

Spokane Trends Newsletter - #1 2019:

Indicators in the News:

Our World In Data by Jordan Stevenson

Although the Spokane Indicators Project is local in scale, the data we track are part of a larger global context. Local issues we are concerned about, such as health, population, food security, and education are also international issues. As such, there are also organizations and publications such as [Our World in Data](#) that track similar indicators on a larger scale.

As we ask vital questions about the Spokane region, such as [air](#) and [water](#) quality, *Our World in Data* allows us to examine [air](#) and [water](#) quality on a global level.

For example, we can see the urban and rural disparity regarding access to water sanitation. Connecting the dots, across the globe, [rural areas suffer higher rates of poor hygiene](#) in relation to water sanitation. Looking at data through a global lens can help explain and make better sense of local data.

Among many unique things about *Our World in Data*, perhaps the most unique is their inclusion of data explaining culture. Have you ever considered the global levels of optimism versus pessimism in our collective consciousness? According to *Our World in Data*, we are [locally optimistic and globally pessimistic](#), meaning as a collective of global citizens, we have more positive views of our individual and community outcomes, but more negative views of the world.

However, there are many indicators on *Our World in Data* that are both positive and trending upward. For example, [global literacy has increased sharply](#) since 1900, which coincides with increased in school enrollment across the globe, at all educational levels.

Some things really are getting better! Perhaps delving further into the *Our World in Data* project will change our minds, giving us a more positive view of the world's future.

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County Health Insights: A Data Hub for Eastern Washington

In a young, thriving America, decision making relied on intuition, gut-feelings, and inspiration. Now, rarely are any decisions made without interweaving multiple layers of data.

Data - whether big, open, private, qualitative, or quantitative - has helped us to evolve from intuition-based decisions to data-informed decisions.

While data representing larger populations, such as Washington State or the U.S., help by providing context and perspective to the local data, the most difficult data to acquire is local. Often when this data is available, such as population or total tax dollars collected, they are of common subjects across the

U.S. So the conundrum is the more localized the data, the more useful it can be to address localized issues, yet it's the most difficult and costly data for local communities to acquire or develop.

In Spokane County and eastern Washington, thanks to the [Spokane Regional Health District's Data & Reports website](#), you'll find a lot of unique local data. Not just local data, but very specific to the topics and issues affecting us locally.

While the Data & Reports website has a lot of unique data for the Spokane area, the [County Health Insights: A Data Hub for Eastern Washington](#) website, provides data in eight health-related categories for the following counties: Adams, Asotin, Ferry, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, and Stevens.

With each county offering over 50 different indicators that can be compared amongst the seven counties offered, the County Health Insights (as with all the data the Spokane Regional Health District offers), we think you enjoy the great resource for local health data.

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Local Data: It Can Even Tell Us How Hungry We Are

It wasn't too long ago estimating hunger relied mainly on Federal Poverty Level statistics. But the national estimates were inadequate when used to estimate hunger in smaller, more localized areas. This created a disparity of what statistically might qualify as food insecure in the national data to what is really happening. The Federal Poverty Level does not change from one place in the U.S. to the next, [Feeding America](#) has developed an extensive methodology to create a different view of local hunger and food insecurity through data. As a result, local organizations and food banks have a much better understanding of what is happening, and how to best deal with the issues at hand.

The natural progression of the data work Feeding America has been involved with is [to create data people can interactive with](#). While we think you'll find much of this website interesting, we'd like to point you to [The Economic Drivers of Food Insecurity](#) interactive webpage.

Selecting any county in the U.S. in Box #2 shows connections between food insecurity and the poverty rate, unemployment rate, and homeownership rate. Sliders under each category allow the user to adjust the rates in positive or negative directions (poverty, unemployment, and homeownership) to see how can have a huge impact on estimations of food insecurity.

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Indicators in Action:

Is Spokane a “College Town”? by Brian Kennedy and Dr. Patrick Jones

When we think of Spokane, college town doesn't typically come to mind. However, in 2017, there were roughly 40,000 students enrolled in the fall term of the community college system and universities in the county according to data taken from the [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System](#) (IPEDS). These students represent 8% of the overall population, over 3 percentage points higher than the state average at 5%. How does this high level of college students translate into the educational attainment profile of county residents, and importantly, how does that relate to the overall regional economy?

