

# RACIAL DISPARITIES IN OUR COMMUNITY:

## Information to Fuel Opportunities for Growth and Healing

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### CONTEXT: Demographics

Working through this collection of data beginning with the understanding of the racial demographics in Whatcom County is essential. When discussing these disparities, this demographic spread lets us know how many of our neighbors are impacted by inequity. It also lets us know how many lives we have the potential to change, to improve in our community. Turning the curve on racial inequity means improving the lives of about 14% of the population.

- Whatcom's Population: 229,247 people
  - White: 196,748.9 (86.2%)
  - Asian: 11,004 (4.8%)
  - Hispanic: 22,466 (9.8%)
  - Indigenous: 7,794 (3.4%)
  - Black: 2,980 (1.3%)

*US Census Bureau 2019 Estimates*

### Economic Development

While the national average income for any race does not meet Healthy Whatcom's reported survival budget for a family of four, there is a 22-47% income gap between Black, Indigenous, and Hispanic community members and their White neighbors. That being said, the Hispanic community has more buying power nationally than the GDP of Australia and is the second fastest growing economic demographic. Economic development creates the opportunity to turn poverty into prosperity.

- Survival Budget for Whatcom County: \$66,480 (2 adults, 1 preschooler, 1 infant)
  - Whatcom County Median: \$55,145
  - Average income by race
    - White: \$55,198 (83% of the survival budget)
    - Asian: \$58,662 (88% of the survival budget; **+5%** compared White neighbors)
    - Hispanic: \$40,514 (61% of the survival budget; **-22%** compared to White neighbors)
    - Indigenous: \$31,655 (48% of the survival budget; **-35%** compared to White neighbors)

- Black: \$23,690 (36% of the survival budget; **-47%** compared to White neighbors)

*2018 Community Health Assessment, Healthy Whatcom, American Community Survey, US Census Bureau*

- Immigrants employed more than 4.7 million Americans and generated more than 776 billion in revenue in 2013
- 75% of patents issued at top 10 universities were to immigrants
- Hispanic businesses make up 28% of all small businesses nationally

*Commissioner Luis A. Aguilar US Securities Exchange Commission 2013, Fiscal Policy Institute*

- The buying power of BIPOC communities in 2018 was \$3.9 trillion
  - Black: \$1.3 trillion
  - Asian: \$1 trillion
  - Indigenous: \$115 billion
  - Hispanic: \$1.5 trillion
- Australia's GDP: \$1.4 trillion
- Both Asian (**267%**) and Hispanic (**212%**) communities experienced the fastest growth rates of any other ethnicities since 2000.

*The Multicultural Economy Report 2018, Selic Center of Economic Growth*

## Health

The conversation of health, healthcare, and the determinants of health is significantly broader than it's represented in this data. That being said an Indigenous baby born in Whatcom County has a 12 year shorter life expectancy than their white neighbors. We have less than 8,000 Indigenous folk in our community, and they represent 5,200 years of potential life lost.

- Total years of potential life lost prematurely (<65 years of age): Black and Indigenous Whatcom County residents, though representing 4% of the population, lost **1,200-5,200 years of potential life** more than the White community in 2016.
- Life expectancy at birth: **-12.14 year** differential between Indigenous populations and White neighbors.
  - White LEAB: 81.43 yrs
  - Indigenous LEAB: 69.29 yrs (only 4.29 years older than standard premature death)
- 38% of Whatcom County 10th Graders report experiencing depression.
  - White Sophomores: 36%
  - Multiracial Sophomores: 44%. **+8% higher** than White classmates
  - Black Sophomores: 43%. **+7% higher** than White classmates
  - Indigenous Sophomores: 66%. **+28% higher** than White classmates
- 10th Graders in Whatcom County report serious suicidal ideation at a 4% higher rate than the Washington state average.

*2018 Community Health Assessment, Healthy Whatcom*

- 1 in 9 households are food insecure in Washington state
  - Low income households of color, especially Black and Hispanic homes, are **2x more** likely to have trouble getting food on the table than White households.

