

Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Homeless Student Data

<https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/access-opportunity-education/homeless-education/homeless-student-data-grant-recipients>

For 2018-2019 School Year

Homeless Students per School District:

Bellingham -	616
Blaine –	66
Ferndale –	134
Lynden –	95
Lummi Tribal –	33
Meridian –	48
Mt. Baker –	95
Nooksack Valley –	80

TOTAL – 1,167

(When you look at the totals by county, Whatcom is said to have 1,130 students who were homeless this school year, but we are using the 1,167 that was reported by the school districts.)

Whatcom County Student Homelessness By Grade:

Pre-K –	30	6 th -	76
K –	101	7 th –	63
1st -	90	8 th –	75
2 nd -	96	9 th –	89
3 rd -	99	10 th –	83
4 th –	92	11 th –	102
5 th -	73	12 th –	83

What was their primary nighttime residence?

Doubled up with other families/couch surfing –	690
Hotel/Motel –	121
Homeless Shelter –	235
Unsheltered –	96

(This number does not equal the 1,167 total, but we interpret this to indicate that they don't have residence information on everyone.)

There were 28,105 Whatcom County students in the 2018-2019 school year. (<https://www.k12.wa.us/data-reporting/data-portal>) Using the 1,167 homeless student total this means that:

1 out of every 24 students in Whatcom County experienced homelessness for all or part of the 2018/19 School Year

More Information

The faces of families experiencing homelessness are mostly invisible in our community – you won't find them advertising their struggle or standing on street corners with signs, but many families among us are engaged in this quiet struggle. **In Whatcom County, 1 out of 24 students experienced homelessness** in the 2018-2019 school year (the most recent data available from the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction). A total of **1,167 students** were reported as having experienced homelessness in that school year, and this does not count the number of children *younger than school-aged* in those families. **

Statistics show that couch surfing and even experiencing homelessness for *part* of the year have significant impacts on students' learning and their emotional and physical health. Doubling up with another family (often called "couch-surfing") has just as significant an impact as being unsheltered does. Whatcom county data in 2018-2019 shows that 690 students were in couch-surfing living situations. The trauma, poor physical and mental health, hunger and fatigue that many of these children experience impact their time at school and have dire consequences on their long-term health, education, and future success.

How does homelessness affect students? They are 3 times more likely to be placed in special education classes. They are 8 to 9 times more likely to repeat a grade. 42% drop out of school at least once. They are 7 times more likely to commit suicide. 47% experience anxiety, depression, or withdrawal. (*familypromise.org*)

Interfaith Coalition has 12 units of housing that are dedicated to helping families in emergency and transitional situations, and the Family Promise program helps even more families with shelter and case management, and coordinates congregations who provide support for qualified families who are taking the steps toward stable housing. From July 2019 to July 2020, **88% of our Family Promise families transitioned into safe and affordable housing.** In addition, many of these families secured health and dental care, accessed childcare, job training, and financial literacy training. Four families increased income and 4 parents returned to school.

The Interfaith Coalition housing programs recognize that, in addition to providing case management support, strengthening all members of the family is important. We are creating a **Learning Center** where trained volunteers will provide math and reading tutoring free of charge (as well as transportation and snacks) for students in our housing program. This will help to provide many things for our families: support and academic skills for the students, a break for parents to pursue their own support or case management as well as the knowledge that their children are receiving valuable academic help from caring volunteers. This will also provide our congregation volunteers an opportunity to help and encourage these families on their journey.

** Children in federally funded shelters are disproportionately young. During the school year of 2016-17, 10% of all children experiencing homelessness who spent time in shelters were under the age of 1. 35% were ages 1 to 5, 34% were ages 6 to 12, and 22% were ages 13 to 17.

<https://www.childtrends.org/indicators/homeless-children-and-youth>