

April 1998

1996 County Comparisons: At-Risk Behaviors of Youth in Washington

Background In 1994, the Washington State Legislature passed comprehensive legislation intended to decrease juvenile violence and certain "at-risk" behaviors of youth in Washington.¹ The Legislature directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to evaluate the costs and benefits of the programs developed as a result of this act.

This report compares 1996 county rates (generally the most recent year for which data are available) for violent crime arrests and convictions, teen liquor and drug law violations, teen births, foster care placements, and domestic violence protection orders.

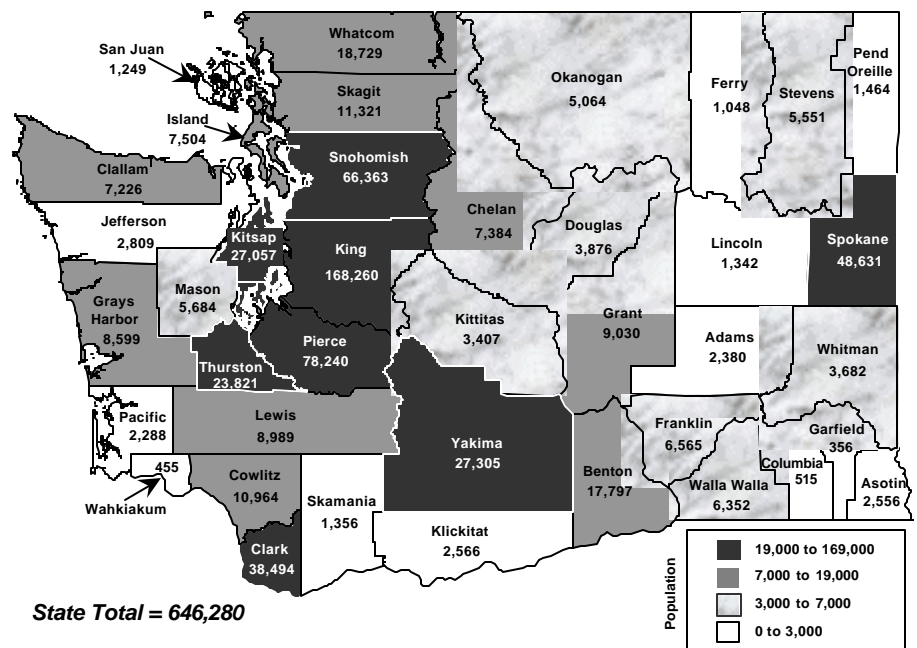
The numbers in this report are expressed as "rates." Rates are calculated by dividing the incidence of any behavior in a county by the total number of youth in the county. The result is the number of events (e.g. arrests, births, or foster care placements) per 1,000 youth. Rates allow small counties to be compared directly with big counties. While this comparison is useful, the reader should be aware that rates reported for counties with small populations can vary from year to year. Thus a small county with a high rate in one year could change dramatically the next with only a small change in the total number of events. Rates for larger counties are less likely to exhibit this sort of variation.

In some instances, rates for certain counties are not reported. In these jurisdictions, either several law enforcement agencies within a county did not supply arrest data, or the occurrence of the event was too low to provide reliable rates (i.e., counties reporting less than five teen births were not included).

This document serves as a companion to the Institute's report, *Trends in At-risk Behavior of Youth in Washington*, with snapshots of indicators for each county.²

For more information, contact the Institute for Public Policy at (360) 866-6000, extension 6380.

Figure 1: 10- to 17-Year-Old Population, 1996



Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Washington State Office of Financial Management.

¹ RCW 70.190.050.

