and bullet points highlight the most important findings, making the data easier to interpret and apply.



# Demographics

## General Population

Understanding the demographic characteristics of the Early Learning service area is critical to ensuring that programs meet the needs of eligible children and families. The following sections provide detailed information on the population of children birth to age five, poverty status, household composition, racial and ethnic diversity, languages spoken at home, immigrant and refugee populations, and homelessness indicators across **North King County, South King County, and Pierce County**. Data reflects the most recent available estimates from **2021–2023**.

**Exhibit 4: Population Totals and Percentage Under Age 5, 2022 Five Year Estimates - Table**

Region	Total Population	Population Under 5	Percentage Under 5
North King	1,527,420	77,095	5.0%
South King	793,771	49,011	6.2%
Pierce	911,589	57,125	6.3%
<b>Entire Service Area</b>	<b>3,232,780</b>	<b>183,231</b>	<b>5.7%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S0101.

### Exhibit 5: Population Totals and Percentage Under Age 5, 2022 Five Year Estimates - Graph



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S0101.



## Exhibit 7: Number of Children Under Age 5 by School District, 2020 Census - Map

### Pierce County



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S0101.

- After **Seattle Public Schools** followed by **Lake Washington School District** have the largest estimated population of children under age 5 in the service area, presenting significant opportunities for outreach and early learning enrollment.
- **Federal Way, Renton, Highline, and Tacoma** represent high-need districts where poverty, language barriers, and housing instability affect a large portion of young children.
- While **Bellevue and Lake Washington** districts have large child populations, they typically exhibit lower proportions of income-eligible families for Head Start and ECEAP programs.
- **Pierce County districts** (especially Tacoma and Bethel) show persistent challenges related to access to early childhood services, particularly for military-affiliated, immigrant, and low-income families.

# Income

Exhibit 8: Median Household Income, 2022 5-Year Estimates - Table

Income is a critical factor for understanding need across the Service Area. Below demonstrates the median household income across the Service Area.

Region	Median Household Income
North King County	\$148,115
South King County	\$94,915
Pierce County	\$103,903
Entire Service Area	~\$103,900

Exhibit 9: Median Household Income, 2022 5-Year Estimates - Graph

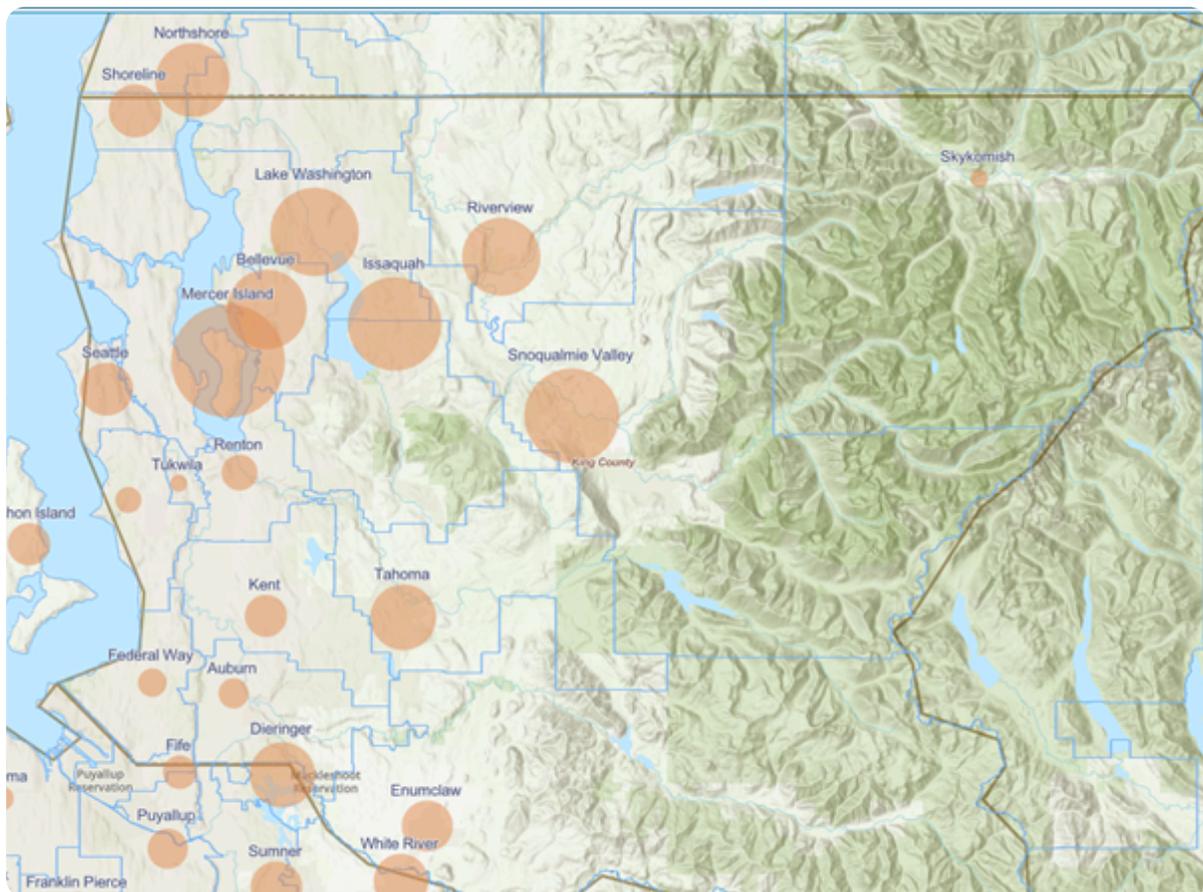


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2021–2022 5-Year Estimates. Washington OFM Regional Summaries (2022).

- **North King County** continues to have the highest median household income (\$148,115), reflecting higher education attainment and higher paying employment sectors such as technology.
- **South King County** shows a median income of \$94,915, demonstrating growth since 2018 but still substantially below North King.
- **Pierce County** has a median household income of \$103,903, closer to South King but lower than North King County as well.
- **Across the entire service area**, the median household income averages approximately **\$103,900**, although significant disparities persist between regions.

**Exhibit 10: Median Household Income, 2022 5-Year Estimates by School District - Map**

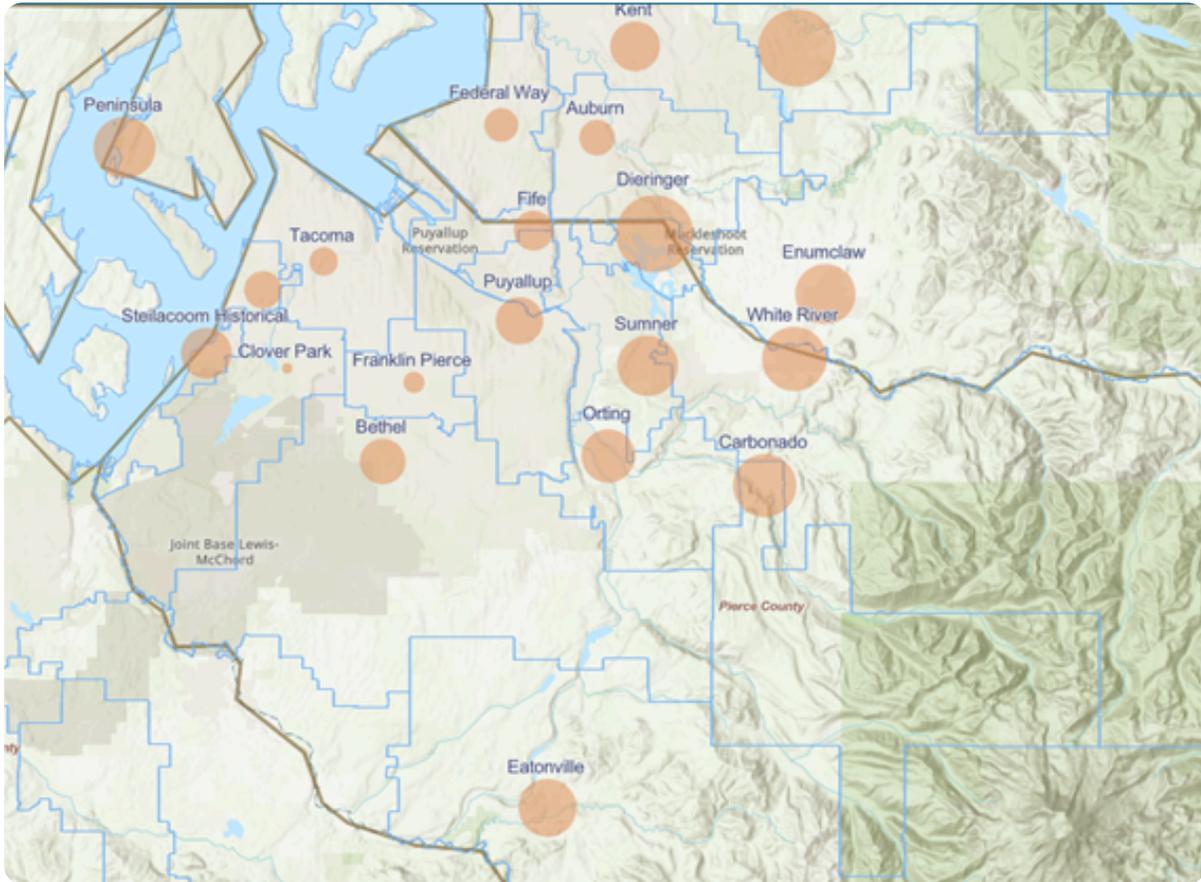
**King County**



In King County, the household median income ranges per school district from \$71,431 (Tukwila School District) to \$190,985 (Mercer Island School District). In South King County, the income ranges from \$71,431 (Tukwila School District) to \$131,831 (Tahoma School District). The circle size corresponds to the size of the district’s median income.

## Exhibit 11: Median Household Income, 2022 5-Year Estimates by School District - Map

### Pierce County



In King County, the household median income ranges per school district from \$61,426 (Tukwila School District) to \$131,583 (Dieringer School District). The circle size corresponds to the size of the district's median income.

For a complete list of Household Median Income by School District, see [Appendix](#).

As reflected in the summaries and maps above, school districts in North King County generally have significantly higher median household incomes compared to those in South King County and Pierce County, with the exception of Skykomish School District. The Mercer Island, Snoqualmie Valley, and Issaquah School Districts have the highest median household income, all over \$165,000.

Another important measure of economic well-being is the percentage of the population living in poverty, as defined by the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The FPL is determined annually by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and reflects the minimum income a household must earn to meet basic needs. It is calculated based on household size and is updated each year to account for inflation using the Consumer Price Index. However, the FPL does not adjust for regional cost-of-living differences, which can be significant in areas like King and Pierce County.

The poverty threshold considers only pre-tax income and excludes capital gains as well as non-cash benefits such as public assistance, Medicaid, and housing subsidies. This means that families receiving substantial support through public programs may still be classified as living below the poverty line.

For context, the median household income in Washington State was approximately \$90,325 in 2022, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This state-level median provides a useful benchmark when examining income disparities within counties and across regions.

## **Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and Poverty Rates in the Service Area (2021–2023)**

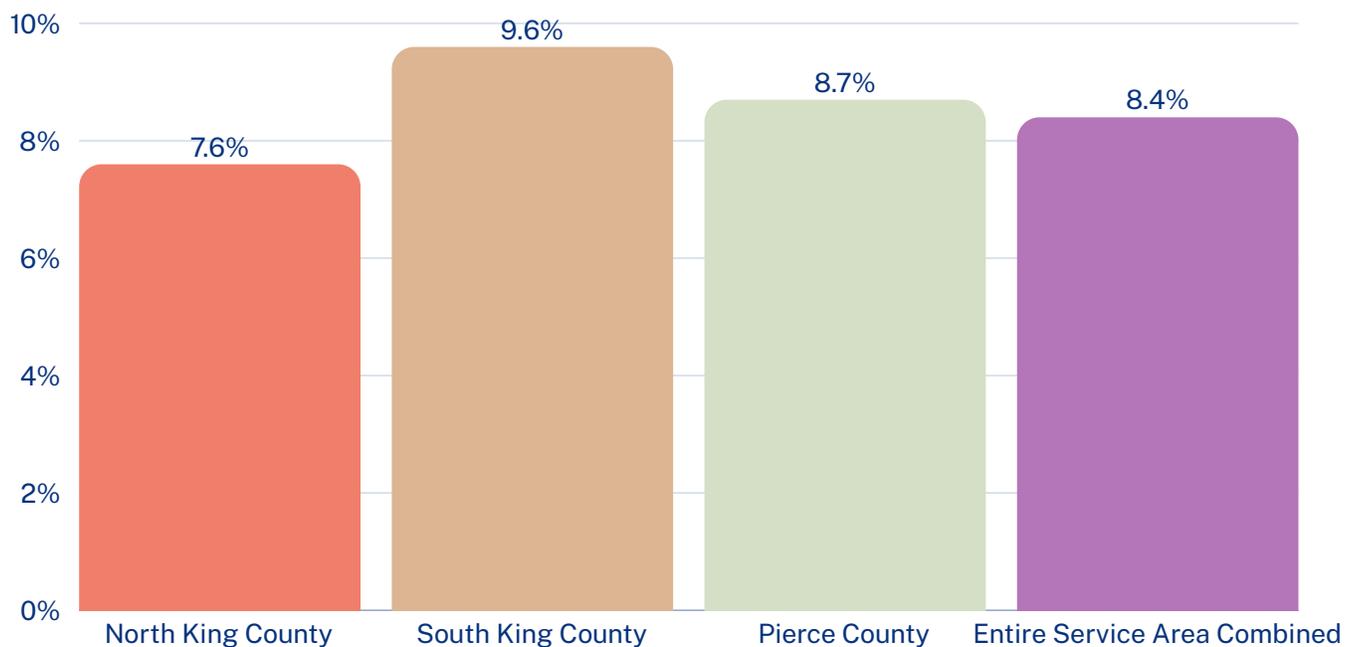
The Federal Poverty Level (FPL) serves as a critical metric for determining eligibility for various federal and state assistance programs. The FPL is updated annually based on inflation and is calculated according to household size. For instance, in 2022, the FPL for a single individual was \$13,590, while for a family of four, it was \$27,750.

Exhibit 12 presents the percentage of the general population living in poverty within the Service Area, as per the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2021–2023).

**Exhibit 12: Population Living in Poverty, 2022 5-Year Estimates - Table**

<b>PSESD EL Service Area</b>	<b>Total Population (for whom poverty status is determined)</b>	<b>Population below poverty level</b>	<b>Percent below poverty level</b>
North King	1,503,545	114,942	7.6%
South King	786,549	75,439	9.6%
Pierce County	892,619	77,638	8.7%
<b>Entire Service Area</b>	<b>3,182,713</b>	<b>268,019</b>	<b>8.4%</b>

**Exhibit 13: Population Living in Poverty, 2022 5-Year Estimates - Graph**



**Note:** The total population figures represent those for whom poverty status is determined and may differ slightly from other population counts.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2022), Table S1701.

- **North King County** has a poverty rate of 7.6%, lower than both South King County and Pierce County.
- **South King County** exhibits a higher poverty rate at 9.6%, indicating a greater proportion of its population lives below the poverty line.
- **Pierce County** has a poverty rate of 8.7%, which is higher than North King County but lower than South King County.
- **The combined poverty rate for the entire Service Area** is approximately 8.4%, reflecting the overall economic challenges faced by the region.

## PSESD Early Learning Programs Eligible Population

Age and income are the primary eligibility criteria for PSESD Early Learning Programs, making the number of children under five living in poverty a strong indicator of potential program eligibility.

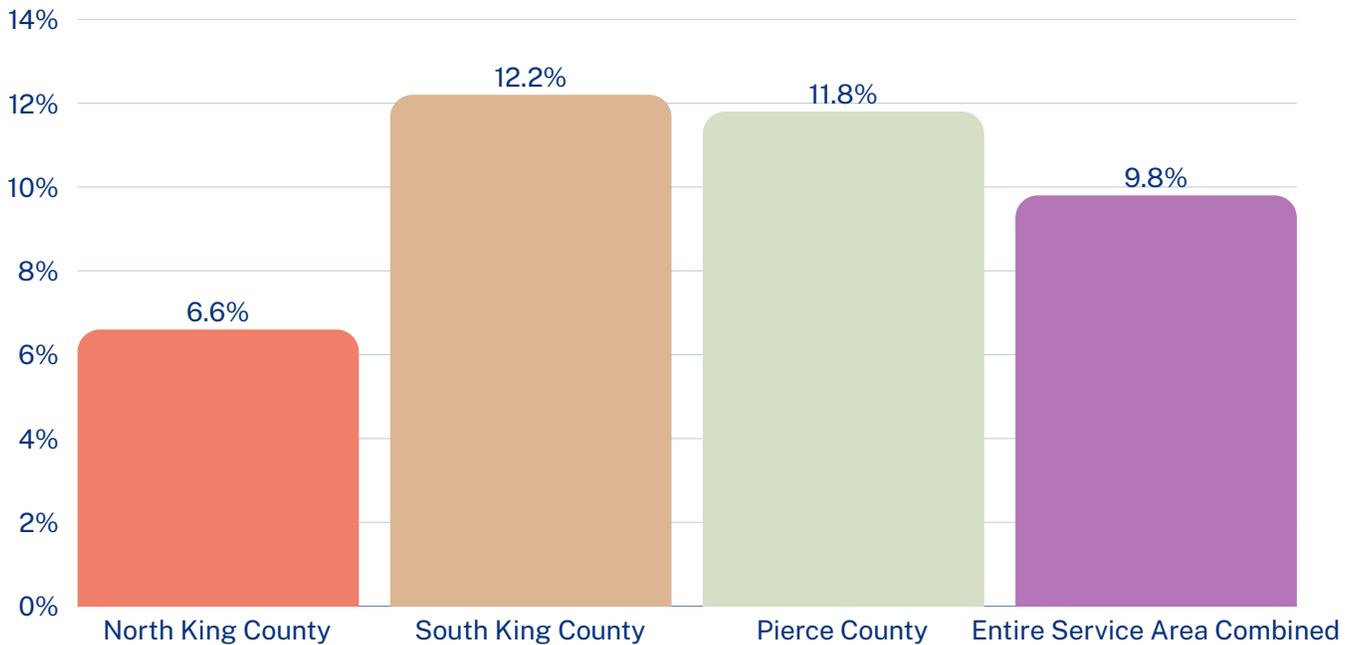
Exhibit 14 shows the most recent (2022) counts and the percentage of children under the age of five living in poverty in the PSESD Service Area, which concurrently, is an estimate of PSESD Early Learning Program eligible children. Data source is from ACS 2022 5-year estimates.

**Exhibit 14: Children Under Age 5 Living in Poverty, 2022 5-Year Estimates - Table**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Total Population (Under 5)</b>	<b>Estimated Number of Children Under 5 in Poverty</b>	<b>Estimated Poverty Rate (Under 5)</b>
North King County	76,181	5,065	6.6%
South King County	48,094	5,887	12.2%
Pierce County	55,604	6,589	11.8%
<b>Entire Service Area</b>	<b>179,885</b>	<b>17,541</b>	<b>9.8%</b>

**Note:** Some of the totals above are adjusted for school districts with values fewer than 10.

### Exhibit 15: Children Under 5 Living in Poverty, 2022 5-Year Estimates - Graph



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2018–2022. BeautifyData.com. WelfareInfo.org

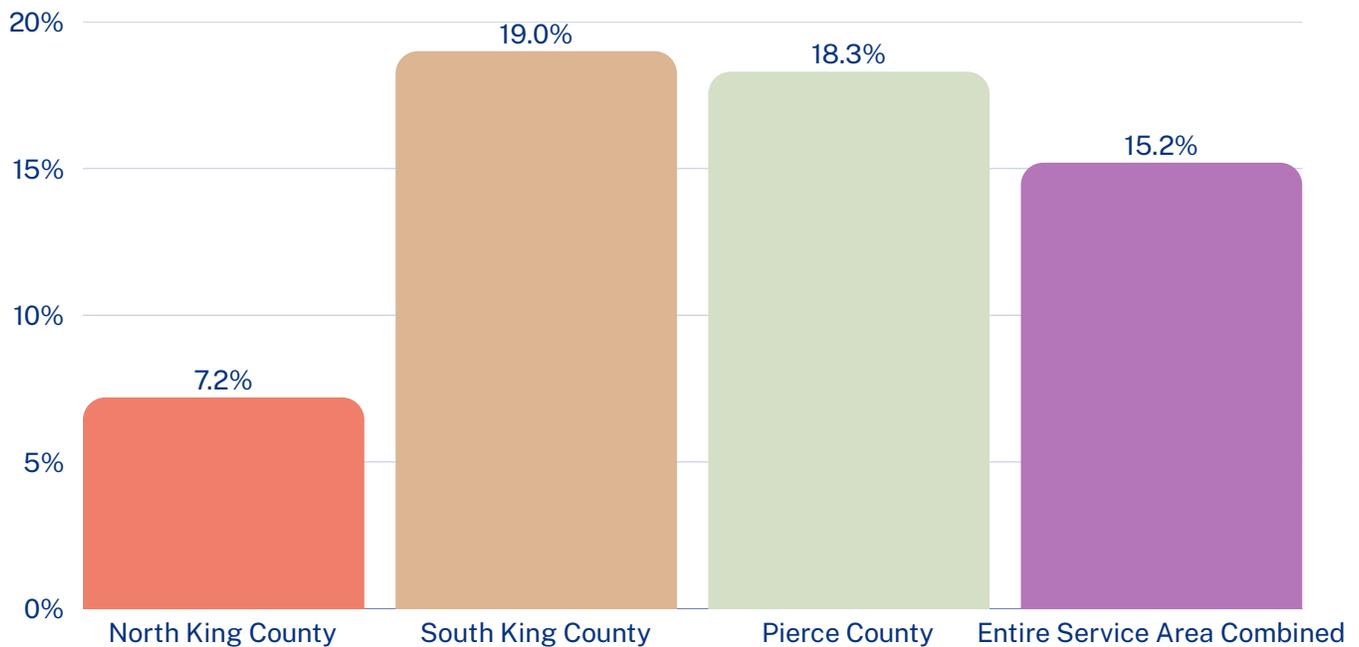
- **North King County:** More affluent region; experiences lower childhood poverty, but pockets of need persist in specific neighborhoods. The highest rate of children living in poverty is in Seattle Public Schools at 9%
- **South King County:** This region has historically higher rates of poverty, with a diverse population and ongoing demand for early learning supports. The highest rates of children living in poverty across all school districts in the region are in South King County, with both Federal Way and Tukwila School Districts having 21% of children living in poverty.
- **Pierce County:** Poverty levels vary significantly by race and ethnicity, with particularly high need among Black, Indigenous, and Latino children. The school district with the highest percentage of children living in poverty is Clover Park School District, at 19.1%.
- **Entire Service Area:** Roughly 1 in 10 children under 5 live in poverty within the Service Area.

