

Communities Count

2002

A Biennial Report on the strength of King County's Communities

This summary report was prepared from *Communities Count 2002: Social and Health Indicators Across King County*, which was issued on December 4, 2002. Full details of the social and health indicators used throughout this report are available in the complete report.

To view the full report online, go to <http://www.communitiescount.org>

Copies are also available from:

- Public Health - Seattle & King County: 206-296-6817
- King County Children and Family Commission: 206-296-3430
- All King County Public Libraries

Quotations from the Communities Count Focus Groups

Working with staff from eight community-based organizations, the Communities Count Partnership sponsored 29 focus groups in five languages with people around King County. Two hundred and fifty-five King County residents participated in discussions about social support and neighborhood social cohesion. Participants were chosen to include a range of people whose perspectives were missed or under-represented in the Community Health Survey: low-income people; people who speak limited or no English; and members of some ethnic groups. Quotations in this summary report are taken from these focus groups.

Staff members from the following organizations conducted the groups:

- Center for Human Services
- Center for Multicultural Health
- International Counseling and Community Services (Lutheran Social Services)
- Refugee Assistance Program (Archdiocesan Housing Authority)
- Ruth Dykeman Children's Center
- Somali Women and Children Skills for Change
- Statewide Poverty Action Network (Fremont Public Association)
- Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition

Report funded by:

- King County Children and Family Commission
- Public Health - Seattle & King County
- Annie E. Casey Foundation
- United Way of King County
- City of Seattle Human Services Department
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- King County Department of Community & Human Services

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King County residents have their say

Communities Count 2002 is the second biennial report to look at the "people and community indicators" for King County. Residents from all parts of the county and from different backgrounds told us what they value and what worries them.

More than 1,500 King County residents participated through a random telephone survey and a series of focus groups and community forums. From this work, a set of indicators was selected as the most meaningful to residents regarding the overall health of King County.

We are pleased to present an updated 2002 report.



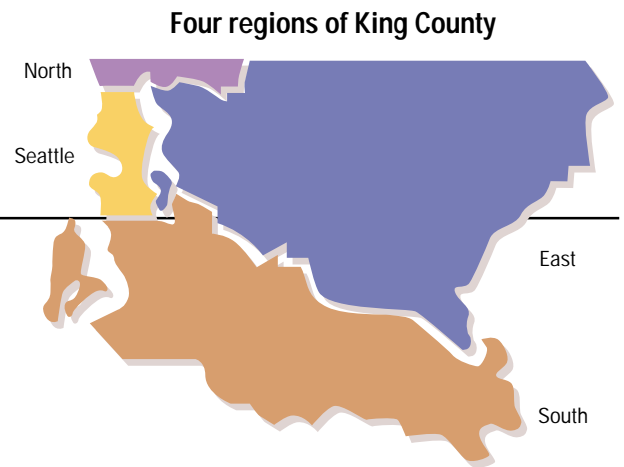
Communities Count 2002 was a combined effort of public and private organizations. The King County Children and Family Commission provided the initial vision and major funding of the effort. Public Health - Seattle & King County provided overall leadership, technical support and prepared the full report.



Communities Count Partnership:

- City of Bellevue
- City of Seattle Department of Human Services
- City of Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment
- King County Children and Family Commission
- King County Department of Community and Human Services
- Public Health-Seattle & King County
- Sustainable Seattle
- United Way of King County





How are we doing?



We want King County to be a strong community where children are nurtured, where we earn fair wages and can afford quality housing, where diversity is valued, and where we feel safe.

Are we living up to these standards? Today, we present the second report card on the strength of King County's communities. We score well in many areas and we have much work to do in others.

Our economy has changed dramatically in two years. In the Communities Count 2000 report, we talked about "tremendous economic growth." Now we are in the midst of an economic downturn that has worsened since this information was collected. Some examples include:

- Twenty percent of us do not earn a living wage, and ten percent of our children live in extreme poverty.
- Most people feel safe in our neighborhoods, but worry about their kids' safety in school. Violent crime continues to decrease, but hate crimes have crept up.
- School test scores are up in almost every category, but too many of our students still fail to finish high school.
- The gap between the richest and poorest among us continues to grow and even people who are working struggle to make ends meet.

This report updates the work begun in 2000 when we first reported on the social health of King County. There is a challenge for all of us to sustain our progress and to address areas of concern. Communities Count 2002 is an important tool to assess where we can best direct resources to address critical needs.

Now is the time for more people to get involved in their communities and be more active neighbors by helping the children, youth and elders around them. Businesses and corporations need to step up to help make King County a place where people can balance work, family, friends and community involvement. Local governments need to work together and within their jurisdictions to address the policies affecting the issues reported in Communities Count 2002.

Let's make King County a place where everyone prospers and lives a safe and healthy life.

Ron Sims
King County Executive

Jon Fine
President,
United Way of King County

Greg Nickels
Mayor,
City of Seattle





What is a 'living wage'?

A living wage is at least **twice** the federal poverty level income. In 2001, the living wage for a family of four was \$36,300 while \$17,000 was considered a living wage for a single person over age 65.

Basic Needs

Food, housing and sufficient income to pay for life's daily necessities top the list of what King County residents say is important for everyone. Twenty percent of our neighbors do not make enough money to make ends meet; five percent do not have enough food.

One in five in King County do not earn a living wage

The basic necessities of daily living - food, shelter, clothing, health care and transportation - are not available to everyone. Without a living wage income, people suffer a lack of dignity and a variety of social and health problems.

Seattle has the highest percentage of people without a living wage (25 %) and East Region the lowest (less than 11 %). The percentage of people who did not earn a living wage income increased from 1989 to 1999 in South Region. This percentage decreased in Seattle and East Region and did not change in North Region.

