

# Gap & Opportunity Analysis of Two Pierce County Communities

*98444 and 98445: Franklin Pierce*

*98404: East Tacoma/Salishan*

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Center for Community Resilience

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# Purpose

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## Supporting *Resilient Pierce County's* Community Strategy

The *Resilient Pierce County* collaborative currently consists of multiple cross-sector partners who serve Tacoma and Pierce County families, including public health, education, social services, behavioral health, faith-based organizations, library services, LGBTQ support services, and more.

### The collaborative has identified at least three shared goals:

- **Goal 1:** Introduce the Pierce community to the concept of being “trauma-informed” and the Pair of ACEs.
- **Goal 2:** Identify key adversity and resilience factors experienced by two communities in Pierce County through community conversations and data analysis of zip codes 98444 and 98445 (Franklin Pierce) and 98404 (Salishan/East Tacoma).
- **Goal 3:** Use community data to reimagine service delivery for targeted zip codes in Franklin Pierce and Salishan/East Tacoma.

## Informing Community Conversations & Systems Change

In efforts to accomplish Goal #2, the *Resilient Pierce County* collaborative undertook a series of community conversations to understand the full range of adversities facing Pierce County families in the “asset limited, income constrained, and employed” (ALICE) category.

This report seeks to further inform the process by **identifying gaps in community resources, assessing outcome disparities, highlighting existing health, wellbeing, and economic supports, and pointing to where collaboration across partners could comprehensively impact the wellbeing and economic status of families in the communities under study.** These conversations are relevant in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has widened pre-existing inequities for families. At all points in this report, the team at the Center for Community Resilience (CCR) will identify how data points can continue to inform community conversations and systems change.

# WA State Poverty Reduction Workgroup: Strategies & Recommendations

In January 2020, the [WA State Poverty Reduction Workgroup](#) released eight strategies and 56 recommendations as part of Governor Jay Inslee’s 10-year vision for the state. As detailed in the group’s final report, *“these strategies and recommendations, if implemented, will reduce poverty and inequality in Washington state, and ensure social and economic opportunity be passed on from this generation to the next...and the next...and the next.”*

Each section of this report highlights opportunities where Pierce County might align with the Governor’s statewide poverty reduction strategies and policies.

## Strategies & Recommendations

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>STRATEGY #1:</b> Understand structural racism and historical trauma, and take action to undo their harmful effects in state policy and programs.<br/>[2 Recommendations]</p> | <p><b>STRATEGY #5:</b> Address the urgent needs of people experiencing homelessness, violence, mental illness, and/or addiction.<br/>[7 Recommendations]</p>                |
| <p><b>STRATEGY #2:</b> Make equal space in decision-making for people and communities most affected by poverty and inequality.<br/>[3 Recommendations]</p>                         | <p><b>STRATEGY #6:</b> Build an integrated human service continuum of care that addresses the holistic needs of children, adults, and families.<br/>[6 Recommendations]</p> |
| <p><b>STRATEGY #3:</b> Target equitable education, income growth, and wealth-building opportunities for people with low incomes.<br/>[16 Recommendations]</p>                      | <p><b>STRATEGY #7:</b> Decriminalize poverty and reduce reliance on the child welfare, juvenile justice, and criminal justice systems.<br/>[10 Recommendations]</p>         |
| <p><b>STRATEGY #4:</b> Strengthen health supports across the life span to promote the intergenerational well-being of families.<br/>[6 Recommendations]</p>                        | <p><b>STRATEGY #8:</b> Ensure a just transition to the future of work.<br/>[6 Recommendations]</p>  |

# Methods

# Conceptual Frameworks

Integrating the Pair of ACEs concept and the Baseline Resilience Indicators for Communities (BRIC) concept, as suggested by Resilient Pierce County staff, we report out a wide range of data following the structure described below:

