

SKAGIT COUNTY  
Community Assessment  
Health Priorities

Report for Community  
Response

POPULATION HEALTH TRUST  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE



December 2015

# Community Assessment Health Priorities for Community Response November-December 2015

## Table of Contents

<b>Purpose</b> .....	1
<b>Background</b> .....	1
<b>Methods</b> .....	2
<b>Root Causes</b> .....	3
<b>Domain: Healthcare Access</b> .....	4
<i>Child Immunization</i> .....	5
<i>Prenatal Care</i> .....	6
<i>Preventive Care</i> .....	7
<b>Domain: Health Behaviors</b> .....	8
<i>Overweight/obesity</i> .....	9
<i>Poor Nutrition: Insufficient Fruits &amp; Vegetables</i> .....	10
<i>Marijuana</i> .....	11
<i>Chlamydia</i> .....	12
<b>Domain: Safety &amp; Support</b> .....	13
<i>Bullying among Youth</i> .....	14
<i>Depression among Children and Youth</i> .....	15
<b>Domain: Socio-economic &amp; Physical Environment</b> .....	17
<i>Lack of Affordable Housing</i> .....	18
<i>Lack of Family Wage Jobs</i> .....	19
<b>References</b> .....	20

For more information:

David Jefferson, MSW

Community Health Analyst, Skagit County Public Health

Office: 360.336.9396

Mobile: 360.708.8837

Davidj@co.skagit.wa.us

## Purpose

This report summarizes health priorities identified by the Skagit County Population Health Trust and partners during a 2015 Community Health Assessment process. The data presented in this report were discussed with Skagit County residents in a series of “Community Listening Sessions” during November-December 2015.

The presentation of these potential priorities in community forums was intended to engage diverse community members in the process of planning to protect and improve Skagit County community’s health. We asked participants to discuss:

- Are these the right health issues for Skagit County to address, based on your perceptions of the community?
- Is anything missing?
- Which issues do you think are the “top 3” for the community, again based on your perceptions?

## Background

The Skagit County Population Health Trust was recently established to bring resources together and develop a community health plan. The 28-member Advisory Committee includes representatives from multiple community sectors.

This group has relied extensively on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s *County Health Rankings and Roadmaps* model for creating a plan to improve community health (see figure at right). This model includes bringing diverse community members together, reviewing health data, and using both data and community experts to pick community health priorities that make sense.

89 Skagit County community leaders participated in a one day “Data Carousel” review of community health data in October 2015, and selected the 12 health issues in this report as potential priorities for action. The “Community Listening Sessions” will provide a broader group of community members to validate or challenge those data-driven selections based on their own experiences.



## Methods

The 12 health issues in this report are organized in four domains:

- Healthcare Access
- Health Behaviors
- Safety & Support
- Socio-economic and Physical Environment

Each domain includes a one-page introduction describing what kinds of issues are included within it, and some community data highlights. Each health issue within domains is summarized on one page, starting with a quote from the Skagit County Data Carousel findings about that issue, followed by a definition and a summary of available data to describe that issue.

### *What do we know from the data?*

Multiple existing data sources were reviewed to gather quantitative information about community health status. Some key data sources include:

- **Washington State Healthy Youth Survey (HYS).** This survey of public school students in Washington State is conducted among 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders in the fall of even-numbered years. The anonymous paper-based survey is given in classroom settings. Many questions about health-related behaviors are included. More information is available at [www.askhys.net](http://www.askhys.net)
- **Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).** The BRFSS is the largest telephone health survey in the world. It is sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in all 50 states. This telephone survey of adults asks about multiple health behaviors and preventive practices related to important public health concerns. More information is available at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/DataandStatisticalReports/DataSystems/BehavioralRiskFactorSurveillanceSystemBRFSS>
- **Washington State Vital Statistics Reports.** Washington State’s Department of Health maintains community-level records on birth, death, immunization, and reportable infectious diseases. More information about data systems is available at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/DataandStatisticalReports/VitalStatisticsandPopulationData>
- **Other sources.** Other data sources are cited as appropriate.

As often as possible, data and survey findings were translated into “real numbers” of people in the County. Findings from surveys were applied to Census 2010 Skagit County age or gender-appropriate groups to generate these estimates. All numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred.

### *What do Skagit County people say?*

Information in these sections is provided from the **Skagit County Quality of Life Survey**. More than 1,500 Skagit County community adults participated in this survey, which was implemented during June-July 2015. A full report of results is available at the Population Health Trust website <http://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PHTAC/survey.htm>.

# Root Causes

The data indicators provide the community and planners an opportunity to identify areas of concern. In order to understand why these areas are raising to the top, it’s important to explore root causes. By looking into root causes, it helps people understand underlying reasons a problem or issue exists. Exploring why a problem exists can lead us to prioritize community efforts on the factors like health, education, employment, income, family and social support, and community safety (Robert Wood Johnson, County Health Rankings).

A small sub-group of the Population Health Trust board members conducted a preliminary root cause analysis following the October 21 Data Carousel event. This analysis was to identify common root causes of the 12 indicators that are in this report. The goal is help other community members who are reading this report, and participating in the Community Forums, to think more broadly about underlying causes of these issues, and whether the issues have common causes. Identifying some primary causes is one of the first steps toward planning. Additional root cause analysis will be done prior to planning in 2016. The following table shows the 12 highest priority health indicators identified at the Data Carousel and possible common root causes. These are by no means a final list, rather, a starting point to move the community and planning forward.

Top 12 Health Indicators	Possible Common Root Causes
1. Skagit County has a low rate of complete childhood immunization	Education, income, adequate provider and community awareness and understanding
2. Some women in Skagit County are not receiving sufficient prenatal care during the first trimester of pregnancy	
3. Some Skagit County children and adults are not receiving routine and preventive medical care	
4. Many Skagit County adults are either obese or overweight	Education, income and community awareness and understanding
5. Some Skagit County adults and children do not consume enough fruits and vegetables	
6. Marijuana use among youth in Skagit County is increasing	
7. The rate of Chlamydia among Skagit County’s young women is increasing	Education, income, adequate provider and community awareness and understanding
8. There is too much youth violence in Skagit County	
9. Too many Skagit County children and youth are depressed or have thought about suicide	Income
10. Too many Skagit County youth have been hurt by an adult in their lifetime	
11. Skagit County housing is unaffordable and unavailable for too many Skagit County residents	
12. Skagit County lacks an adequate number of living wage jobs	

## Domain: Healthcare Access

### *What does this mean?*

The “Healthcare Access” domain includes measures of clinical care, such as those related to access to care and quality of care.

Health care in Washington and individual counties have been experiencing significant changes since the passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA, sometimes called “Obamacare” due to the leadership of President Obama in this effort). Many of these changes aim to improve the quality of care, the quality of the patient’s experience, and doing it all in a fiscally responsible manner.

### *What do we know from the data?*

In 2015, about 9% of Skagit County residents are uninsured, an estimated 10,500 people, which is an improvement from 15% in 2013.<sup>1</sup>

### *What do Skagit County people say?*

- About one in five (20%) Skagit County residents identified better access to affordable health care as one of the top changes they would make to improve health and well-being in Skagit County.
- About one in ten (10%) Skagit County residents identified health care access as one of the biggest day-to-day challenges their families face
- About one in nine (13%) Skagit County parents or caregivers for young children (ages 0 to 5) said lack of medical, mental health or dental providers for their children was one of their biggest challenges.