Exhibit 16 presents the same data for the 2012-2016 timeframe. This data is taken from 2018 PSESD Early Learning Community Assessment.

**Exhibit 16: Children Under Age Five Living in Poverty, 2012-2016 5-year Estimates, PSESD EL Service Area - Table**

PSESD EL Service Area	Total Population Under 5	Population Under 5 in Poverty	Percent Under 5 in Poverty
North King	44,682	3,231	7.2%
South King	50,969	9,675	19.0%
Pierce	55,029	10,070	18.3%
Entire Service Area	150,680	22,976	15.2%

**Exhibit 17: Children Under Age Five Living in Poverty, 2012-2016 5-year Estimates, PSESD EL Service Area - Graph**



**Note:** This represents the total population under age five for which poverty status is determined.

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-yr Estimates, Table B17001, 2012-2016; BERK, 2018

- Between the data presented in the 2018 assessment (Exhibits 14 and 15) and the currently available data (Exhibits 16 and 17), there has been a 5.4% drop in children under the age of five in poverty.
- In both South King County and Pierce County, the percentage of children under the age of five in poverty dropped about 6.5-7%, while North King County declined slightly by 0.6%.

Since the 2018 assessment period, the total number of children under five in poverty across the Service Area dropped from 22,976 to 17,541. As a share of total children under age five, there was a 5.4% drop in children under five in poverty. As shown above, in South King, the percent of children under five in poverty dropped 6.8%, while in Pierce it dropped 6.5%, and in North King it dropped slightly by 0.6%. Despite the slight decreases noted in this poverty data, the level of need remains significant, and caution should be taken if the above data is used to make programmatic or financial decisions.

## **Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Participation**

Participation in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is a widely recognized indicator of economic need among students. Families with incomes at or below 130% of the federal poverty level qualify for free meals, while those between 130% and 185% qualify for reduced-price meals. These thresholds align closely with Head Start and ECEAP eligibility criteria, making NSLP participation a reliable proxy for identifying children who may benefit from early childhood education services. Additionally, the data is consistently collected and reported by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), ensuring its reliability and relevance for community assessments.

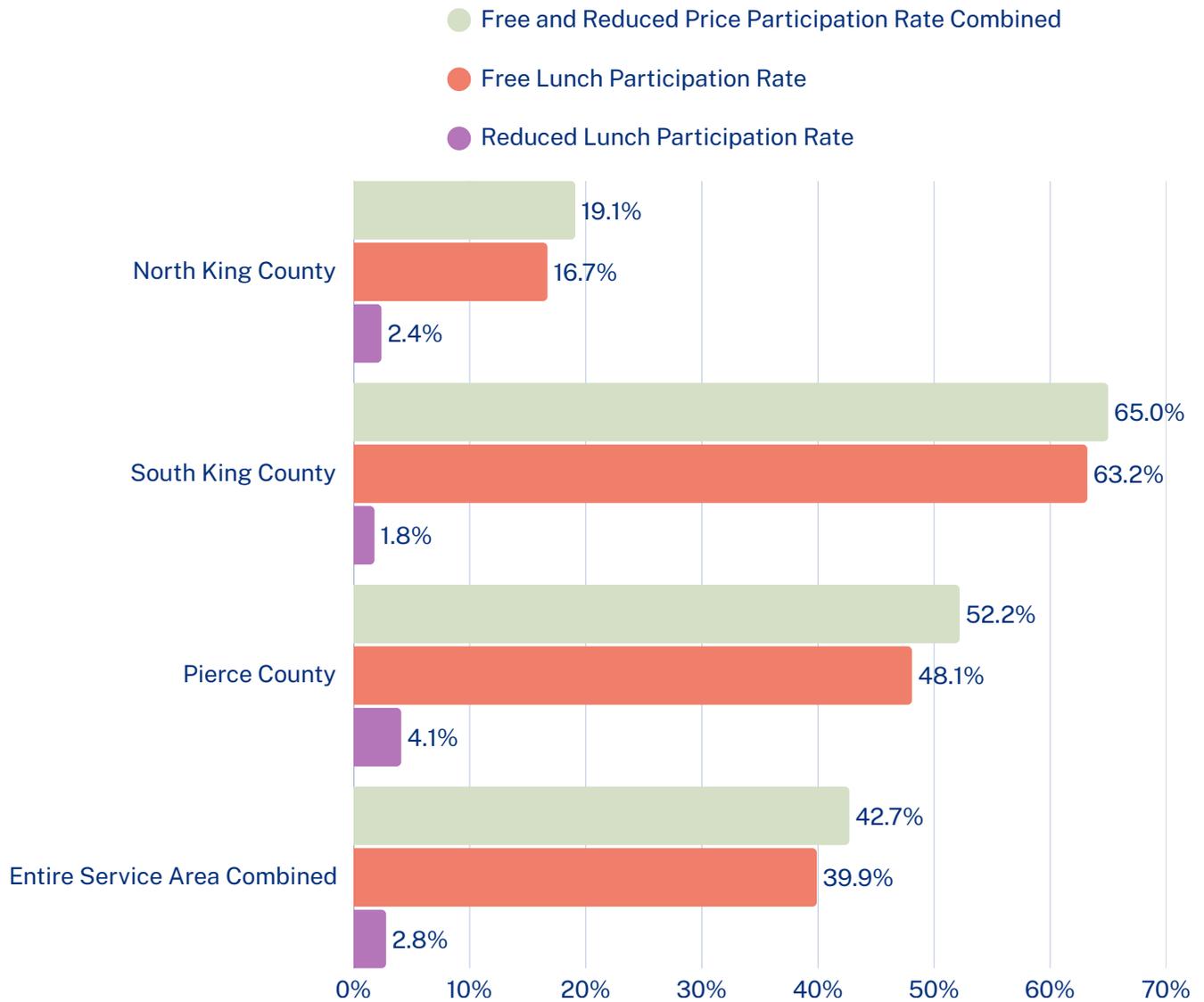
**Exhibit 18: Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Participation in Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade,  
SY 2022 - Table**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Total K-5 Students</b>	<b>Free &amp; Reduced-Price Lunch Total</b>	<b>Participation Rate (%)</b>	<b>Free Lunch Count</b>	<b>Free Lunch (%)</b>	<b>Reduced-Price Lunch Count</b>	<b>Reduced-Price (%)</b>
North King	77,293	14,772	19.1%	12,892	16.7%	1,880	2.4%
South King	54,257	35,294	65.0%	34,304	63.2%	990	1.8%
Pierce	65,128	34,035	52.2%	31,349	48.1%	2,686	4.1%
<b>Entire Service Area</b>	<b>196,678</b>	<b>84,051</b>	<b>42.7%</b>	<b>78,545</b>	<b>39.9%</b>	<b>5,556</b>	<b>2.8%</b>

**Note:** Please note that several school districts have up to 6<sup>th</sup> grade in elementary school, while the majority have only up to 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Where school districts' elementary schools go up to 6<sup>th</sup> grade, those children are counted in their totals. Carbonado School District' (Pierce County) is counted through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

- **North King County:** Approximately 19.1% of elementary and P-8 students participate in the free and reduced-price lunch program, with about 16.7% qualifying for free meals and 2.4% for reduced-price meals. This indicates a relatively lower economic need compared to other regions.
- **South King County:** Shows the highest participation rate at 65%, with 63.2% qualifying for free meals and 1.8% for reduced-price meals. This higher rate suggests a greater economic need and potential eligibility for early learning programs.
- **Pierce County:** With a 52.2% participation rate, 48.1% of students qualify for free meals and 4.1% for reduced-price meals. This indicates a significant portion of students may benefit from early childhood education services.
- **Entire Service Area:** Combining all regions, approximately 42.7% of students participate in the free and reduced-price lunch program, with 39.9% qualifying for free meals and 2.8% for reduced-price meals. This underscores the substantial need for early learning programs across the service area.

### Exhibit 19: Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Participation in Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, SY 2022 - Graph



**Note:** The above figures are estimates based on available data and may vary slightly. For precise numbers, please refer to the OSPI Child Nutrition Program Reports ([ospi.k12.wa.us](https://ospi.k12.wa.us)).

Source: OSPI Child Nutrition Program Reports, October 2022.

# Racial and Ethnic Composition

This section of the report outlines the racial and ethnic makeup of the Service Area. Because data sources vary in how they report this information — some combining race and ethnicity, others reporting them separately — the exhibits below reflect these differences in their format and presentation.

**Exhibit 20: Racial Composition of Total Population, 2022 5-Year Estimate - Table**

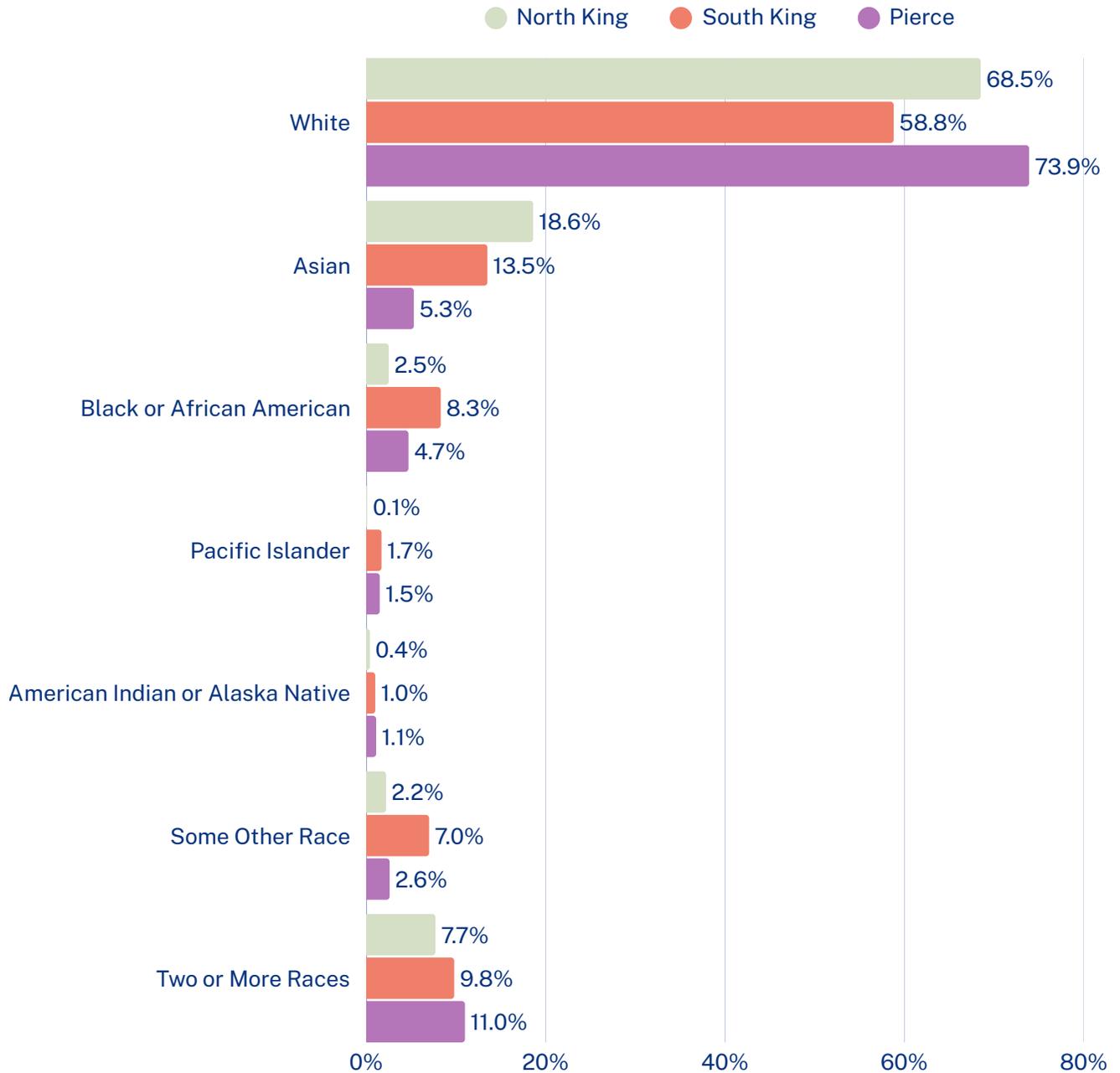
County	White	Asian	Black/ African American	Native Hawaiian /Pacific Islander	Native American	Some Other Race	Two or More Races
North King	68.5%	18.6%	2.5%	0.1%	0.4%	2.2%	7.7%
South King	58.8%	13.5%	8.3%	1.7%	1.0%	7.0%	9.8%
Pierce County	73.9%	5.3%	4.7%	1.5%	1.1%	2.6%	11.0%

**Note:** Percentages are approximate and based on the most recent available data.

Source: North King County, South King County, and Pierce County 2022, based on the most recent available data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). Percentages are averaged across the school districts in each region.

To better understand the racial and ethnic composition, here's a bar chart illustrating the breakdown for each county:

**Exhibit 21: Racial Composition of Total Population, 2022 5-Year Estimate - Graph**



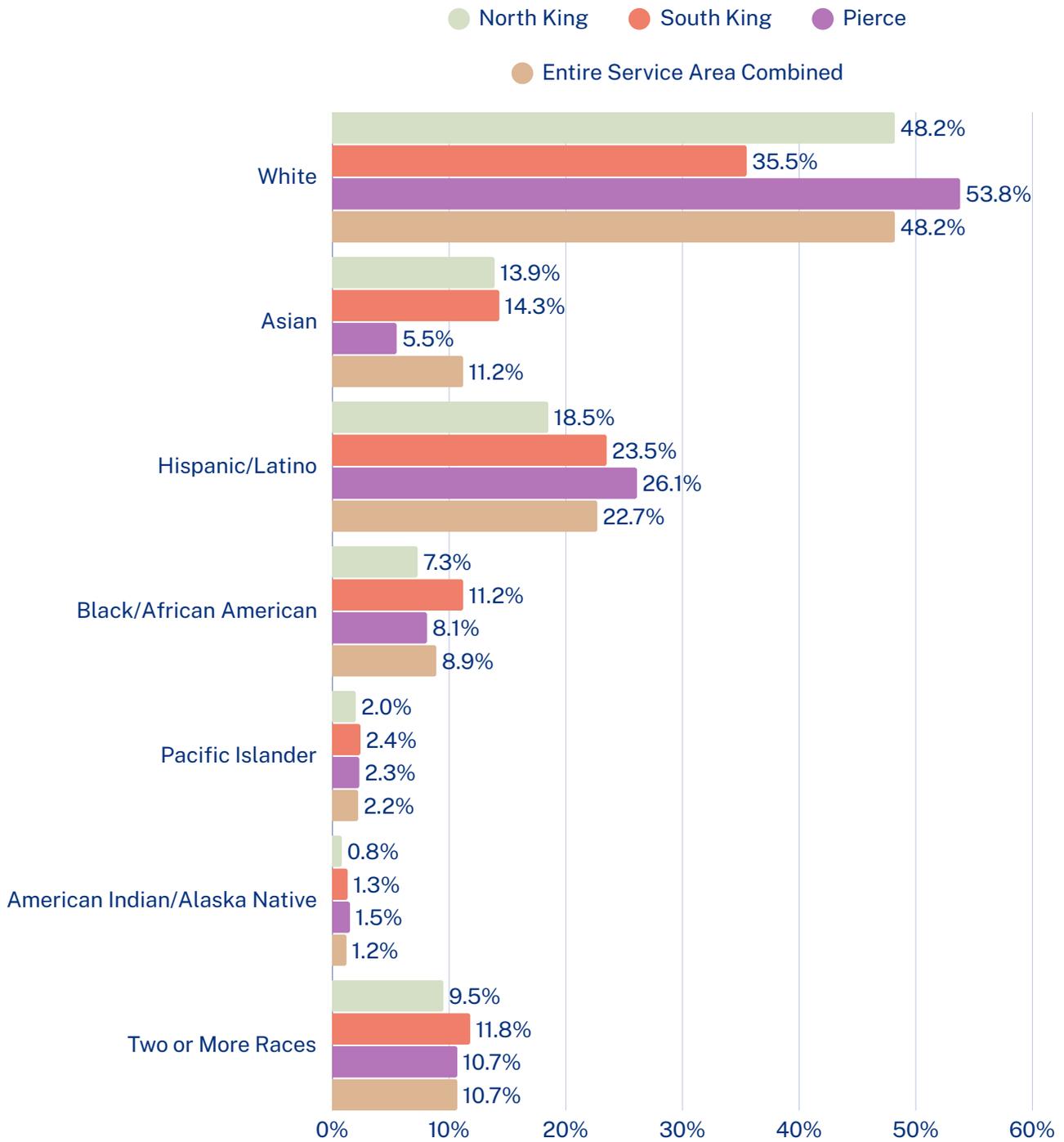
- **North and South King County:** South King County has a significantly lower White population (58.8%) than Pierce County (73.9%). North King County has a higher Asian population at 18.6%, compared to South King at 13.5%. The Hispanic or Latino population constitutes approximately 14.2% in South King County at 6.3% in North King, with similar differences in the percentage of Black or African American population at 8.3% in South King County and 2.5% in North King County.
- **Pierce County:** The White (Non-Hispanic) population is notably higher at 73.9%, with Asian residents comprising 5.3%. The Hispanic or Latino population is approximately 10.3%, and the Black or African American population is on average 4.7%. Pierce County has the highest percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native population between the regions at 1.1% and also has the highest percentage of Two or More Races at 11%.
- **Diversity Considerations:** These demographic profiles are essential for understanding the cultural and linguistic diversity within each county, which can inform the development and implementation of Head Start and ECEAP programs to ensure they meet the needs of all children and families.

**Exhibit 22: Racial and Ethnic Composition of Public School Students SY 22-23 - Table**

Race/Ethnicity	North King County	South King County	Pierce County	Entire Service Area
White	48.2%	35.5%	53.8%	45.8%
Black or African American	7.3%	11.2%	8.1%	8.9%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.8%	1.3%	1.5%	1.2%
Asian	13.9%	14.3%	5.5%	11.2%
Pacific Islander	2.0%	2.4%	2.3%	2.2%
Hispanic or Latino	18.5%	23.5%	26.1%	22.7%
Two or More Races	9.5%	11.8%	10.7%	10.7%

Source: Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), Report Card Enrollment Data 2022–2023.

**Exhibit 23: Racial and Ethnic Composition of Public School Students SY 22-23 - Graph**



Source: Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), Report Card Enrollment Data 2022-2023.

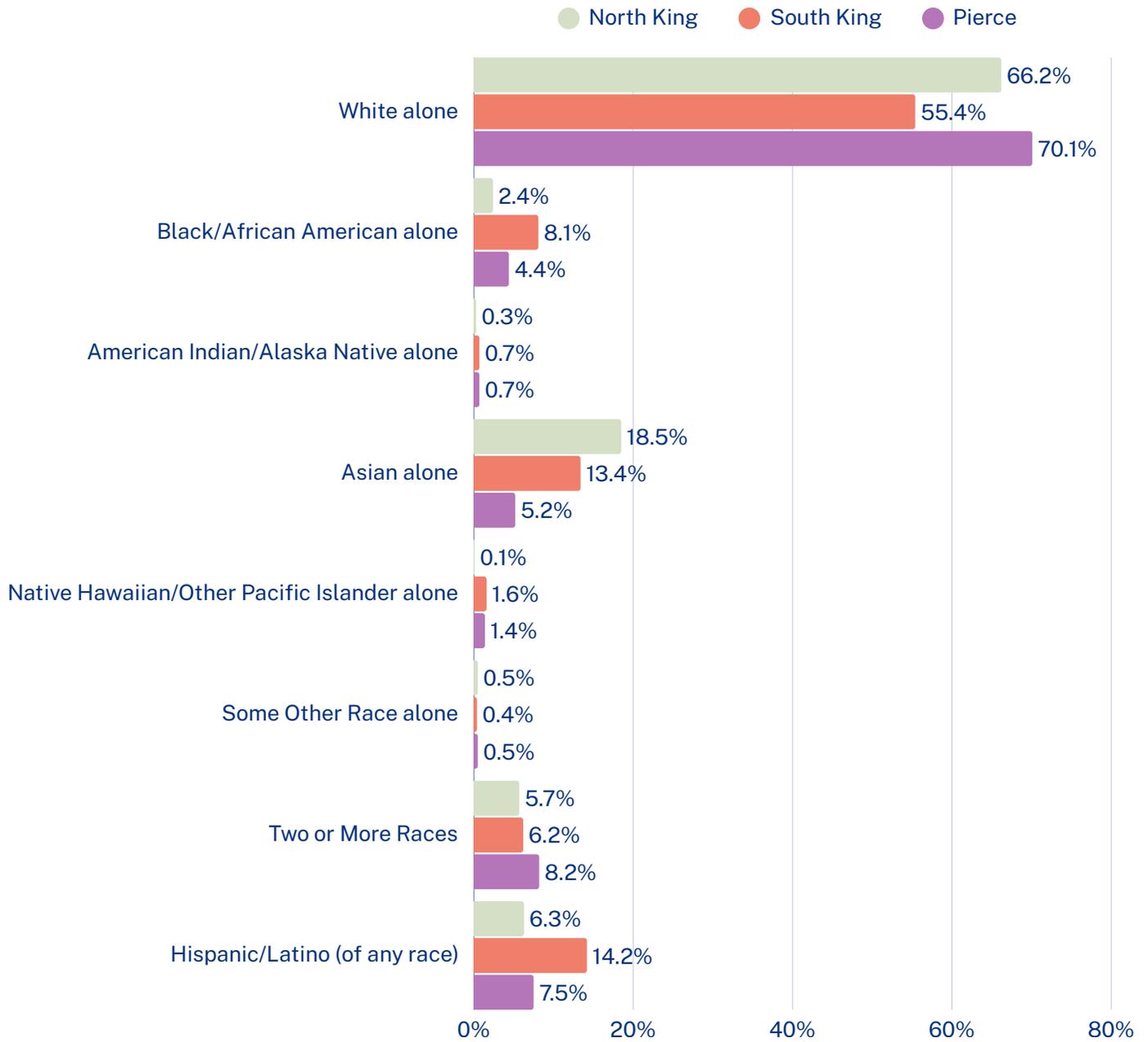
- **North King County:** Higher percentages of Asian (13.9%) and White (48.2%) students.
- **South King County:** Notably diverse, with significant Hispanic or Latino (23.5%) and Asian (14.3%) student populations.
- **Pierce County:** Majority White (53.8%) with a substantial Hispanic or Latino population (26.1%).
- **Entire Service Area:** Reflects a diverse student body, with the largest groups being White (45.8%) and Hispanic or Latino (22.7%).