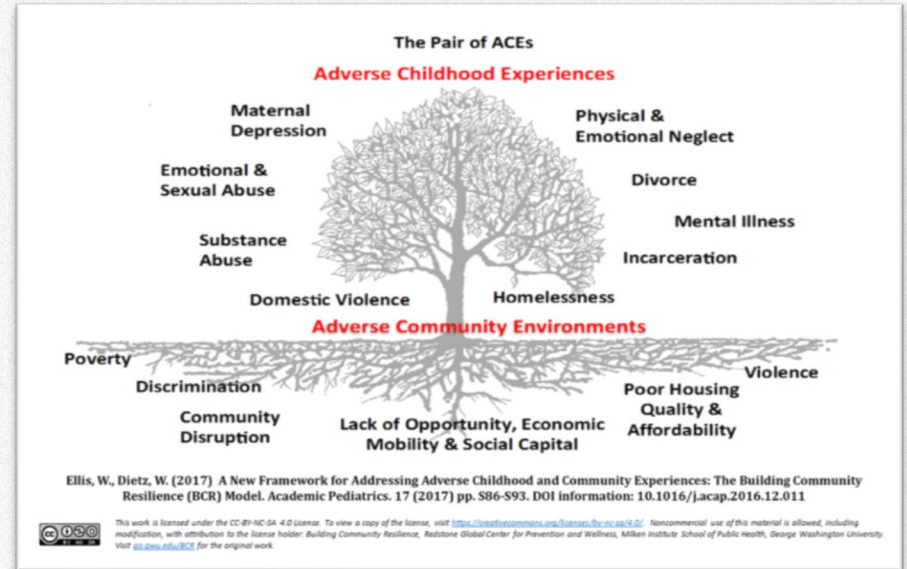
**Section 1. Historical Context:** We begin the journey with a brief review of Pierce County's history, focusing on people and their experience.

**Section 2. Demographics:** This section provides a snapshot of local family households, including their race/ethnicity, labor force participation, native language spoken, caregiver demographics, and education.

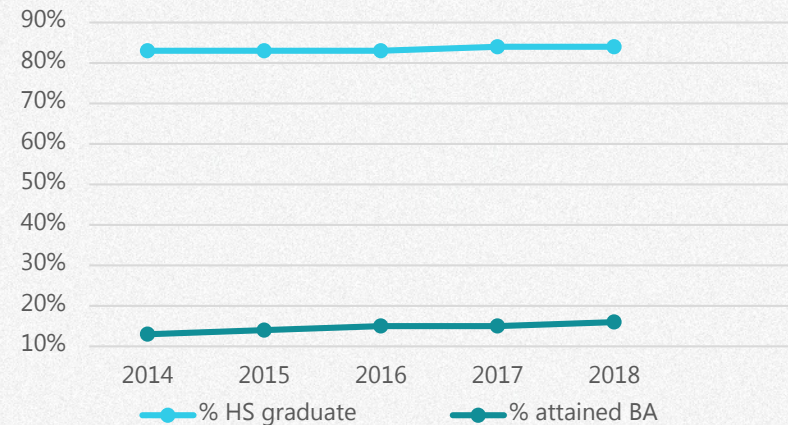
**Section 3. Built Environment and Public Infrastructure:** This section describes the local systems currently in place that support community resilience. At the Center for Community Resilience, we focus on three key systems that are central to promoting community resilience, health, wellbeing, and economic stability: housing, public education, and law enforcement and criminal justice.

**Section 4. Community Environments:** This section describes root causes that shape the local environment within which families live and grow. These root causes are the result of policies and practices across multiple systems.

**Section 5. Childhood Experiences:** This section describes the adversities and traumas children may experience as well as life and health outcomes as a result of community environments.



**Sample Demographics Indicator:  
Education Attainment among the Franklin Pierce and  
East Tacoma/Salishan Communities since 2014**