---

<sup>1</sup> New York Times. We Mapped the Uninsured. You'll Notice a Pattern. Q. Bui and M. Sanger-Katz. October 30, 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/10/31/upshot/who-still-doesnt-have-health-insurance-obamacare.html? r=1> (last accessed 11-15-15).

## Child Immunization

“Skagit County has a low rate of complete childhood immunization”

*What does this mean?*

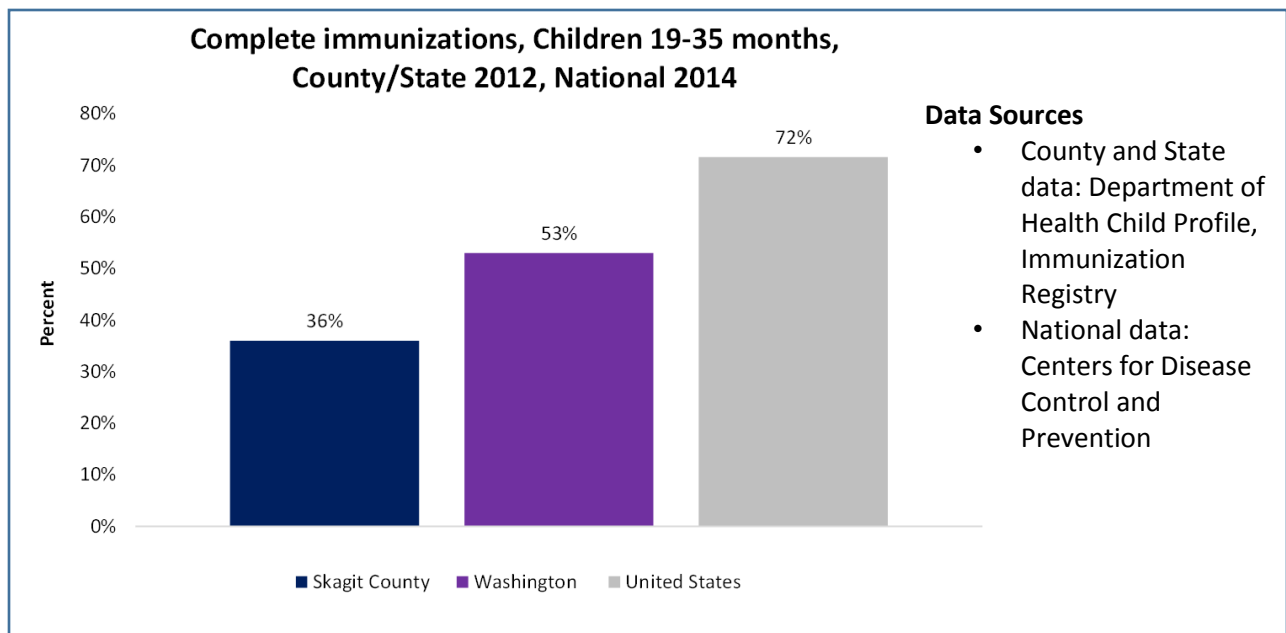
The reduction in morbidity and mortality associated with vaccine-preventable diseases in the United States has been described as one of the 10 greatest public health achievements of the first decade of the 21st century.<sup>2</sup>

Recommended childhood immunization includes vaccinations of at least four doses of diphtheria and tetanus toxoids and pertussis vaccine (DTP), three doses of poliovirus vaccine, and one dose of measles-mumps-rubella vaccine (MMR) between ages 19 and 35 months.<sup>3</sup>

*What do we know from the data?*

The rate of complete childhood immunizations in Skagit County (36%) is lower than the State (53%) and the Nation (72%).

**About 2,500** Skagit County children ages 19 to 35 months are without complete immunizations.



*What do Skagit County people say?*

The Skagit County “Data Carousel” participants identified child immunizations as an important priority because Skagit County has a low rate of childhood immunization completion.

<sup>2</sup> CDC. Ten great public health achievements—United States, 2001–2010. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2011;60:619–23.

<sup>3</sup> CDC. National, state, and local area vaccination coverage among children aged 19–35 months—United States, 2014. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2015;64:889–96.

## Prenatal Care

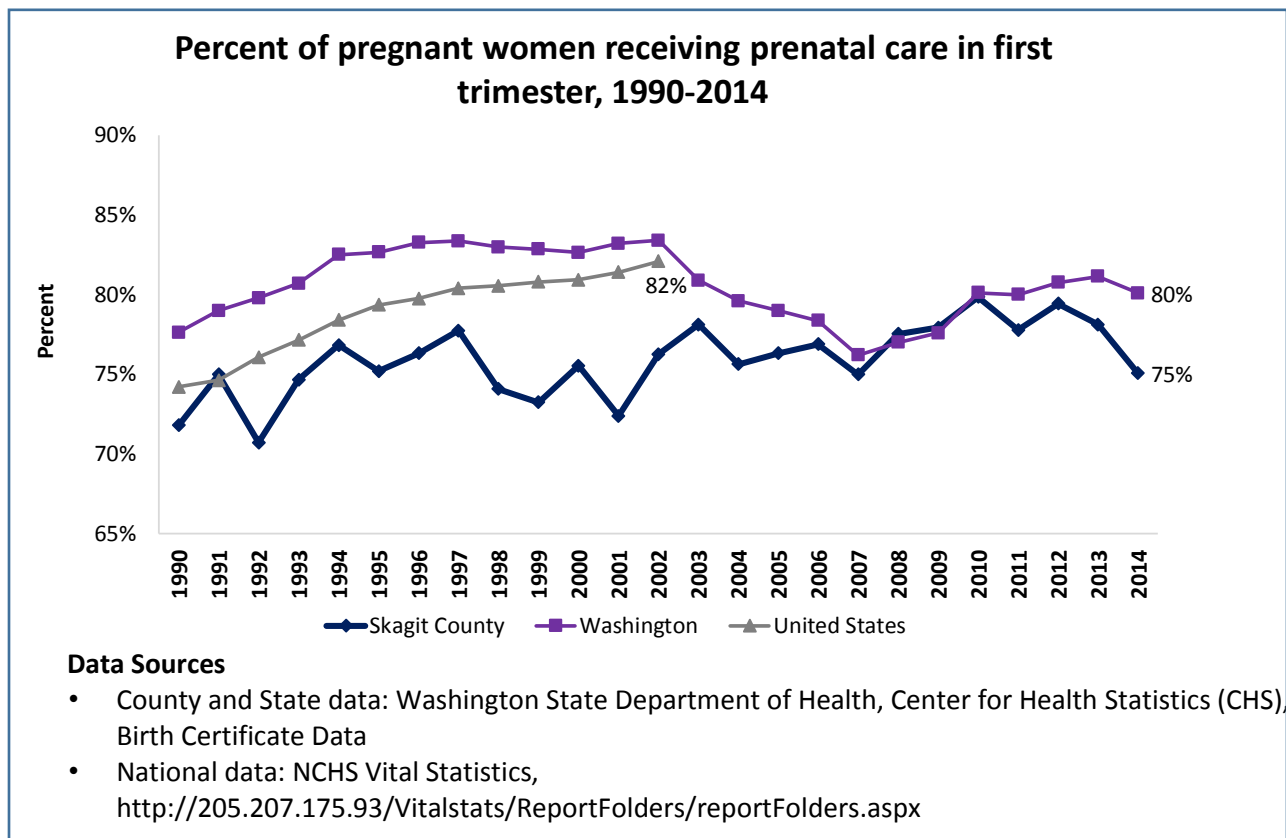
“Some women in Skagit County are not receiving sufficient prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy”

*What does this mean?*

Prenatal care includes comprehensive medical care during pregnancy, labor and delivery, and postpartum. Services include screening for medical and other conditions known to increase the risk of poor outcomes and treatment for those conditions.