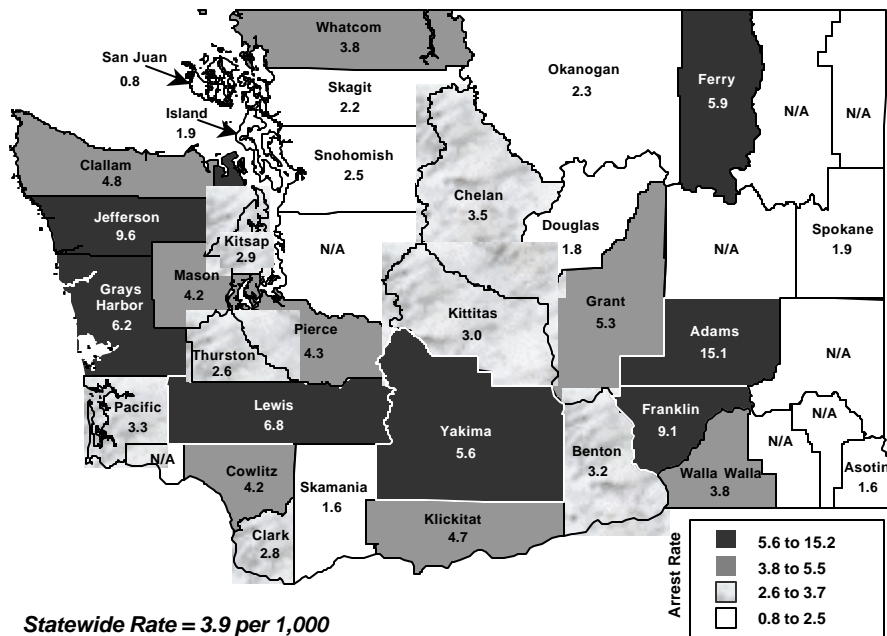
² The Institute has published previous reports describing the 1994 legislation and statewide trends in risk behaviors. See *Trends in At-Risk Behaviors of Youth in Washington*, Washington State Institute for Public Policy, January 1996 and April 1998 (Update).

Juvenile Violent Crime Arrest Rate

Although juvenile crime still remains high by historical standards, the statewide rate of juvenile violence declined in 1996. Figure 2 displays arrest rates for juvenile violent crime in Washington counties in 1996.

In 1996, 2,524 arrests were made for juvenile violent crime in Washington.³ This corresponds to a statewide rate of 3.9 arrests per thousand youths ages 10 to 17. As Figure 2 shows, however, the 1996 juvenile violent crime arrest rate varied considerably across Washington.

Figure 2: Juvenile Violent Crime Arrest Rate, 1996



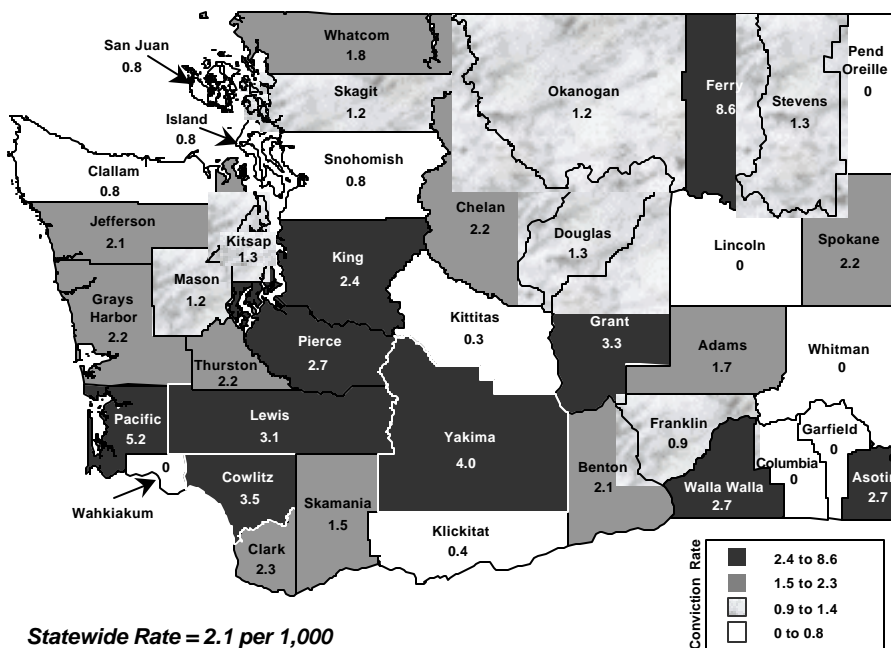
The number of arrests per 1,000 youth for violent crimes in 1996. In Columbia, Garfield, King, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Wahkiakum, and Whitman Counties, less than 70 percent of the population is represented by law enforcement agencies providing arrest data. Thus, rates are not reliable and are not reported here. Violent offenses are defined by the FBI to include murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Source: Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.