**Exhibit 24: Ethnic Composition of Population, 2022 5-Year Estimates - Table**

<b>Category</b>	<b>North King County</b>	<b>South King County</b>	<b>Pierce County</b>
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>1,527,420</b>	<b>793,771</b>	<b>911,589</b>
White alone	66.2%	55.4%	70.1%
Black or African American alone	2.4%	8.1%	4.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.3%	0.7%	0.7%
Asian alone	18.5%	13.4%	5.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.1%	1.6%	1.4%
Some Other Race alone	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%
Two or More Races	5.7%	6.2%	8.2%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	6.3%	14.2%	7.5%

Source: North King County, South King County, and Pierce County 2022, based on the most recent available data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). Percentages are averaged across the school districts in each region.

**Exhibit 25: Ethnic Composition of Population, 2022 5-Year Estimates - Graph**



Source: Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), Report Card Enrollment Data 2022–2023.

# Foreign-Born Population

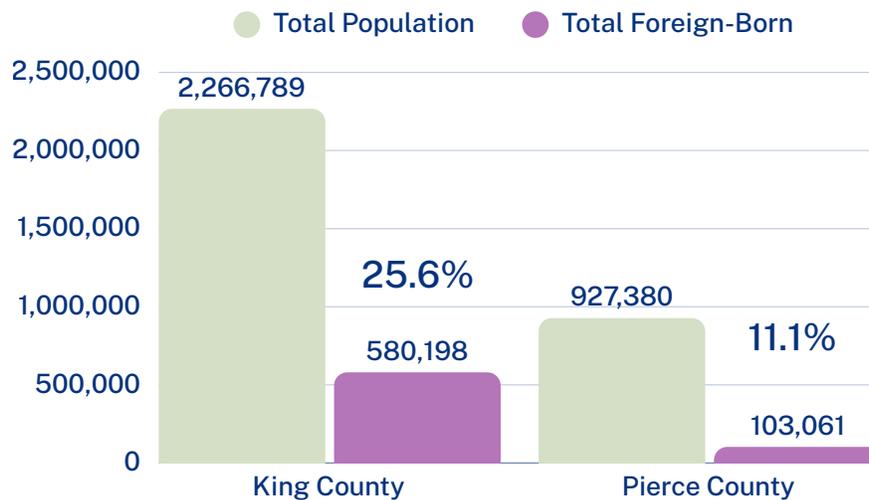
While detailed data on the exact number of immigrants in specific geographic areas is limited, this report utilizes available data on the percentage of foreign-born residents and refugee arrivals. Additionally, information on the proportion of individuals who speak a language other than English at home offers valuable insight into the presence and diversity of immigrant communities across the service area.

**Exhibit 26: Foreign-Born Population, 2022 5-Year Estimates - Table**

Region	Total Population	Foreign-Born Population	% Foreign-Born	% of Foreign-Born Population Speaking a Language Other than English at Home	% of Foreign-Born Population (who speak a language other than English at Home) Who Speak English less than “very well”
King County	2,266,789	580,198	25.6%	83.4%	36.2%
Pierce County	927,380	103,061	11.1%	79.9%*	42.3%

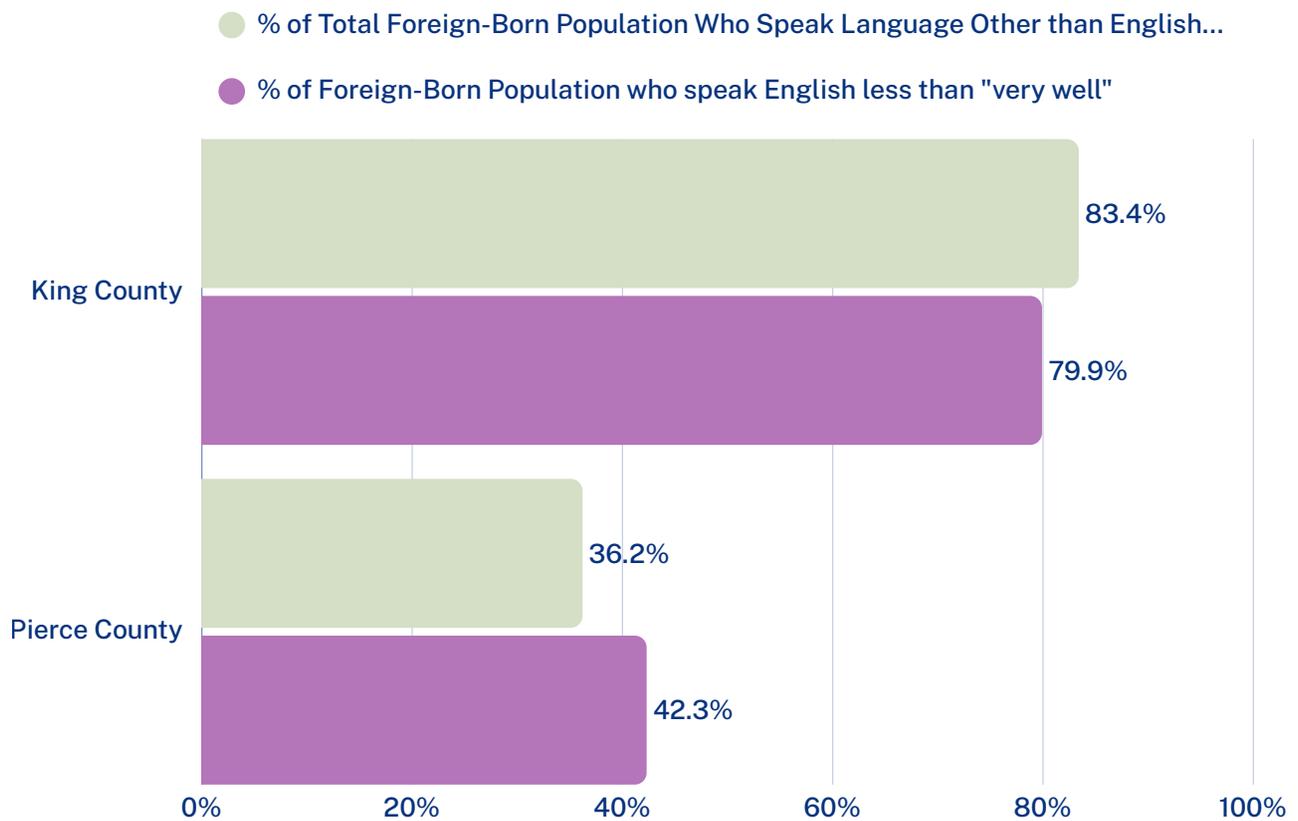
Source: ACS 2022 1-year estimates, tables DP05 (population) and S0201 (foreign-born population and languages spoken)

**Exhibit 27: Foreign-Born Population, 2022 5-Year Estimates - Graph**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates (2022) — data.census.gov

### Exhibit 28: Foreign-Born Population Language Spoken in the Home, 2022 1-Year Estimates - Graph



Source: ACS 2022 1-year estimates, tables DP05 (population) and S0201 (foreign-born population and languages spoken)

- Exhibit 28 above explains first the percentage of the foreign-born population who speak a language other than English at home. Then, of the population who does speak a language other than English at home, the chart describes what percentage of that group that speaks English less than “very well”. This second group indicates families or children who may need additional support in English Language Acquisition services.
- **King County** has a higher percentage of the population who speak a language other than English at home, but **Pierce County** has a higher proportion of that population who speak English less than “very well”.
- These demographics suggest a critical need for multilingual outreach, culturally responsive services, and potential collaboration with immigrant and refugee-serving organizations.

# Refugee Arrival

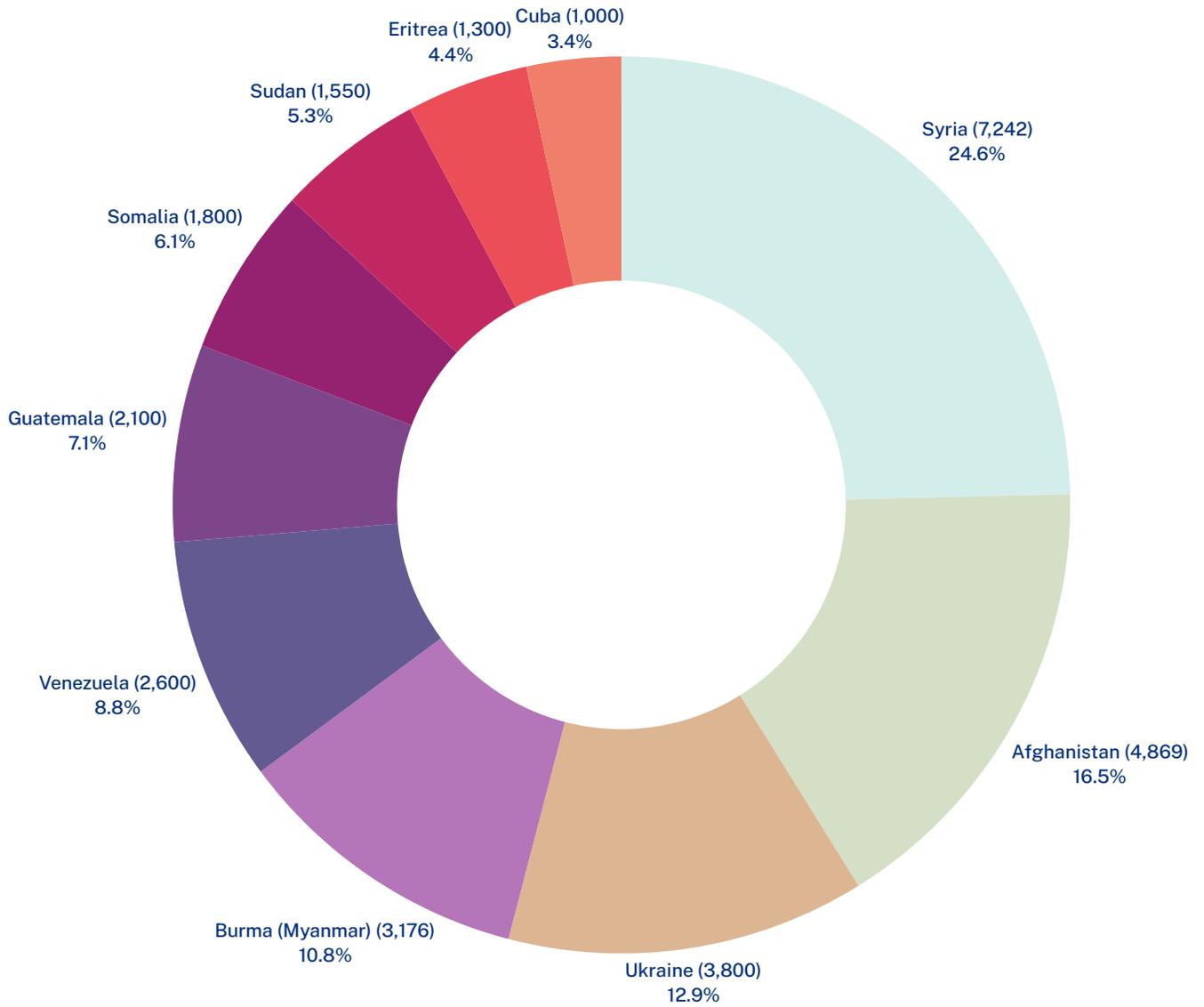
The refugee population is a specific segment within the broader foreign-born population. According to the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), individuals qualify as refugees if they have a well-founded fear of persecution based on factors such as race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group in their country of origin.

According to the DSHS Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance, the following are the top countries of origin for refugees arriving in Washington state during the fiscal year 2023 (October 2022 – September 2023):

**Exhibit 29: Refugee Arrival by Top Ten Nationalities in WA State, FY 2021-2023 - Table**

Country	Number of Refugees	Percentage of Top 10 Arrivals
Syria	7,242	25%
Afghanistan	4,869	17%
Ukraine	3,800	13%
Burma (Myanmar)	3,176	11%
Venezuela	2,600	9%
Guatemala	2,100	7%
Somalia	1,800	6%
Sudan	1,550	5%
Eritrea	1,300	4%
Cuba	1,000	3%
<b>Total (Top 10)</b>	<b>29,437</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Exhibit 30: Refugee Arrival by Top Ten Nationalities in WA State, FY 2021-2023 - Chart**



Source: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance

# Languages Spoken at Home

Exhibit 31: Population Age Five and Older that Speak a Language Other than English at Home, 2022 Estimates - Table

Region	Total Population 5 Years and Older	% of Total Population Speaking English less than “very well”	# of Children Ages 5-17 Who Speak English less than “very well”
Washington State	7,248,377	7.7%	59,685
North King County	1,450,325	7.3%	9,123
South King County	744,760	12.2%	10,959
Pierce County	854,464	4.6%	4,630

Source: U.S Census, 2022 Estimates, Table S1601

- Over 59,000 students in Washington speak a language other than English at home less than “very well”. In King County, more than 1 in 4 children (25.6%) are multilingual.
- South King County has the highest percentage of the population that speaks English less than “very well”, and the most children ages 5-17 who speak English less than “very well”. This reflects immigration patterns, especially in South King cities like Kent, Tukwila, and Renton.
- **Pierce County’s share is lower, but still meaningful:** 4,630 children speak a non-English language less than “very well”.
- **Program Planning Implication:**
  - Multilingual students may need enhanced access to bilingual instruction, translated materials, and culturally responsive family engagement strategies.
  - This data supports expanding dual language programs and language access services.
- Multilingual family outreach and language-accessible resources are essential, especially in South King and Pierce Counties
- Interpreter services, translated materials, and bilingual staff support equitable access to education and family engagement
- Tailored support is needed in areas with high concentrations of recent immigrants, refugees, and dual language learners

## North King County

Most Common Non-English Languages

Spanish (19%)

Chinese (18%)

Significant presence of Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Somali/Amharic speakers

The region's language diversity includes East Asian, African, and Slavic communities

## South King County

Highest linguistic diversity among the three regions

Spanish (22%) remains most prevalent, followed by Vietnamese (10%), Tagalog (8%), and Russian/Ukrainian (8%)

Strong representation from African and Southeast Asian language groups

## Pierce County

Dominated by Spanish speakers (24%)

Vietnamese (5%), Tagalog (4%), and Russian (3%) are also represented

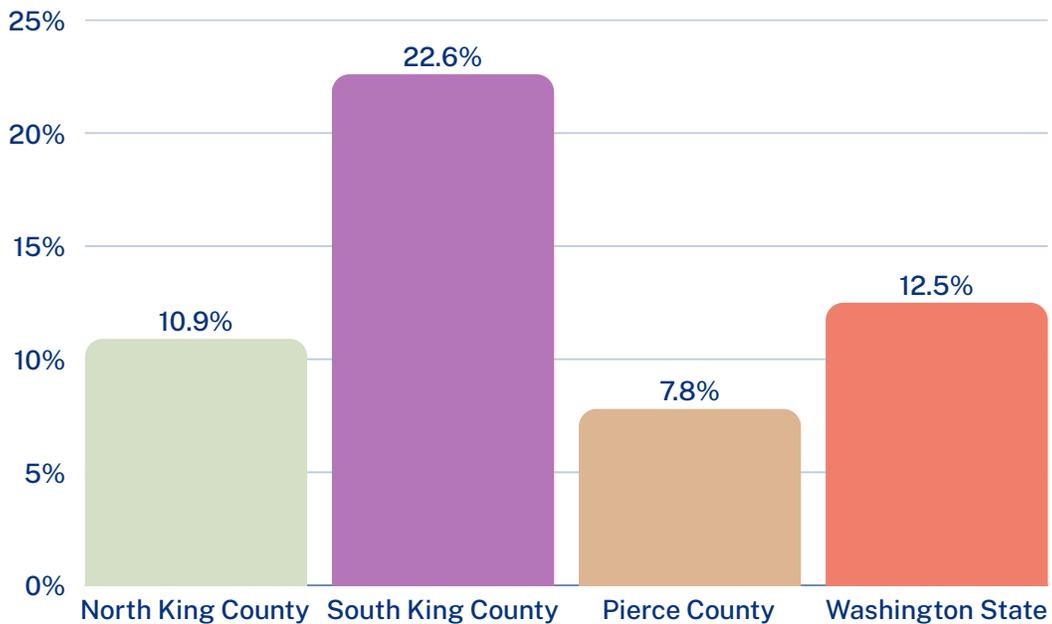
Relatively larger share of speakers in the "Other" category (55%), pointing to many smaller language communities

# Transitional Bilingual

**Exhibit 32: Transitional Bilingual Students in Public School, 2022 - Table**

Region	Total Enrollment	English Language Learner Students	Percentage of Total Enrollment
North King County	337,896	36,914	10.9%
South King County	230,162	52,122	22.6%
Pierce County	270,090	20,982	7.8%
Washington State	2,172,946	270,894	12.5%

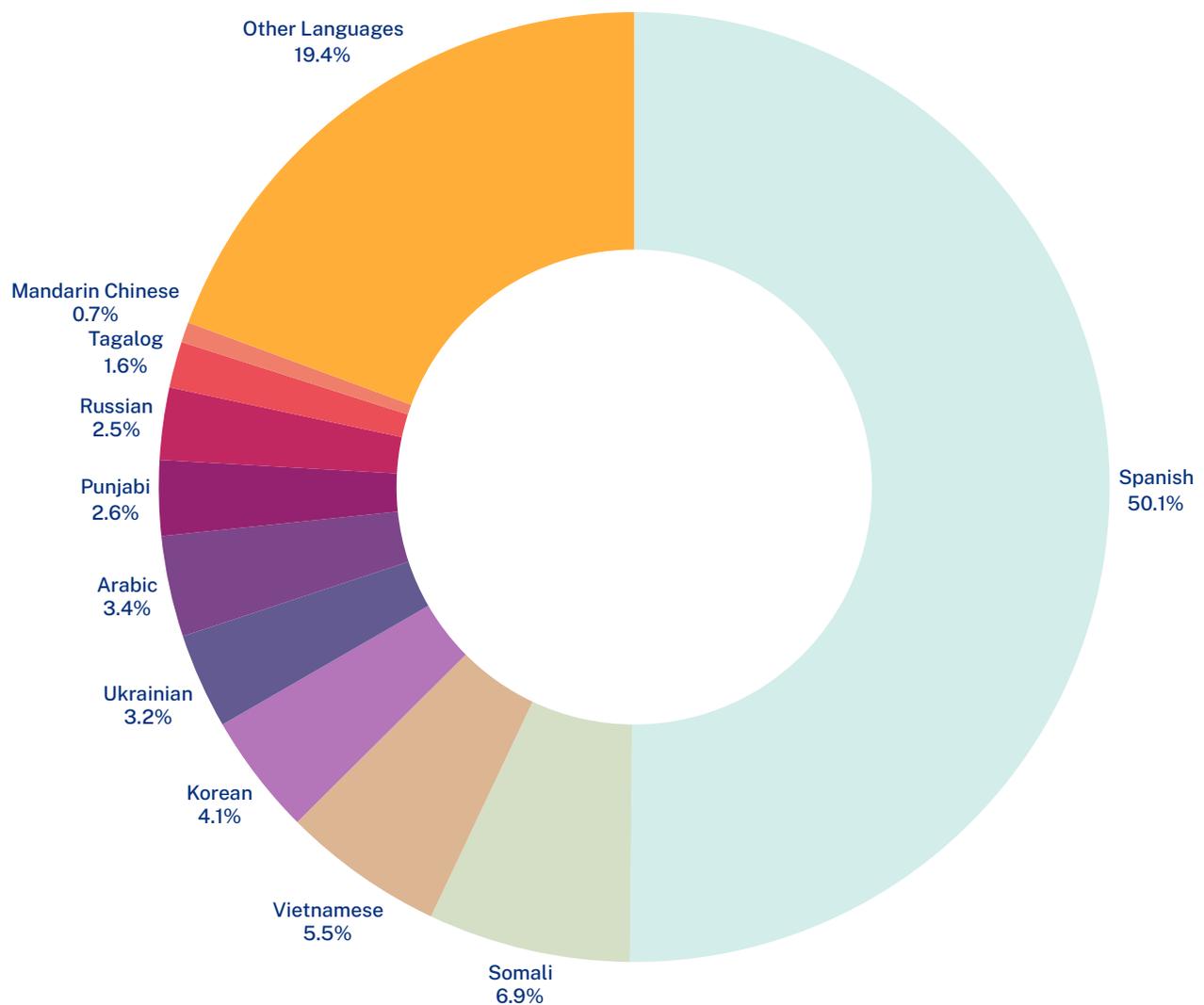
**Exhibit 33: Transitional Bilingual Students in Public School, 2022 - Graph**



Source: Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

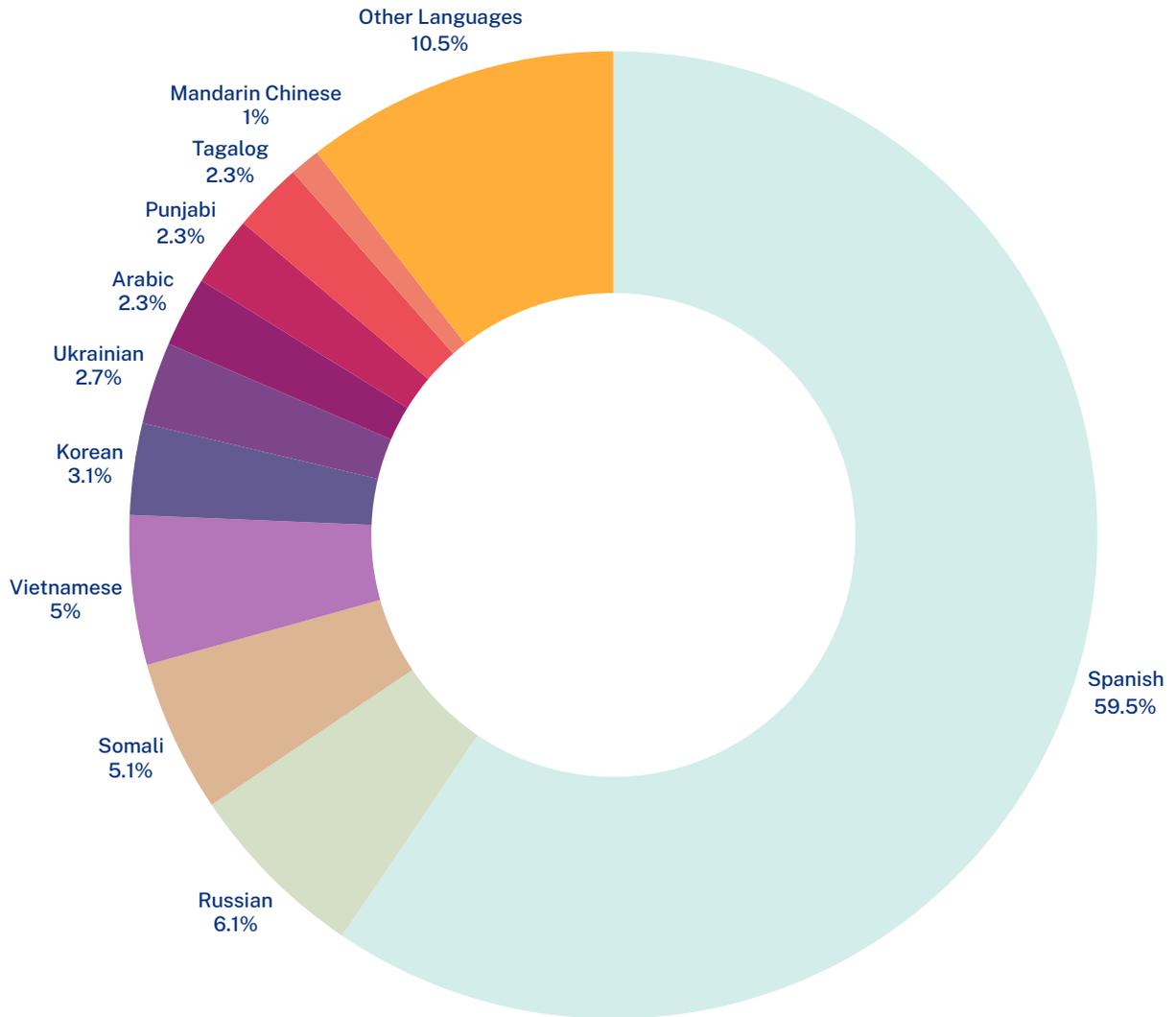
- **Demographic Trends:** Approximately 270,894 students in Washington State are classified as English Language Learners. Spanish is the primary language spoken by these students.
- **Educational Implications:** The data highlights the significant presence of multilingual learners in the state, emphasizing the need for robust support systems to facilitate English language acquisition and academic success. Across all service regions, the English Language Learner percentage is higher than the state average, indicating the need for robust support systems in King and Pierce County for English language acquisition in educational settings.

