

INCOME AND POVERTY

MEDIAN INCOME

Median income is an economic indicator that gives you a feel for the way in which income is distributed across a population. Median income is the point at which half of all households have a lower income and half a higher income. The median "household" income for Mason County was lower than the state for all years between 1990 and 2002. In 2002, the county median "household" income was the 26th lowest in the state. There are 39 counties in the state. (DS33-34)

Median Household Income, Mason County & Washington State 1989-2002

	\$ 1989	\$ 1999	\$ 2002	% CHANGE 1989-1999	% CHANGE 1999-2002
Mason County	26,304	39,586	42,292	↑ 51%	↑ 7%
WA State	31,183	45,776	49,898	↑ 47%	↑ 9%

Data in current dollars.

The median household income, is not the same as median family income. See side bar. Median is not an average, it is the middle income number in a string of numbers arranged from low to high.

The median "family" income of Mason County was lower than the state in both 1989 and 1999. The rate of growth for median "family" income within the county and state was similar over the last decade. (DS35-36)

Median Family Income, Mason County & Washington State 1989-1999

	\$ 1989	\$ 1999	% CHANGE 1989-1999
Mason County	30,429	44,246	↑ 45%
WA State	36,792	53,760	↑ 46%

PER CAPITA INCOME

Per capita income is an economic indicator of an area's well-being. Per capita income describes how income changes (decrease or increases) relative to a population's size. It does not describe how income is distributed within a population.

Mason County had the 11th lowest per capita income in the state in 2000. The per capita income of Mason County was about 1/3 lower than that of the state in 2000 (\$21,210 compared to \$31,230). In 1990, the county per capita income was about 1/4 lower than the state (\$14,855 compared to \$20,017). Though the county per capita income grew during the 1990-2000 time period, it did not grow as fast as the state (43% compared to 56% increase). (DS34, 37)

Per Capita Income, Mason County & Washington State 1990-2000

	\$ 1990	\$ 1995	\$ 2000	% CHANGE 1990-2000
Mason County	14,855	17,460	21,210	↑ 43%
WA State	20,017	23,660	31,230	↑ 56%

A "household" can be a person living alone, or multiple people living together. A household can be a family, but households can also be unrelated people living together.

A "family" is a type of household in which everyone is related by blood, marriage, or adoption.

Income does not equal money gained from employment. Income can come from many sources, such as retirement, unemployment, or wages.

Per capita income for an area is the total personal income of the area divided by the total population of an area.

In 1999, only 45% of the county's total "personal income" came from earnings (e.g. wages). This compares to 75% for the state. (DS34)

In 1999, the remaining portion of Mason County's "personal income" primarily came from transfer payments (22%) and investments (25%). (DS34)

An area's "personal income" is made up of earnings, transfer payment, and investments. Transfer payments include things like public assistance, social security, and unemployment. (DS34)

RANGE IN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Between 1989 and 1999, the "household" income structure of Mason County shifted with fewer households in the lowest income brackets. In 1989, around 5 in 10 households (47%) had an income of \$25,000 dollars per year or less. In 1999, about 3 in 10 households (29%) had an income of \$25,000 or less. When Mason County is compared to the state the number of households earning \$75,000+ was considerably less (14% compared to 25%) in 1999. (DS39-41)

Household Income, Mason County 1989-1999

	# 1989	# 1999	% OF TOTAL 1989	% OF TOTAL 1999	% CHANGE 1989-1999
\$0-9,999	2,346	1,785	16%	9%	↓ 24%
\$10,000-24,999	4,526	3,835	31%	20%	↓ 15%
\$25,000-49,999	5,420	6,484	37%	34%	↑ 20%
\$50,000-74,999	1,695	4,091	12%	22%	↑ 141%
\$75,000-\$99,999	328	1,524	2%	8%	↑ 365%
\$100,000+	230	1,157	2%	6%	↑ 403%
Total	14,565	18,876	100%	100%	↑ 30%

Households do not equate to number of people. A "household" could be 1 person, 2 person etc. Data may not add to total due to rounding.

Household Income, Washington State 1989-1999

	% OF TOTAL 1989	% OF TOTAL 1999	% CHANGE 1989-1999
\$0-9,999	13%	8%	↓ 29%
\$10,000-24,999	26%	17%	↓ 21%
\$25,000-49,999	36%	30%	↓ 1%
\$50,000-74,999	16%	21%	↑ 64%
\$75,000-\$99,999	5%	12%	↑ 193%
\$100,000+	4%	13%	↑ 317%
Total	100%	100%	↑ 21%

DSHS UTILIZATION

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) offers a wide range of services to children, individuals, and families who are in need. Services include child abuse protection, public assistance, foodstamps, Medicaid, disability assistance, drug treatment, foster care, and much more. (DS45-47)

Children Age 0-17 Utilizing DSHS Services, Mason County and Washington State 2000-2001 Fiscal Year

	# 2000	# 2001	% 2000	% 2001
Mason County	6,325	6,667	55%	58%
WA State	629,640	663,192	42%	44%

% based on number of children age 0-17 living in the area of interest.

Income data from the Census is collected for each year prior to the Census. The 2000 Census collected income data for 1999 and 1990 Census for 1989. The Census is done in the Spring so no household would yet know what their total income for 2000 or 1990 would be yet as the year had not ended.

1 in 10 Mason County households had an income of less than \$10,000 in 1999. (DS40)

Though household income is generally better for Mason County when 1999 data are compared to 1989, it is important to remember that cost of living has also risen during that time period.

In 2001, 27% of county residents used DSHS services. This means that nearly 3 in 10 persons used at least one DSHS service in that time period. DSHS utilization for the state was 22% in 2001. (DS47)

DSHS utilization represents the percent of residents using at least one service during that fiscal year. DSHS services are geared towards individuals in extreme need which is why high utilization rates are particularly troubling.