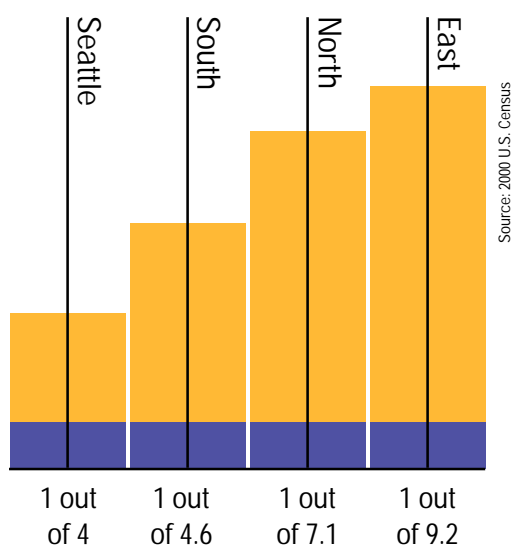


It's true: the gap between rich and poor continues to grow

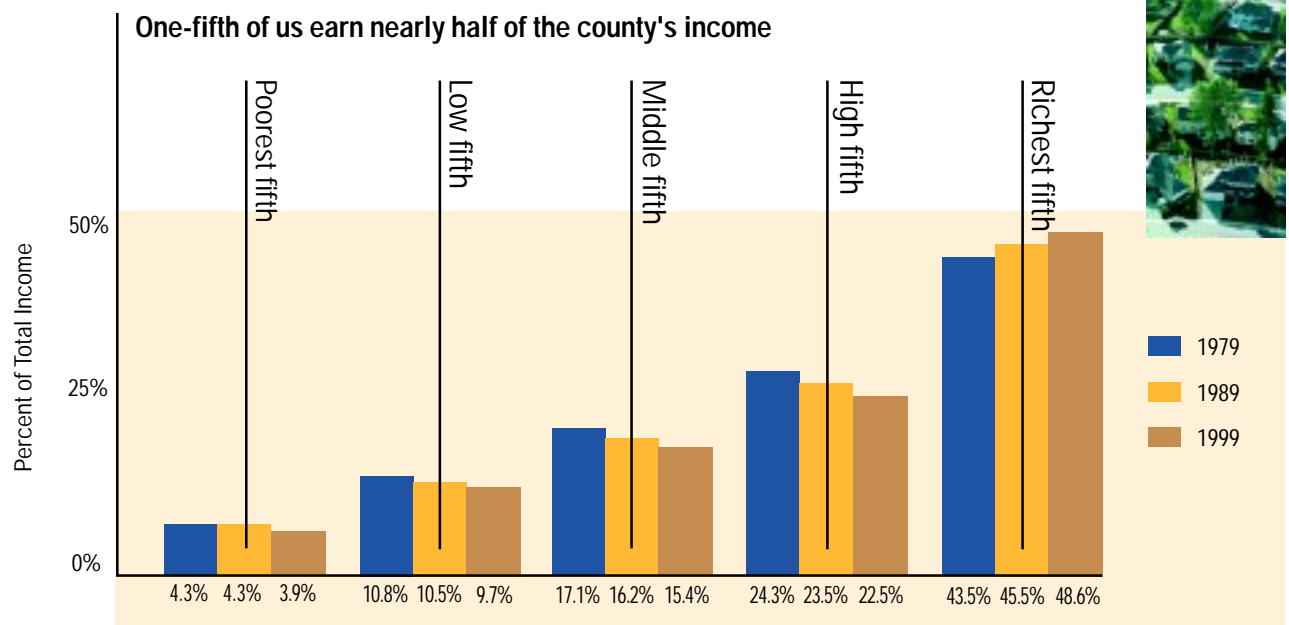
The gap between rich and poor is best illustrated by a discussion of income distribution. The poorest fifth of the population - or those households making less than \$25,000 per year - earns only 4 percent of the county's total income. Yet the richest fifth - households with annual incomes in excess of \$97,000 - accounts for 49 percent of the county's total income.

In addition to the social consequences of economic inequality, a wide gap between rich and poor has a detrimental effect on the health of the entire population. Studies conducted throughout the United States show that as the gap between rich and poor widens, crime goes up, fewer people participate in civic activities and death rates increase for people in all income levels.

Too many are not earning a living wage



...people in households without a living wage



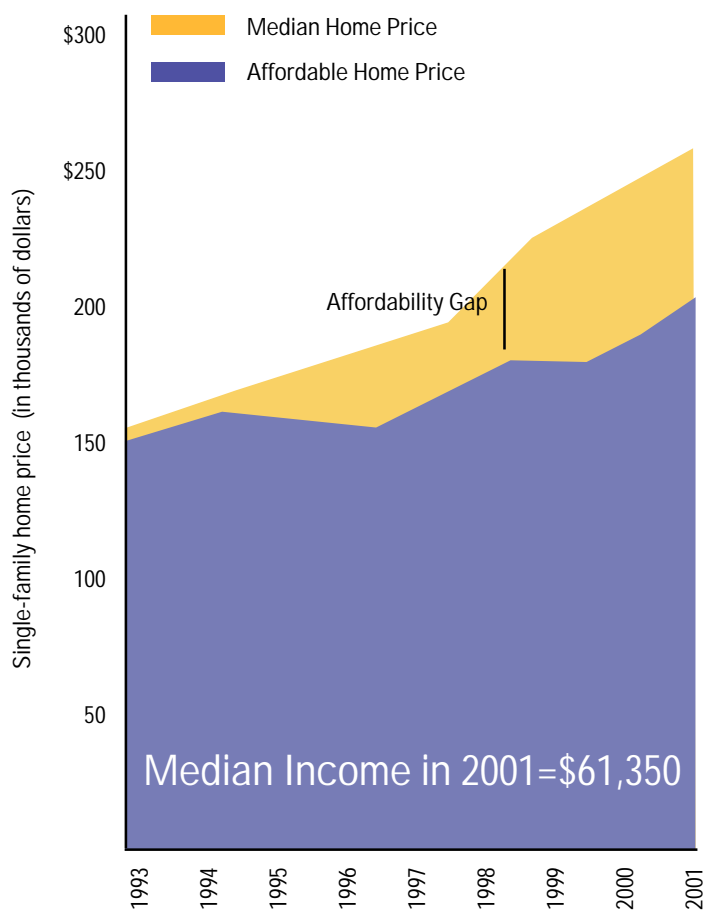


Basic Needs

Home ownership takes a larger share of income

The American dream of owning your own home is out of reach for many King County residents because of the increasing gap between what families can afford and the median price of a home in our market. The median price of a single-family home in King County was \$264,000 in 2001, but a family in the middle-income range could only afford to pay 213,500. The median-priced home has increased \$30,000 in two years.