Juvenile Violent Crime Conviction Rate

Figure 3 shows the violent crime conviction rate for counties in Washington State. In 1996, there were 1,371 violent crime convictions, translating to a statewide rate of 2.1 convictions per thousand juveniles ages 10- to 17-years-old.

Conviction rates differed across the state in 1996. The highest rates occurred in Ferry, Pacific, and Yakima counties. Among urban counties, Snohomish County had one of the lowest conviction rates for juvenile violent crime.

Figure 3: Juvenile Violent Crime Conviction Rate, 1996



The number of convictions per 1,000 youth for violent crimes in 1996. Violent offenses are defined by the FBI to include murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Source: Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.

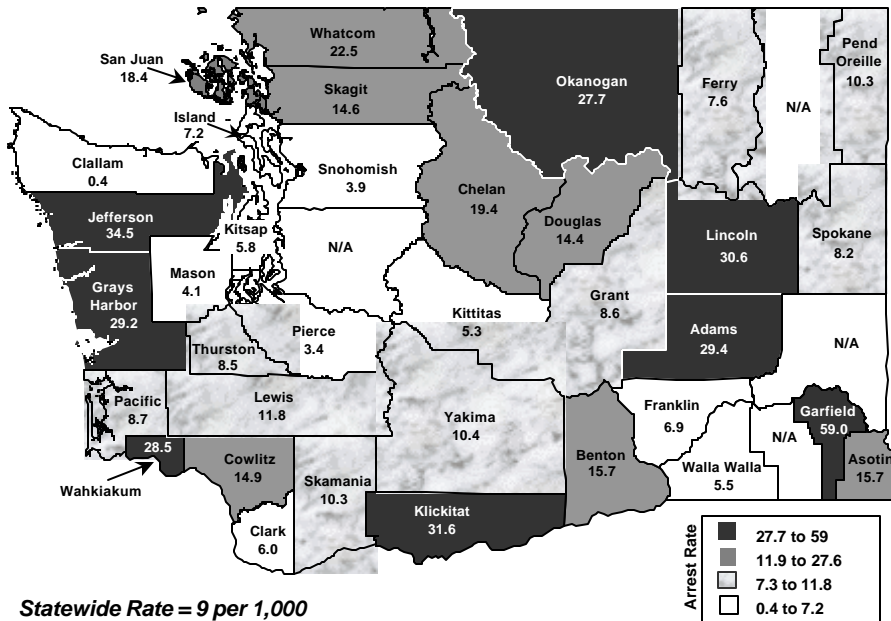
³ Arrest totals are adjusted by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to account for under-reporting in some jurisdictions.

Juvenile Substance Abuse: Liquor Law Arrest Rates

Figure 4 displays the juvenile arrest rate for alcohol violations by county in Washington State for 1996.

The statewide juvenile arrest rate for liquor law violations in 1996 was 9 per thousand juveniles ages 10 to 17. This rate varied significantly between counties. Pierce County (3.4) reported a lower rate than many surrounding counties: Thurston 8.5, Lewis 11.8, and Yakima 10.4. Many rural counties appear to have much higher rates.

Figure 4: Juvenile Arrests for Liquor Law Violations, 1996



The number of arrests per 1,000 youth for liquor law violations in 1996. In Columbia, King, Stevens, and Whitman counties, less than 70 percent of the population is represented by law enforcement agencies providing arrest data. Thus, rates are not reliable and are not reported here.

Source: Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, with adjustments made by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, April 1998.