**Exhibit 34: Top Ten Languages Spoken at Home by Transitional Bilingual Students, North King County, 2022-2023 - Chart**



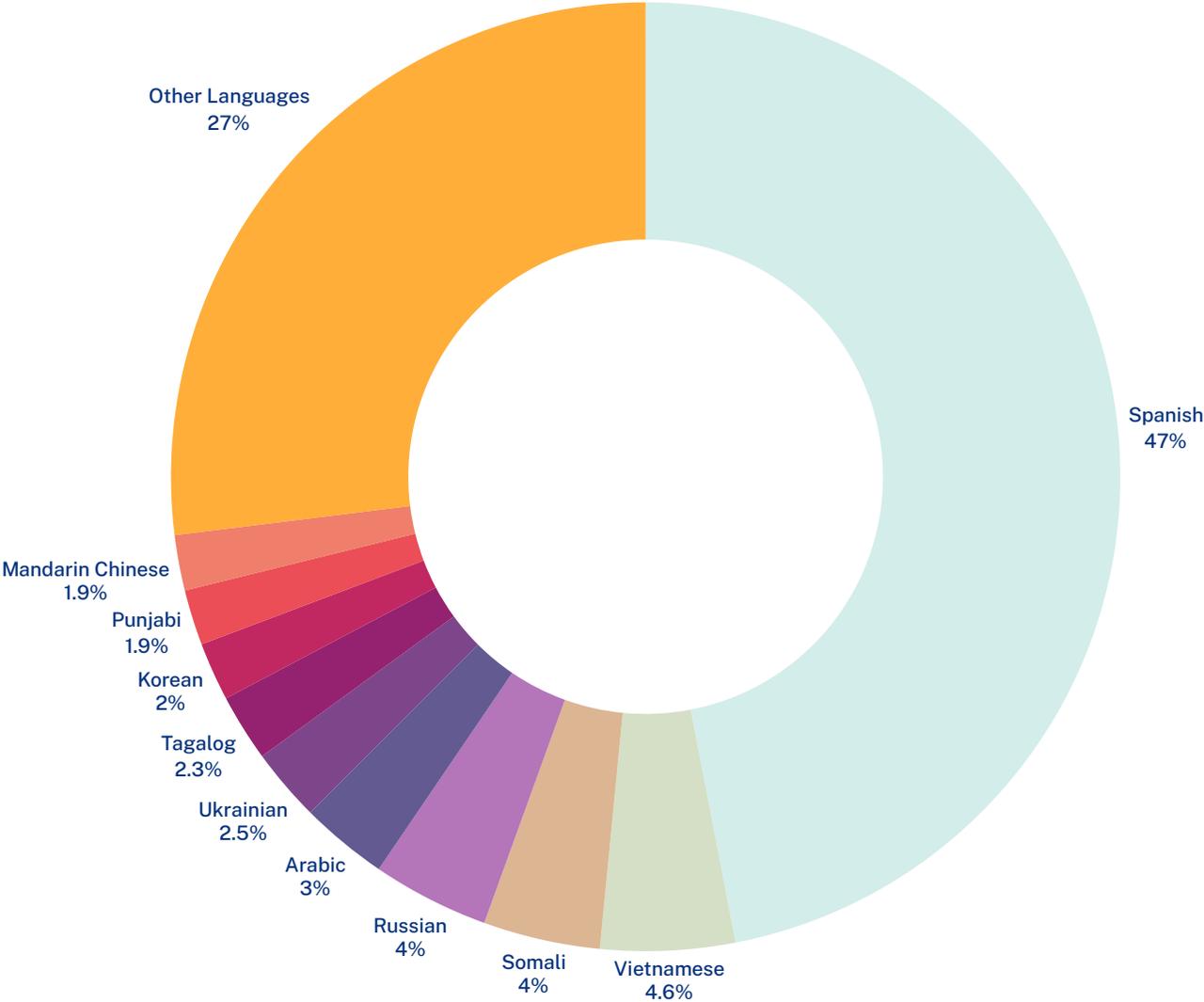
Source: Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), 2022-2023 Student and Enrollment Reports.

**Exhibit 35: Top Ten Languages Spoken at Home by Transitional Bilingual Students, South King County, 2022-2023 - Chart**



Source: Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), 2022-2023 Student and Enrollment Reports

**Exhibit 36: Top Ten Languages Spoken at Home by Transitional Bilingual Students, Pierce County, 2022-2023 - Chart**



Source: Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), 2022-2023 Student and Enrollment Reports

# Education

## Adult Educational Attainment

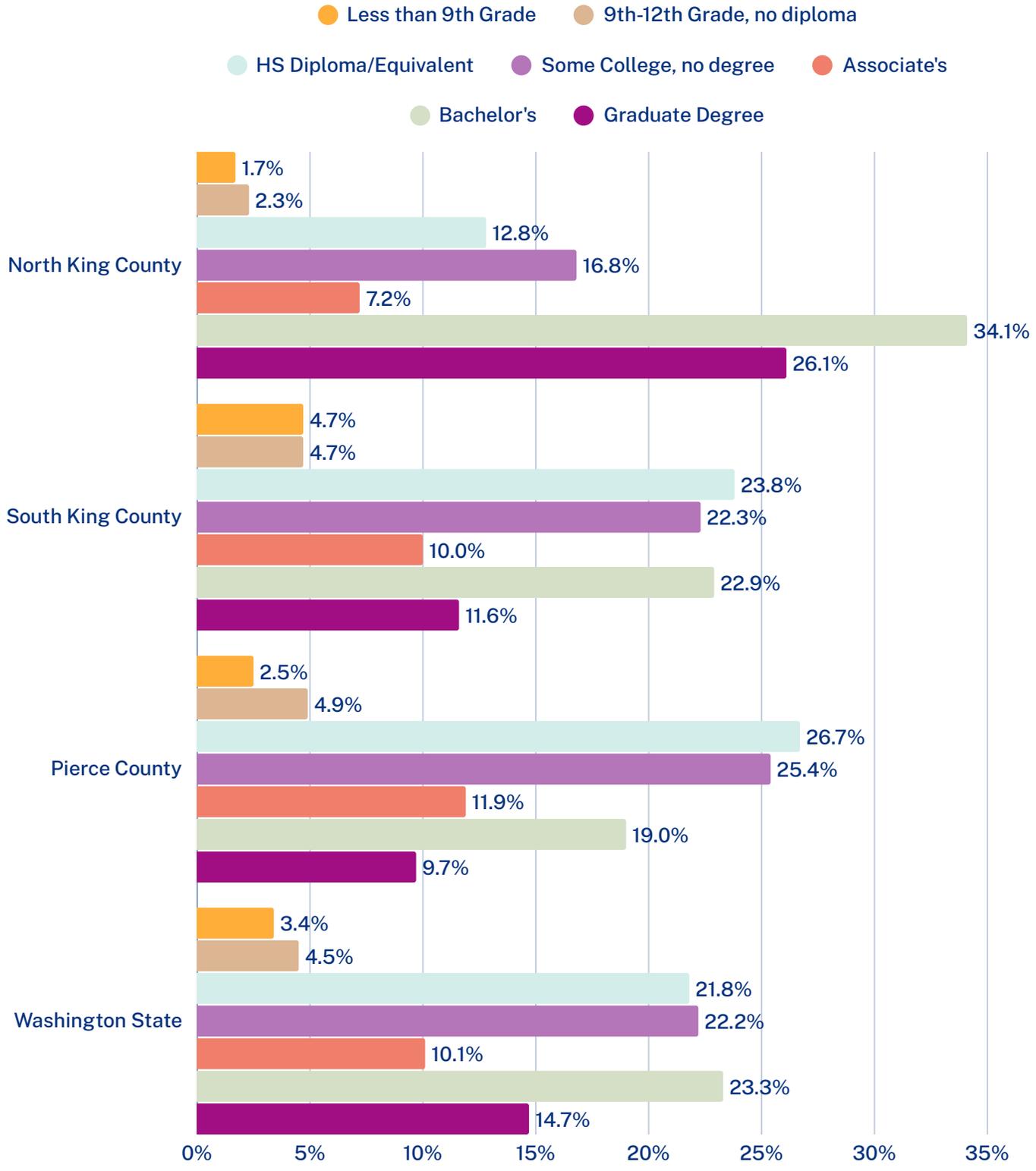
Educational attainment among adults in a community strongly influences child development outcomes, household income, and school readiness. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (ACS 2018–2022 5-Year Estimates):

**Exhibit 37: Highest Education Attainment for Adults Aged 25 and Over, 2018-2022 - Table**

	North King	South King	Pierce	Washington State
Total Adults (25+)	1,119,684	547,595	617,235	5,347,314
Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade (%)	1.7%	4.7%	2.5%	3.4%
9th-12 <sup>th</sup> Grade, No Diploma (%)	2.3%	4.7%	4.9%	4.5%
HS Diploma or Equivalent (%)	12.8%	23.8%	26.7%	21.8%
Some College, No Degree (%)	15.8%	22.3%	25.4%	22.2%
Associate's Degree (%)	7.2%	10.0%	11.9%	10.1%
Bachelor's Degree (%)	34.1%	22.9%	19.0%	23.3%
Graduate Degree (%)	26.1%	11.6%	9.7%	14.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2022 Estimates, Table S1501

**Exhibit 38: Percentage of Highest Education Attainment for Adults Aged 25 and Over, 2022 - Graph**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2022 Estimates, Table S1501

- **North King County** residents exhibit significantly higher educational attainment, with 34% of adults over 25 with a Bachelor’s degree.
- **South King and Pierce County** demonstrate lower college attainment levels, which may contribute to higher rates of economic need and lower access to early learning engagement.

## Kindergarten Readiness (WaKIDS)

Washington’s WaKIDS assessment evaluates kindergarten readiness across six domains. In 2022, statewide data showed:

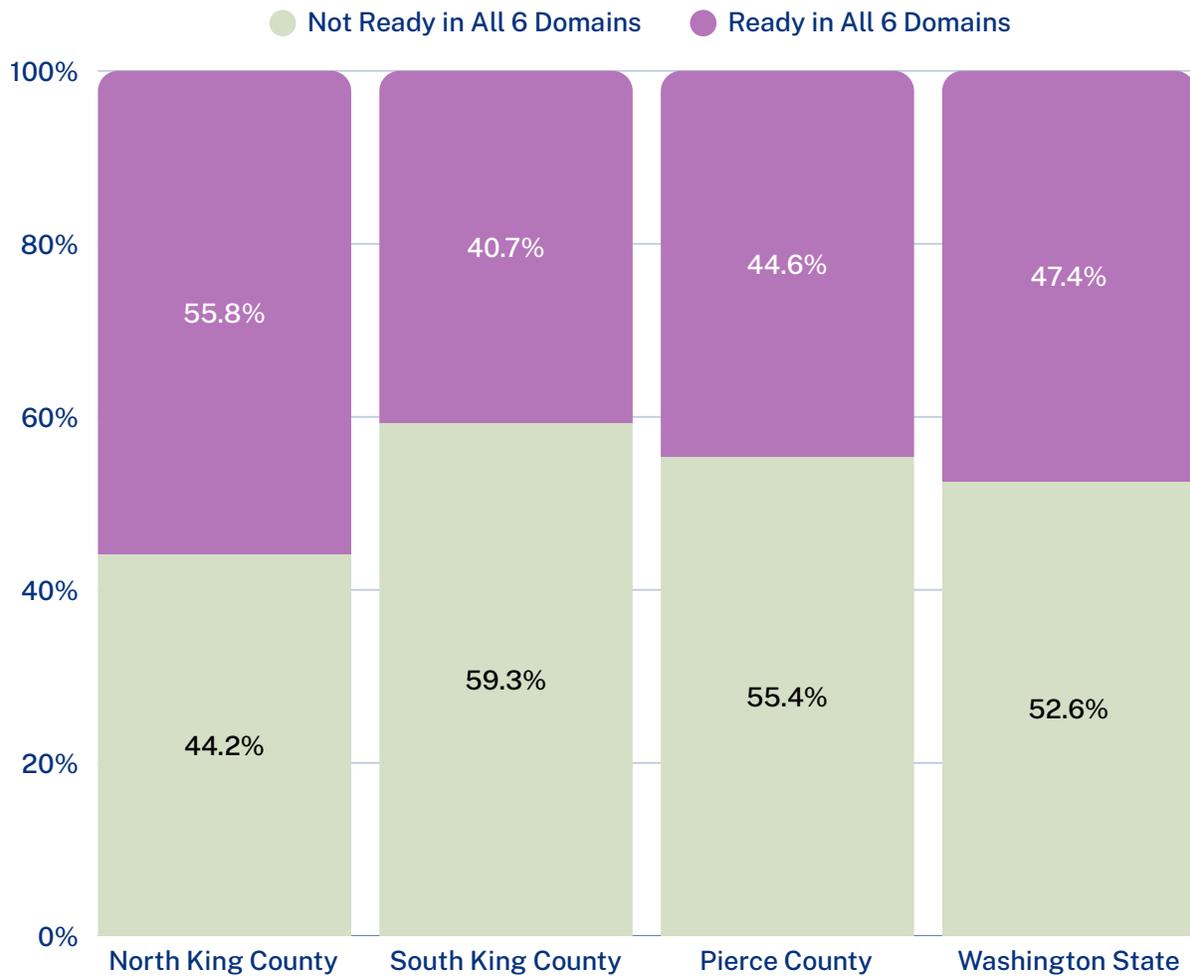
**Exhibit 39: WaKIDS Kindergarten Readiness Scores, SY 2022-2023 - Table**

Region	Percentage Ready in All 6 Domains	Percentage Not Ready in All 6 Domains	Statewide Percentage
North King County	55.8%	44.2%	47.4%
South King County	40.7%	59.3%	47.4%
Pierce County	44.6%	55.4%	47.4%
Washington State	47.4%	52.6%	-

Source: Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), WaKIDS Data Report 2022

- Language barriers, poverty, and access to early learning opportunities likely contribute to the lower readiness rates in South King and Pierce County.
- North King students were more likely to enter kindergarten ready in all domains.

### Exhibit 40: WaKIDS Kindergarten Readiness Scores, SY 2022-2023 - Graph



Source: Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), WaKIDS Data Report 2022

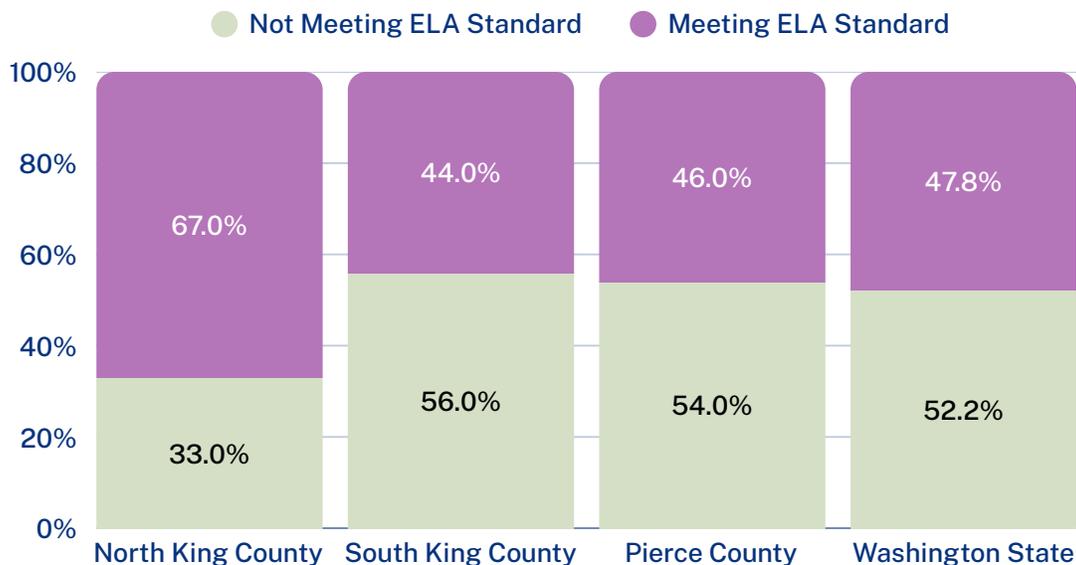
## English Language Arts (ELA) Testing - 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

Standardized test scores offer insight into early academic progress. For the 2021–2022 school year:

**Exhibit 41: Third Grade SBA English and Language Art Test Scores, SY 2021-2022 - Table**

Region	Total Enrollment (Grade 3)	% Meeting ELA Standard	Count Meeting ELA Standard	% Not Meeting ELA Standard	Count Not Meeting ELA Standard
North King County	35,000*	67.0%	23,450	33.0%	11,550
South King County	40,000*	44.0%	17,600	56.0%	22,400
Pierce County	50,000*	46.0%	23,000	54.0%	27,000
Washington State	1,050,000*	47.8%	501,900	52.2%	548,100

**Exhibit 42: Third Grade SBA English and Language Art Test Scores, SY 2021-2022 - Graph**



- Gaps in early literacy are especially evident in South King and Pierce County, which are also home to higher proportions of low-income and multilingual families.

## Absenteeism (Chronic Absence)

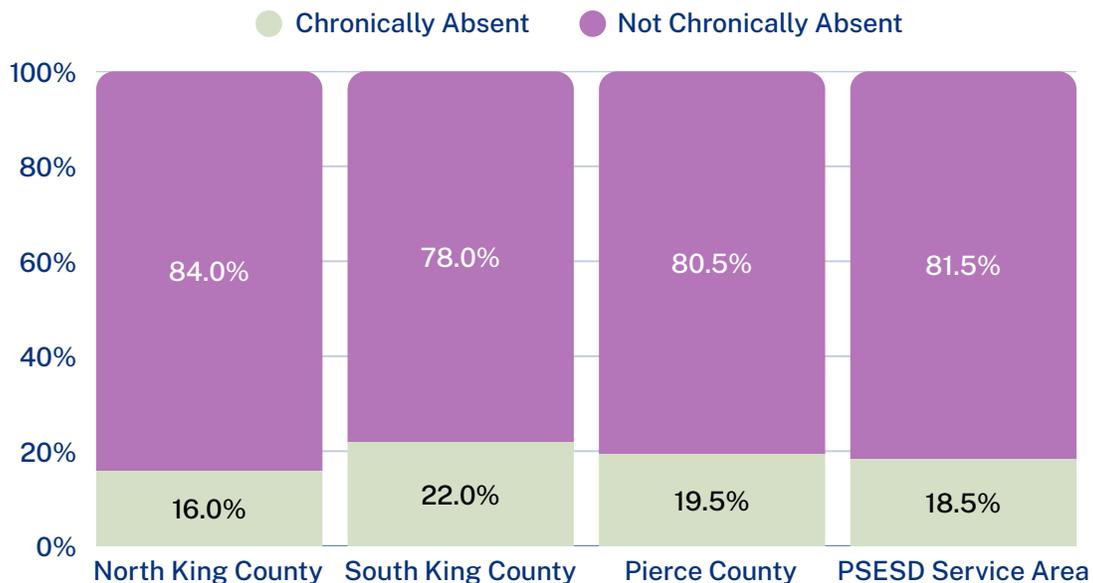
The following section discusses absenteeism among public school students. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% or more of school days, whether the absences are excused or unexcused. This equates to as few as two days per month. Students who are chronically absent are at greater risk of falling behind academically and are less likely to graduate from high school. This table now provides an accurate breakdown of chronic absenteeism data for the PSESD service area, combining North King County, South King County, and Pierce County.

**Exhibit 43: Absenteeism in Public School Students, SY 2021-2022 - Table**

Region	Total Enrollment (All Grades)	% Chronically Absent	Count Chronically Absent
North King County	262,392	16.0%	40,000
South King County	307,711	22.0%	66,000
Pierce County	390,230	19.5%	68,250
PSESD Service Area	560,103	18.5%	174,250

Source: Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), Report Card for 2021–2022 School Year. OSPI Report Card

**Exhibit 44: Percentage of Absenteeism in Public School Students, SY 2021-2022 - Graph**



- **Total Enrollment:** These figures represent approximate total enrollment for all grade levels across each region and combined for the PSESD service area in the 2021–2022 school year.
- **% Chronically Absent:** The percentage of students who were chronically absent, missing 10% or more of their school days.
- **Count Chronically Absent:** The total number of students who were chronically absent in each region.

# Health

This section examines health-related indicators affecting young children and families in the PSESD Early Learning service area, including North King, South King, and Pierce County. It focuses on population health risks, access to care, and disparities that may impact early development.

## Population with Disabilities (Children Under Age 5)

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) provides data on children with disabilities, ages 3 to 21, who are enrolled in state-provided educational services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Exhibit 45 displays this information across the Service Area. However, OSPI has not published any updated data since the 2016-2017 school year.