*What do we know from the data?*

In 2014 about **345 of 1,383 Skagit County women** of child bearing age (15 to 39) did not receive prenatal care in their first trimester. The percentage of women receiving prenatal care in their first trimester is lower in Skagit County (75%) than the State (80%).



*What do Skagit County people say?*

The Skagit County “Data Carousel” participants identified prenatal care as an important priority because Skagit County has a relatively low rate of prenatal care compared to the state.



## Preventive Care

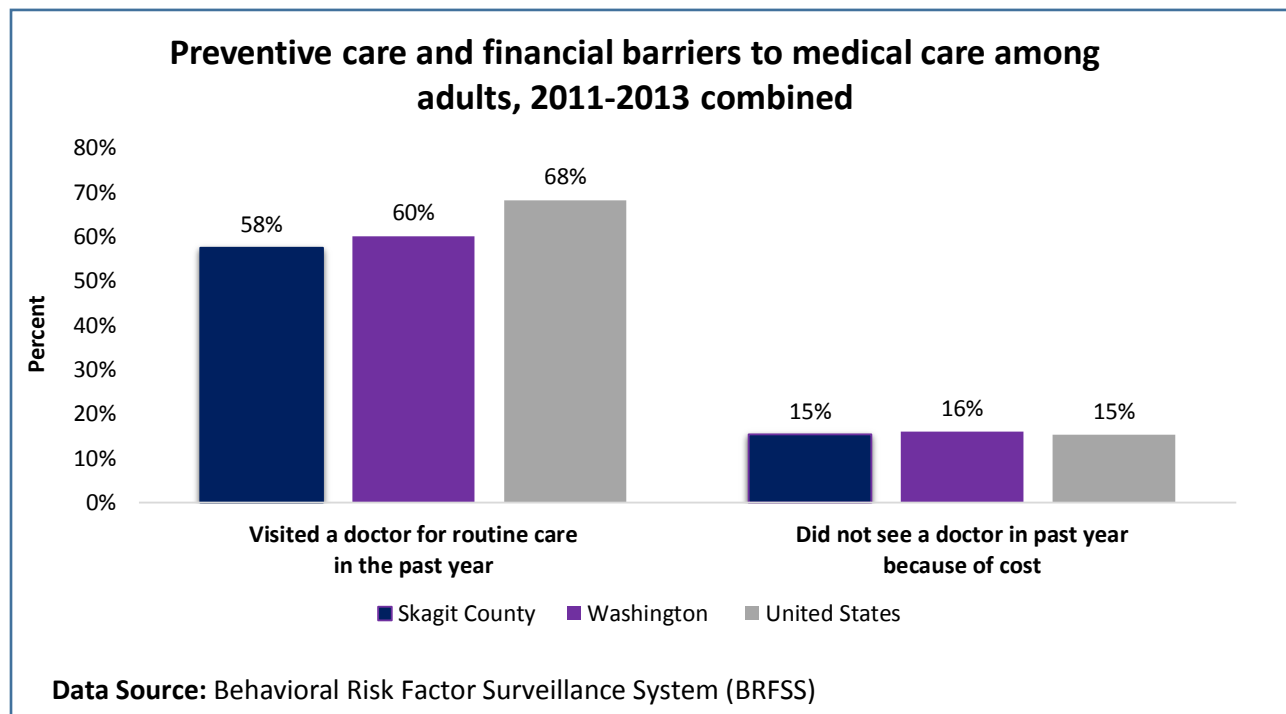
“Some Skagit County children and adults are not getting routine and preventive medical care”

*What does this mean?*

Preventive or routine care is defined in adult and youth surveys as seeing a doctor or healthcare provider in the past year for a checkup (a general exam, not for a specific injury, illness or condition). Lack of preventive care can be related to a lack of knowledge about importance of care, lack of providers, or lack of financial resources/insurance coverage.

*What do we know from the data?*

About **37,400 Skagit County adults** and **4,000 Skagit County youth** (ages 12 to 17) did not receive preventive or routine care in the past year. Skagit County adults were slightly less likely than adults statewide and in the US to say they had seen a health care provider for routine, preventive care in the past year.



*What do Skagit County people say?*

The Skagit County “Data Carousel” participants identified preventive care as an important priority because Skagit County has a relatively low rate compared to the state, for both adults and youth.

## Domain: Health Behaviors

### *What does this mean?*

The “Healthcare Behaviors” domain includes measures of individual health risk behaviors, such as alcohol and drug use, diet and exercise, and sexual activity.

Unhealthy behaviors can be the result of factors such as:

- Lack of knowledge (such as lack of access to messages about what is healthy, or exposure to messages promoting unhealthy behaviors)
- Acceptability of unhealthy behaviors as “normal” within the community
- Lack of resources (such as lack of access to healthier foods or not having enough money to buy higher-quality foods).

### *What do we know from the data?*

The Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) and Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) provide detailed information about health behaviors of both youth and adults.

### *What do Skagit County people say?*

- About one in ten (10%) Skagit County residents identified health care access as one of the biggest day-to-day challenges their families face

## Overweight/obesity

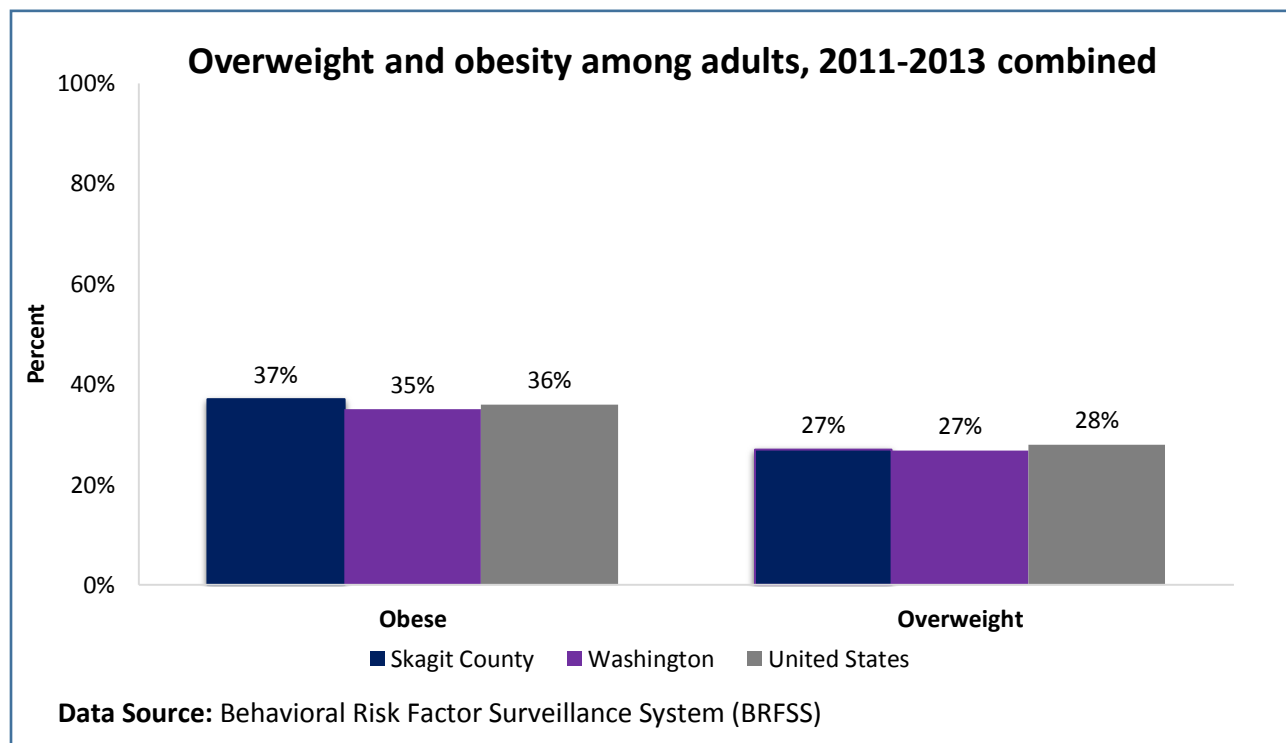
“Many Skagit County adults are either obese or overweight”