In 2001, nearly 6 in 10 Mason County children were utilizing at least 1 DSHS service. (DS47)

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is the state program that helps families in extreme economic distress. The program was, in years past, called Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). The TANF program is provided through the state Department of Social and Health Services. TANF is what is commonly referred to as public assistance or welfare.

The county and state rate for TANF utilization has dropped significantly over the last 5 years. The county rate for TANF utilization was much higher than the state rate during every year between 1998-2002. (DS42-43)

Children Age 0-17 Receiving Public Assistance (TANF), Mason County and Washington State 1998-2002

	# 1998	# 2000	# 2002	RATE 1998	RATE 2000	RATE 2002
Mason County	1,718	1,329	1,069	138.3	114.5	92.1
WA State	*	*	*	96.0	69.9	64.2

* Number not listed in data source. Rate per 1,000

LIVING BELOW POVERTY LEVEL

The proportion of residents living below poverty level was similar for the county and the state (12% and 11% respectively) according to Census 2000. A higher proportion of Mason County children were living below poverty when compared to the state (18% and 13% respectively). (DS48-51)

Residents of All Ages Living Below Poverty Level, Mason County and Washington State 1989-1999

	# 1989	# 1999	% 1989	% 1999	% CHANGE 1989-1999
Mason County	4,817	5,716	13%	12%	↑ 19%
WA State	517,933	612,370	11%	11%	↑ 18%

Residents Age 0-17 Living Below Poverty Level, Mason County and Washington State 1989-1999

	# 1989	# 1999	% 1989	% 1999	% CHANGE 1989-1999
Mason County	1,817	2,058	19%	18%	↑ 13%
WA State	179,272	202,891	14%	13%	↑ 13%

Family Households Living Below Poverty Level, Mason County and Washington State 1999

FAMILIES.....	ALL % 1999	WITH CHILDREN UNDER 5 % 1999	SINGLE PARENT (MOM) % 1999
Mason County	15%	23%	33%
WA State	11%	15%	24%

In 1996, federal legislation changed the way public assistance was provided. Changes in the way this program operates within the state, such as time restrictions for eligibility (5 years) and work requirements are thought to be partially responsible for the decrease in utilization rates. Decreases in utilization are not necessarily a reflection of improving economic or employment conditions among the participants, but rather may reflect ineligibility for the program or movement to locations where work is available. Welfare reform in Washington went into effect November 1997. (DS44)

Nearly 2 in 10 Mason County children lived below the poverty level according to Census 2000. (DS48, 50)

Poverty as defined in the Census is not the same as the Federal Poverty Level/Poverty Guidelines. These two poverty measures are for different purposes. Poverty in the Census is thought of as a threshold, or the income point at which any below it are poor. (DS52)

Nearly 1 in 4 families with children under 5 were living below poverty in Census 2000. (DS39-40)

1 in 3 female headed single parent families were living below poverty in Census 2000. (DS39-40)

FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEAL PROGRAM

The free and reduced-price meal program, nationally known as the School Lunch and Breakfast Program, is a child nutrition program offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The program is geared toward children most in need of assistance. The number of school children eligible for the program is an indicator of the economic status of households. High percentages of children eligible for the program may be used to identify geographical regions where families are experiencing economic distress.

Each year an average of 3200 Mason County public school children apply for the free and reduced price meal program (based on data from 1998-2002). Between the 1998 and 2002 school year the number of Mason County students enrolling in the program increased from 38% to 44%. The proportion of county students participating in the program is consistently higher than the state. (DS53-57)

Free and Reduced Price Meal Program Applications, Mason County and Washington State 1998/99–2002/03 School Year

	# 1998	# 2002	# PER YEAR 1998-2002	% 1998	% 2002	% CHANGE 1998-2002
Mason County	3,161	3,653	3,221	38%	44%	↑ 16%
WA State	312,088	350,100	321,642	31%	36%	↑ 12%

% based on number of students enrolled in county public school districts

Free and Reduced Price Meal Program Applications, Mason County School Districts 1998/99–2002/03 School Year

	# 1998	# 2002	# PER YEAR 1998-2002	% 1998	% 2002
Grapeview	74	53	62	39%	33%
Hood Canal	258	231	250	67%	70%
Mary M. Knight	96	88	91	45%	41%
North Mason	781	778	775	33%	33%
Pioneer	425	414	416	49%	53%
Shelton	1,450	2,011	1,553	36%	49%
Southside	77	78	73	31%	29%

% based on number of students enrolled in each public school district

DISTRESSED AREA

Each year Washington State identifies counties that are considered economically distressed areas. Mason County has consistently been listed as a “distressed area” in Washington State due to high unemployment rates. (DS59-60)

Economically Distressed Area, Mason County 1996-2001

	RATE 1996-1998	RATE 1999-2001
Mason County	7.2	6.8
WA State	5.3	5.0

Based on 3 Year Average Unemployment Rate

The Free and Reduced Price Meal Program is offered to eligible school age children. The program can provide breakfast and lunch within the school setting. It is important to note that not all people who qualify for the program apply for the program and that individuals who apply are not required to provide verification of income with the application.

The eligibility criteria for the program is based on federal poverty guidelines. A child is eligible for free meals if their household’s income is 130% of the poverty guidelines and for reduced price meals if the household income is 185% of federal poverty guidelines. (DS58)

7 in 10 students within the Hood Canal School District were enrolled in the Free and Reduced Meal Program in 2002. (DS57)

Nearly 1 in 2 students in both the Pioneer and Shelton School Districts were enrolled in the Free and Reduced Meal Program in 2002. (DS57)

% = Percent
= Number or count
\$ = Dollars

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