Median income will not buy a median-priced home

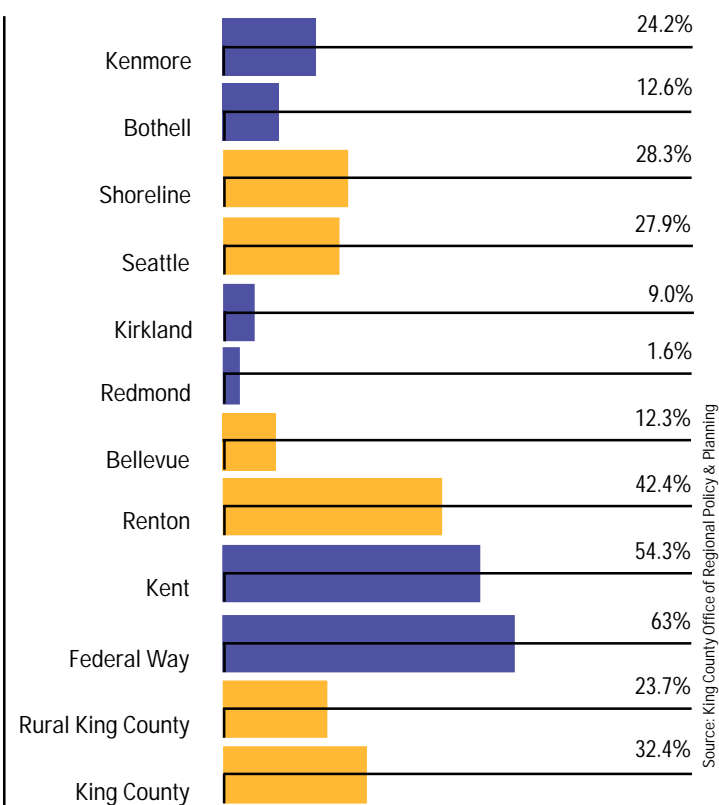


Source: King County Office of Regional Policy & Planning.
Median price means half the houses cost more than that amount, and half cost less.

Only one-third of rental housing is affordable for our low-income neighbors

For low-income families, many apartment rentals are beyond their reach. In 2000, the average monthly rent on a 2-bedroom, 1-bath apartment in King County exceeded the affordable payment of a low-income family by about \$85. The availability of low-cost rental housing varies among cities and regions in King County. Cities in the South Region have a greater proportion of affordable housing for low-income renters than the other regions. The East Region has the lowest proportion of affordable housing.

Percentage of rental housing that is affordable



“I try not to turn to anybody for any help. I just kind of work it out on my own.... Except for every once in a while I go to the [food bank] and grab some bread or something....”

Low-income person, South King County

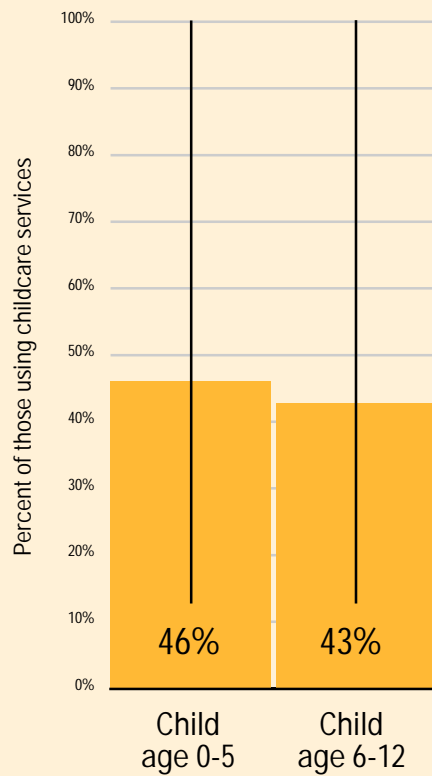


Does everyone get enough food?

Throughout King County, 5 percent of residents are concerned about getting enough food for themselves or their families. Washington State ranks second in the nation in hunger.



Almost half of our youngest children are in regularly scheduled child care



Source: 2001 King County Community Health Survey

Quality, affordable child care vital to community

During the first five years of life, crucial brain development occurs that affects the rest of an individual's life. Increasing numbers of young children spend much of this time with child care providers other than their parents.

In a 2001 countywide survey, 46 percent of people in households with a child under the age of 6 said their youngsters spend time in some type of regularly scheduled child care and 43% of school-age children use various types of child care or organized after-school activities.

Two-thirds of people use formal child care arrangements such as child care centers, licensed family homes, Head Start or pre-school. Less than one-third use informal family, friend or neighbor care or have a nanny in the child's home.

Children

Children play a big role in our vision for King County. Childhood is a key period of a person's development and we want all children to have:

- Quality child care
- Healthy lives
- Academic achievement

How are we doing? Fairly well in some areas; not measuring up in others.



“When I had my baby I had a lot of questions. I started participating in the Program for Early Parent Support [PEPS] and I found support. People attending this group were in my same situation.”

Young Spanish-speaking mother



Almost forty percent of all parents using regularly scheduled child care want to see changes in their children's care. The quality and cost of care were the most frequent concern as it was two years ago. Infant care costs range from an average of \$632 per month in South Region to \$968 per month in East Region.