*What does this mean?*

Body mass index (BMI) is obtained by dividing a person's weight by the square of his or her height. Obese adults have BMI of 30 or higher and overweight adults have a BMI between 25 and 29.9. Youth obese and overweight status are based on age and gender-specific BMI charts developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Youth in the top 5 percent for body mass index are considered obese and youth in the top 15 percent, but not the top 5 percent, are considered overweight.

*What do we know from the data?*

About 37% of Skagit County adults are overweight and another 27% are obese. About 16% of Skagit County 10<sup>th</sup> graders are overweight and another 14% are obese. This means that about **58,000 Skagit County adults** and **3,000 Skagit County youth** (ages 12 to 17) are overweight or obese.



*What do Skagit County people say?*

The Skagit County “Data Carousel” participants identified overweight and obesity as an important priority because of the high prevalence in Skagit County and the important related health consequences such as diabetes and heart disease.

## Poor Nutrition: Insufficient Fruits & Vegetables

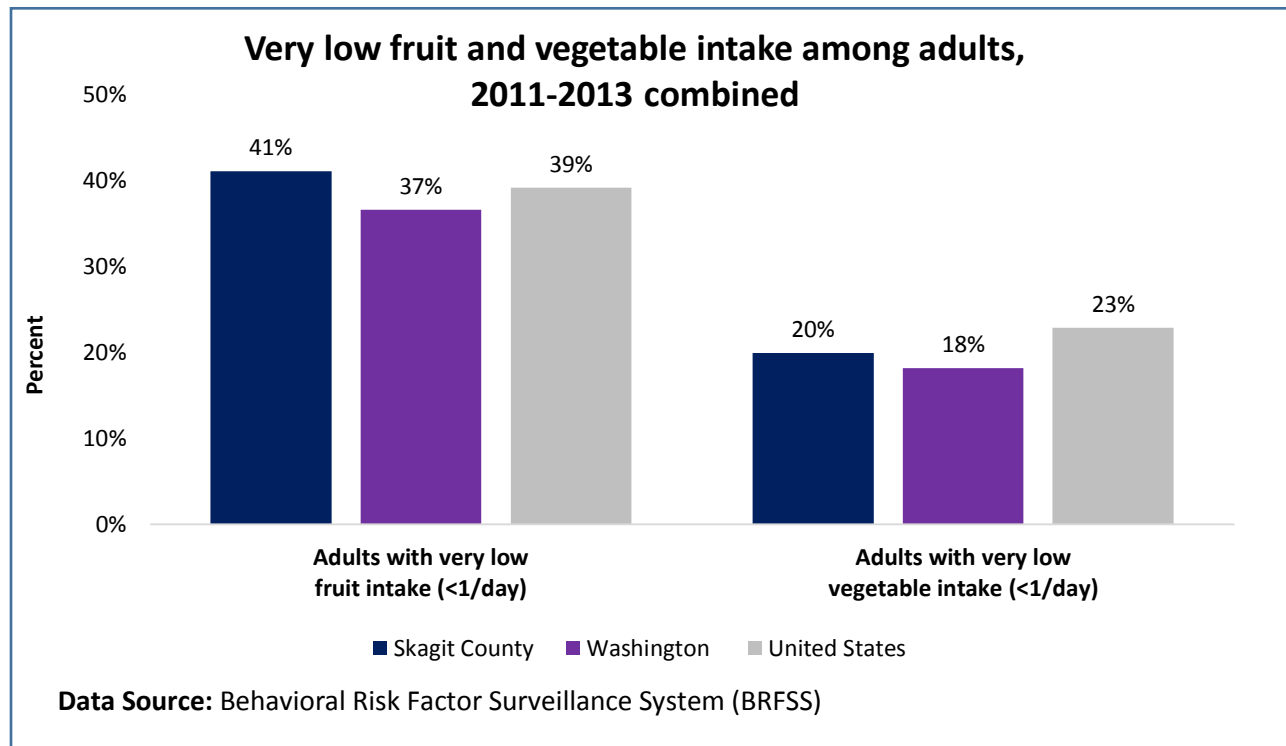
“Some Skagit County adults and children do not consume enough fruits and vegetables”

*What does this mean?*

Fruit and vegetable consumption is calculated by asking how many times in the past day, week or month people consumed specific items. For adults, recommendations for daily consumption are based on age and gender and activity level. Adults are considered to have very low consumption if they have less than one serving of fruit or vegetables per day. For youth, “five a day” fruit or vegetable servings are recommended. “Fruit” means 100% fruit juice, fresh, frozen or canned fruit. “Vegetables” means beans, dark green vegetables or greens, orange-colored vegetables, and other vegetables (not French fries, potato chips).

*What do we know from the data?*

About **36,600 Skagit County adults** report very low fruit consumption and **17,800 Skagit County adults** report very low vegetable consumption. About **7,600 Skagit County youth** (ages 12 to 17) are not getting at least 5 servings of fruits or vegetables daily.



*What do Skagit County people say?*

About 47% of Skagit County residents were not satisfied with the amount of fruits and vegetables they were eating. Among those not satisfied, over half of them said they would be motivated to eat more fruits and vegetables if they were less expensive.