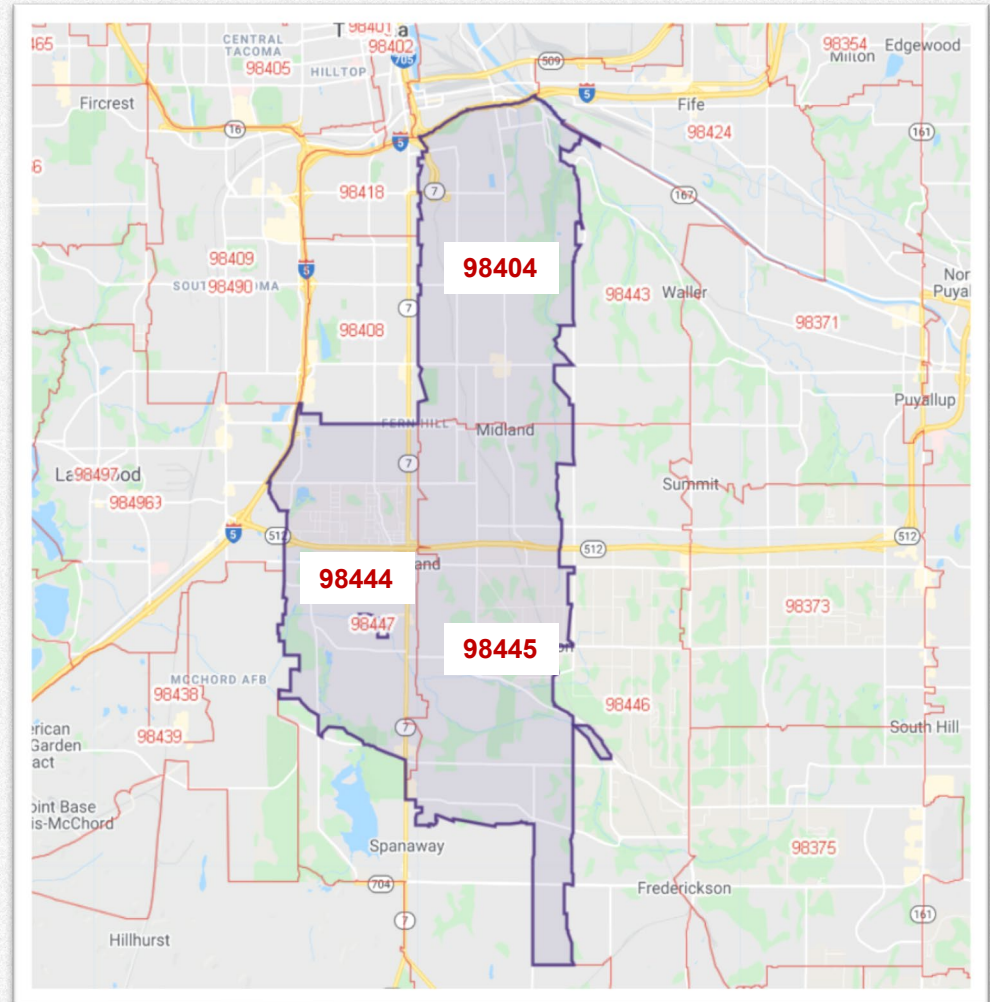


# Data Levels

**This report aims to provide a variety of local-level data to help characterize two neighborhoods in Pierce County:** Franklin Pierce (98444 and 98445 zip codes) and East Tacoma/Salishan (98404 zip code).

This map illustrates the zip code demarcation of these neighborhoods. Where possible, local zip-level data will be provided alongside Washington state, Pierce County, and census tract data as comparison points.

Due to data collection limitations, zip-code level data is not available for all topical areas relevant to child and family wellbeing. In these cases, state, county, census tract, and/or school-level data are provided.



# Pierce County School District and Zip Code Overlay

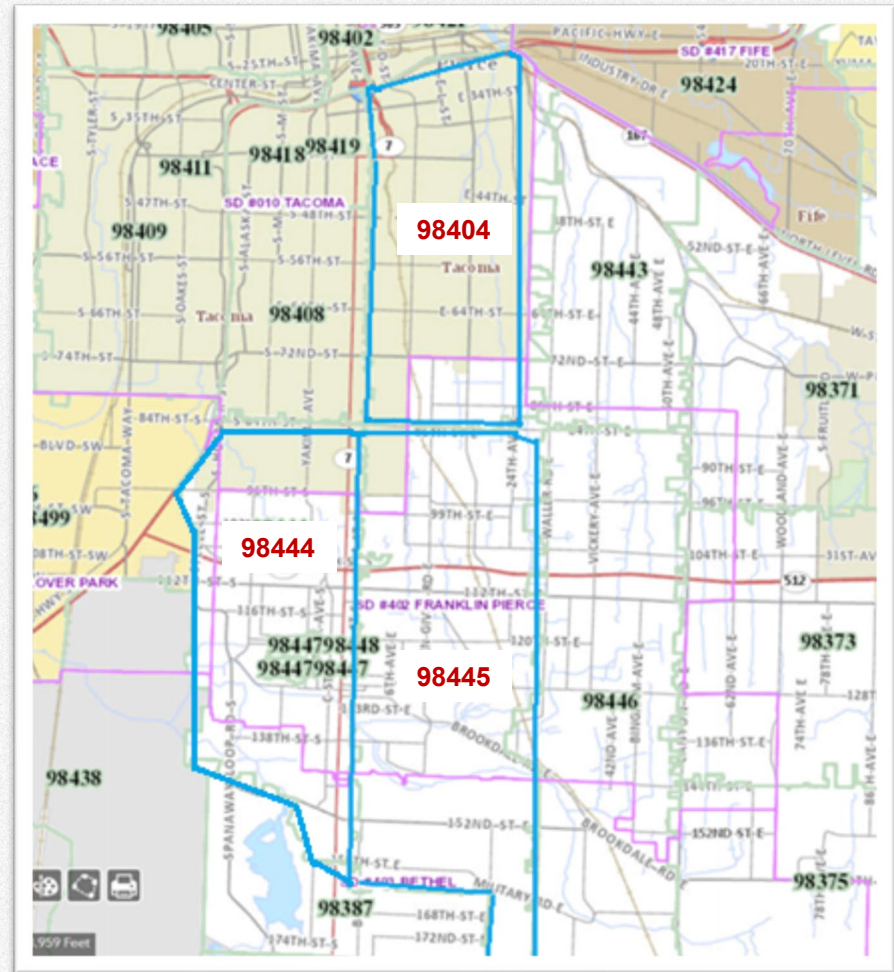
For policy and performance metric purposes, it is important to note that children in the Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan neighborhoods are assigned to one of three much larger public-school districts: Franklin Pierce School District, Bethel School District, and Tacoma School District. This map shows the demarcation of the 98444, 98445, and 98404 neighborhoods (blue borders) over the Pierce County school districts (pink borders).