Changes parents/guardians want in their child care situation

Percent of households that want a change	39%
Prefer parent/babysitter in home	27%
Quality: staff, ratios of staff to children, curriculum, consistency	23%
Cost	20%
Location/transportation	7%
Hours/scheduling	6%
Want full-day kindergarten	3%
Other	13%

Source: 2001 King County Community Health Survey

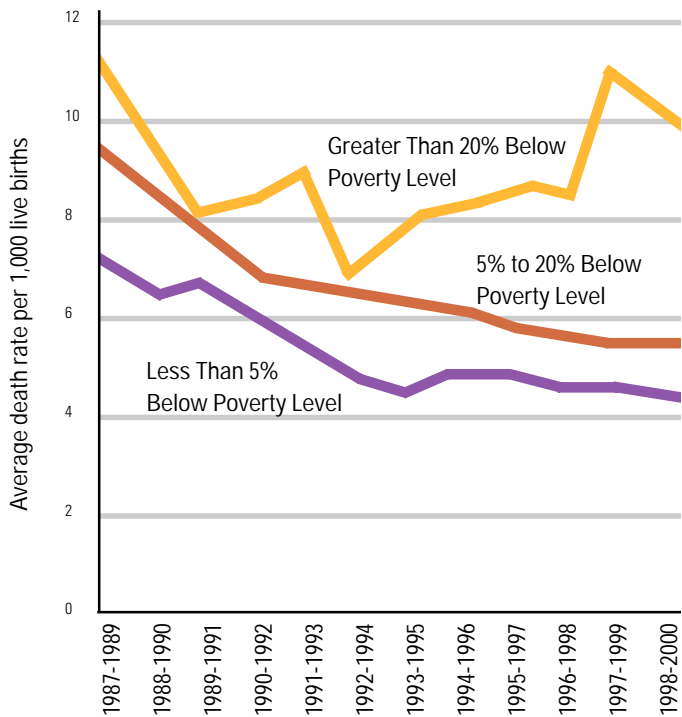


Children

Infant mortality rates are higher in poor neighborhoods

Infant mortality is higher in the lowest income neighborhoods. Infant death rates have declined steadily since the early 1980s in King County and throughout the nation, and continue to do so. In 2001, there were 109 deaths of infants under one year of age in King County. The infant death rate in East Region is lower than Seattle, South Region and King County as a whole.

Infant deaths by poverty level



Source: Washington State Department of Health

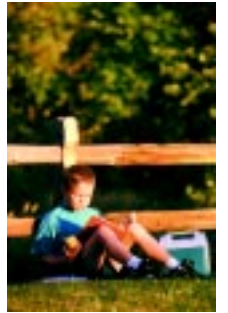


Parents read to children and prepare them for learning



Source: 2001 King County Community Health Survey

Reading to young children promotes language development and, later on, reading comprehension and overall success in school. Reading stories and/or telling stories in any language assists young children to be prepared for school. There were no significant changes in the level of reading to young children since the last report.



College graduates read to children more than other parents



Source: 2001 King County Community Health Survey

Protecting our children

Although domestic violence includes crimes against children, the term "child abuse" has a broader definition. Child abuse is the physical, psychological or sexual mistreatment, or physical neglect of children by their parents or guardians. Neglect is the most common form of child abuse. Washington Child Protective Services receives reports of suspected abuse and investigates cases involving roughly 3 percent of the children (ages 0-17) in King County each year. Many more cases go unreported.

Number of King County children reported to be abused

Year	King County children referred to state due to suspected child abuse
1997	13,097
1998	12,259
1999	12,506
2000	11,993
2001	11,433

Source: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services



Children



Children living in poverty

Nearly 40,000 children reportedly lived in poverty in King County in 1999. It is likely that more children have joined these ranks because of the poor economic situation in which many King County residents now find themselves.

Children growing up in poverty are at greater risk for health problems and are not as likely as their peers to achieve academic success.

Over one-third of low income children are uninsured

Twenty-two percent of children living in high poverty households are not covered by health insurance even though most are eligible for Medicaid. Almost 8 percent of all King County children do not have health insurance.

More children than adults live in poverty

	Percent in 1989	Number in 1989	Percent in 1999	Number in 1999
North Region	5.5%	1,726	6.2%	2,003
Seattle	16.2%	13,295	14.5%	12,335
East Region	5.0%	4,182	4.7%	4,657
South Region	9.9%	13,392	11.4%	18,959
King County	9.8%	32,595	9.9%	37,954

Source: 2001 King County Community Health Survey

Reading, writing and arithmetic

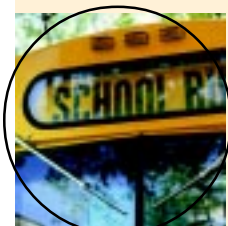
State standards are provided in reading, writing, communication, mathematics, social sciences and the arts. The Class of 2008 must meet these essential learning requirements to graduate from high school. People without a high school diploma earn significantly less on average than those who finish high school and complete some college classes.

Most King County school districts had higher percentages of 4th graders meeting the state standards in math, reading and writing in 2002 than in 1998. Most King County school districts had higher percentages of students meeting the standards than the percentage of Washington State as a whole. Fewer students in South County and Seattle schools are meeting the state standards than in other areas of the county.

To learn the math, reading and writing scores for the King County school districts, visit <http://www.k12.wa.us/edprofile/>

“I know what it's like to be homeless, I know what it's like to hear my stomach rumble. But I always make sure that my kids got something to eat. If I don't eat, they're gonna eat.”

*Low-income parent,
South King County*





Teens



King County residents share a common vision for our teens. With the support of family and community, we want all teens to:

- **Excel academically and socially**
- **Avoid risky behaviors**
- **Grow into emotionally healthy adults**

We are doing well in some areas, but not all.

Nearly one in five students drops out of high school.

Teen pregnancies continue to decrease.

Presenting the Class of 2001

A new, more accurate measure of high school graduation was developed for the class of 2001. This measure follows students from Grade 9 forward to account for transfers in and out of school districts, and tracks completion of high school based on graduation or obtaining GED or adult diploma. The completion rate for King County school districts ranges from 63% to 96%.

2001 graduation rates

District	Graduated	Completed
Auburn	79 %	80.6%
Bellevue	82.8%	83.6%
Enumclaw	88.9%	88.9%
Federal Way	70.3%	72.2%
Highline	60.9%	62.7%
Issaquah	89.3%	89.4%
Kent	85.1%	86.7%
Lake Washington	81.3%	82.4%
Mercer Island	95.5%	95.5%
Northshore	87.2%	88.4%
Renton	77.2%	79.6%
Riverview	78.5%	80.5%
Seattle	74.1%	76.0%
Shoreline	72.2%	72.4%
Skykomish	66.8%	66.7%
Snoqualmie Valley	66.7%	66.7%
Tacoma	64.8%	65.2%
Tukwila	67.3%	67.3%
Vashon Island	80.5%	80.5%

Source: Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

“I got teenagers myself, and it would help if they had something that they could do, not just on the weekends, but maybe throughout the week. Like a rec room or something, where they can play pool, ping pong, basketball.”