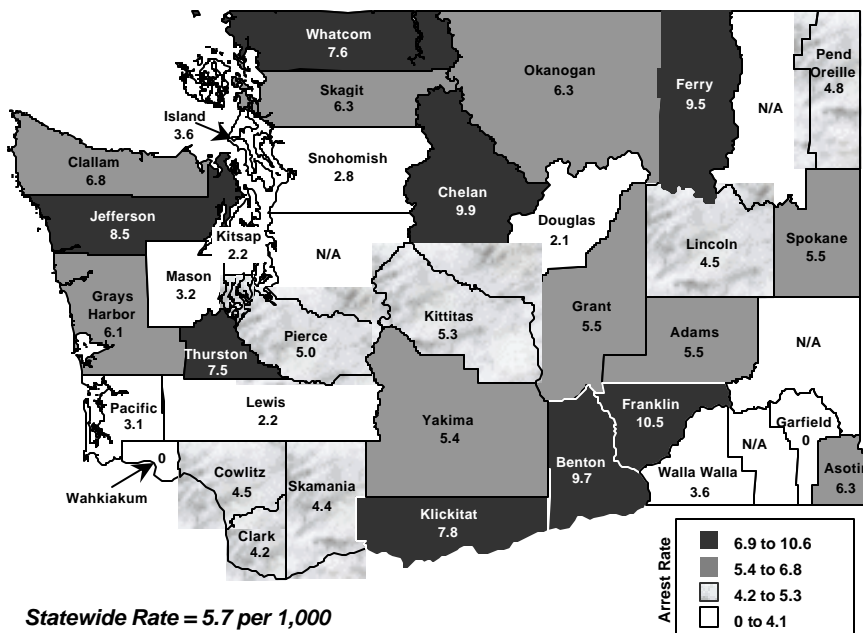
Juvenile Substance Abuse: Drug Law Arrest Rates

Figure 5 shows the juvenile arrest rate for drug law violations by county in Washington State for 1996.

In 1996, there were 3,662 arrests for drug law violations in Washington, a statewide rate of 5.7 arrests per thousand youths ages 10 to 17.

Across the state, drug law arrest rates did not differ as dramatically as liquor law arrest rates in 1996. Rates reached a high of about 10 per 1,000 juveniles in Benton, Chelan, and Franklin counties, whereas Lewis (2.2) and Snohomish (2.8) counties reported much lower rates.

Figure 5: Juvenile Arrests for Drug Law Violations, 1996



The number of arrests per 1,000 youth for drug law violations in 1996. In Columbia, King, San Juan, Stevens, and Whitman counties, less than 70 percent of the population is represented by law enforcement agencies providing arrest data. Thus, rates are not reliable and are not reported here.

Source: Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, with adjustments made by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, April 1998.

Teen Birthrates

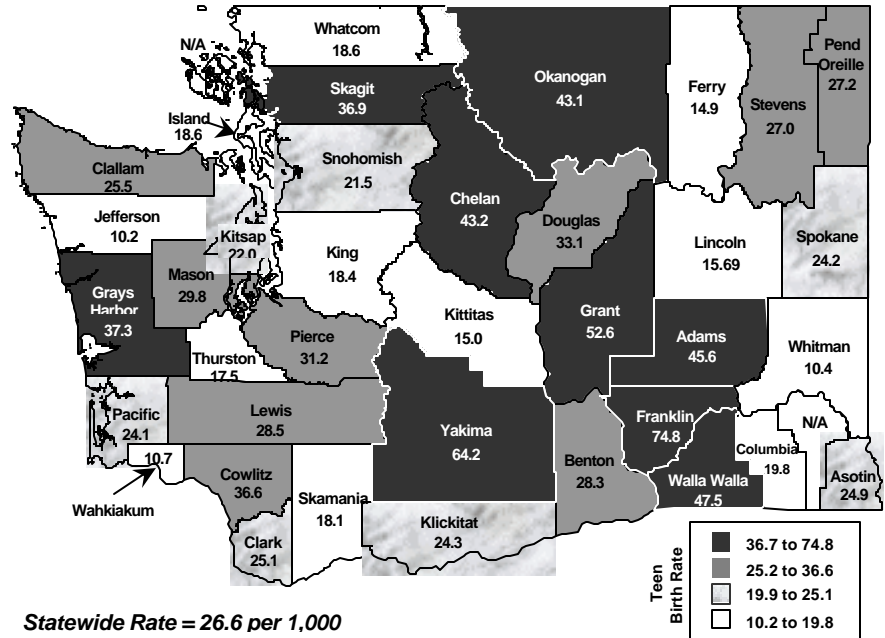
Figure 6 shows the number of births per thousand 15- to 17-year-old females in Washington.