Indicators [3.6.2](#) and [3.6.3](#) show the share of the population ages 25 and over by the highest level of educational attainment. Combining the two measures shows that 45.2% of Spokane County residents were estimated to hold an associate's degree or higher in 2017. There is no statistical difference between the county and the state average, which sits at 45.4% of the population. Compared to the U.S., however, our community lies about 5 percentage points higher. Moreover, Spokane County is more educated than all of its Eastern Washington urban area counterparts. Comparable shares for neighboring metro areas are: the Tri-Cities at 34.6%, Wenatchee at 33.2%, and Walla Walla, the closest contender, at 40.6%. It's undoubtedly not coincidence that overall educational attainment is a main focus of Greater Spokane Inc. (GSI) where, according to Meg Lindsay, director of education and talent, “our focus on education and our region has set a goal of 60% attainment for those holding a high-level certificate, 2- or 4-year degree by 2025.”

With such a high education level overall, how does the distribution between two and four year degrees look? The story behind the numbers of [indicator 3.6.3](#) shows that for bachelors and graduate degrees, Spokane is still lagging the state but growing at a quicker pace. In 2017, 19.6% of the population in Spokane County held a bachelor's degree. This estimate fell short of the state average by 2.4 percentage points, whereas there was no statistical difference with the national benchmark.

However in terms of growth, Spokane has been slightly outperforming both the state and the U.S. From 2005 to 2017, the county's share of the population with these degrees increased by 2.9 percentage points while shares of Washington and the U.S. increased at a slightly lower pace, 2.4 and 2.5, percentage points, respectively. Most of Spokane's growth has occurred in the last few years, with a statistically significant change of nearly 2 percentage points in this share since 2014.

Similar to the picture with bachelor's degrees, Spokane County has seen statistically significant growth in the share of the population ages twenty-five and older with a graduate or professional degree. Unlike bachelor's degree attainment, however, Spokane's growth in these degrees lags the state just slightly. Combining both components of this indicator [3.6.3](#), one allows us to see where Spokane has an opportunity to close the gap. Just 30.9% of the population ages twenty-five and over have either a bachelor's or graduate degree, trailing the U.S. by about a percentage point and the State by about four.

One possible reason? Spokane's economic structure differs quite a bit from that of the state, whose averages are largely dominated by the central Puget Sound population. Mark Mattke, CEO of Spokane Area Workforce Development, advises caution against comparing to Washington. “Comparisons to the I-5 corridor and its preponderance of high tech companies will be skewed towards more graduate degrees.” However, he goes on further to note that “as our economy continues to focus investments upon growing life sciences, including two medical schools, IT, and other sectors, we will see an increase in the number of graduate degree holders in our area.”

A place where Spokane County shines lies mid-level degrees. According to [indicator 3.6.2](#), Spokane County has outperformed both state and national benchmarks for the share of the population having a vocational or associates degree. Here, 14.3% of the population report having a two-year degree as their highest level of education, 4.2 percentage points higher than the state and 5.8 percentage points higher than the nation. This group has shown a statistically significant increase of 2.7 percentage points since the start of the measure in 2005. Again, local growth has outpaced the state (0.9 percentage points) and nation (1.1 percentage points).

At least two c factors stand out in pushing this number up: the strength of the Community Colleges of Spokane (CCS) and the simple fact that more students are graduating from high school than prior years.

[Indicator 3.3.4](#) measures the extended high school graduation rate, students earning a diploma in five years or less, for both the county and the state. The most recent data shows that for the 2016-2017 class, 85.7% of the students graduated, up about 5 percentage points in the last 7 years. Another measure, [Indicator 3.5.1](#), shows about 56% of those students continue on to some form of higher education. This share has stayed stable across the entirety of the trend. So while the County continues to graduate more students from high school, even if the share going on to higher education hasn't increased, the total number continuing their education will continue to rise. Of course, not all will take their post-secondary training, and even for those local students who do, not all will stay in Spokane.

The other major contributing factor is the strong presence of CCS, comprised of Spokane Community College and Spokane Falls Community College, in the region. Of the nearly 40,000 enrolled in 2017, about 40% were students at CCS. According to Mark Macias, managing director of institutional research at CCS, "on average, around 1,750 students each year successfully transfer to 4-year colleges and universities from SCC and SFCC. Many of these students will complete their degrees in high demand areas but the course of their completions will occur at some point in the future."