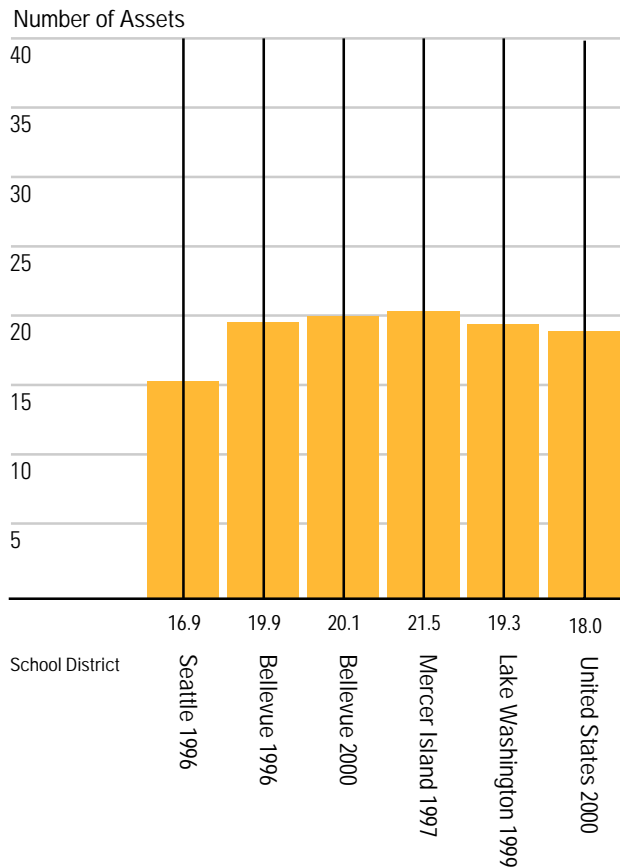
East King County low-income parent





Teens

Teens encounter only half of 40 assets needed for emotional health



Sources: Bellevue, Lake Washington, Mercer Island and Seattle school districts study of high school students (grades 9-12)



Developing socially & emotionally healthy teens

Development assets are the building blocks adolescents need to grow into competent, caring and healthy adults. The more of these experiences and assets our teens have, the more likely they are to engage in positive behaviors. Consequently, they are less likely to participate in risky activities.

Research shows us that teens with the highest number of development assets (40 have been identified) are less likely to participate in risky behaviors such as involvement with drugs and alcohol, firearms and gangs.



Do schools encourage teens to be involved in the community?

Category	Middle Schools		High Schools	
	2002	2000	2002	2000
Allows use of class time for community service	37%	24%	42%	32%
Gives extra credit	21%	29%	32%	42%
Encourages service learning	21%	29%	53%	58%
Requires service for graduation	N/A	N/A	32%	11%

Source: 2002 King County School District Survey

Experiences teens need to be emotionally healthy

Support	Family support, family communication and family involvement in school
	Caring neighborhood and adult relationships
	Caring school climate
Empowerment	Community values teens
	Teens are resources in community
	Safety at home, school and in neighborhood
Boundaries and Expectations	Family, school and neighborhood have clear rules and consequences
	Positive adult and peer role models
	High expectations from parents and teachers
Constructive Use of Time	Creative activities, sports and youth programs
	Religious activities
	Time at home

Source: Search Institute

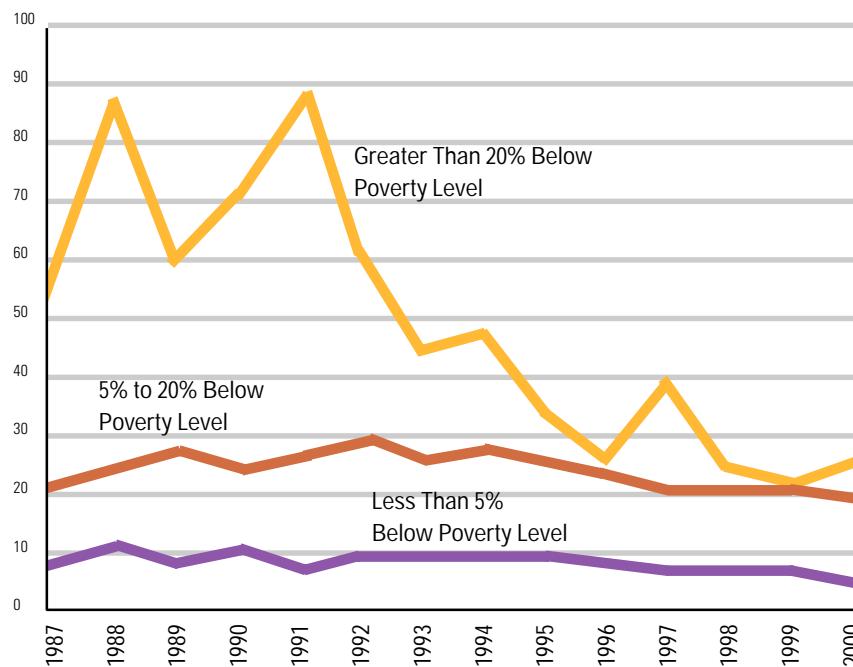


Teens

Teen births decreasing - but higher in low income areas

Infants born to mothers under age 18 have increased risk of death and low birth weight. Teens at greatest risk live in low-income neighborhoods. Both the mother and child tend to have fewer educational, economic and social opportunities.

Teen births by poverty level



Source: Washington State Department of Health

Signs of risky behavior

Risk factors are the opposite of positive assets and experiences. They are conditions that could push teens toward risky behaviors. The more risk factors King County teens have in their lives, the more likely they are to make poor choices.

Since the last report, more 8th and 10th graders report favorable attitudes towards alcohol and drugs. More students also report low attachment to their neighborhoods.