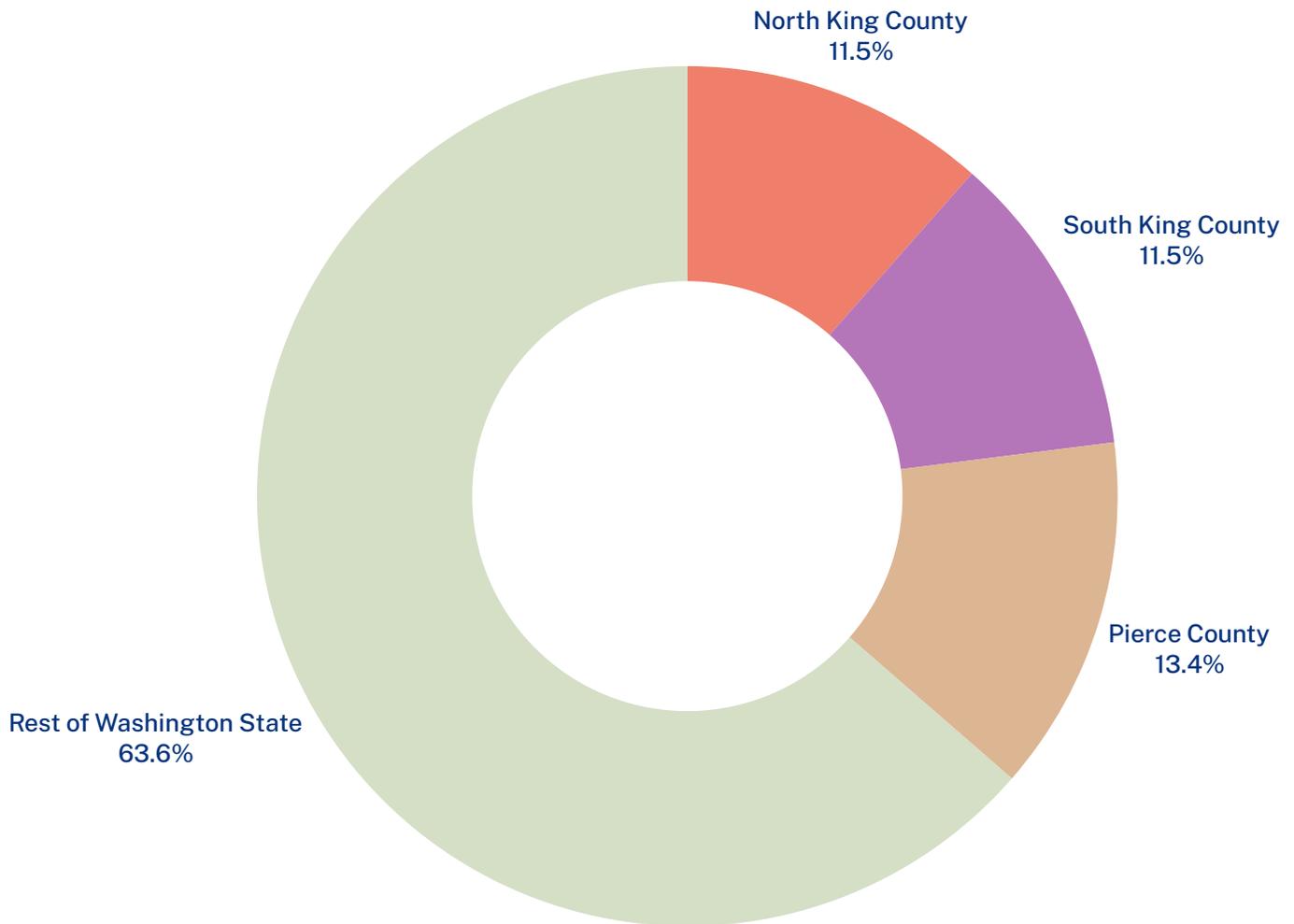
**Exhibit 45: Public School Students with Disabilities Who are Enrolled in State-Provided Educational Opportunities, Estimates 2022 - Table**

Region	Total Children Under Age 5	Children Under Age 5 with an IEP	Percentage with an IEP
North King County	77,095	1,247	1.7%
South King County	49,011	1,244	2.5%
Pierce County	57,125	1,448	2.5%
PSESD Service Area	183,231	3,939	2.1%
Washington State	440,172	10,822	2.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2022 Estimates; Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State, Pre-K LRE Trend Data by LEA, November 2022

- Pierce County reports the highest number of young children with disabilities (1,448), even though its total population under 5 is only slightly larger than South King.
- North King County has the lowest percentage at 1.7%, lower than the other regions and the statewide average.
- The percentage of children with disabilities is the same in South King County and Pierce County, indicating a consistent need for inclusive services across those regions.

**Exhibit 46: Percentage of Pre-K Children with IEPs in Washington State, November 2022 - Chart**



Source: Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State, Pre-K LRE Trend Data by LEA, November 2022

- North King County, South King County, and Pierce County combined account for approximately 36.4% of all Pre-K (aged 3 and 4, turning 5) aged children with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in Washington State, for a total of 3,939 children.
- Pierce County had the highest percentage and total of children with IEPs, with approximately 1,448 children in November 2022, followed by North King County with 1,247 children and South King County with 1,244 children.
- Combined, King County accounts for 23.0% of children with IEPs across the state, with a total of 2,491 children.

## Birth Statistics

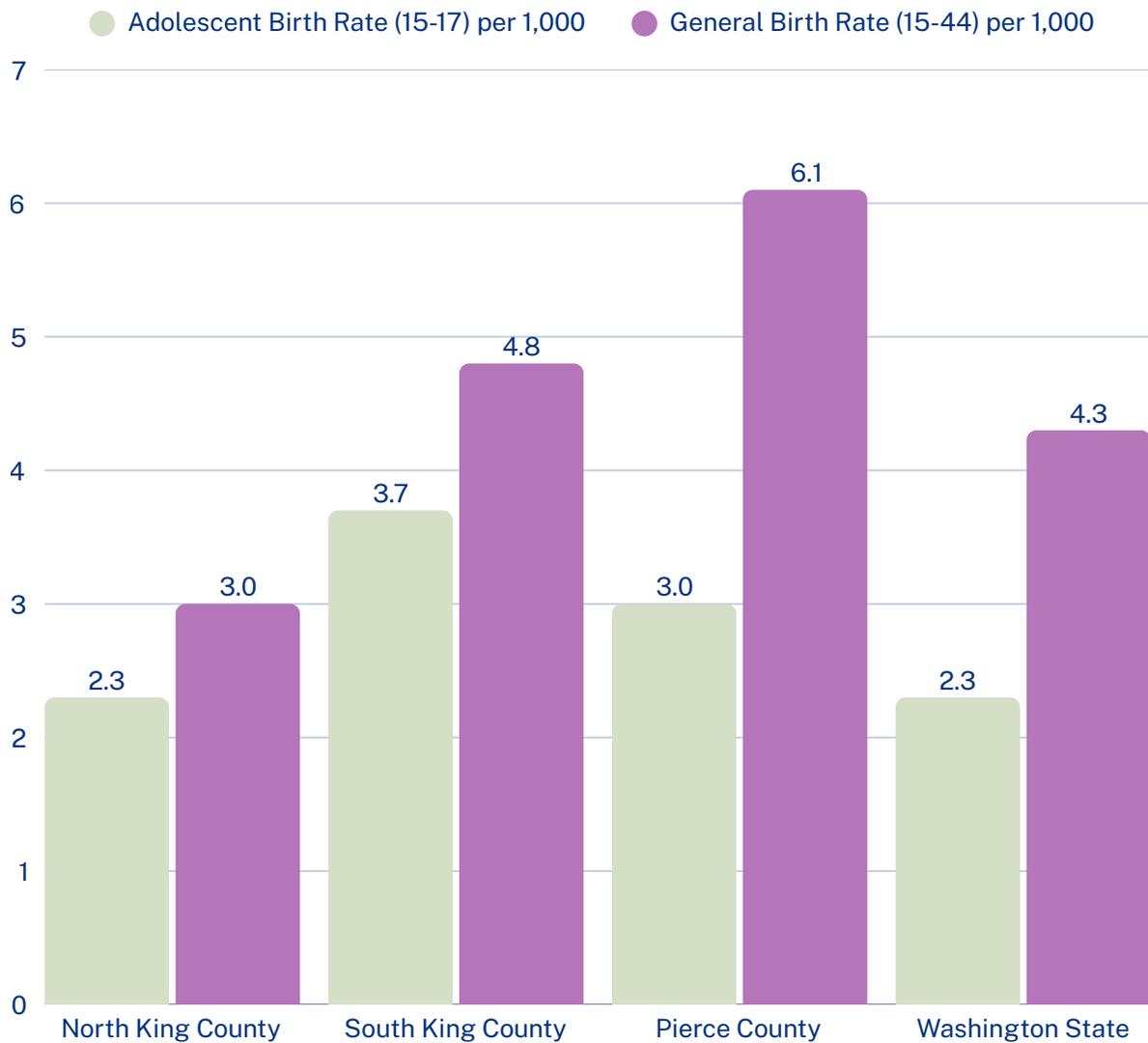
Birth outcomes provide valuable insights into the overall health of communities and the well-being of mothers and infants. Metrics such as preterm birth rates, low birth weight, and adolescent birth rates are closely linked to early developmental risks and long-term health outcomes for children. These indicators help early learning programs like Head Start and ECEAP identify communities that may require more intensive prenatal and early childhood supports. The data below reflects birth trends in North King County, South King County, and Pierce County, with a focus on both adolescent birth rates (ages 15–17) and general female populations (ages 15–44).

**Exhibit 47: Birth Rates per 1,000 Females and Average Annual Birth Count for Adolescent and General Population, 2021 - Table**

Region	Births per Year	Preterm Births (%)	Low Birth Weight (%)	Adolescent Birth Rate (15–17)	General Female Birth Rate (15–44)
North King County	9,012	8.1%	6.4%	2.3 per 1,000	3.0 per 1,000
South King County	12,478	9.3%	7.1%	3.7 per 1,000	4.8 per 1,000
Pierce County	10,994	9.1%	7.6%	3.0 per 1,000	6.1 per 1,000
Washington State	82,290	9.0%	6.9%	2.3 per 1,000	4.3 per 1,000

Source: Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics (2021). Public Health – Seattle & King County: <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health>. Tacoma–Pierce County Health Department: <https://tpchd.org>

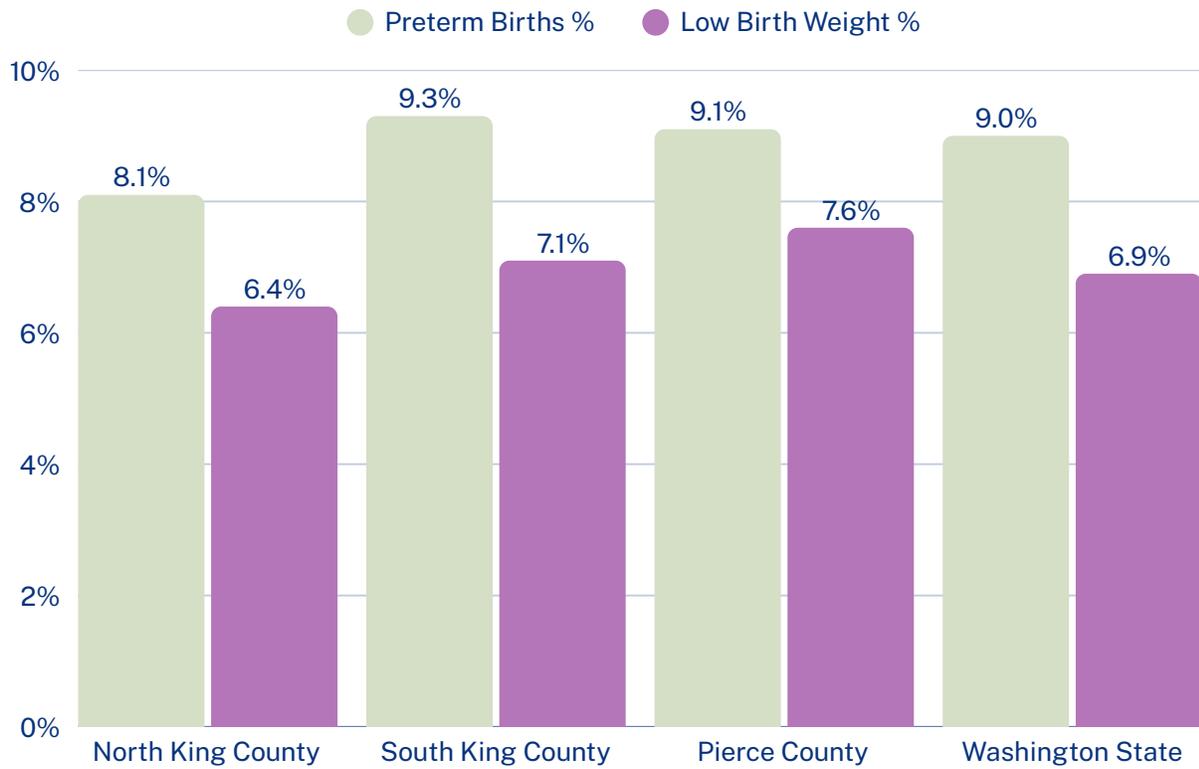
**Exhibit 48: Birth Rates per 1,000 Females and Average Annual Birth Count for Adolescent and General Population, 2021 - Graph**



Source: Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics (2021). Public Health – Seattle & King County: <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health>. Tacoma–Pierce County Health Department: <https://tpchd.org>

- **Pierce County** leads in both adolescent and general female birth rates, with 6.1 births per 1,000 females ages 15–44.
- **North King County** reports the most favorable outcomes with the lowest rates of preterm births and low birth weight.
- **South King County** has the highest preterm birth rate (9.3%) and a significant rate of low birth weight (7.1%).

### Exhibit 49: Preterm Births and Low Birth Weight Percentages, 2021 - Graph



Source: Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics (2021). Public Health – Seattle & King County: <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health>. Tacoma–Pierce County Health Department: <https://tpchd.org>

### Exhibit 50: Birth Risk Factors by County 2021 - Table

Region	Prenatal Care in 1st Trimester (%)	Maternal Smoking Rate (%)	Maternal Gestational Hypertension (%)	Maternal Gestational Diabetes (%)	Maternal Education (High School/GED or Less) (%)
King County	75.9%	1.7%	8.3%	13.0%	19.9%
Pierce County	67.1%	5.6%	10.4%	10.7%	31.4%

Source: Washington State Department of Health, Birth Risk Factors Dashboard – County

- Pierce County has a lower rate of mothers accessing prenatal care in their first trimester at 67.1% compared to 75.9% of mothers in King County.
- While Maternal Gestational Hypertension percentages were higher in Pierce County, King County saw a higher rate of gestational diabetes in 2021 with 13.0% of births.
- The percentage of mothers who have a high school diploma/GED or less for education is 31.4% in Pierce County, compared to 19.9% in King County.

## Infant Mortality Rate

Infant mortality, defined as the death of a child before their first birthday, is a critical indicator of population health and access to quality prenatal and pediatric care. This data is drawn from official public health sources including the Washington State Department of Health, Public Health – Seattle & King County, and the Tacoma–Pierce County Health Department, using the most recent available figures from 2021–2023. These rates reflect both regional health disparities and the social determinants of health – such as income, access to care, and racial equity – that shape maternal and infant health outcomes. Monitoring infant mortality across our service area helps Head Start and ECEAP programs identify communities in need of targeted supports and informs strategies to promote healthy birth outcomes for vulnerable populations.

**Exhibit 51: Infant Mortality (Age 0-1) per 1,000 Births, by County - Table**

County	Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)	Data Period
King County	4.1	2019–2021
Pierce County	5.3	2021

Note: The data for King County represents a 3-year average from 2019 to 2021, while the data for Pierce County is for the year 2021.

Source: Washington State Department of Health – Center for Health Statistics. Public Health – Seattle & King County (PHSKC). Tacoma–Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD)

- **King County:** The infant mortality rate is 4.1 per 1,000 live births, which is below the national average of 5.4 per 1,000 live births. <https://www.lmtribune.com/northwest/a-wide-swing-in-infant-deaths-a2289b58?>
- **Pierce County:** The rate is higher at 5.3 per 1,000 live births.
- **Racial Disparities:** In King County, Black and Native infants experience significantly higher mortality rates compared to their White counterparts. For instance, the infant mortality rate for Black infants is 8.1 per 1,000 live births, and for Native American/Alaska Native infants, it is 19.2 per 1,000 live births.
- **Geographic Variations:** Within King County, South King County exhibits an infant mortality rate of 5.3 per 1,000 live births, which is higher than the county average.

## Child Mortality Rate

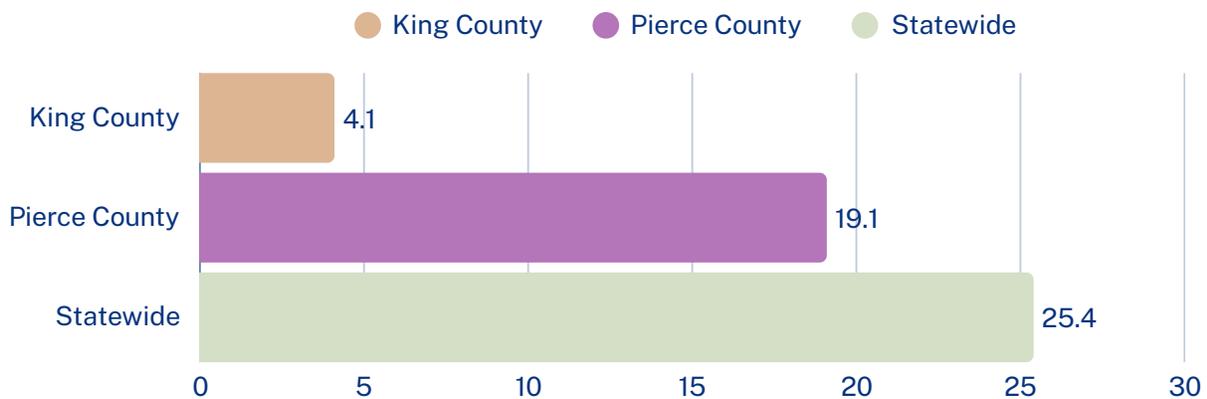
Child mortality, defined as the death of a child aged 1 to 17 years, is a critical indicator of a community's overall health and well-being. This data is sourced from the Washington State Department of Health, Public Health – Seattle & King County, and the Tacoma–Pierce County Health Department, utilizing the most recent available figures from 2018–2022. Monitoring child mortality rates helps identify disparities and informs public health strategies aimed at improving child health outcomes in our communities.

**Exhibit 52: Child Mortality Rates (Ages 1–17) per 100,000 Population, by County, 2018-2022 - Table**

County	Child Mortality Rate (per 100,000)	Data Period
King County	4.1	2018-2022
Pierce County	19.1	2018-2022
Statewide	25.4	2018-2022

Note: The data for King County represents a 5-year average from 2011 to 2015, while the data for Pierce County is for the year 2015.

**Exhibit 53: Child Mortality Rates (Ages 1–17) per 100,000 Population, by County, 2018-2022 - Graph**



Source: Washington State Department of Health, Public Health – Seattle & King County, and the Tacoma–Pierce County Health Department.

- The Washington State Department of Health reports an average of 720 child deaths annually, underlining the importance of continuous public health efforts to reduce preventable fatalities.
- **Racial Disparities:** In King County, infants born to American Indian/Alaska Native families experience a significantly higher mortality rate of 19.2 per 1,000 live births, compared to the overall county rate of 4.1.
- **Geographic Variations:** Within King County, areas such as South King County exhibit higher infant mortality rates (5.3 per 1,000) compared to other regions like East (2.7 per 1,000) and North (2.6 per 1,000) King County.
- **Maternal Education:** Infants born to mothers with lower educational attainment (high school diploma/GED or less) have higher mortality rates (6.2–9.1 per 1,000) compared to those with higher education levels (bachelor’s or master’s degrees), who have rates below the county average

Source: Washington State Department of Health, Public Health – Seattle & King County, and the Tacoma–Pierce County Health Department. Communities Count. March of Dimes

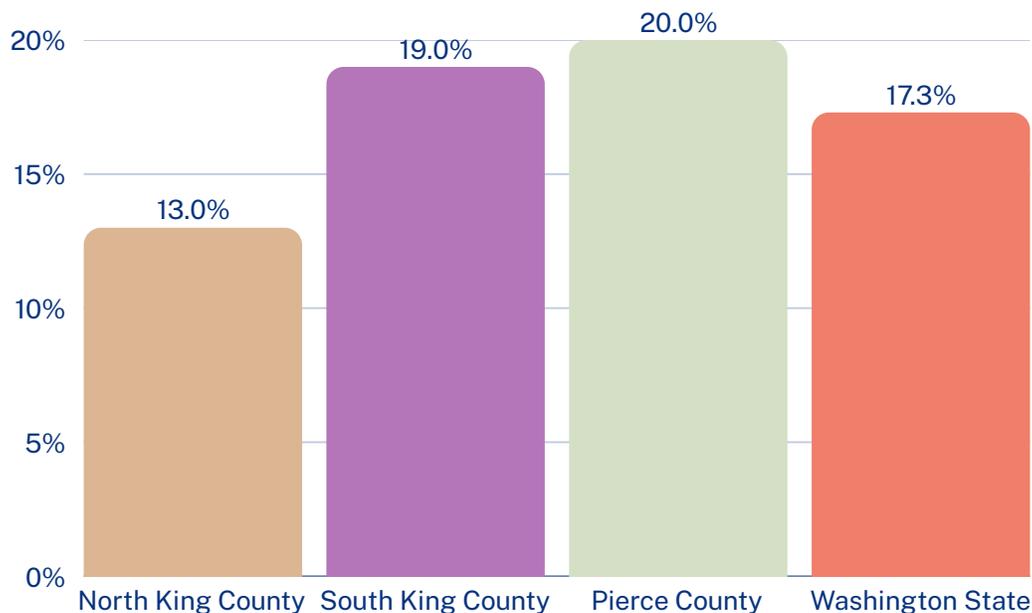
## Obesity Rates

Childhood obesity is a serious public health concern that can lead to a variety of long-term health problems, such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity-related cancers. Early intervention, especially between the ages of 2 and 5, is crucial for reducing these risks. Monitoring obesity prevalence in young children provides valuable insights for developing targeted interventions, particularly in communities with high obesity rates. In this section, we look at obesity rates among children aged 2 to 5 in King County (both North and South), Pierce County, and Washington State as a whole, based on data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System for 2021–2022.