In 1996, 3,033 children were born to mothers ages 15 to 17 in Washington State (an average of 8.3 births per day).

The teenage birthrate in Washington State for 1996 was 26.6 births per thousand females ages 15 to 17.

Among Washington counties, teenage birthrates ranged from a low of 10.2 in Jefferson County to a high of 74.8 in Franklin County.

Figure 6: Teen Birthrates, 1996



Statewide Rate = 26.6 per 1,000

The number of births per 1,000 15- to 17-year-old females in 1996. In Garfield and San Juan Counties there were fewer than five teen births, thus these rates are too low to report.

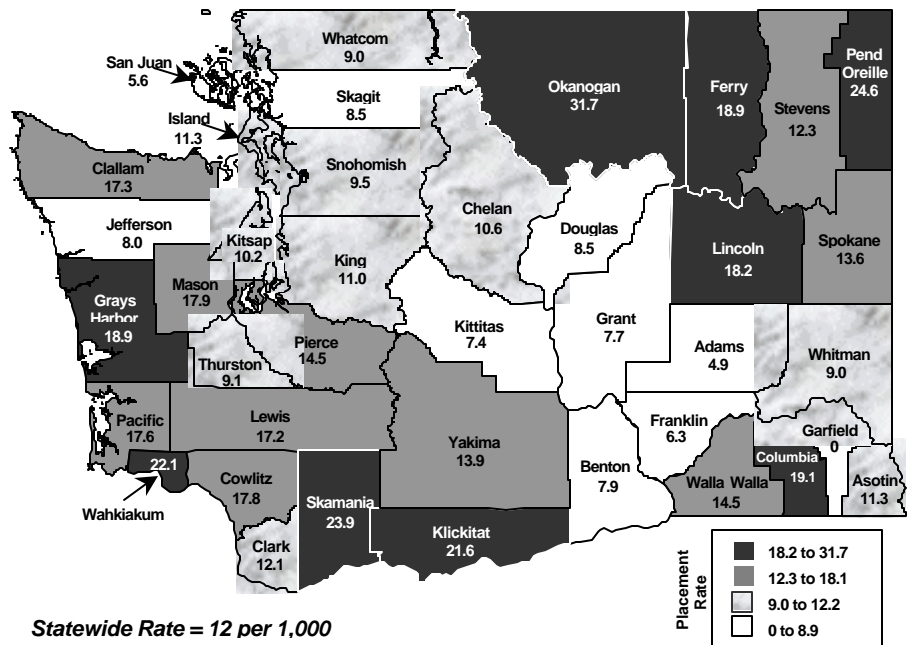
Source: Center for Health Statistics, Washington State Department of Health. All calculations made by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, April 1998.

State-Funded Foster Care

Figure 7 displays the county rates for foster care placements in Fiscal Year 1994, the most recent year that comprehensive data at the county level is available.

The statewide foster care placement rate for FY 1994 was 12 placements per 1,000 youth under 18.⁴ Rates varied from county to county, with generally higher rates in rural areas. Thurston and Snohomish counties reported rates below 10, while Lewis and Cowlitz counties reported rates above 17.

Figure 7: Rate of Foster Care Placements in 1994



Statewide Rate = 12 per 1,000

The total number of children served in foster care for the year (Fiscal Year 1994) per 1,000 youth ages 10 to 17. Client counts were rounded to the nearest multiple of five. Counties with less than five clients were counted as zero.

Source: Department of Social and Health Services Budget Division and Office of Research and Data Analysis, "DSHS County Data Report Fiscal Year 1994," April 1996.