- 46 percent of 10th graders and 32 percent of 8th graders say that drugs are easily available.
- 31 percent of 8th graders report favorable attitudes toward drugs and alcohol use. By 10th grade, it's up to 46 percent.
- 38 percent are academic failures by 10th grade, the same percentage reported by 8th graders.
- 40 percent of 8th graders and 44 % of 10th graders report little commitment to school.
- 33 percent of 8th graders have low attachment to their neighborhood compared with 41% of 10th graders.

Internal assets of emotionally healthy teens

Commitment to Learning	Actively engaged and motivated to do well in school
	Reads for pleasure
Positive Values	Honesty, integrity and caring
	Responsibility
	Places strong value on equality and social justice
	Restraint in sexual activity, alcohol and drug use
Social Competencies	Planning and decision-making
	Interpersonal competency
	Competency with cultures, races and ethnic backgrounds
	Skills to resist negative peer pressure
	Seeks peaceful conflict resolution
Positive Identity	Feels control over things that happen to self
	Self-esteem
	Sense of purpose
	Positive view of personal future

“What I hear all the time with different families, is: 'What are the teenagers gonna do? Where are they gonna go?' My kids are 19 and 22, and...they [say], 'Mom! What is to go out there for? There's nothing there to do!'....There's no bus service on the side of the valley that I live on, so there's no really way to get around if you don't drive.”

Low income mother, East King County



Adults

Whether we are married or single, have children or not, we all want the same things:

- **Balanced lives**
- **Satisfying jobs**
- **Time for our families and friends**

Stress scores are up

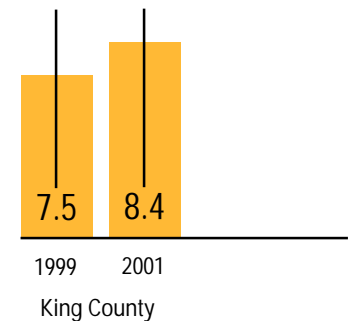
In the past 30 days, how often have you felt ?	North		Seattle		East		South		King County	
	1999	2001	1999	2001	1999	2001	1999	2001	1999	2001
...that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	10%	13%	10%	21%	8%	14%	13%	19%	10%	18%
...confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	85%	87%	84%	84%	88%	89%	90%	83%	87%	85%
...that things were going your way?	76%	72%	74%	65%	76%	77%	76%	67%	75%	69%
...difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	7%	8%	8%	9%	7%	7%	7%	14%	7%	10%

Source: 2001 King County Community Health Survey

Stress has increased everywhere

The specific causes are unknown, but it is clear that adults in all regions and in the County as a whole report more stress than they did two years ago.

Stress Index



“Socializing is a beautiful thing. When my friends come over to my house it really relaxes me.”

Elderly Russian-speaking man

Day-to-day social support

Receiving affection, companionship, and assistance from family and friends makes people feel loved, esteemed, cared for, valued and secure. These factors have a protective effect on our health and well-being.

- People who are white report more social support than people of other races.
- People with incomes of \$50,000 or more have higher levels of support than people with lower incomes.
- People who live in a couple have more social support than others who are separated, divorced, widowed or single.

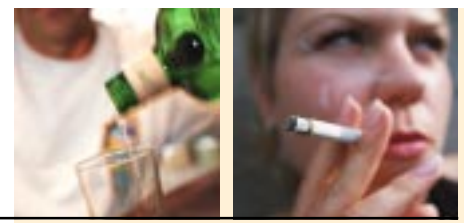
Fewer employers offering family-friendly benefits

In almost all categories - including those mandated by federal law - fewer employers are offering paid or unpaid family, medical and personal leave. For example, nearly 47 percent of small employers provided maternity leave in 2000, but less than 37 percent offer it now.

Are employer benefits family friendly?

Percentage of employers offering following benefits	Small employers (Less than 50 people)		Medium employers (50-499 people)		Large employers (500 people or more)	
	Leave offered	Paid leave offered	Leave offered	Paid leave offered	Leave offered	Paid leave offered
Maternity leave	36.6%	15.4%	62.1%	17.4%	90.4%	11.5%
Paternity leave	20%	7.4%	36.4%	9.8%	65.4%	11.5%
Leave to care for sick child	32.6%	21.1%	44.7%	31.8%	75%	50%
Leave for school visits	22.9%	10.3%	25%	12.9%	32.7%	21.2%
Leave for family death	64%	49.7%	83.3%	72%	94.2%	80.8%

Sources: United Way of King County and University of Washington



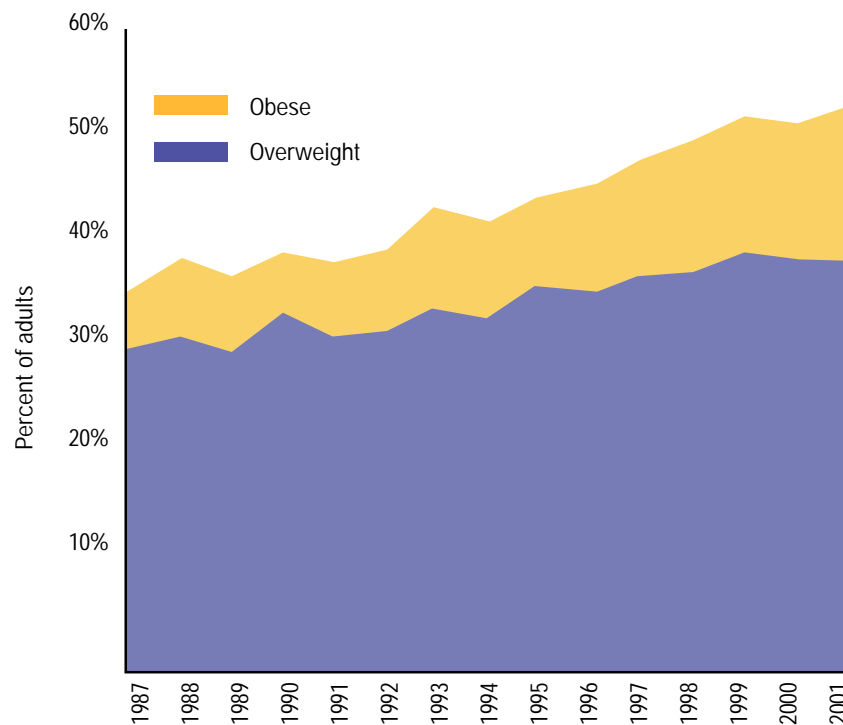
Health

We know what it takes to lead healthy lives, but many of us do not do it. We are gaining weight, exercising too little and still smoking. And a high number of young and middle-aged males admit to binge drinking.