In addition to obtaining an associate's degree, CCS offers 120 career and technical programs of study that lead directly to employment. The Workforce Development Council, along with GSI and other community partners, has identified five key industries in the Spokane region: finance and insurance; healthcare; manufacturing; professional, scientific, and technical services; and transportation and warehousing. Meg Lindsay of GSI, refers to these non-degree programs as part of career ladder. Some individuals may obtain certificates in high wage occupations and then work in the field while obtaining further degrees or training to advance their careers. This in part could be responsible for some of the growth in 4-year and graduate degrees within the county.

There is something to be said about living in Spokane County that draws people to Spokane as well. A healthy portion of those with graduate degrees would be considered "imports". It's a hard to measure indicator, but many lawyers, engineers, academics, and certainly up until recently, all our physicians are imported talent t drawn to Spokane because of our regional amenities ranging from our large healthcare sector, low cost of living, or access to the outdoors.

So as Spokane's population grows, new graduates decide to take up roots locally, and our workforce transitions into industries looking for talented and educated individuals and people take notice of how enjoyable living in Spokane can be the trends found in indicators 3.6.2 and 3.6.3 should continue to ride.

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2) Overall Growth in Medicaid Insured with Recent Declines by Scott Richter and Dr. Patrick Jones

Dean Kamen, inventor of the Segway, said, “Nothing of value, real value, has no cost. Not freedom, not food, not shelter, not healthcare.”

While we share the cost of freedom, we also share the cost of food, shelter, and healthcare for those in need or who can’t afford through a variety of assistance programs - some public and some private.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, or more commonly known as the Affordable Care Act (ACA), became law in 2010. Some aspects of the law quickly went into effect, such as extending dependent coverage to the age of 26 and eliminating lifetime limits imposed by insurers.

Most notably, the ACA [expanded eligibility of Medicaid](#) “to adults with incomes up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL).”

The first Open Enrollment for the new health insurance marketplace occurred on October 1, 2013 with all health plans purchased before December 23, 2013 going into effect on January 1, 2014.

As an individual state, Washington adopted Medicaid expansion under the ACA with full implementation occurring on January 1, 2014.

According to the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#), during 2016 in Washington State, about 62% of adult Medicaid enrollees were working, and Medicaid covered approximately: 40% of all children, 60% of all nursing home residents, 17% of all adults, and half of all persons with a disability.

According to the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#), by early November, 2018, only 14 states had not opted in to ACA-related Medicaid expansion. The remaining 36 states had either expanded, had expansion approved through a voter ballot initiative but not yet implemented, or were currently in the process of expanding using a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Section 1115 Waiver. [The Section 1115 Waiver](#) allows “states to test new or existing ways to deliver and pay for health care services in Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP).”

While the purpose of this article is to dig into the [Total and Share of the Population Insured by Medicaid](#) indicator on the Trends website, we remain neutral and let the data speak for itself, including the ACA. However, this indicator is highly affected by changes in health care laws authorized by the ACA.

The latter part of this graph (2013-2017) shows both a greater number and share of Spokane County residents insured by Medicaid than the first half of the series (2009-2013).

Three other indicators on the Trends website, the [Overall Uninsured Population](#), [Uninsured Population by Age Groups](#), and [Uninsured Population by Poverty Status](#) also reflect how Medicaid expansion in Washington State created more access for people to acquire health insurance.

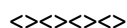
One of the larger questions posed by this indicator is why the share of Medicaid insured in Spokane County decreased slightly in both 2016 and 2017 from the peak in 2015.

According to Alison Poulson, Executive Director, Better Health Together, there are a variety of possibilities, but it's too soon to know for sure why these decreases have occurred.

Poulson said, "According to a report released by the [Washington State Employment Security](#), the ACA created roughly 1,350 new health-related jobs in the state and reduced the amount of donated care from our health systems. The growth in the number of people insured by Medicaid created a simultaneous demand for more healthcare workers."

Local community health providers, such as CHAS, were able to greatly expand their reach by building new facilities in many communities in eastern Washington. This was possible, in part, due to funding opportunities for federally qualified health centers who had always treated low income patients with or without insurance.

With both private and public health insurance markets affected by recent federal changes to portions of the ACA, this indicator will perhaps also reflect the volatility and churn in health insurance markets.