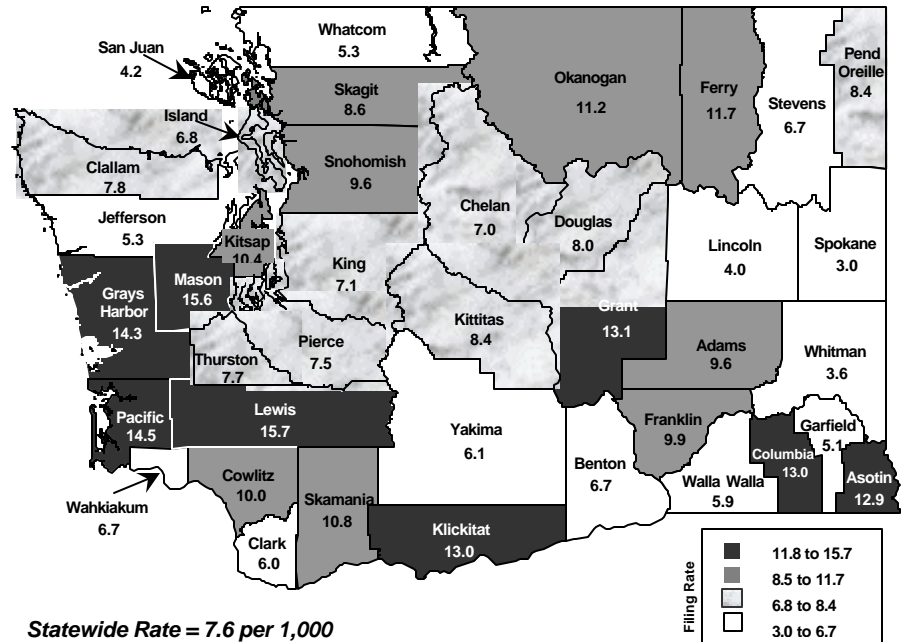
⁴ This statewide rate differs from the rate listed in the Institute's report, *Trends in At-Risk Behaviors of Youth in Washington*, April 1998 Update. The "Trends" report calculates the average monthly rate of children being served for calendar years and does not include counts from Family Receiving Homes.

Domestic Violence: Court Filings

Figure 8 illustrates the rate of domestic violence protection orders in Washington. In 1996, 30,528 domestic violence protection orders were filed, a statewide rate of 7.6 per thousand adults ages 18 or older.

Domestic violence protection orders ranged considerably throughout Washington, from a low of 3 in Spokane County, to a high of 15.7 in Lewis County.

Figure 8: County Rates of Domestic Violence, 1996



Statewide Rate = 7.6 per 1,000

The number of domestic violence protection orders filed per 1,000 adults ages 18 years or older in 1996.

Source: Office of the Administrator for the Courts. All calculations made by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, April 1998.

Future Publications

In the upcoming year, the Institute plans to supplement this information with topic briefs further analyzing statewide trends and county comparisons of at-risk behaviors of youth in Washington. These topic briefs will include:

- Child Protective Services referrals and victims
- Foster care placements
- Teenage pregnancy and male parentage
- Juvenile arrests (weapon violations, property and violent crimes)
- At-risk youth and truancy petitions
- High-school completion rates

In addition, the data from this report will be available on the Institute's World Wide Web homepage for years prior to 1996. For more information see <http://www.wa.gov/wsipp>.