## Marijuana

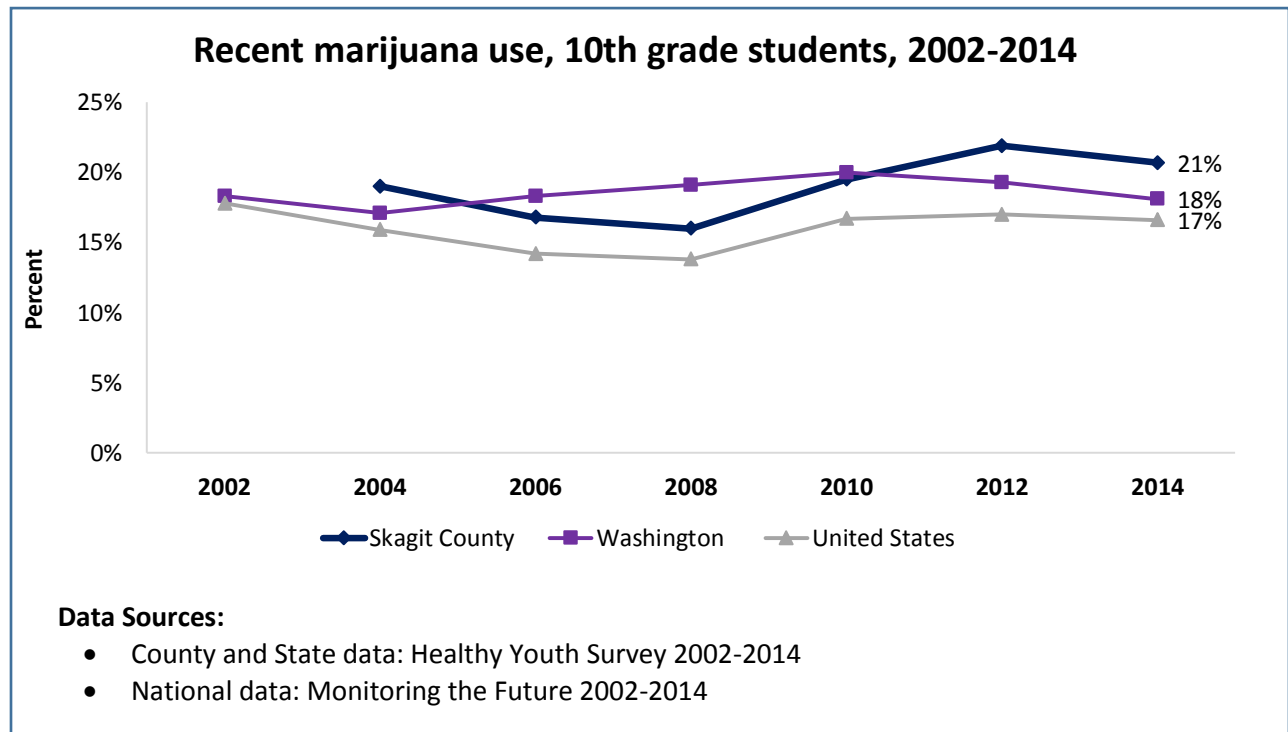
“Marijuana use is increasing among Skagit County youth”

*What does this mean?*

Current youth marijuana use is based on use of marijuana in any form, on one or more days in the past month.

*What do we know from the data?*

About **1,900 Skagit County youth** (ages 12 to 17) currently use marijuana. The overall trend in marijuana use among youth appears to be increasing, particularly since 2008.



*What do Skagit County people say?*

The Skagit County “Data Carousel” participants identified marijuana use among youth as an important priority because of concern about the recent increasing trend in use among youth in Skagit County, and concerns about continued increases in access and availability because of legalization of recreational marijuana in Washington State.

## Chlamydia

“The rate of Chlamydia among Skagit County’s young women is increasing”

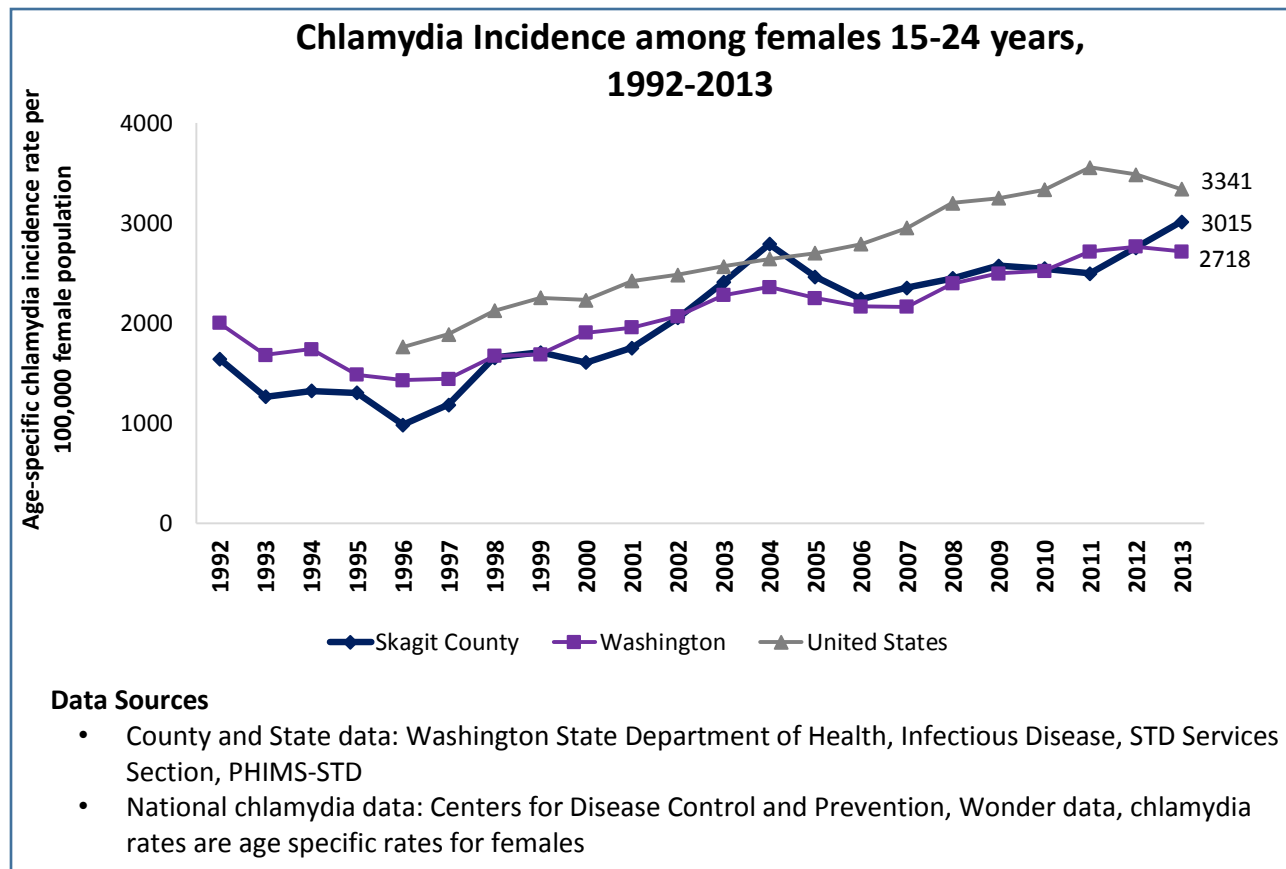
*What does this mean?*

Chlamydia is the most commonly reported sexually transmitted infection (STI or sexually transmitted disease - STD) in WA and the US. Chlamydia disease cases reported to the Department of Health are shown as the annual rate per 100,000 population of females ages 15-24.

Chlamydia can cause serious, permanent damage to a woman’s reproductive system, making it difficult or impossible for her to become pregnant later on. Chlamydia can also cause potentially fatal ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy that occurs outside the womb).

*What do we know from the data?*

There were **215 cases of Chlamydia** among women ages 15-24 during 2013.



*What do Skagit County people say?*

The Skagit County “Data Carousel” participants identified Chlamydia as an important priority because Skagit County has an increasing rate and because of the long-term damage it can do.

## Domain: Safety & Support

### *What does this mean?*

The “Safety and Support” domain is not included in the Robert Wood Johnson model for community health; however, Skagit County community members identified important health risks that did not fall clearly within the existing RWJ domains. Therefore, this domain includes measures of related to interpersonal stressors (such as violence and bullying) and support (such as social supports and community connectedness).