3) Child Abuse & Neglect Trending Upward by Scott Richter and Dr. Patrick Jones

The Spokane Trends website offers indicators showing the good, bad, and ugly of who we are as a community. But what all indicators have in common is they tell a story. "Bad" things can receive a lot of attention, but this is due to their impact on society. It's why we hear about thefts, murders, and assaults more than we do about a neighbor helping a neighbor dig their car out of the snow, or someone donating \$100 to a local charity. It's the attention applied to the wrongs in our society that help people to create road maps to change. Good and reliable data helps us to draw those maps.

The [Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families](#) (DCYF), the State's youngest agency, was "created to be a comprehensive agency exclusively dedicated to the social, emotional and physical well-being of children, youth and families — an agency that prioritizes early learning, prevention and early intervention at critical points along the age continuum from birth through adolescence."

The DCYF oversees a variety of child-focused programs and services previously scattered across many different agencies. For example, all Children's Administration programs previously under the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and all Department of Early Learning services are now under the DCYF umbrella. Beginning Scheduled to go into effect in July, 2019, juvenile criminal justice programs, such as the [Juvenile Rehabilitation](#) program and the [Office of Juvenile Justice](#), will be moved underneath the DCYF umbrella.

Looking at the [Victims of Child Abuse and Neglect in Accepted Referrals](#) indicator on the Trends website, we see the general trend line has been upward. From 2000 to 2017 in Spokane County, the number of

children listed in reports of child abuse or neglect in accepted referrals for investigation increased from 4,074 to 6,564, or by 61%.

The rate of victims in Spokane County has been consistently higher than the state benchmark. During 2000 the rate of victims listed in accepted referrals for investigation per 1,000 youth in Spokane County was 37.9 compared to 40.6 in the state. By 2017, the abuse and neglect rate in Spokane County was had grown to 57.7 while the state decreased to 37.8.

So what does it mean to be a victim of child abuse or neglect in an accepted referral for investigation? First, let's look at the legal definition of child abuse and neglect in Washington State. According to [RCW 26.44.020](#):

- *abuse and neglect* generally “means sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or injury of a child by any person under circumstances which cause harm to the child's health, welfare, or safety”.
- *negligent treatment or maltreatment* is defined as “an act or a failure to act, or the cumulative effects of a pattern of conduct, behavior, or inaction, that evidences a serious disregard of consequences of such magnitude as to constitute a clear and present danger to a child's health, welfare, or safety”.

When someone suspects a child is being abused or neglected and files an official report with the DCYF, each report is examined by appropriate DCYF staff. The DCYF assesses each report to see if the minimum legal threshold of child abuse or neglect has been met. Any initial assessment meeting minimum thresholds are “screened in” and referred for further investigation.

When a referral is accepted for investigation, at this point, the number of children listed as potential victims in the original referral (based on the number of children listed in the initial report) are represented in this indicator - regardless of the outcome of the investigation.

This indicator does not represent the outcome of an investigation, nor does it delineate between victims of abuse and neglect.

Rob Larson, Deputy Regional Administration - Region 1 with the DCYF said investigations of neglect are generally carried out by the Family Assessment Response (FAR) Pathway, which in Washington State is part of Child Protective Services (CPS). According to the [DCYF](#), “FAR focuses on child safety along with the integrity and preservation of the family when lower risk allegations of child maltreatment have been screened in for intervention.”

Larson said investigations of abuse are generally conducted by CPS Investigative Pathway with outcomes based on a “preponderance of the evidence” that abuse “more likely than not” occurred. This is a lower standard than the typical “beyond a reasonable doubt” burden of proof required in most criminal procedures.

However, when a report is “screened in” for abuse, CPS will forward the report to law enforcement who are required by law to conduct an independent and simultaneous investigation for criminal conduct. Unlike the CPS investigation resulting in the accusation of abuse being “founded” or “unfounded” using a “preponderance of the evidence”, the law enforcement investigation can result in a referral for criminal prosecution, which would then be held to the “beyond a reasonable doubt” standard.

While lower numbers are obviously preferred in this indicator, a few final explanations help describe the graph.

- A child is counted as many times as they are listed in an accepted referral in the same year.
- These numbers do not include children living in the same home if they are not listed in the referral.
- These numbers are not adjusted to reflect the results of an investigation that were “unfounded”.
- Locations are based on the location of the residence at the time of the referral.