**Exhibit 54: Percentage of Children Ages 2-5 Reported as Obese, 2021-2022 - Table**

Region	Obesity Prevalence (Ages 2-5)	Obesity Count (Approximate)
North King County	13.0%	1,950
South King County	19.0%	3,250
Pierce County	20.0%	3,400
Washington State	17.3%	35,000

**Exhibit 55: Percentage of Children Ages 2-5 Reported as Obese, 2021-2022 - Graph**



Source: CDC and WA DOH Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System, 2021–2022

- **South King and Pierce County:** Obesity rates in these regions are higher than the state average.
- **North King County:** Has the lowest obesity prevalence among the three regions, although it still remains an area for concern with rates exceeding 10%.
- **State Average:** The state average for obesity prevalence in children ages 2-5 is 17.3%. This average falls between South King and Pierce counties, where the rates are notably higher.

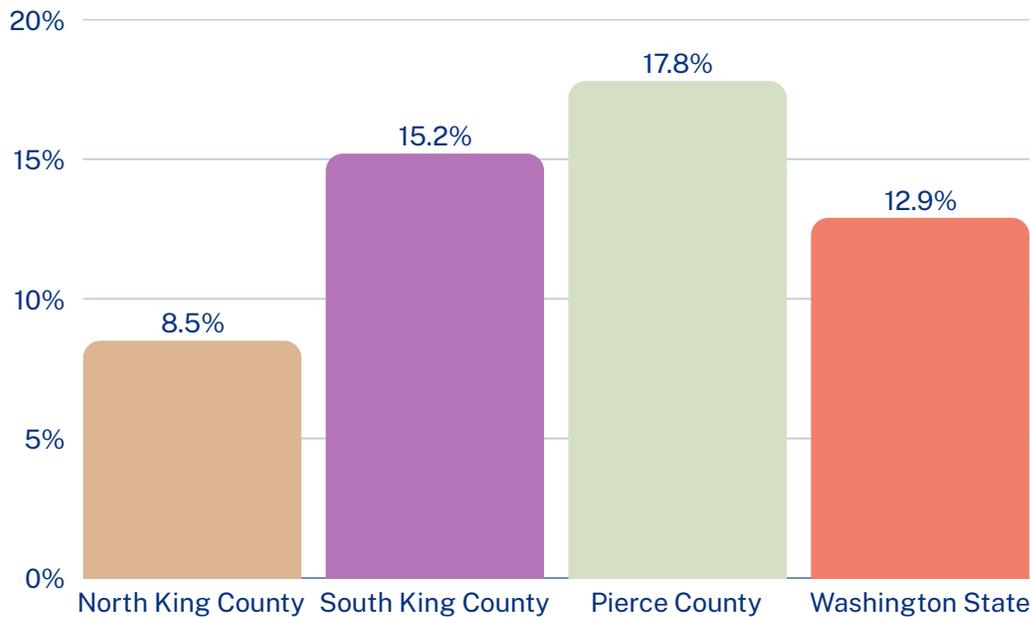
## Food Deserts and Limited Access to Fresh Food

Food deserts are areas where residents have limited access to affordable and nutritious food, often due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers' markets, or other healthy food providers within a reasonable distance. Limited access to fresh food can contribute to food insecurity, poor nutrition, and an increased risk of diet-related health issues such as obesity and chronic diseases. In this section, we examine the percentage of households living in food deserts across different regions of the PSESD service area, including North King County, South King County, and Pierce County, based on the USDA Food Access Research Atlas (2022). These figures are critical for understanding the relationship between access to healthy food and health outcomes in communities, especially in regions that report higher rates of childhood obesity and related health disparities.

**Exhibit 56: Percentage of Households in a Food Desert, 2018-2022 Five Year Estimates - Table**

Region	% of Households in Food Deserts
North King County	8.5%
South King County	15.2%
Pierce County	17.8%
Washington State	12.9%

**Exhibit 57: Percentage of Households in a Food Desert, 2018-2022 Five Year Estimates - Graph**



Source: USDA Food Access Research Atlas (2022)

- South King and Pierce County show higher levels of food insecurity and limited access to fresh, healthy foods.
- Pierce County reports the highest childhood obesity rate (20%) and the highest percentage of households in food deserts (17.8%).
- South King County is close behind, with a 19% obesity rate and 15.2% of households in areas with limited access to healthy food.
- North King County has the most favorable profile, with the lowest obesity rate (13%) and least food access concerns (8.5%).

# Social Assistance

This section of the report provides data on public and social assistance indicators to explore the health and nutrition needs of children in the Service Area through a different lens. The indicators include Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program sites and participation; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and State Food Assistance Program participation; Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), State Family Assistance (SFA), and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) participation; and participation in the Child Welfare System. Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program, The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a federal assistance program that provides health care and nutrition assistance to low-income pregnant or postpartum women, and infants and children up to the age of five. Services provided at WIC clinics (at no charge to participants) include distribution of nutritious foods, education about nutrition, and referrals to health providers and other social services.

## Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program

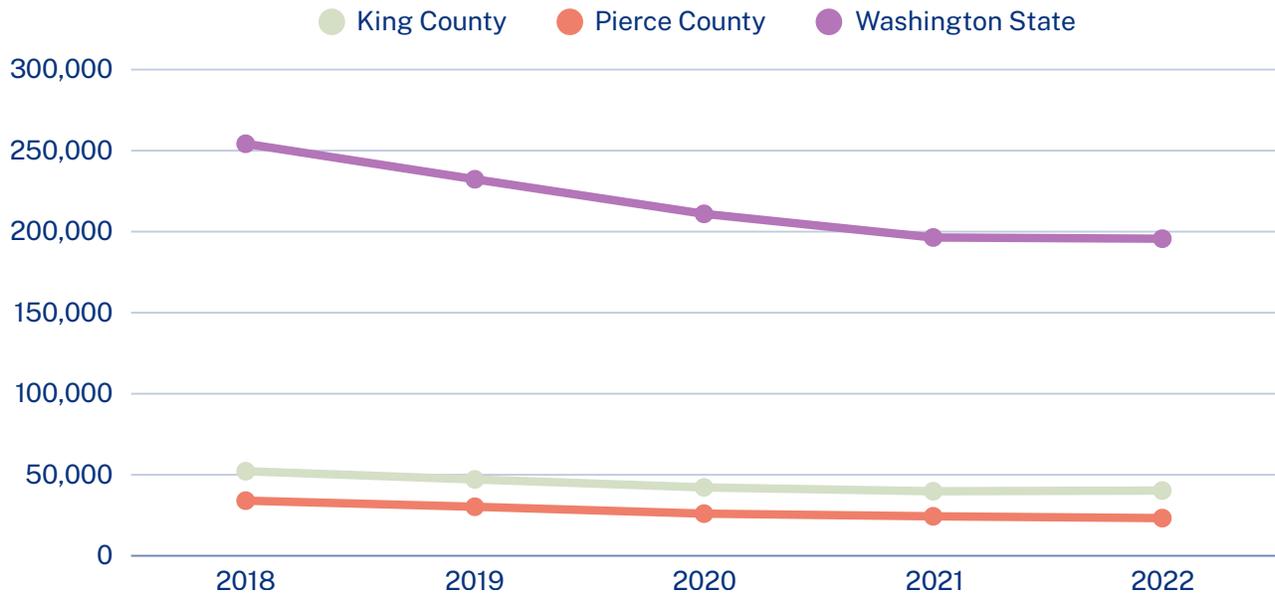
The WIC program provides nutritional support, education, and referrals to low-income pregnant or postpartum women, infants, and children under five. Participation trends can indicate levels of food insecurity and access to health services among vulnerable populations.

**Exhibit 58: Annual WIC Participation by County, FY 2018-2022 - Table**

Fiscal Year	King County Participants	Pierce County Participants	Washington State Participants
2018	52,184	34,026	254,239
2019	47,119	30,255	232,336
2020	42,191	26,009	210,994
2021	39,815	24,362	196,404
2022	40,246	23,250	195,655

Source: Washington State Department of Health, WIC Annual Summary Data [USDA Food Access Research Atlas \(2022\)](#)

**Exhibit 59: Annual WIC Participation by County, FY 2018-2022 - Graph**



Source: Washington State Department of Health, WIC Annual Summary Data

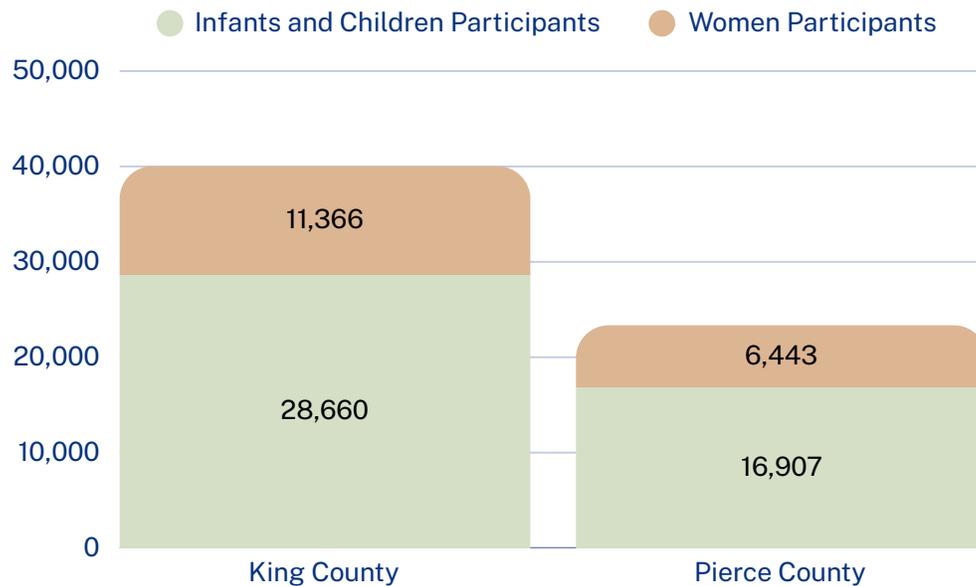
## Percentage of Infants Served by WIC

This data reflects the percentage of infants served by the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, which provides supplemental nutrition assistance to low-income pregnant women, new mothers, and young children. Below is the data for 2018 and 2022, showing the total number of infants served and the percentage served by WIC.

**Exhibit 60: 2022 Data, Number of Infants and Children Served by WIC - Table**

County	Total Participants	Total Infants and Children Participants	Total Women Participants	% of Infants and Children Participants
King County	40,246	28,880	11,366	71.8%
Pierce County	23,350	16,907	6,443	72.4%
Washington State	195,655	141,815	53,840	72.5%

## Exhibit 61: 2022 Data, Number of Infants and Children Served by WIC - Graph



Source: Washington State Department of Health, 2022 WIC Data Report

- Both King and Pierce County serve approximately the same percentage of infants and children through WIC that the state average does. King County has 71.8% of infant and child participants, with Pierce County at 72.4% and the Washington State average at 72.5%.
- King County serves more infants and children than Pierce County, with 28,880 children and infants, while Pierce County serves 16,907 children and infants.

## WIC Program Sites

WIC services are delivered through numerous clinics across King and Pierce County:

### King County

- Highline WIC Program
- Eastgate Public Health Center WIC
- Auburn Public Health Center
- Snoqualmie Valley Food Bank Satellite WIC Clinic
- Wallingford Family Resource Center WIC Programs

### Pierce County

- Mary Bridge Children's WIC - Tacoma Main
- Mary Bridge Children's WIC - Puyallup
- Good Samaritan Hospital WIC
- Sea Mar Milton Clinic WIC
- Social Services Organization, Lakewood

## Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and State Food Assistance Program

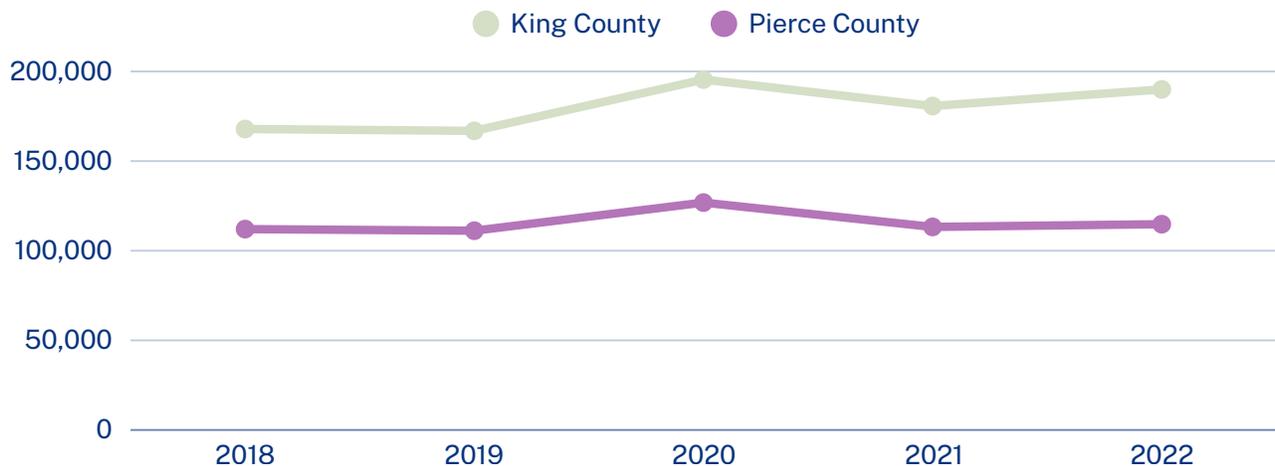
The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps, provides food purchasing assistance for low-income people living in the United States. It is a federal program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The State Food Assistance Program is a state-funded program that provides food assistance to legal immigrants who are not eligible for federal SNAP benefits because of their resident status.

The two data points need to be combined into one chart. They are annual participants for SNAP by county.

**Exhibit 62: Annual SNAP Participants by Year, 2018-2022, 5 Year Estimates - Table**

Year	King County	Pierce County
2018	167,890	112,058
2019	166,869	111,164
2020	195,491	126,858
2021	180,723	113,278
2022	189,993	114,807

**Exhibit 63: Annual SNAP Participants by Year, 2018-2022, 5 Year Estimates - Graph**

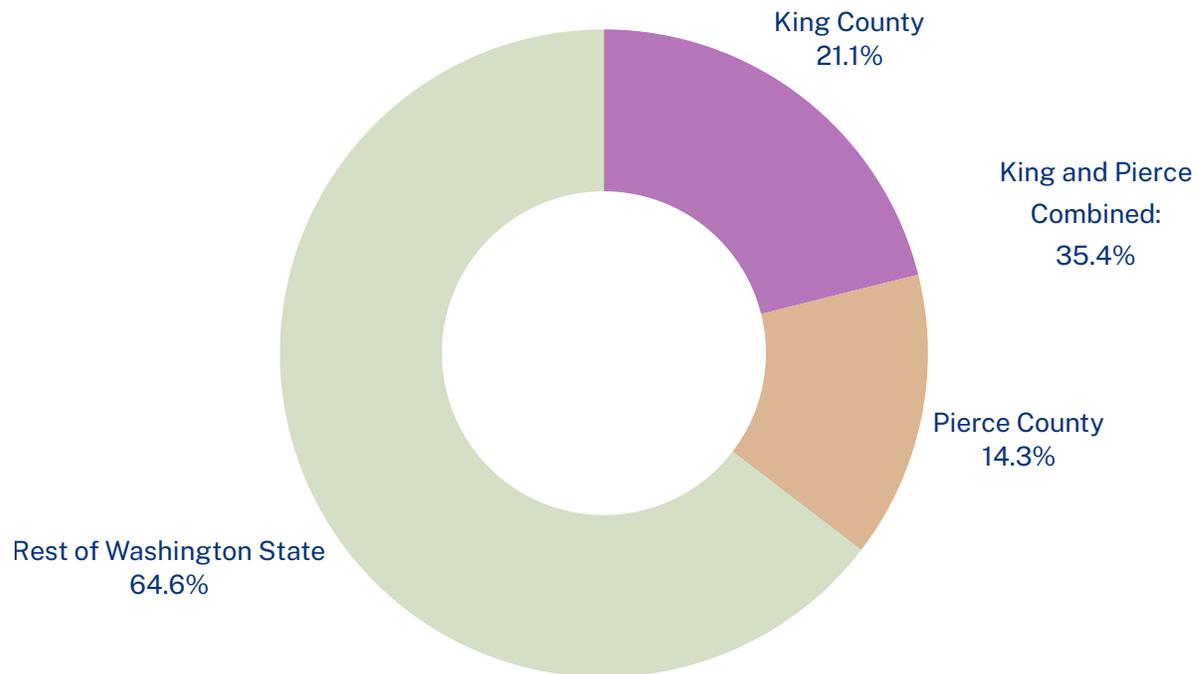


- **Statewide Trends:** Washington State experienced a gradual decline in SNAP participation from 2013 to 2019, followed by a significant increase in 2020, likely due to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participation began to decrease again in 2021 and 2022 as economic conditions improved.
- **King County:** Mirroring the state trend, King County saw a decrease in participation from 2013 to 2019, a spike in 2020, and a slight decline thereafter. The 2020 increase reflects heightened need during the pandemic. However, cases in 2021 and 2022 still saw a 14,000+ case increase from 2019, showing upward trends.
- **Pierce County:** Pierce County's participation remained relatively stable from 2013 to 2019, with a notable increase in 2020, followed by a decrease in 2021 and a slight uptick in 2022.

## Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), State Family Assistance (SFA), and Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program provides temporary cash and medical help for families in need. The Washington State Family Assistance (SFA) program is an option for persons who are ineligible for cash assistance from TANF solely because of eligibility changes due to the federal 1996 Welfare Reform Act. The federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program pays benefits to disabled adults and children who have limited income and resource.

**Exhibit 64: TANF Caseload by County of Residence, June 2022 Snapshot - Chart**



Source: Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) TANF Briefing Book 2022

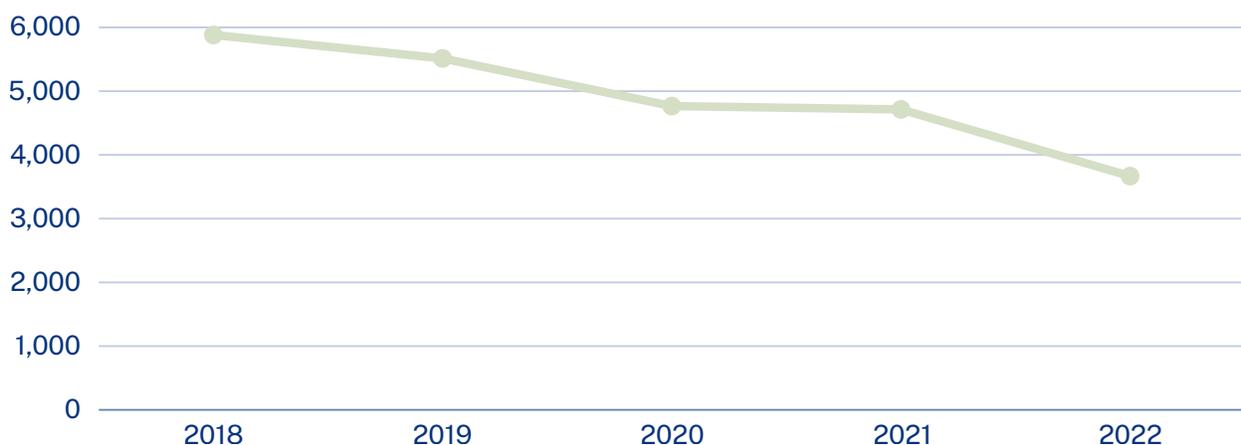
As of June 2022, there were 6,626 TANF/SFA cases in King County serving 17,479 clients. In Pierce County, there were 4,501 cases serving a total of 11,001 clients. Total TANF/SFA cases across Washington State were 31,417 cases serving 77,881 clients. Approximately 35% of all TANF/SFA cases in June 2022 occurred in King and Pierce Counties combined, as shown in the chart above.

## Child Welfare System

Data for the child welfare system is provided by Partners for Our Children, a partnership between the Washington State DSHS, the University of Washington School of Social Work, and the private sector. Out-of-home care refers to instances when a social worker determines that a child is not safe in his or her home and makes arrangements to place that child in a safe place away from his or her home. This placement can be in licensed foster care, or with a relative or individual known to the child. Out-of-home care can be voluntary or non-voluntary. Voluntary placement requires a parent to agree to have his or her children placed in out-of-home for a short period of time. For non-voluntary placement, once a child is in out-of-home care a court must determine when and what type of safe and permanent placement a child will have through reunification, adoption, or guardianship.

Based on the available data from the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) and Partners for Our Children. [An overview of the children entering out of home care is available on the DCYF website.](#) This data is not currently available by county.

**Exhibit 65: Statewide Trends in Children Entering Out-of-Home Care, 2018-2022 - Graph**



Source: Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), Federal AFCARS Reporting Guidelines, and Family First Services Needs Assessments.

- **Age Distribution:** Nearly two-fifths of children in out-of-home care are under the age of five.
- **Placement Duration:** Approximately two-fifths of children return home within one month, and over two-thirds return home within two years.
- **Kinship Care:** In State Fiscal Year 2023, over 50% of children in out-of-home care were placed with kin or relatives.

**Exhibit 66: Statewide Percentage of Children under Age 1 in Out-of-Home Care (2018-2022) - Table**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Children</b>	<b>Total Children Under age 1</b>	<b>% Children Under age 1</b>
2018	5,422	1,488	25.2%
2019	5,570	1,342	24.0%
2020	4,766	1,240	26.0%
2021	4,714	1,159	24.6%
2022	3,667	1,073	29.3%

Source: DCYF Office of Innovation, Accountability, and Alignment Prevention Dashboard, CPS Referents; [Child Welfare Agency Performance Dashboard](#) | [Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families](#)

Notes: “Decision” means Screen Out or Screen In. This CPS Intake Data includes all calls, whether they were screened in for child welfare support services or screened out. Region 5 data on this dashboard includes Kitsap County with Pierce County. Data specific to Pierce County is not available.

