

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), older adults, people with serious underlying medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease may be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. In addition, people who are pregnant may be at higher risk for severe illness from this virus. To reduce the spread and severity of COVID-19, CDC advises that people stay home when sick, call their health provider before seeking care, and limit movement in the community. Some in our community may be more impacted by the new coronavirus if they do not have resources to prepare for it. Here, we summarize findings about community conditions that may signal opportunities to deploy resources to communities most vulnerable to COVID-19 and impacts of social isolation orders.

Older adults

King County has nearly 400,000 adults aged 60 and over, accounting for 18% of the total population. Of them,

- 216,600 (55%) are aged 60-69
- 116,300 (30%) are aged 70-79, and
- 61,900 (16%) are aged 80 and older.

Vashon Island, Mercer Island/Point Cities, and Des Moines/Normandy Park had the highest percentages of older adults (at 32%, 30%, and 24%, respectively). Among race/ethnic groups, of **White** King County residents, 23% were age 60+, followed by 16% of **American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN)** residents and 15% of **Asian** residents.

By count, **West Seattle, Downtown Seattle, and Shoreline** had the largest numbers of older adults, with more than 13,000 in each area. These three areas also had the largest number of older adults age 70+.

High-risk health conditions, severe obesity, and pregnancy

Averaged over 2014-2018, 17% of King County adults had **high-risk underlying medical conditions** including heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease (COPD and asthma). The prevalence of these conditions was much higher among older adults, reaching 30% among those aged 60+ (60-69: 27%, 70-79: 35%, and 80+: 35%). Note that many other conditions that are also high risk, such as cancer, hypertension, and diseases that are associated with compromised immune system, are not included in the above high risk statistics and can be found on the [King County Community Health Indicators](#) website.

Fairwood, Kent West, and Vashon Island had the highest percentages of adults with underlying medical conditions (27%, 27%, and 26%, respectively). Looking at counts, **Federal Way Central/Military Road, Bear Creek/Carnation/Duvall, Downtown Seattle, Queen Anne/Magnolia, and Shoreline** had the largest number of adults with underlying medical conditions, exceeding 10,000 people in each of these areas.

By race/ethnicity, **AIAN adults** in King County had the highest rates of high-risk chronic conditions (37%), followed by **Black adults** (26%) and **multiple-race adults** (24%).

The CDC also identified adults with **severe obesity** (body mass index [BMI] ≥ 40) as having higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. **Auburn, Federal Way, and North Seattle** had the highest number of

adults with severe obesity, while the highest rates of severe obesity were among adults living in **Auburn, Kirkland, and North Highline**. By race/ethnicity, **Hispanic/Latinx** and **Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (NHPI)** adults had the highest rates of severe obesity (5% each).

People who are pregnant should also be monitored, as they are known to be high risk for other viral illness. We approximate pregnancy using birth rate per 1,000 population. In 2018, 24,000 babies were born in King County. The highest birth rates were in **Auburn South** (18 births per 1,000 population), **Kent West** (rate of 18), and **SeaTac/Tukwila** (rate of 15). The highest birth rates by race/ethnicity were among **NHPI** (20 per 1,000) and **Black** (16 per 1,000) King County residents.

By count, **Federal Way Central/Military Road** (895 births), **Kent SE** (891 births), and **Redmond** (866 births) had the highest number of births, as did **White** (11,455 births) and **Asian** (5,565 births) King County residents when looking by race/ethnicity.

Race and ethnicity

Due to historic and ongoing systemic racism and discrimination, people in certain race and ethnic groups experience worse social, economic, and health outcomes than other groups. These social, economic, and health conditions may place these groups at higher risk of severe COVID-19 illness (the disease caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2) and/or make them more likely to experience hardship due to the social distancing orders and economic impacts of the pandemic.

The data tool shows the number and percent of the population in each city or neighborhood that identifies with a specific race or ethnic group. Due to small sample sizes, the tool does not display rates of each indicator by geography and race/ethnicity in order to protect privacy and ensure valid estimates.