While these caveats are offered only to help explain this indicator, they are not intended to soften the implications and consequences of child abuse and neglect. Mandatory reporters (people required by law to report all incidents of suspected abuse and neglect, such as teachers, doctors, and counselors) usually comprise about 75% of all initial reports of child abuse and neglect, the remaining 25% come from friends, family, neighbors, other, and unknown sources.

More information on how to report child abuse and neglect, [can be found here](#).

A special “thank you” is owed to Debra Johnson, Director of Communications with the DCYF.

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5-Questions with: Manny Hochheimer, AVP of Corporate & External Relations, Numerica Credit Union



Q1: Numerica is now the fourth-largest credit union by assets in Washington State. Do you have any strategic plans over the next three years that you can share with our readers?

A1: Over the next three years, Numerica’s focus is much the same as it has always been – to enhance lives, fulfill dreams and build communities. In order to do that successfully, we must continue to grow, ensuring quality financial services are readily available and easy to access for our members. We also plan to remain actively involved in our communities, ensuring a strong, vibrant community that fosters well-being for both businesses and residents.

To accomplish this, our strategy includes designing branches that are open and inviting and that encourage conversations about finances. We plan to implement convenient technology that gives members access to their money 24/7. Currently, our members can manage their finances through the use of our mobile app, Apple Pay, Google Pay, Samsung Pay, Fitbit Pay, Gamin Pay and Microsoft Pay. We will continue to stay on top of new tools that make managing finances easy for our members. We will also remain committed to enhancing our community by giving back at least 5% of our earnings.

Q2: The credit union serves three key markets: the greater Spokane area, the Tri Cities and Wenatchee. In these markets, Numerica has been a generous sponsor of community-building activities. What criteria do you use to make your social investments?

A2: In 2018, Numerica gave over \$1.7 million to lend a helping hand, create leaders and celebrate our community. Through Numerica employee donations, fundraising efforts, sponsorships, and funding of

local nonprofits, Numerica's charitable giving focuses on efforts to help systemic issues impacting our community like poverty, homelessness, food insecurity, crisis intervention and access to quality education.

Q3: In all these markets, there are EWU-led community indicators projects. Which measures from these sites does the credit union pay close attention to, either for business growth or community investments?

A3: Numerica watches the following indicators for where to best apply community investments as well as planning for marketing, branch expansion and recruiting:

- People (demographics)
- Economic Vitality (income, activity, labor force)
- Housing (renters vs. buyers)
- Transportation (public transit)

Q4: You represent Numerica on the steering committee of Priority Spokane. In light of that organization's recently chosen short list of issues – family violence, substance abuse & mental health and affordable housing – what measures on Spokane Community Indicators are you tracking?

A4: Both as a Numerica representative and personally, I am passionate about the health and happiness of our community as it relates to family violence. Numerica's mission to enhance lives, fulfill dreams, and build communities aligns with Priority Spokane's focus to help move the dial on that front. We are also involved in organizations, such as the YWCA, that directly impact positive change regarding those issues.

Priority Spokane's steering committee utilizes Spokane Community Indicators such as People, Education, and Health sub-sets. They assist us to make wise decisions on where to direct resources to impact positive change and outcomes. The Housing, Economic Vitality, and Public Safety sub-sets allow us to see where those resources have made an impact, benefitting the Spokane Community. Demographics and Poverty statistics also help by giving us background and understanding of the communities that need the most help.

Q5: It's been eight years now since you arrived in Spokane. You've been very active in community organizations from the start. Are there two or three observations you can make about how Spokane goes about tackling its challenges?

A5: Spokane is the rarest of gems. A place that still exists where people check their egos at the door in order to come together to make change and progress. They are driven by grit, compassion, heart, and a deep drive to leave the community and world a better place, not just for tomorrow or next year, but for 20, 50, or 100 years down the road. People here, simply put, have vision that is driven by a desire for long-term betterment and prosperity for all. There is not a challenge imaginable that this community will not join together in order to face. Through bold dreams, hard work and creativity, we don't simply find a solution, but make long-lasting improvements that impact future generations. The people of Spokane are intelligent and collaborative, utilizing great community assets, such as the Spokane Community Indicators, to make decisions.