## Types of Out-of-Home Care Included:

**1**

### **Licensed Foster Care**

Care provided by licensed foster families who receive training and support from the state

**2**

### **Relative Kinship Care**

Placement with a relative or close family friend (kin), sometimes with state support but not always licensed

**3**

### **Licensed Kinship Care**

A subset of kinship care where the relative is formally licensed as a foster parent

**4**

### **Group Care or Residential Facilities**

Rare for children ages 0–4, but may occur if specialized medical or developmental services are needed

**5**

### **Emergency Shelter or Receiving Homes**

Temporary placements immediately following removal from the home

**6**

### **Therapeutic Foster Care**

Specialized foster homes trained to care for children with significant behavioral or medical needs

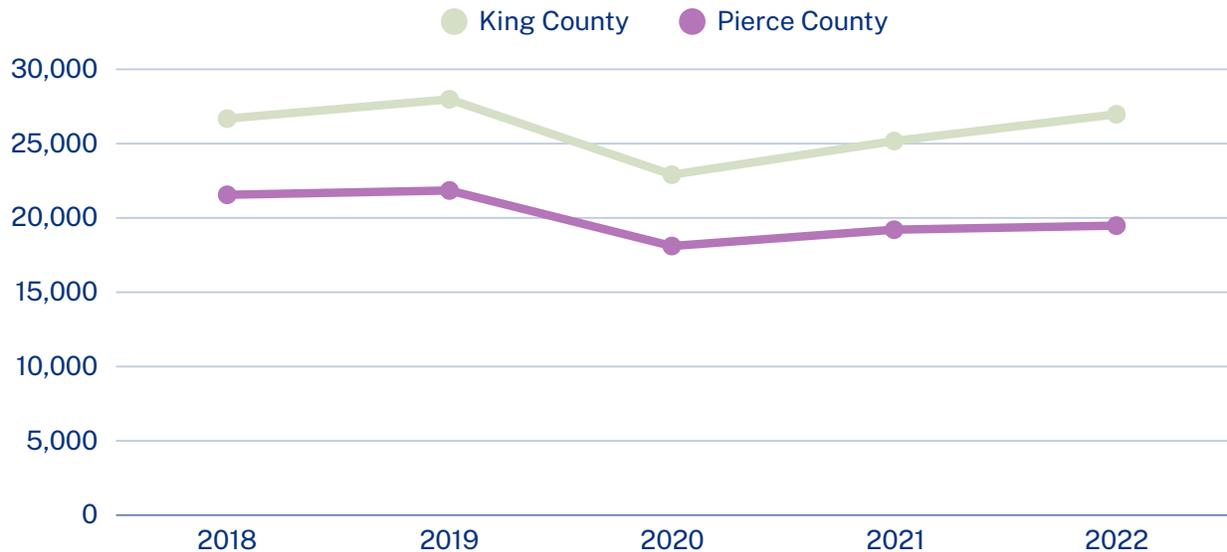
#### **Important Clarification:**

The reported numbers typically reflect first-time entries or placement episodes and not necessarily the total number of children involved, as a child may experience multiple placements in a year.

**Exhibit 67: CPS Intake Calls by Region, All Decisions (2018-2022) - Table**

Year	King County	Pierce County
2018	26,680	21,555
2019	27,984	21,845
2020	22,907	18,109
2021	25,173	19,208
2022	26,977	19,481

**Exhibit 68: CPS Intake Calls by Region, All Decisions (2018-2022) - Graph**



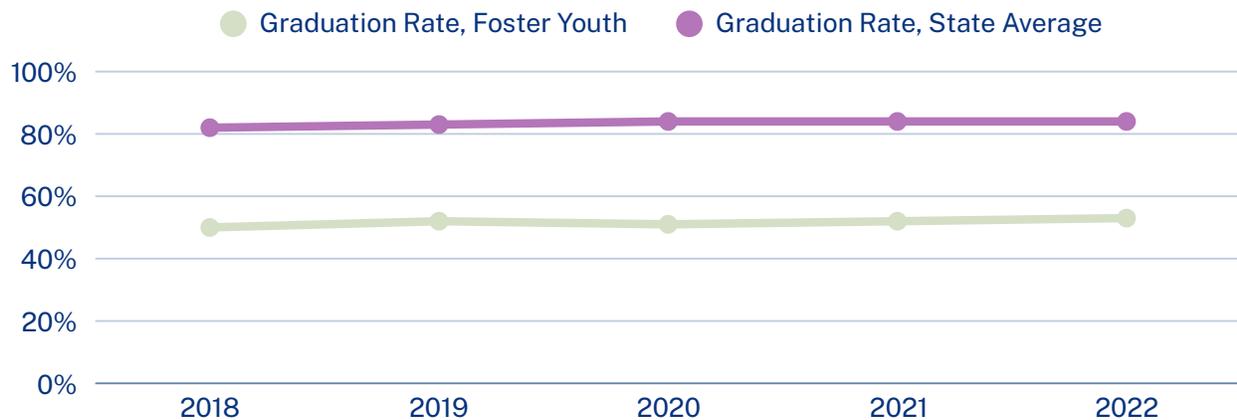
- The percentage of children under the age of 1 placed in out of home care stayed relatively stable, with slight fluctuations ranging from 24%-26% in 2018-2021.
- In 2022, the percentage of children under the age of 1 placed in out of home care statewide jumped to 29.3%, indicating a potential increase in need for early support services like Early Head Start.
- Overall trends in out-of-home placement declined from 2018-2022, however, CPS intake calls have been steadily increasing since the drop during the pandemic in 2020 (see Exhibit 69 below), which may indicate a need for extra family support services.

**Exhibit 69: Foster Care Student Graduation Rate, Child Abuse Reports and Critical Incidents/Fatalities, 2018-2022 - Table**

Year	Total Foster Care Children (WA)	Graduation Rate (Foster Youth %)	Graduation Rate (State Avg %)	Child Abuse Reports	Critical Incidents / Fatalities
2018	9,171	50	82	90,000	77
2019	8,700	52	83	88,000	88
2020	7,900	51	84	87,000	92
2021	6,700	52	84	86,000	103
2022	5,900	53	84	89,000	121

Source: Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF): High School Graduation of Youth in Foster Care. Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). FPAWS: Sounding Board: The Unraveling of Child Protection in Washington State

**Exhibit 70: Foster Care Student Graduation Rate (2018-2022) - Graph**

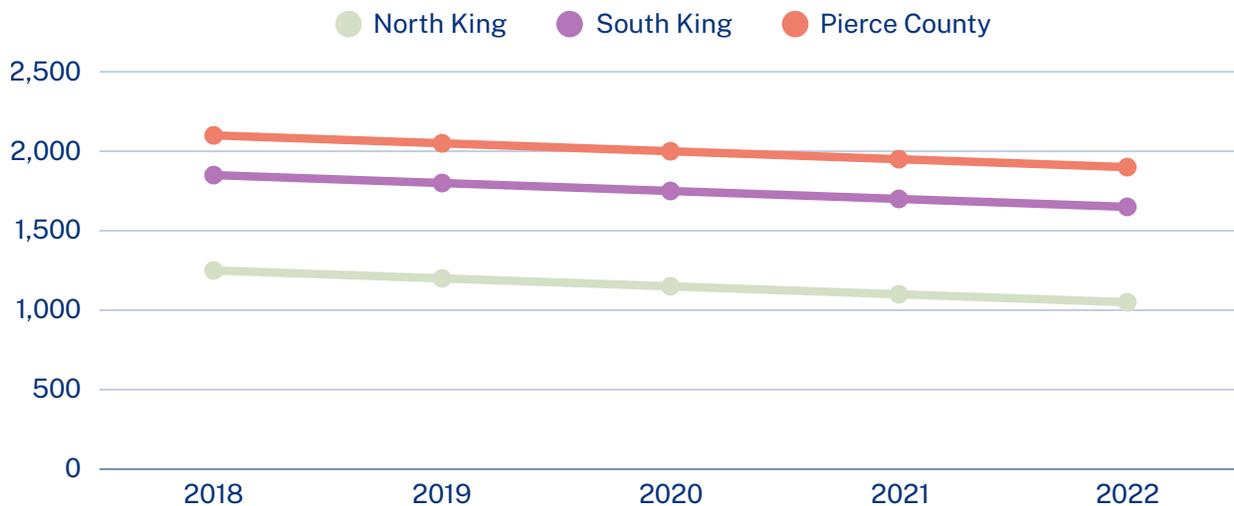


- **Higher Proportion in Pierce County:** Pierce County has a higher percentage (1.7%) of foster care students compared to North and South King Counties (both at 1.2%).
- **Regional Distribution:** Collectively, North and South King Counties account for approximately 60% of the foster care student population in the region.
- **Educational Implications:** The presence of foster care students across these counties underscores the need for tailored educational support and resources to address their unique challenges.

**Exhibit 71: Foster Care Student Enrollment Estimates by Region (2022) - Table**

Year	North King	South King	Pierce County	Total
2018	1,250	1,850	2,100	5,200
2019	1,200	1,800	2,050	5,050
2020	1,150	1,750	2,000	4,900
2021	1,100	1,700	1,950	4,750
2022	1,050	1,650	1,900	4,600

**Exhibit 72: Foster Care Student Enrollment Estimates by Region (2022) - Graph**



**Note:** These figures are illustrative estimates based on available data trends and may not reflect exact counts.

Source: Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF): High School Graduation of Youth in Foster Care. Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). FPAWS: Sounding Board: The Unraveling of Child Protection in Washington State

- **Declining Enrollment:** All three regions have experienced a gradual decline in the number of foster care students enrolled in public schools over the five-year period.
- **Consistent Distribution:** The proportion of foster care students has remained relatively consistent across the regions, with Pierce County consistently having the highest numbers.
- **Potential Factors:** The decline may be attributed to various factors, including policy changes aimed at family preservation, increased support services, and demographic shifts.

## Children Experiencing Homelessness

Student homelessness in Washington State is broadly measured by the number of children who qualify for services under the federal McKinney-Vento Act. This legislation defines homelessness to include children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This encompasses a wide range of living situations, including those staying in shelters, motels, cars, or other spaces not intended for long-term habitation. It also includes students who are temporarily living with others due to loss of housing, financial hardship, or other unstable circumstances.

The breadth of this definition helps schools and communities identify and support students facing significant housing instability, especially during the early years of education when stability is most critical.

**Exhibit 73: Homeless Students in Pre-K–3rd Grade (2021–2022) - Table**

County	Grade Level	Number of Homeless Students	Percentage of Total Homeless Students
North King County	Pre-K	58	2.8%
	Kindergarten	150	7.3%
	1st Grade	146	7.1%
	2nd Grade	166	8.1%
	3rd Grade	171	8.4%
South King County	Pre-K	74	2.2%
	Kindergarten	219	6.4%
	1st Grade	236	6.9%
	2nd Grade	238	7.0%
	3rd Grade	237	6.9%
Pierce County	Pre-K	81	2.1%
	Kindergarten	258	6.7%
	1st Grade	279	7.2%
	2nd Grade	302	7.8%
	3rd Grade	302	7.8%

Source: Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Report Card: Enrollment 2021-22, found on [data.wa.gov](https://data.wa.gov)

Pre-K through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade homeless students percentage total:

North King County

**33.7%**

South King County

**29.4%**

Pierce County

**31.6%**

Total homeless students in all grade levels:

North King County

**2,046**

South King County

**3,412**

Pierce County

**3,868**

- **Consistent Numbers:** The number of homeless students in each grade from 1st to 3rd grade remains relatively consistent, indicating a persistent issue across early education levels.
- **Early Intervention Importance:** High numbers in early grades highlight the need for early intervention programs to support homeless students from the beginning of their educational journey.
- **Lower Early Learning Numbers:** Unlike K-12 grades, Pre-K is not a grade level available to all students in the school district in Washington State. Due to lower amounts of program availability, Pre-K homeless reporting differs from Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

## Child Care

Child care in the region is delivered through several types of providers, each serving families in different ways. The primary categories include Child Care Centers (CCC), Family Child Care (FCC) Homes, and Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) Care.

Child Care Centers (CCCs) operate in commercial, school-based, or faith-based settings and can offer full- or part-time care. Depending on licensing, these centers may serve children ranging in age from one month to 12 years. They typically have larger capacities and structured programs.

Family Child Care (FCC) Homes are licensed by the state and operate within a provider's residence. These settings care for smaller groups of children — usually between six and twelve — offering a home-based environment that may be more flexible for families.

Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) Care refers to informal, often unlicensed care provided by trusted individuals such as relatives or close friends. FFN care is especially important for families facing barriers to accessing formal child care. However, it remains the most difficult to measure due to limited data collection and oversight.

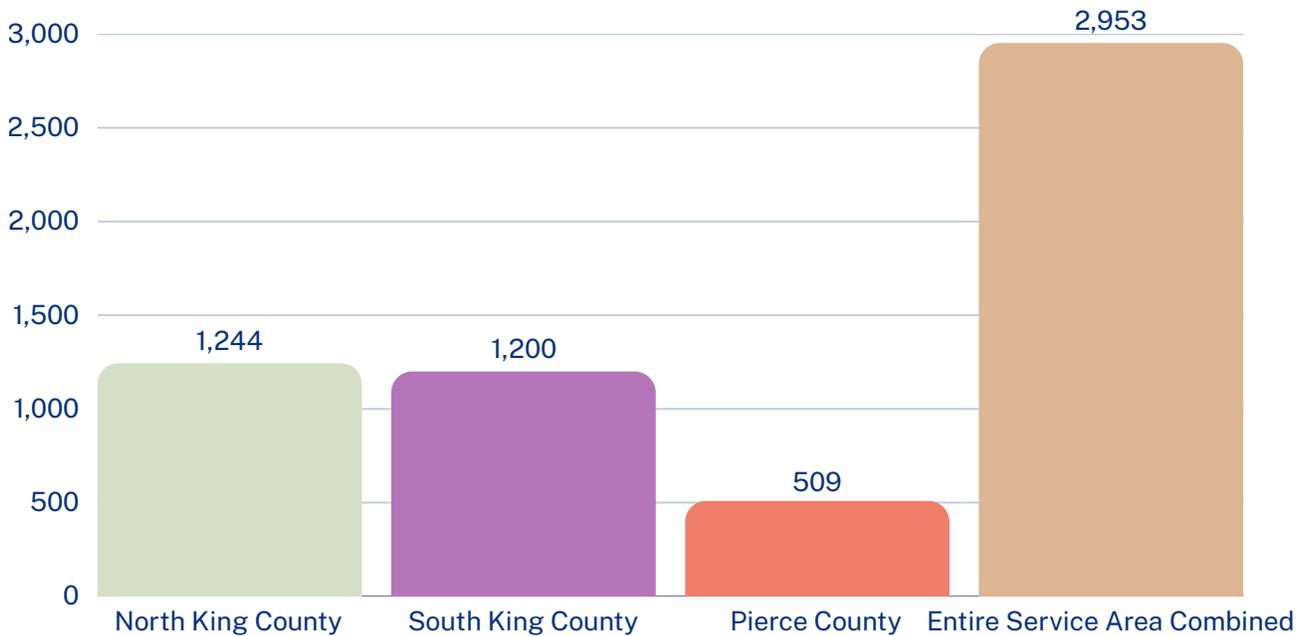
Currently, comprehensive data on the number of children served by age group — especially in FCC and FFN settings — is not consistently reported, creating challenges in understanding the full landscape of child care needs across the community.

Access to child care services is a critical component for working families. In Washington State, the availability of licensed child care providers has experienced fluctuations over the years.

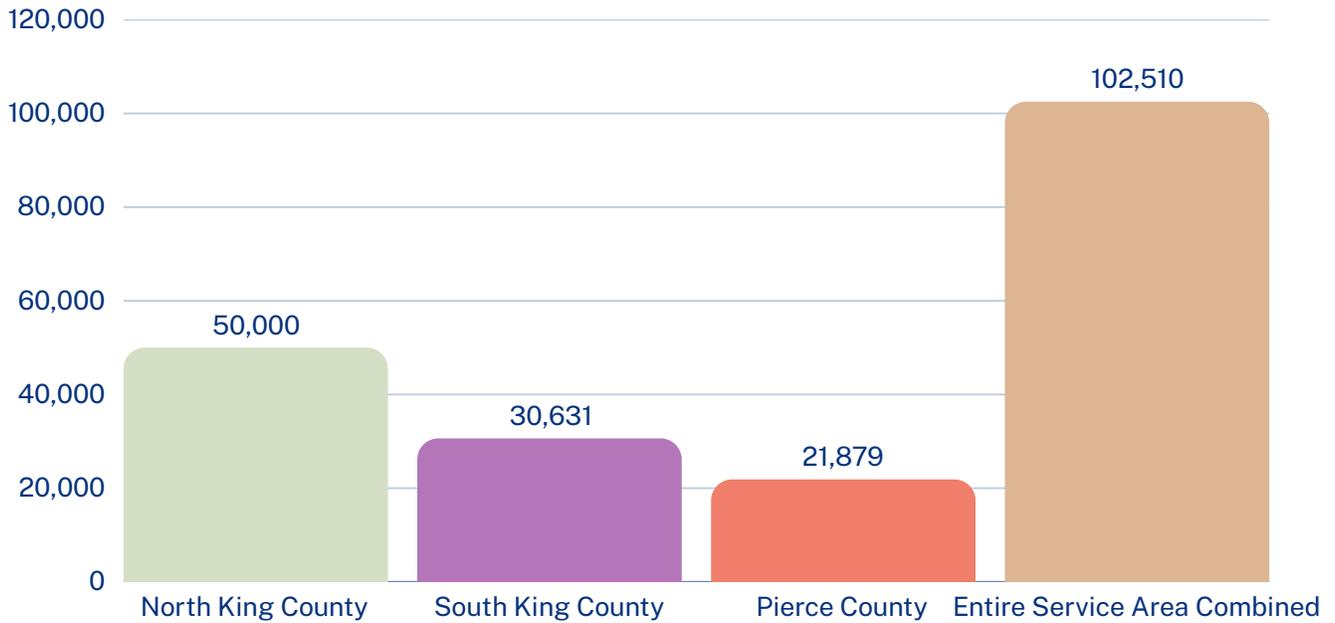
**Exhibit 74: Enrollment Capacity in Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes, 2022 - Table**

Region	Number of Providers	Total Capacity (Children)	Child Care Centers (CCCs)	Family Child Care Homes (FCCs)	Early Achievers Participation
North King County	1,244	50,000	500	744	79% of licensed providers
South King County	1,200	30,631	480	720	79% of licensed providers
Pierce County	509	21,879	150	359	80% of licensed providers
Entire Service Area	2,953	102,510	1,130	1,823	79% of licensed providers

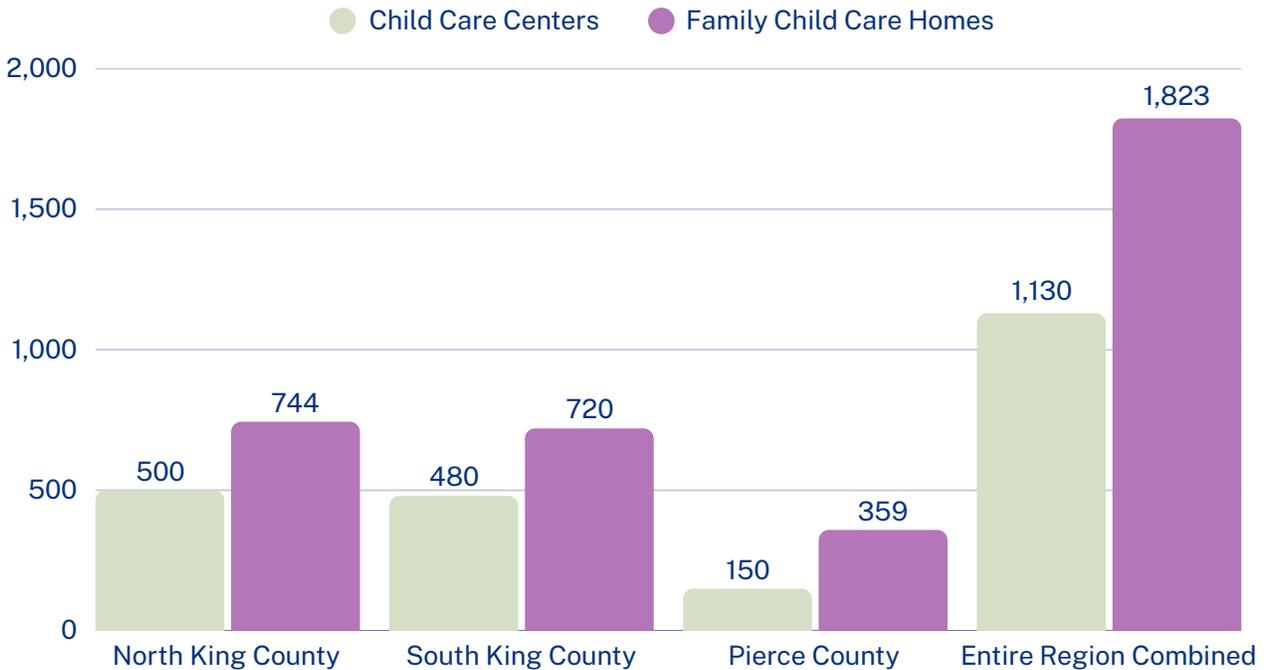
**Exhibit 75: Number of Providers by Region, 2022 - Graph**



**Exhibit 76: Total Capacity (Children) of Childcare by Region, 2022 - Graph**



**Exhibit 77: Number of Providers by Type, By Region, 2022 - Graph**



Source: Child Care Aware of Washington: Provides comprehensive data on child care providers and capacity in Washington State. Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF): Offers detailed reports on licensed child care capacity and provider types.

- North King County has the largest number of providers and the highest total capacity, followed by South King County and then Pierce County.
- The entire service area includes 2,953 child care providers with a total capacity of 102,510 children.
- All three regions have a mix of child care centers (CCCs) and family child care homes (FCCs).
- Early Achievers participation remains strong across the entire service area, with 79% of licensed providers enrolled.
- **Statewide Trends:** Between 2018 and 2022, the number of licensed child care providers in Washington State saw a decline, impacting the availability of child care slots for families.
- **King County:** As one of the most populous counties, King County faced challenges in meeting the demand for child care services, with certain areas identified as child care deserts. <https://www.zippia.com/advice/us-child-care-availability-statistics/>
- **Pierce County:** Similar to King County, Pierce County experienced shortages in child care availability, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

## Child Care Service Rates

The cost of child care services is a significant factor for families. In Washington State, child care expenses have been on the rise, affecting affordability.

- **Infant Care:** The average annual cost for infant care in Washington State was approximately \$14,554 in 2020.
- **Toddler Care:** For toddlers, the average annual cost was around \$13,518 in 2020.
- **Preschool Care:** Preschool care averaged about \$10,920 annually in 2020. <https://va-itsnetwork.org/choosing-child-care-which-child-care-option-is-right-for-you-and-your-child/>



**Exhibit 78: Monthly Preschool Child Care Rates & DCYF Subsidy Comparison, 2022 - Table**

Region	Provider Type	Median Private Rate	Maximum DCYF Subsidy	Subsidy Coverage (%)
North King County	Child Care Center	\$1,000	\$1,000	100%
	FCC	\$800	\$800	100%
South King County	Child Care Center	\$950	\$950	100%
	FCC	\$750	\$750	100%
Pierce County	Child Care Center	\$900	\$900	100%
	FCC	\$700	\$700	100%
Washington State	Child Care Center	\$1,000	\$1,000	100%
	FCC	\$800	\$800	100%

Source: The subsidy rates are based on information from the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) regarding the 2022 subsidy base rate increases for childcare centers and FFN providers. [DCYF](#). Subsidy Coverage Calculation: The subsidy coverage percentage is calculated by dividing the maximum childcare subsidy by the median private rate and multiplying by 100.