Poverty, language, and access to healthcare

Poverty: 442,000 (21%) King County residents lived below 200% of the federal poverty level. The rate was the highest in **Beacon Hill/Georgetown/South Park** (37%), **SeaTac/Tukwila** (36%), and **North Highline** (35%). By count, these areas had the highest number of people living below 200% poverty: **Kent** (42,000), **Federal Way** (30,000), and **Auburn** (21,000). By race/ethnicity, **AIAN** (46%) and **Black** (47%) King County residents were the most likely to have incomes below 200% FPL.

Uninsured: In King County, 109,000 (8%) adults aged 18-64 did not have health insurance coverage. The uninsured rates were the highest in **North Highline** (18%), **Burien** (16%), and **SeaTac/Tukwila** (14%). By the number of people impacted, **Kent, Renton, and Federal Way** each had more than 8,000 uninsured adults age 18-64. **Hispanic/Latinx** (28%) and **AIAN** (21%) King County adults were the most likely to be uninsured.

No personal doctor: 418,000 (24%) King County adults did not have a personal doctor, including some people who do have health insurance. The rate was the highest in **Downtown Seattle** (34%), **NE Seattle** (33%), and **Redmond** (31%). The largest number of people who did not have a personal doctor were in **Downtown Seattle** (23,000 people), **NE Seattle** (21,000 people), and **Fremont/Green Lake** (16,000 people). Note that **NE Seattle** includes the University of Washington campus and surrounding areas with a large student population. By race/ethnicity, 41% of **Hispanic/Latinx** adults, 31% of **multiple-race** adults, and 29% each of **AIAN** and **Asian** adults lack a personal doctor.

Language: 48,000 (6%) of households in King County were limited English speaking; in other words, no one in the household age 14 or older speaks English very well. The rate was the highest in **Beacon Hill/Georgetown/South Park** (18%), **North Highline** (14%), and **Bellevue Central** (13%). **Renton and Kent** had the largest number of limited English speaking households with 4,000 persons in each area. Looking at individuals age 5 and older, 32% of **Asian** King County residents and 28% of **Hispanic/Latinx** speak Limited English and may have challenges accessing information in English.

Students and families who might be highly impacted

Students who receive free or reduced price meals or experience food insecurity: In King County, 34% of students in public schools were eligible for free or reduced price meals in the 2019-2020 school year. This represents over 103,000 students. Looking at specific school districts, 76% of **Skykomish** students, 75% of **Tukwila** students, and 69% of **Highline** students are eligible for free and reduced price meals. The districts with the highest numbers of eligible students were **Seattle** (about 18,100 students), **Federal Way** (15,500 students), and **Kent** (14,500 students).

Student food insecurity was measured by the number of students who said they had to skip or cut the size of meals in the past year because there was not enough money for food. Among public school middle and high school students in King County, 22% of **NHPI** students and 19% of **AIAN** students reported being food insecure.

Students who experience homelessness: During the 2019-2020 school year, nearly 6,000 King County public school students experienced homelessness, accounting for 2% of the total student body. The **Seattle** School District had the largest number of homeless students (about 2,200 students), followed by **Highline** (1,000 students), and **Federal Way** (600 students). The rate of homelessness was the highest in the **Tukwila** and **Highline** School Districts (both 5%), followed by **Seattle** (4%). By race/ethnicity, **AIAN** students (8%), **Black** students (8%), and **NHPI** students (7%) were the most likely to report experiencing homelessness.

Families who lack support and connection: In 2017, 75% of caregivers of children said they had someone to turn to for day-to-day emotional support with parenting and raising children. This indicates that 25% of the caregivers lack emotional support. The rate of support was lower among **Asian** (63%), **Latino** (60%), and **black** (59%) caregivers, and among caregivers for students in the **Highline** school district (51%).

Additional Resources

Visit Public Health Seattle & King County's [COVID-19 website](#) for recent updates, recommendations on protecting our community, fact sheets and translated materials.

Visit the [COVID-19 Outbreak Data Dashboard](#) for daily updates of a summary of COVID-19 test results, status of cases in King County by region, and breakdown of test results by sex at birth and age group.

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