## 98444 and 98445: Franklin Pierce

- 60% of this neighborhood is part of the Franklin Pierce School District
- 30% is part of the Bethel School District
- 10% is part of the much larger Tacoma School District (tan shading)

## 98404: East Tacoma/Salishan

- 85% of this neighborhood is part of the much larger Tacoma School District (tan shading)
- 15% is part of the Franklin Pierce School District



Source: TPCHD GIS Mapping Tool



# Pierce County Census Tract and Zip Code Overlay

In some cases, more detailed data are available at the census tract-level. Two census tracts are fully immersed in the Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan neighborhoods: **Parkland** and **Midland**. Observing data within these census tracts can allow for local-level analysis.

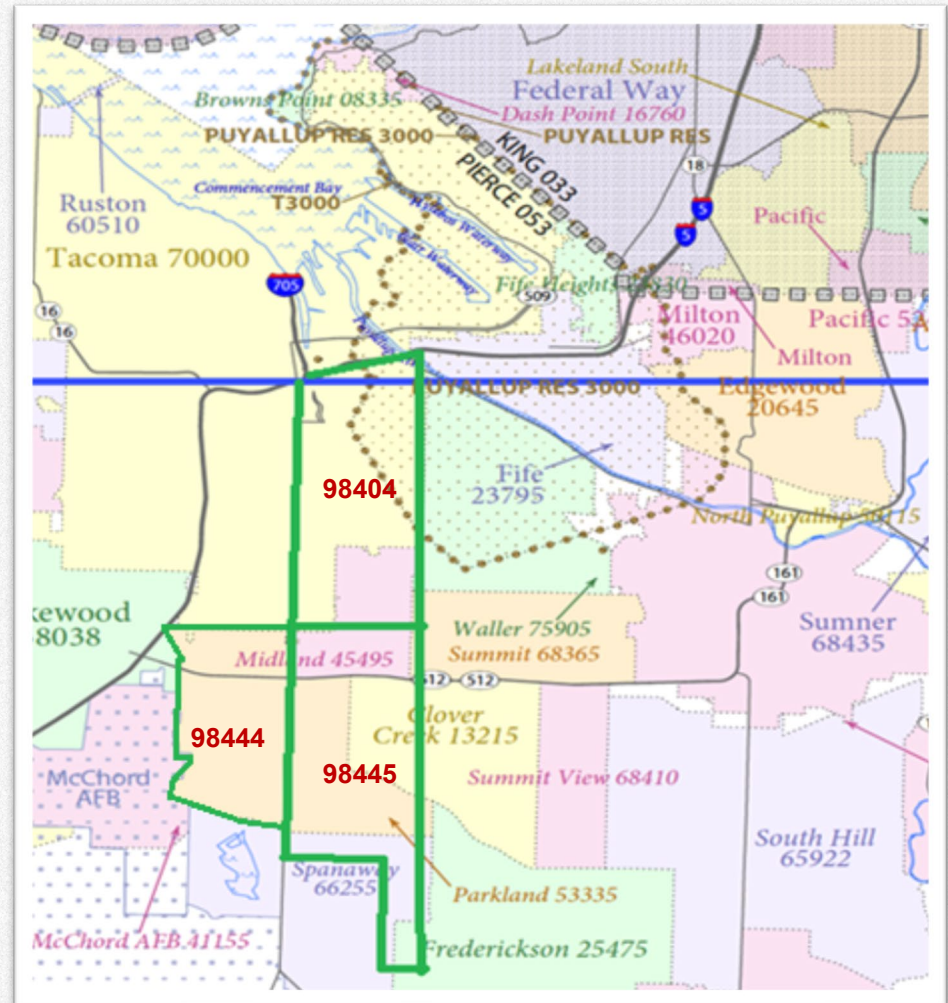
This map shows the demarcation of the 98444, 98445, and 98404 neighborhoods (green borders) over Pierce County census tracts.