We weigh too much and exercise too little

The proportion of adults who are overweight or obese has been increasing since 1987.

Only about one in four of us (27%) exercise regularly (30 minutes a day, 5 times a week).



1 in 10 lack health insurance

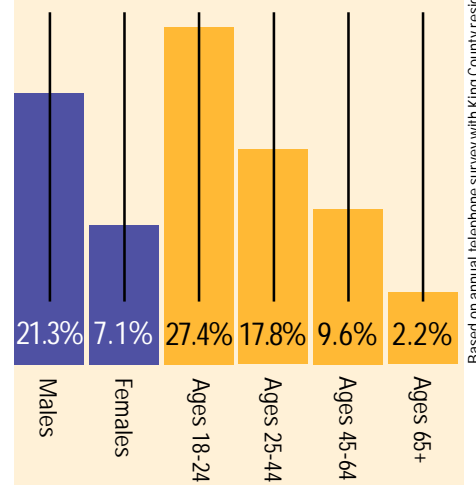
In Communities Count 2000, we reported that approximately 11 percent of King County adults under the age of 65 did not have health insurance. Today it is closer to 9 percent. East Region has the lowest rate of adult uninsured of the four regions and North Region has the highest.

The working poor are hit hardest by insurance costs. They often earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, work for companies that do not offer health care insurance, and earn too little to buy their own coverage. Even people with health insurance are not always covered for all of their health care needs.

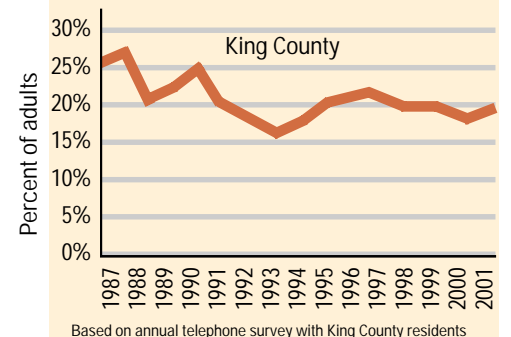
Young men binge drink more

The rate of binge drinking among King County adults declined over the past decade with some regional differences. Binge drinking is higher in Seattle (20 percent) and lower in East Region (12 percent).

Binge drinking



Smoking



Who does not have medical insurance?

Lack of health insurance, by household income, 1999-2001

Less than \$15,000	26%
\$15,000-\$24,999	35%
\$25,000-\$34,999	16%
\$35,000-\$49,000	10%
\$50,000 and over	3%

Based on annual telephone survey with King County residents

“A year ago my husband fell very ill and he was hospitalized. I did not have anyone to help me take care of my children. I couldn't go to work so I lost my job.”

Spanish-speaking mother

Smoking decline has leveled off

Nineteen percent of King County residents smoke compared to 23 percent nation-wide. Nearly a fourth of South Region residents smoke compared to 13 percent in East Region. Seattle and North Region averages were 19 percent and 21 percent, respectively. Among older adults, smoking rates have declined from 11 percent to 6 percent.



Community

Most people share the same vision for their communities:

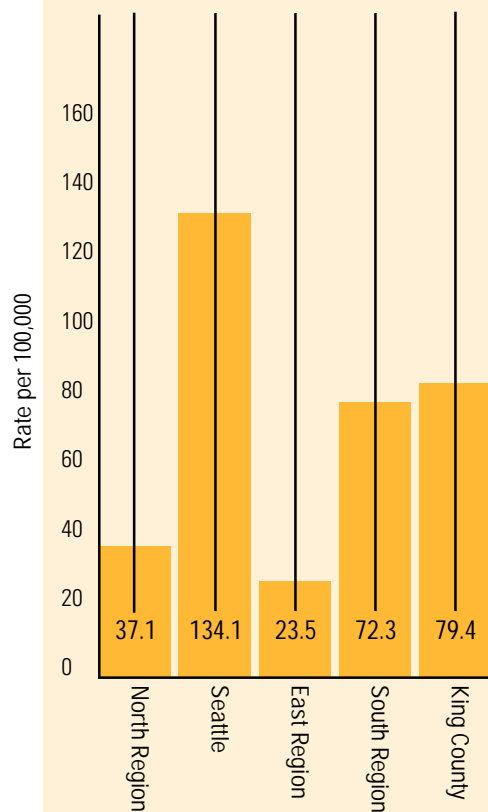
- Safe and secure neighborhoods
- Opportunities for community involvement
- Tolerance among people

Generally, we are satisfied with this aspect of our lives. But many are not free from domestic violence or discrimination.

Violent crime has decreased significantly

Violent crime continues to decline in King County. It is down from a high of 93 violent crimes per 1,000 people in 1987 to 58 per 1,000 in 2001. Violent crimes include murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault. Motor vehicle thefts are an exception to this trend: they have increased in all regions except North.

Domestic violence rates by region



Domestic violence continues to be a major issue

In 2001, 12,051 domestic violence offenses were reported in King County including 11 murders and 73 rapes. Since these crimes are often unreported, the actual number is unknown. From data available, we know that Seattle still has the highest rate of serious domestic violence crimes. There were almost 3,000 violations of protection or no contact orders in King County and the highest number was in South Region.