Table 1: 1996 County Rate Comparisons

County	10 to 17-Year-Old Population⁵	Violent Arrests⁶	Violent Convictions⁶	Liquor Law Violations⁷	Drug Law Violations⁷	Teen Birth Rate⁸	Foster Care (1994)⁹	Domestic Violence¹⁰
Adams	2,380	15.1	1.7	29.4	5.5	45.6	4.9	9.6
Asotin	2,556	1.6	2.7	15.7	6.3	24.9	11.3	12.9
Benton	17,797	3.2	2.1	15.7	9.7	28.3	7.9	6.7
Chelan	7,384	3.5	2.2	19.4	9.9	43.2	10.6	7.0
Clallam	7,226	4.8	0.8	0.4	6.8	25.5	17.3	7.8
Clark	38,494	2.8	2.3	6.0	4.2	25.1	12.1	6.0
Columbia	515	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	19.8	19.1	13.0
Cowlitz	10,964	4.2	3.5	14.9	4.5	36.6	17.8	10.0
Douglas	3,876	1.8	1.3	14.4	2.1	33.1	8.5	8.0
Ferry	1,048	5.9	8.6	7.6	9.5	14.9	18.9	11.7
Franklin	6,565	9.1	0.9	6.9	10.5	74.8	6.3	9.9
Garfield	356	N/A	0	59.0	0	N/A	0	5.1
Grant	9,030	5.3	3.3	8.6	5.5	52.6	7.7	13.1
Grays Harbor	8,599	6.2	2.2	29.2	6.1	37.3	18.9	14.3
Island	7,504	1.9	0.8	7.2	3.6	18.6	11.3	6.8
Jefferson	2,809	9.6	2.1	34.5	8.5	10.2	8.0	5.3
King	168,260	N/A	2.4	N/A	N/A	18.4	11.0	7.1
Kitsap	27,057	2.9	1.3	5.8	2.2	22.0	10.2	10.4
Kittitas	3,407	3.0	0.3	5.3	5.3	15.0	7.4	8.4
Klickitat	2,566	4.7	0.4	31.6	7.8	24.3	21.6	13.0
Lewis	8,989	6.8	3.1	11.8	2.2	28.5	17.2	15.7
Lincoln	1,342	N/A	N/A	30.6	4.5	15.7	18.2	4.0
Mason	5,684	4.2	1.2	4.0	3.2	29.8	17.9	15.6
Okanogan	5,064	2.3	1.2	27.7	6.3	43.1	31.7	11.2
Pacific	2,288	3.3	5.2	8.7	3.1	24.1	17.6	14.5
Pend Oreille	1,464	N/A	0	10.3	4.8	27.2	24.6	8.4
Pierce	78,240	4.3	2.7	3.4	5.0	31.2	14.5	7.5
San Juan	1,249	0.8	0.8	18.4	N/A	N/A	5.6	4.2
Skagit	11,321	2.2	1.2	14.6	6.3	36.9	8.5	8.6
Skamania	1,356	1.6	1.5	10.3	4.4	18.1	23.9	10.8
Snohomish	66,363	2.5	0.8	3.9	2.8	21.5	9.5	9.6
Spokane	48,631	1.9	2.2	8.2	5.5	24.2	13.6	3.0
Stevens	5,551	N/A	1.3	N/A	N/A	27.0	12.3	6.7
Thurston	23,821	2.6	2.2	8.5	7.5	17.5	9.1	7.7
Wahkiakum	455	N/A	0	28.5	0	10.7	22.1	6.7
Walla Walla	6,352	3.8	2.7	5.5	3.6	47.5	14.5	5.9
Whatcom	18,729	3.8	1.8	22.5	7.6	18.6	9.0	5.3
Whitman	3,682	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	10.4	9.0	3.6
Yakima	27,305	5.6	4.0	10.4	5.4	64.2	13.9	6.1
Statewide:	646,280	3.9	2.1	9.0	5.7	26.6	12.0	7.6

⁵ U.S. Bureau of Census, Washington State Office of Financial Management.

⁶ Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs. Violent offenses are defined by the FBI to include murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

⁷ Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.

⁸ Center for Health Statistics, Washington Department of Health.

⁹ Based on FY 1994 data. Washington State Department of Social and Health Services Budget Division and Office of Research and Data Analysis, "DSHS County Data Report Fiscal Year 1994," April 1996.

¹⁰ Office of the Administrator for the Courts.



The Washington Legislature created the Washington State Institute for Public Policy in 1983. A Board of Directors—representing the legislature, the governor, and public universities—governs the Institute and guides the development of all activities. The Institute's mission is to carry out practical research, at legislative direction, on issues of importance to Washington State.