### *What do we know from the data?*

Lack of feeling safe and supported can be related to exposure to violence or crime, or lack of exposure to positive interactions and supportive resources. These exposures can occur at the community, neighborhood, school, or family level.

### *What do Skagit County people say?*

About one in seven (14%) Skagit County residents identified safe communities and less violence as one of the top changes they would make to improve health and well-being in Skagit County.

- Out of a list of 22 possible changes, safe communities and less violence was ranked 9<sup>th</sup>.

About one in twelve (8%) Skagit County residents identified safety as one of the biggest day-to-day challenges their families face.

About one in four (28%) of Skagit County residents reported community members have a shared feeling of pride and responsibility for what happens in their community.

- About one in ten (10%) Skagit County residents identified a stronger sense of community as one of the top changes they would make to improve health and well-being in Skagit County.
- About one in seven (15%) Skagit County parents or caregivers for young children (ages 0 to 5) said lack of community support was one of their biggest challenges.

## Bullying among Youth

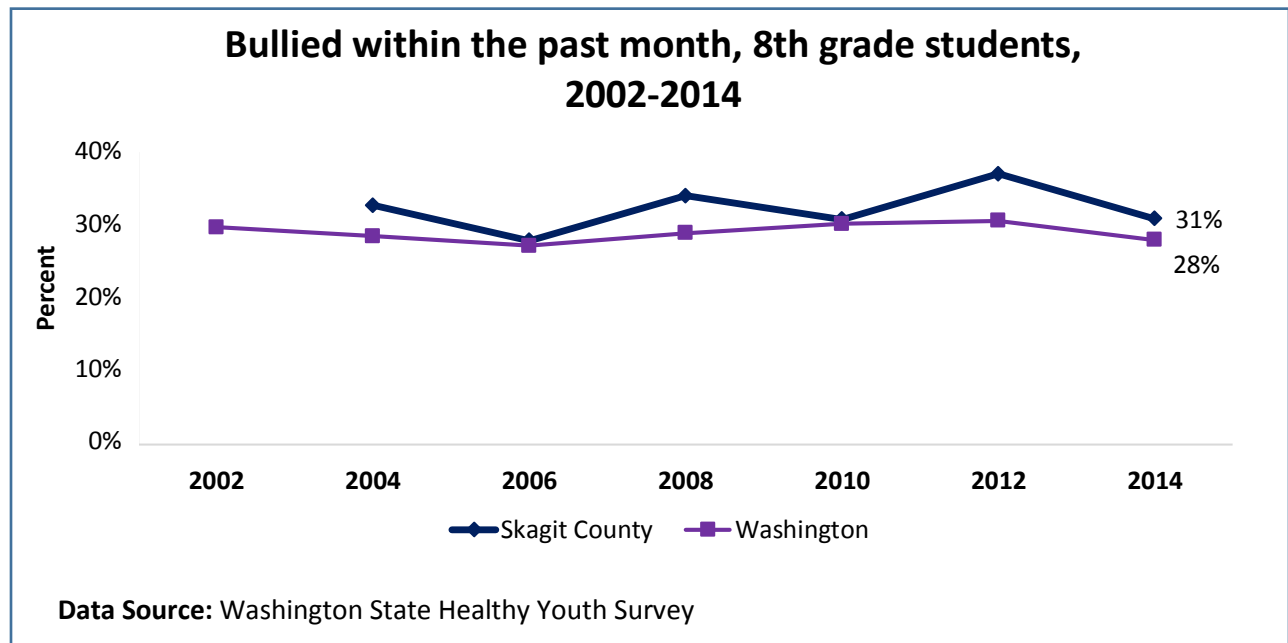
“There is too much youth violence in Skagit County.”

*What does this mean?*

Bullying is defined as when another student/ students say or do nasty or unpleasant things, or when a student is teased repeatedly in a way he or she doesn't like. It is NOT bullying when two students of about the same strength argue or fight. Youth are asked on the Healthy Youth Survey whether they have been bullied in the past 30 days.

*What do we know from the data?*

About **2,400 Skagit County youth** (ages 12 to 17) say they were bullied in the past month. The rate of bullying in Skagit County is fairly constant, and appears slightly higher than the state rate.



*What do Skagit County people say?*

Almost half (49%) of Skagit County residents with school age children identified bullying as one of their biggest challenges for high school age children.



## Depression among Children and Youth

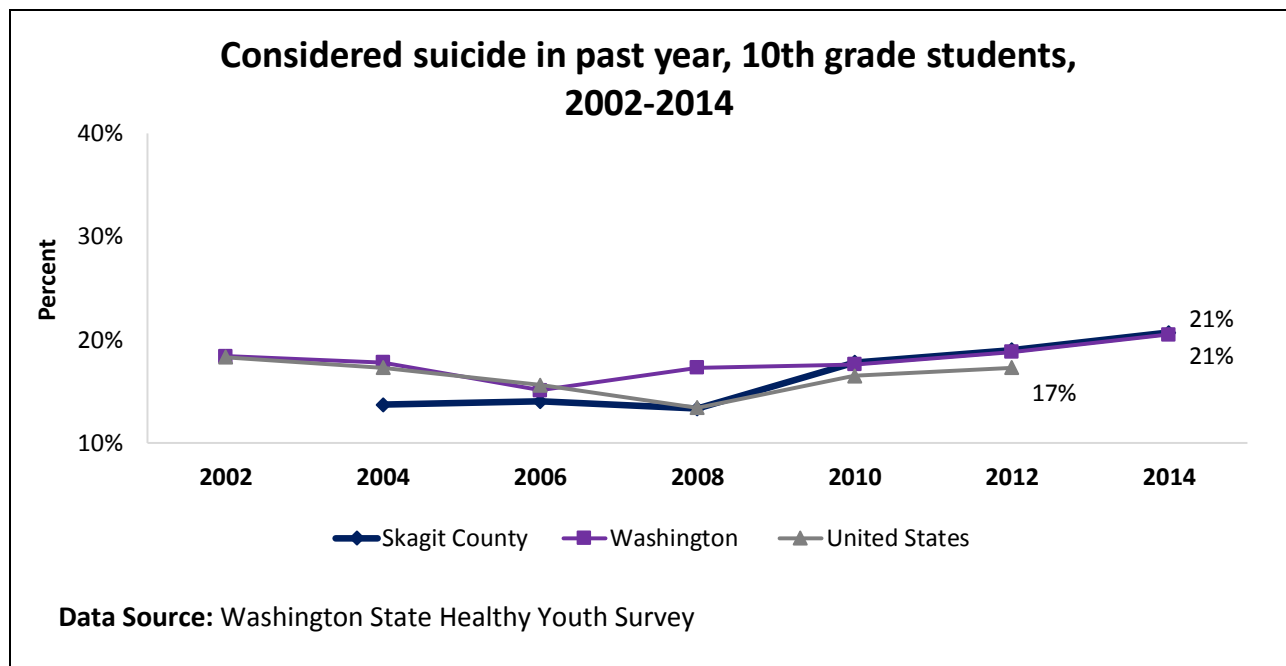
“Too many Skagit County children and youth are depressed or have thought about suicide”

*What does this mean?*

The Healthy Youth Survey asks several questions about mental health and suicide. Youth who say in the past year they felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for 2+ weeks in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities are classified as having depression. Youth are also asked whether they seriously considered suicide in the past year. Death by suicide is noted on death certificates.