Hate crimes appear to be increasing

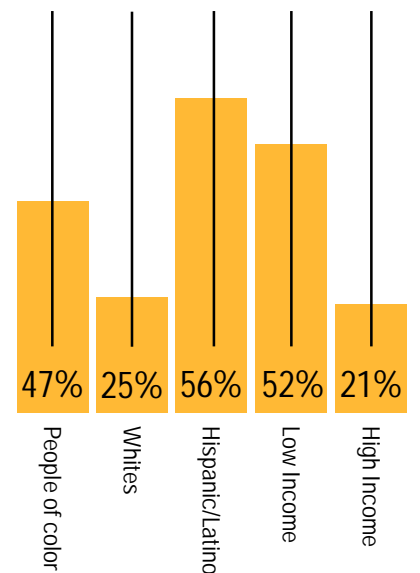
In 2001, there were 100 reported hate crimes in King County compared to 87 in 2000 and 78 in 1999. While these numbers are low, the increasing trend is concerning.



Many of us experience discrimination

All people should be treated fairly and live free from discrimination. Almost 30 percent of King County residents reported that they experienced discrimination. In the past year the most common places where discrimination occurred were in public and at work.

Percent of people who say they were discriminated against



Source: 2001 King County Community Health Survey.





Community

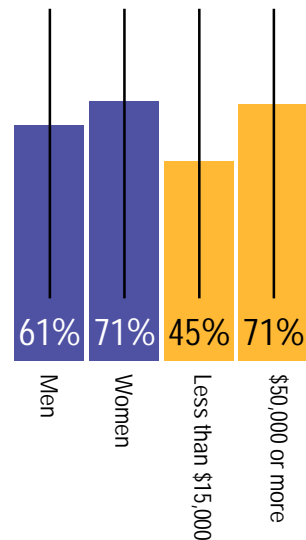
We feel safe but worry about our children's safety

Most King County residents do not worry about safety, but those who do worry about their children's safety in their neighborhoods and at school. Women feel less safe than men; older people feel safer than people in their middle years.

We are involved in our communities

Two-thirds of all King County adults are active in at least one community organization, such as a neighborhood group, civic club or political organization, parent-teacher association, or a religious group. Women are more involved than men. Those with higher incomes (over \$50,000 per year) are more active in community organizations than very low-income people (less than \$15,000 per year).

Participation in community organizations



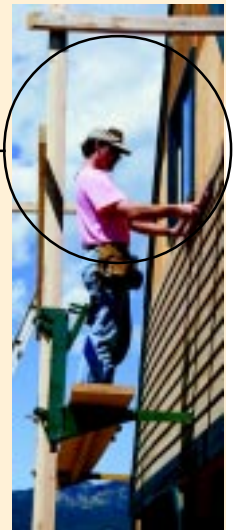
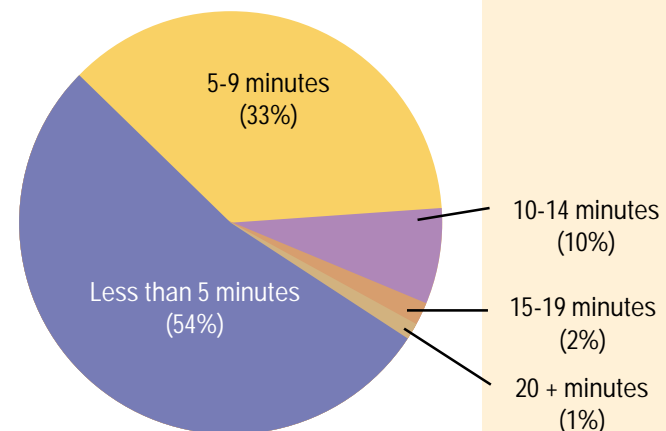
Source: 2001 King County Community Health Survey

"I was raised in a neighborhood where you knew everybody, and if you did something down the street, it probably got back before you did... I've (lacked) a sense of "neighborhoodness" in bringing up my two daughters...."

African American parent

Quick trips to the grocery store save time for other activities. Most King County residents have easy access to grocery shopping.

Travel time to the grocery store by car



How we view our neighborhoods

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following	Percent of King County residents answering "strongly agree" or "agree"
...This is a close-knit neighborhood.	53%
...People in this neighborhood can be trusted.	79%
...People around here are willing to help their neighbors.	83%
...People in this neighborhood share the same values.	76%
...People in this neighborhood generally get along with each other.	94%
Would you say it is very likely, unlikely, or very unlikely that your neighbors could be counted on to intervene or do something if:	Percent of King County residents answering "very likely" or "likely"
...if children were skipping school and hanging out in the neighborhood?	57%
...if children were spray-painting graffiti on something in the neighborhood?	85%
...if children were showing disrespect to an adult?	59%
...if a fight broke out in front of their house?	79%
...if the fire station closest to their home were threatened with budget cuts?	67%

Source: 2001 King County Community Health Survey

"Every time when there is heavy rain it clogs this neighborhood's storm drain. [A neighbor] called the City to come to unclog it [but] it clogged again. My husband had to come out to unclog it himself. We just wanted to make our neighborhood to look clean and nice. When the next-door American neighbor saw that, he came out to help, too."

Vietnamese-speaking woman



How do we respond?



There are many strengths in King County. Most people feel safe in their neighborhoods and have somewhere to turn for support. Crime continues to go down. We read to our children and school test scores are improving. But our situation is worsening with respect to affordable housing, increasing obesity and increasing levels of stress.



In some very basic ways, King County has not progressed. Economic shifts are occurring and may mean that harder times are ahead.

- One out of five people does not earn enough to cover the basic costs of living
- One out of every ten children lives in extreme poverty
- There is a widening gap between rich and poor—and the middle is shrinking
- Fewer small and medium employers are offering family-friendly benefits

This second biennial report provides an update on people and community indicators that matter to residents of King County. We are committed to getting this information into the hands of policy-makers and advocates every two years. *Communities Count* provides a way to look at how we are doing and to identify those areas in King County that need our attention.

How do we respond? We need to keep doing the things that work: nurturing and reading to our children, supporting our schools, volunteering with community organizations, eating well and exercising regularly. We can all be more active neighbors and help the children, youth and elders around us.

We face challenges that require collective action and a long view. Businesses and corporations need to step up to help make King County a place where people can balance work, family, friends and community involvement. Local governments need to work together and across jurisdictions to address the policies that affect these issues. We, the people of King County, need to participate in the work of our democracy: staying informed, getting involved, and standing up for the things that are important to us.