*2020 King County Strategic Climate Action Plan Update*

- **82%** of Whatcom County 10th Graders do not eat the USDA's recommended 5+ servings of fruits and vegetables

*2018 Community Health Assessment, Healthy Whatcom*

## Education

Education is a pathway to future economic success. It's opportunity. Our Hispanic, Indigenous, English Language Learners, and low-income students are less ready to start school and less likely to graduate on time. If low-income students are less likely to graduate on time AND education, graduation is a pathway to economic success there is a cycle being perpetuated leading to these outcomes.

- Kindergarten Readiness:
  - 19% of English Language Learners are Kindergarten Ready. **32% less** than those who already speak English
  - 26% of Low-income children are Kindergarten ready. **33% less** than those with higher incomes
  - White child readiness: 54%
  - Hispanic child readiness: 27%. **27% less** than White neighbors
  - Indigenous child readiness: 23%. **31% less** than White neighbors
- On-time Graduation Rates
  - 68% of Limited English speakers graduate on time. **12% less** than those who speak English
  - 67% of Low-income students graduate on time. **24% less** than those with higher incomes
  - White student graduation rate: 82%
  - Hispanic student graduation rate: 71%. **11% less** than White classmates
  - Indigenous student graduation rate: 63%. **19% less** than White classmates

*2018 Community Health Assessment, Healthy Whatcom*

## Child Welfare

Currently the population of children of color in our foster cares system is disproportionately higher. Families of color experience a higher rate of calls to protective services. These children see a higher rate of intakes, are less likely to be placed back with family, and remain in the system longer. More alarming is that a consideration for child removal is if a parent was once a

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foster child themselves. At the beginning of 2020 Gov. Cuomo instituted race-blind removals after Nassau County began the practice. Race-blind removals reduced the percentage of Black children removed from their families by 26.5 percent.

- The proportion of Indigenous children brought into the foster care system is **almost double** that of White children.
  - Child/ Youth intake rates per 1,000 people living in WA state
    - White: 49.67
    - Multiracial: 54.45; **10% higher** representation within the system
    - Black: 78.16; **57% higher** representation within the system
    - Indigenous: 89.52; **80% higher** representation within the system

*2019 Child Welfare Racial Disparity Indices, Washington State Office of Children, Youth, & Families*

## Criminal Legal

The disproportionate representation of BIPOC in the Criminal Legal System is a national trend. Whatcom County is no different. Our Black, Indigenous, and Hispanic communities are incarcerated at a higher rate, have greater representation in the daily population, and stay longer.

- Average Daily Population Disparities:
  - Indigenous ADP is **4x higher** than the % of the Indigenous population in Whatcom County
    - 14% of ADP; 3.4% of Whatcom's population
  - Black ADP is **5.4x higher** than the % of the Black population in Whatcom County
    - 7% of ADP; 1.3% of Whatcom's population
- Admission Disparities:
  - Black men are admitted at a **4.2x higher** rate than White men
  - Indigenous women are admitted at a **5x higher** rate than White women
  - Hispanic folks are admitted at a **3.5x higher** rate than non-Hispanic folks
- Length of Stay Disparities
  - White men average a 20 day stay and White women average 13 days
  - Black men average a 23 day stay and Black women average 21 days (**+3 days; +8 days**)
  - Indigenous men average a 23 day stay and Indigenous women average 22 days (**+3 days; +9 days**)

*2017 Whatcom County Vera Report*

## Environmental Justice

Frontline communities face the challenges of adapting to climate change while also feeling the weight of current and historic racial, social, environmental, and economic inequities. The impact of not having the same capacity for adaptation as White community members exacerbates

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existing inequities like food instability, lack of affordable health care, health outcomes, income disparities, and so forth within communities of color.

- BIPOC Communities are **37% more** likely to experience poor air quality
  - Black, Indigenous, and Asian community members die at a higher (up to **20% higher** rate) from asthma than White community members.
  - Breathing polluted air can cause asthma and exacerbate respiratory issues.

*2020 King County Strategic Climate Action Plan Update*