*What do we know from the data?*

About **3,200 Skagit County youth** (ages 12 to 17) say they experienced depressive feelings in the past month. About **1,700 Skagit County youth** say they considered suicide in the past year; the prevalence of suicidal thinking appears to be increasing among Skagit County 10<sup>th</sup> graders – as well as among youth statewide - during recent years. During the last 5 years, there were an average of **19 deaths by suicide per year** in Skagit County.



*What do Skagit County people say?*

Skagit County residents with school age children identified the following mental health issues among their biggest challenges for high school age children:

- About one in three (33%) said maintaining emotional health
- About one in four (28%) said pressure to succeed
- About one in five (20%) said suicidal thoughts or attempts

## Physical Abuse of Children

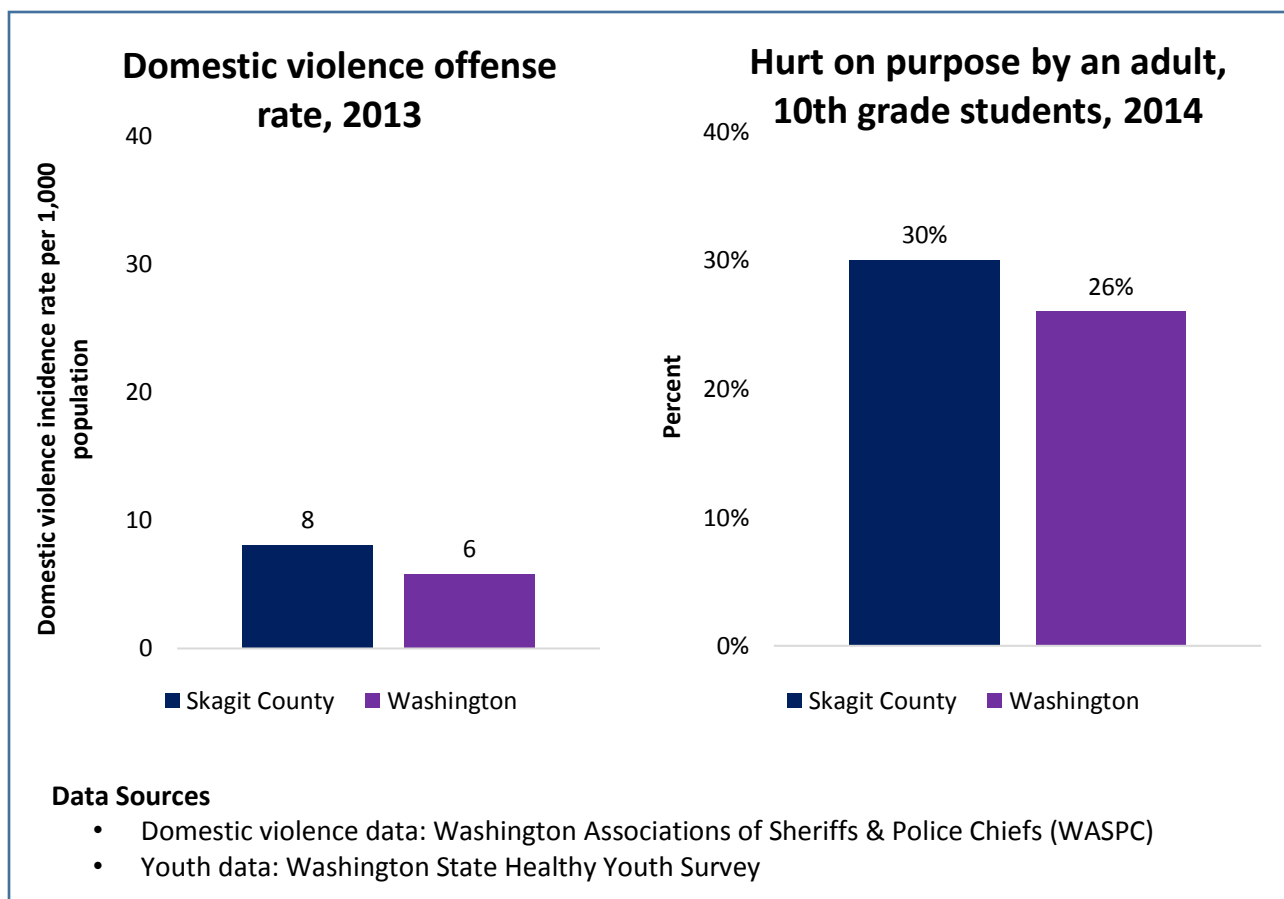
“Too many Skagit County youth have been hurt by an adult in their lifetime”

*What does this mean?*

Youth who say an adult ever physically hurt them on purpose (pushed, slapped, hit, kicked or punched), leaving a mark, bruise or injury, can be considered as abused. Domestic violence can be associated with multiple different types of arrests whenever a “domestic violence” flag is applied by the arresting officer.

*What do we know from the data?*

About **2,500 Skagit County youth** (ages 12 to 17) say they have been hurt by an adult on purpose in their lifetime. There were **952 Domestic Violence offenses** in Skagit County in 2013.



*What do Skagit County people say?*

The Skagit County “Data Carousel” participants identified physical abuse of children as an important priority because Skagit County has a relatively high rate, and because this is an unacceptable behavior.

## Domain: Socio-economic & Physical Environment

### *What does this mean?*

This domain is a combination of two individual domains as described by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. “Social and Economic Factors” include social determinants of health such as education, housing, and employment. “Physical Environment” includes infrastructure and environmental topics such as housing, transportation systems, and air and water quality.

### *What do we know from the data?*

- Median household income in Skagit County is \$56,000.
- Median hourly wage in Skagit County is \$18.99.
- About 14% of people (16,000 people) in Skagit County live below federal poverty level.
- About 19% of children (5,000 children) in Skagit County live below federal poverty level.
- About 6% of Skagit County adults (4,000 adults ages 18-64) are unemployed.

### *What do Skagit County people say?*

More than one in three Skagit County residents (37%) reported that they didn’t have enough money to pay for essentials like food, clothing, housing or medicine at any time in the past year.

About four out of ten (42%) Skagit County residents identified income as one of the top changes they would make to improve health and well-being in Skagit County.