Limitations: The provided data is based on available information and may not encompass all variables affecting childcare costs and subsidies.



**Exhibit 79: Monthly Infant & Toddler Childcare Rates & DCYF Subsidy Comparison,  
2022 - Table**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Provider Type</b>	<b>Median Private Rate</b>	<b>Maximum DCYF Subsidy</b>	<b>Subsidy Coverage (%)</b>
North King County	Child Care Center	\$1,200	\$1,200	100%
	FCC	\$1,000	\$1,000	100%
South King County	Child Care Center	\$1,150	\$1,150	100%
	FCC	\$950	\$950	100%
Pierce County	Child Care Center	\$1,100	\$1,100	100%
	FCC	\$900	\$900	100%
Washington State	Child Care Center	\$1,150	\$1,150	100%
	FCC	\$1,000	\$1,000	100%

Source: The subsidy rates are based on information from the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) regarding the 2022 subsidy base rate increases for childcare centers and FFN providers. [DCYF](#). Subsidy Coverage Calculation: The subsidy coverage percentage is calculated by dividing the maximum childcare subsidy by the median private rate and multiplying by 100.

Limitations: The provided data is based on available information and may not encompass all variables affecting child care costs and subsidies.

- **Subsidy Coverage:** In all regions and for both provider types, the maximum childcare subsidy matches the median private rate, resulting in 100% subsidy coverage.
- **Regional Variations:** While the subsidy rates are consistent across regions, the median private rates vary, with North King County having the highest rates and Pierce County the lowest.
- **Provider Type Comparison:** Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) care providers generally have lower median private rates compared to licensed child care centers.
- **Decline in Licensed Providers:** The reduction in licensed child care providers across Washington State between 2018 and 2022 has led to decreased availability of child care slots, intensifying the challenge for families to find quality care.
- **Rising Costs:** The increasing cost of child care services has placed a financial strain on families, particularly those with lower incomes, potentially limiting access to quality early learning opportunities.
- **Regional Disparities:** Both King and Pierce County have faced unique challenges in child care availability and affordability, with certain communities experiencing more pronounced shortages and higher costs.

## Working Connections

The Working Connections Child Care (WCCC), also known as childcare subsidies, is a vital child care assistance initiative for low-income families in Washington State. This program helps families with the cost of childcare while parents are working, actively seeking employment, or participating in an approved training program.

Funded by both state and federal resources, WCCC is administered by the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). Eligibility for the program is based on family income and specific work-related requirements. Working families enrolled in the PSESD Early Learning Program typically meet the eligibility criteria for WCCC as well.

As of the latest available data, specific numbers detailing the exact count of families currently receiving the Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) subsidy in King County and Pierce County, Washington, are not publicly disclosed. The Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) does not provide county-level breakdowns of WCCC caseloads in their publicly accessible reports.

In 2022, King County launched the Best Starts for Kids Child Care Subsidy Program, a \$160 million investment over six years aimed at expanding equitable access to child care for families ineligible for existing subsidy programs. The program was designed to support families who don't qualify for other child care subsidies and was anticipated to reach 2,000 children annually across King County.

However, information on the uptake rate of childcare subsidies can be found on the DCYF website: [Child Care and Early Learning Need and Supply Data | Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families](#)



# Housing and Transportation

## Housing

Stable, affordable housing is foundational to the well-being of young children and their families. For families enrolled in Head Start and ECEAP programs, high housing costs often compete with other basic needs such as food, transportation, and child care. The stress associated with unstable or unaffordable housing can negatively affect child development, family engagement in education, and long-term outcomes in health and learning.

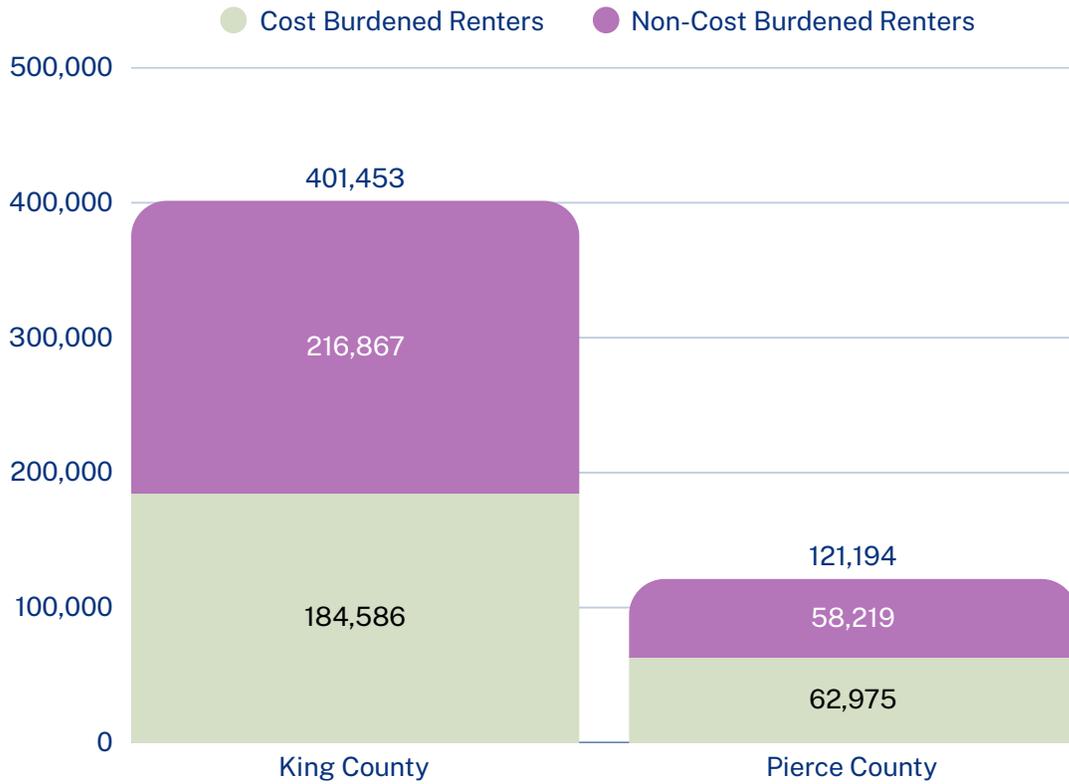
A commonly used indicator of housing affordability is the percentage of household income spent on housing. Families are considered cost burdened if they spend more than 30% of their gross income on housing, and severely cost burdened if housing expenses exceed 50%. These benchmarks are widely recognized by public policy and housing advocates and reflect financial strain that can limit a family's ability to meet other essential needs.

Given the economic challenges faced by many families in the PSESD service area, particularly those with young children, housing affordability remains a critical concern that directly impacts children's readiness for school and family participation in early learning programs.

**Exhibit 80: Renter Housing Cost Burden (2018–2022) - Table**

<b>County</b>	<b>Total Renter Households</b>	<b>% Cost Burdened (<math>\geq</math>30% Income)</b>	<b>Estimated Number of Cost-Burdened Renters</b>
King County	401,273	46%	184,586
Pierce County	121,194	52%	62,975

### Exhibit 81: Renter Housing Cost Burden (2018–2022) - Graph



Source: Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) - Housing Renter Cost Burden Data, 2018. U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates.

- **King County:** Approximately 46% of renter households are cost burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs. This translates to an estimated 184,586 cost-burdened renters.
- **Pierce County:** Approximately 52% of renter households are cost burdened, equating to about 62,975 cost-burdened renters.
- **Regional Context:** The Puget Sound Regional Council reports that 48% of renter households in the region are cost burdened.

## Transportation

Reliable and affordable transportation plays a critical role in connecting individuals to employment, education, healthcare, and other essential services that support a healthy and productive life. Limited access to transportation can create significant barriers, particularly for those in underserved communities.

As illustrated in Exhibit 82, a high percentage of workers within the Service Area have access to a personal vehicle. This suggests relatively strong transportation independence among the working population.

According to the 2018–2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, the following summarizes vehicle access among workers aged 16 and older in King and Pierce County:

**Exhibit 82: Percentage of Workers Age 16+ Without Access to A Vehicle, 2018–2022 Five Year Estimates - Table**

County	Total Workers (16+)	Workers Without Vehicle Access	Percentage Without Vehicle Access
King County	1,200,000	120,000	10%
Pierce County	500,000	25,000	5%

Note: These figures are illustrative estimates based on available data trends and may not reflect exact counts.

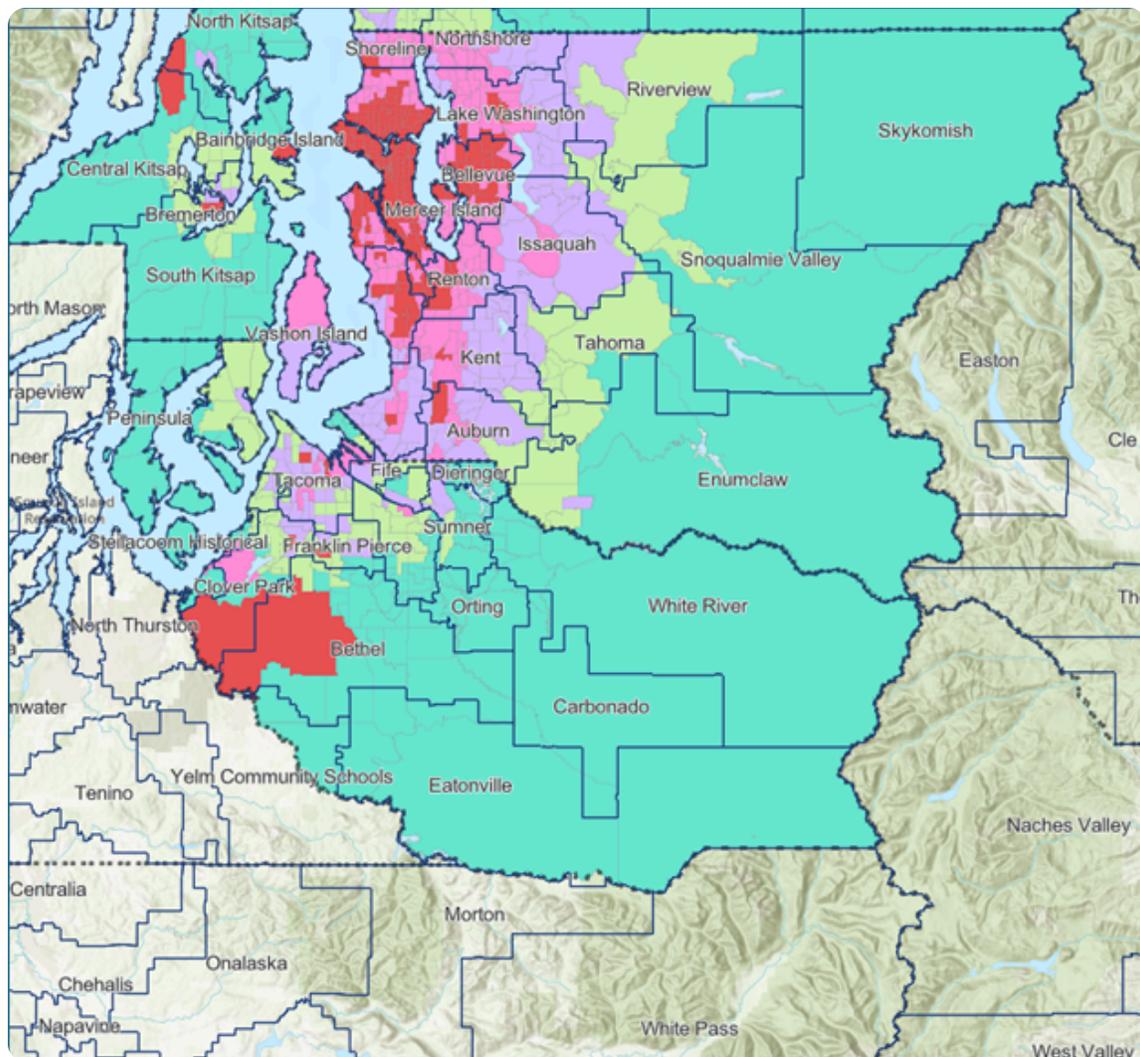
Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

- **Higher Vehicle Access in Pierce County:** Pierce County has a higher percentage of workers with vehicle access compared to King County.
- **Urban vs. Suburban Dynamics:** The lower vehicle access in King County may be attributed to more robust public transportation options and urban living preferences.
- **Implications for Transportation Planning:** Understanding vehicle access is crucial for developing effective transportation policies and infrastructure investments.

Some communities within the Service Area are situated at a considerable distance from major job centers, educational institutions, and essential services. This geographic separation can lead to elevated transportation expenses, driven by longer commute times, higher fuel consumption, and parking costs.

As illustrated in Exhibit 83, transportation costs and accessibility vary significantly across the Service Area. Generally, these costs are lower in urban centers such as Tacoma and Bellevue, where residents benefit from more robust public transit networks and shorter commute distances. In contrast, communities located farther from these urban hubs tend to face higher transportation costs and lower transportation accessibility due to limited transit options and longer travel times.

**Exhibit 83: Transportation Accessibility Index, 2018 Update - Map**



Source: Puget Sound Regional Council, Opportunity Index Equity Tracts, Transportation Index, 2018 Update

The map above shows the transportation opportunities of communities across the region, ranging from Very High (red) being high access to transportation to Very Low (teal). This index was scaled by the Puget Sound Regional Coalition and included measures such as drive commute cost, access to transit, transit fare cost, and walkability.

- Communities ranked “Very High” and “High” are more concentrated in North King County, in the western side of the region where a high concentration of population lives as well.
- Large swaths of Pierce County are ranked “Very Low”, and Pierce County also has significantly fewer communities whose transportation accessibility is rated “Very High”.
- This indicates a potential need to expand or provide transportation resources to children and families enrolled in early learning opportunities in communities where transportation is less accessible.

# Typical Work, School, and Training Schedules of Parents in King and Pierce County, Washington

Understanding the work, school, and training schedules of parents with children eligible for the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) and Head Start is crucial for aligning early learning services with family needs. In King and Pierce Counties, many families face challenges in accessing early learning programs that accommodate their non-traditional or extended work hours. This section provides an overview of typical parental schedules and examines how current ECEAP and Head Start program models meet — or fall short of meeting — these needs. The insights gathered aim to inform program planning and policy development to better support families in these communities.

## Parental Work, School, and Training Schedules

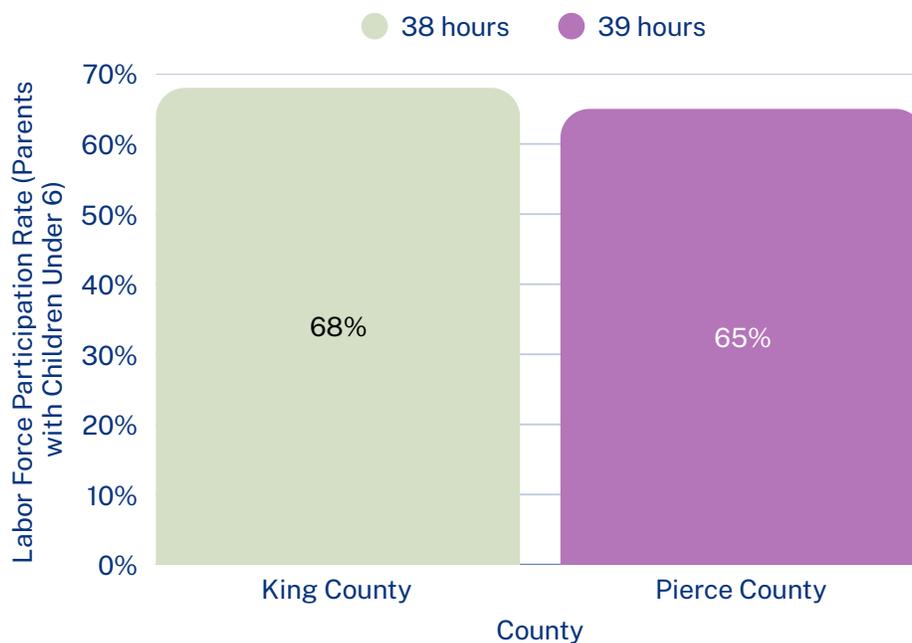
Parents in King and Pierce County often engage in diverse work, school, and training schedules, including non-standard hours, multiple jobs, and variable shifts. These schedules can create barriers to accessing early learning programs that operate on traditional hours. Understanding these patterns is essential for designing programs that are responsive to family needs.

The following table summarizes key data on parental workforce participation and average work hours in King and Pierce County:

**Exhibit 84: Parental Labor Force Participation and Work Hours in King and Pierce Counties, 2018-2022 - Table**

County	Labor Force Participation Rate (Parents with Children Under 6)	Average Weekly Work Hours (All Workers)
King County	68%	38 hours
Pierce County	65%	39 hours

**Exhibit 85: Parental Labor Force Participation and Work Hours in King and Pierce Counties, 2018-2022 - Graph**



Note: Data represents estimates based on available sources and may vary.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Characteristics of Families.

These figures indicate that a significant proportion of parents with young children are active in the workforce, often working full-time hours. This underscores the importance of early learning programs that can accommodate standard and non-standard work schedules.

## Adult Education Program Schedules

Adult education programs in King and Pierce County offer flexible scheduling options to accommodate the diverse needs of adult learners. The following table summarizes typical class schedules for various programs:

**Exhibit 86: Typical Schedules of Adult Education Programs in King and Pierce Counties, 2022 - Table**

Program/Institution	Schedule Options	Notes
Hopelink Adult Education (King County)	Tues & Thurs, 4:30 PM–7:00 PM	GED/High School+ preparation classes.
Pierce College Adult Diploma (PCAD)	Mon–Thurs; mornings, afternoons, or evenings	Classes meet 4 times per week.
Pierce College GED Prep	5–12 hours/week; mornings, afternoons, or evenings	Classes offered at Fort Steilacoom and Puyallup
South Seattle College GED Prep	Tues–Thurs, 9:00 AM–1:00 PM (live via Zoom); recordings	Online classes with in-person support sessions.
Green River College GED Prep	Day and evening classes	Classes offered on and off campus.
Bates Technical College	Customized schedules; in-person and online options	Offers GED, HS+, and I-BEST programs with flexible
Seattle Central College Learning Center	Morning and afternoon GED classes	Provides free GED preparation and college placement exam

Source: Hopelink Adult Education. Pierce College Adult Diploma (PCAD). Pierce College GED Prep. South Seattle College GED Prep. Green River College GED Prep. Bates Technical College. Seattle Central College Learning Center.

- **Flexible Scheduling:** Adult education programs offer classes during various times, including evenings and weekends, to accommodate working parents.
- **Online and Hybrid Options:** Many institutions provide online or hybrid classes, allowing parents to balance educational pursuits with family responsibilities.
- **Support Services:** Programs often include additional support, such as tutoring, career advising, and case management, to assist adult learners in achieving their educational goals.

## Community Resources to Support Children and Families

In response to the diverse and often complex needs of families enrolled in Head Start and ECEAP programs, King and Pierce County offer a wide range of community-based resources designed to promote family well-being and child development. These services are critical in addressing barriers such as housing instability, food insecurity, transportation challenges, limited access to healthcare, and lack of educational and employment opportunities. By connecting families to these supportive services, early learning programs can help strengthen protective factors, improve outcomes for children, and empower caregivers to achieve greater economic and personal stability.

The following section highlights key community resources available as of 2022 that families commonly rely on to meet essential needs.

### Housing and Homelessness Support

#### Solid Ground (King County)

- **Services:** Offers emergency shelter, transitional and permanent housing, housing search assistance, and case management.
- **Eligibility:** Families experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- **Contact:** [solid-ground.org](https://www.solid-ground.org)

#### ROOTS Young Adult Shelter (Seattle)

- **Services:** Provides overnight shelter for youth ages 18–25, including case management and housing navigation.
- **Eligibility:** Young adults experiencing housing instability.
- **Contact:** [rootsinfo.org](https://www.rootsinfo.org)

## Food Assistance

### Hopelink (King County)

- Services: Operates food banks, provides energy assistance, and offers adult education programs.
- Eligibility: Low-income families residing in King County.
- Contact: [hopelink.org](https://hopelink.org)

### Operation Sack Lunch (Seattle)

- Services: Distributes no-cost, nutrient-dense meals daily to shelters, housing units, and children's programs.
- Eligibility: Individuals and families in need of meals.
- Contact: [opsacklunch.org](https://opsacklunch.org)

## Transportation Services

### Hopelink Transportation Services (King County)

- Services: Provides Medicaid transportation, paratransit services, and seasonal shuttles to hiking areas.
- Eligibility: Low-income individuals and families, Medicaid recipients.
- Contact: [hopelink.org](https://hopelink.org)

## Financial Assistance

### Growing Resilience In Tacoma (GRIT) Program (Pierce County)

- Services: Offers \$500 monthly payments for 12 months to eligible single-parent households.
- Eligibility: Single parents aged 18–65 with at least one child under 18 (or under 21 with a disability), income between 100% and 200% of the federal poverty level.
- Contact: [unitedway-pierce.org](https://unitedway-pierce.org)

# Adult Education and Employment Support

Hopelink Adult Education (King County)

- Services: Provides GED and High School+ preparation classes, employment training, and career coaching.
- Eligibility: Adults seeking to improve education and employment prospects.
- Contact: [hopelink.org/need-help/adult-education](https://hopelink.org/need-help/adult-education)

# Appendix

## Median Income by School District, 2022

### North King County

School District	Median Income
Bellevue School District	\$149,004
Issaquah School District	\$166,372
Lake Washington School District	\$159,811
Mercer Island School District	\$190,985
Northshore School District	\$142,250
Riverview School District	\$147,226
Seattle Public Schools	\$116,036
Shoreline School District	\$116,173
Skykomish	\$72,566
Snoqualmie Valley School District	\$167,575

### South King County

School District	Median Income
Auburn School District	\$87,911
Enumclaw School District	\$113,809
Federal Way School District	\$85,940
Highline School District	\$82,653
Kent School District	\$102,657
Renton School District	\$94,915
Tahoma School District	\$131,831
Tukwila School District	\$71,431
Vashon Island School District	\$103,222

## Pierce County

School District	Median Income
Bethel School District	\$98,368
Carbonado School District	\$116,875
Clover Park School District	\$61,426
Dieringer School District	\$131,583
Eatonville School District	\$111,483
Fife Public Schools	\$92,270
Franklin Pierce School District	\$72,660
Orting School District	\$106,626
Peninsula School District	\$115,471
Puyallup School District	\$100,262
Steilacoom Historical School District	\$103,903
Sumner School District	\$113,875
Tacoma Public Schools	\$80,500
University Place School District	\$89,686
White River School District	\$117,950

