Washington County, OREGON



Washington County continues to experience rapid population growth. The total population has grown by close to 60% since 1990, and 11% since 2000, from 311,554 in 1990, to 445,342 in 2000, and to 495,597 in 2005 (2005 American Community Survey). Washington County's growth rate has been more than double the growth rate for the state as a whole.

The diversity of Washington County continues to grow at an even faster rate than the population as a whole. Latinos comprise the largest minority population in the county, representing just under 14% of the population, with an estimated 69,219 residents. This reflects more than a 480% increase since 1990, when there were an estimated 14,210 Latinos in the county. Similarly, there has been significant growth in the Asian population, growing from 12,891 in 1990 to 41,939 in 2005, an increase of just over 325% since 1990. Asian/Pacific Islanders now comprise 8.5% of the county population. While comprising a much smaller proportion of the county population, there has also been growth in the African American and Native American populations. The African American population has grown by 339% since 1990, and comprises 1.4% of the county population; and the Native American population has grown by 183% in the same period and comprises under 1% of the county population.

County cont.

School enrollment data provides additional information regarding the increasing diversity of the county. In the 2000-01 school year, almost 25% of students were minority, with Latino students comprising the largest proportion (13.7% of total school enrollments), followed by Asian students (8.3%). The proportion of minority students was higher at the elementary level, with 28% of students being minority, with Latino students again representing the largest group (16.8%), followed by Asian students (8.1%). African American and Native American students have much lower enrollment levels. In 28% of Washington County schools minority enrollments represent more than 30% of total school enrollments in 2001-03 (30 of 109 schools).

By the 2006-2007 school year, enrollment of minority students had grown significantly, by 68% for all students, while the overall student population had only grown by 13% since 2000-01. Minority students comprised almost 37% of all students by the 2006-07 school year.

The growth rate for minority students was higher for middle and high school students at 79% and 84% respectively. At the elementary level, minority students represent 40% of enrollments, while at the middle and high school levels the proportions are lower (35% and 33% respectively). The Latino school population grew by 69% over this period, while the Asian population grew by 22%. The number of White students has declined by 6% since 2000-01. By 2006-07 Latino students comprised 21% of the student population with Asian students comprising just about 9%. Enrollment levels for White students has decreased from 75% in 2000-01 to less than 63% by 2006-07. By the 2006-07 school year, 57% of schools in the county had minority enrollment levels exceeding 30%, 20% had minority enrollments in excess of 50% and 6% had more than 70% minority students.

Elementary schools had significantly higher minority enrollment levels, with 64% of elementary schools having 35% minority students; 26% having more than 50% and 10% having in excess of 70% minority students.

Poverty

While Washington County continues to have the highest per capita income in the state, the proportion of people living in poverty has increased significantly, rising from 6.5% in 1990 to 7.4% in 2000 and to 9.0% in 2004. Since 2000, the poverty rate in Washington County has been growing faster than that of other urban counties in Oregon.

Children are disproportionately affected by poverty, with poverty rates among children rising from 7.9% in 1990 to 12.0% in 2004.

Single parents are also more likely to live in poverty: in 2000, 15.8% of single mother headed households lived in poverty, growing to 19.1% by 2004, compared to 10.4% of two parent families.

The percent of children participating in the free/reduced lunch program is another indicator of poverty. Since the 2000-01 school year, the percentage of Washington County school children participating in the program has increased from 21.7% to 31.7% in the 2006-07 school year, a 46% increase in six years.

This data reflects continued population growth in the county and the impact of the economic downturn of recent years.

Minority children are significantly more likely to live in poverty. In 2000, the following percentages of Washington County children lived in poverty:

	White	Latino	Asian/PI	Afr. Amer.	Nat. Amer.
Children Under 6	6.0%	24.6%	7.1%	19.9%	9.8%
Children Under 18	5.7%	23%	9.5%	15.9%	20.8%

Poverty cont.

Children living in single parent households are also substantially more likely to live in poverty, as the following chart illustrates:

	White	Latino	Asian / Pl
Two parents w/ chil- dren under 18	2.3%	18.7%	5.8%
Single mother w/ children under 18	17.4%	41%	30.2%
Single mother w/ children under 5	25.7%	50.4%	21.2%

Employment

The unemployment rate in the Portland Metropolitan Statistical Area, which includes Washington County, increased dramatically in the early part of the decade, and while it has begun to decline more recently, it remains above the national average

	March 2000	March 2001	March 2002	March 2003	October 2004	Decem- ber 2005	Decem- ber 2006
PDX SMSA	4.1%	5.1%	8.4%	8.4%	6.5%	4.8%	4.7%
State	4.7%	5.4%	7.9%	7.6%	7.3%	5.4%	5.2%
National	4.1%	4.3%	5.7%	5.8%	5.5%	4.6%	4.3%

Consistent with state and national trends in recent decades, the majority of children living in two parent households have both parents in the labor force, and single parents have even higher labor force participation rates. In Washington County in 2000, for children under six, 56% of both parents or single parents worked; for children between 6 and 17, 69% of their parents were in the workforce; and for all children under 18, 64% of parents were in the labor force.

Educational Status



Washington County continues to have the best educated populace in the state: in 2004, just over 90% of the population over age 25 had at least a high school diploma, and 36.7% had a four year college degree.

However, these levels of educational attainment are not consistent among all ethnic/racial groups.

Among Latinos, just under 50% of people over age 25 had high school diplomas in 2000.

Among other ethnic groups (Asian, African American, Native Americans), high school completion rates are lower than the average for the county as a whole, but are well over 80%.



College graduation rates are also substantially lower for Latinos and Native Americans, at 11.3% and 21% respectively, while the college graduation rate among all ethnicities was highest among Asian/Pacific Islanders at 50% (2000 Census).

Educational Status Cont.

Similarly, high school drop out rates computed by the state Department of Education also reflect substantially higher drop-out rates among Latino youth. While drop out rates have declined in recent years, the rate for Latinos continues to be more than double that of all students. While the Latino dropout rate has declined significantly since the 1999-2000 school year, Latinos comprise just over 35% of the dropouts while representing 14.5% of the secondary student enrollments.

	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
County	5.86%	4.57%	4.1%	3.2%	3.4%	3.1%	3.4%
Anglo	4.8%	3.5%	3.0%	2.4%	2.5%	2.4%	2.2%
Latino	15.7%	12.4%	12.1%	14.6%	8.8%	7.9%	6.1%
Asian	5.0%	2.9%	2.2%	2.4%	1.8%	1.4%	2.4%

For the past several years, Washington County dropout rates have been below the state rates for all racial/ethnic groups.

	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
State	6.3%	5.25%	4.86%	4.4%	4.6%	4.2%	4.1%
Anglo	5.5%	4.5%	4.0%	3.6%	3.8%	3.5%	3.3%
Latino	13.3%	11.3%	10.4%	9.1%	9.6%	8.1%	8.4%
Asian	836%	4.4%	3.6%	3.8%	3.4%	2.2%	2.7%

Census data suggests that the drop-out rate may be higher. In 2000, among 16 to 19 year olds in the County, 12.6% were not enrolled in school and had not graduated from high school. Among white youth, 8.4% had not graduated and were not enrolled in school, while this figure grew to 11.9% for Asians/Pacific Islanders, and to more than 36% for Latino youth.