## Lack of Affordable Housing

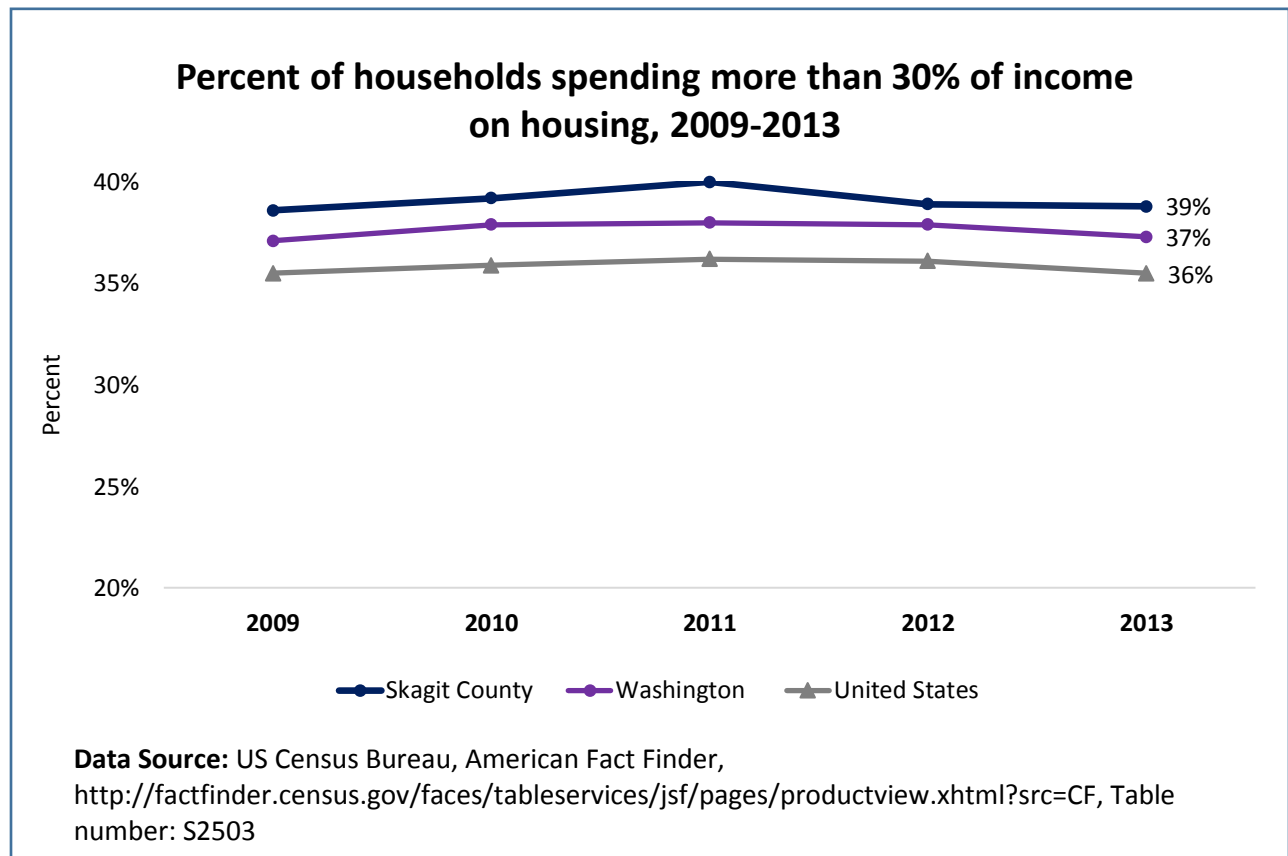
“Skagit County housing is unaffordable and unavailable for too many Skagit County residents”

*What does this mean?*

Housing cost burden is defined as 30% or more of household income in the past year was spent on housing costs (includes rent and utilities – electricity, gas, water, sewer, etc.).

*What do we know from the data?*

About **17,700 Skagit County households** spend more than 30% of their income on housing and associated costs.



*What do Skagit County people say?*

About 31% of Skagit County residents reported that they did not enough money for housing during the past year.

About one in four (28%) Skagit County residents identified more affordable housing as one of the top changes they would make to improve health and well-being in Skagit County.

### *Lack of Family Wage Jobs*

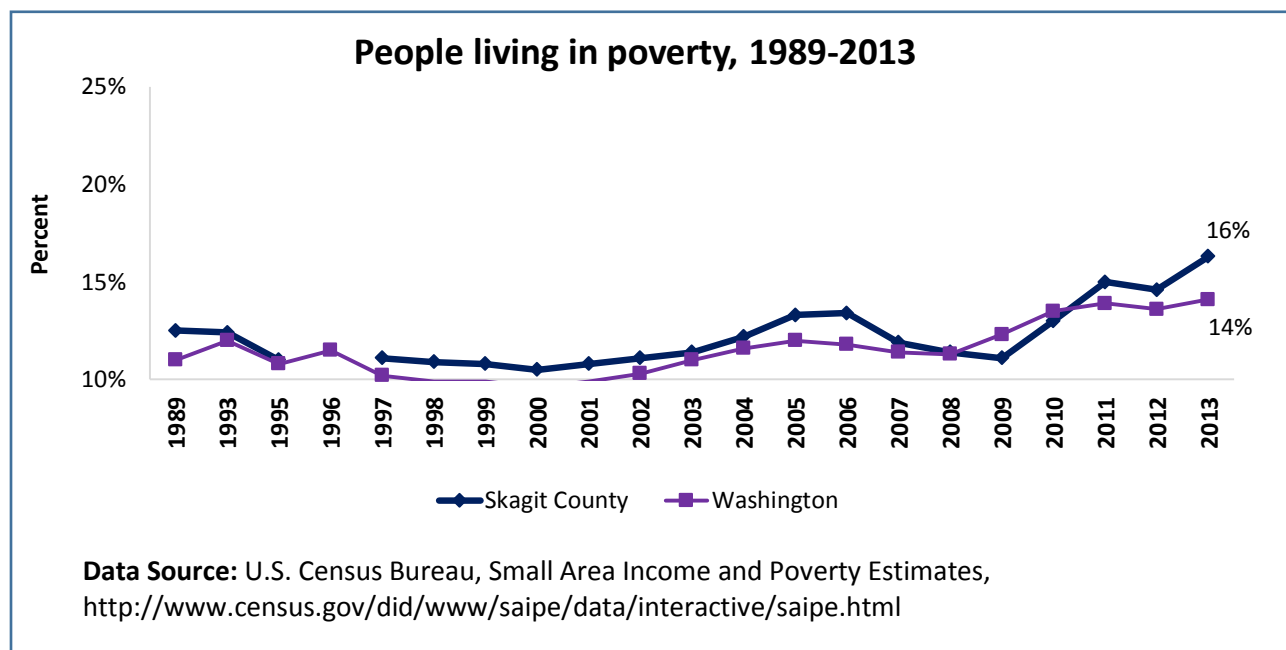
“Skagit County lacks an adequate number of living wage jobs”

*What does this mean?*

The federal government issues annual income levels that represent the “national poverty level.” Income levels are specified for households with different numbers of people. As an example, this means that in 2014 a family of 4 people with an annual household income of \$23,550 or less is considered to be “living in poverty” or “below the 100% federal poverty level.”

*What do we know from the data?*

About **16,000 Skagit County residents** are living in poverty, including about **5,000 Skagit County children**. Poverty increased dramatically between 2008-2013, and Skagit County residents are more likely to be living in poverty than people statewide.



*What do Skagit County people say?*

About one in four (23%) Skagit County residents identified more and better jobs as one of the top changes they would make to improve health and well-being in Skagit County.

About one in five (22%) Skagit County residents identified employment as one of the biggest day-to-day challenges their families face

About one in eight (13%) Skagit County parents or caregivers for young children (ages 0 to 5) said lack of medical, mental health or dental providers for their children was one of their biggest challenges.

## References

### **Skagit County Population Health Trust Advisory Committee**

<http://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PHTAC>

*Skagit County Quality of Life Survey Report*, published September 28, 2015

<http://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PHTAC/survey.htm>

### **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.**

2015 County Health Rankings Key Findings Report. Published March 25, 2015.

Available at: <http://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2015/03/2015-county-health-rankings-key-findings-report.html>

Specific information about the Ranking System and domains for health are available at

<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/our-approach>

<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/ranking-methods/ranking-system>