## 98444 and 98445: Franklin Pierce

- 60% of this neighborhood is considered the **Parkland** census tract.
- 10% of this neighborhood is considered one-half of the **Midland** census tract.
- 15% is included in the larger Clover Creek tract.
- 10% is included in the larger Spanaway tract.
- 5% is part of the larger Frederickson tract.

## 98404: East Tacoma/Salishan

- 20% of this neighborhoods is considered the **second-half of the Midland** census tract.
- 80% of this neighborhood is part of the much larger Tacoma census tract.



Source: TPCHD GIS Mapping Tool

# **Section 1: Historical Context**

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## Early Settlers

Several thousand years ago, early settlers built a community at what is now known as Pierce County, WA. The location's proximity to rivers, lakes, and ocean meant an abundance of food for the community to grow. These settlers eventually became the Nisqually, Puyallup, Squaxin, Steilacoom and Muckleshoot Tribes of Native Americans.<sup>1</sup>

Europeans first came to the region in 1792. Their first permanent settlement, Fort Nisqually, was built in 1832. In 1846, the region officially became part of the United States through the Oregon Treaty. The City of Tacoma was founded in 1872, and soon became the northwest terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad. The Port of Tacoma was created a few decades later in 1918, making Tacoma a hub for both land and water transportation. Tacoma goes on to become the largest city and the county seat of Pierce County.<sup>1,2</sup>

## Race and Policy

### *Asian Americans*

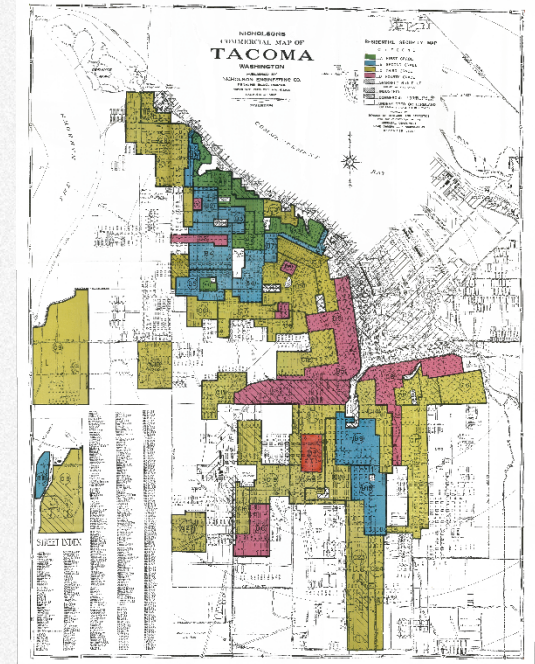
Chinese immigrants came to Pierce County in the 1870s to build the railroad. Anti-Chinese movement grew over time in Tacoma and across the nation, especially during the economic downturn after the railroads were built. In 1885, Tacoma mayor Jacob Robert Weisbach—an immigrant from Germany—deemed the Chinese “a curse” and “a filthy horde”. He expelled the entire Chinese community from Tacoma, and rioters burned down homes of Chinese residents who did not leave by the November 3 deadline. Although the perpetrators were indicted, their charges were dropped, and they instead received a hero's parade.<sup>3</sup>

During World War II, the Puyallup Fairgrounds in Pierce County—just east of Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan neighborhoods—was the location of Camp Harmony, one of the largest “assembly centers” for Japanese American internment.<sup>2</sup>

Today, Pierce County is home to many Southeast Asian refugees. During the Vietnam War in the 1970s, thousands of Vietnamese refugees found home in Pierce County. In the 1980s, several thousand Cambodians fleeing from genocide in their home country obtained refugee status and settled in Pierce County. Many Cambodians now face the possibility of deportation due to federal policy changes in the current administration.<sup>2,4</sup>

### *Redlining and Segregation*

The City of Tacoma also has a history of redlining neighborhoods and allowing racially restrictive covenants to minimize homeownership by People of Color and maintain racial segregation.<sup>5,6</sup> Much of the East Tacoma/Salishan neighborhoods were designated as “Definitely Declining” and “Hazardous” in the 1940 redlining map. “Definitely Declining” neighborhoods were characterized as “obsolescence [and] infiltration of lower grade population.” Mortgage lenders would limit the loan to less than 65% of the appraisal. “Hazardous” neighborhoods were “characterized by detrimental influences in a pronounced degree, undesirable population or an infiltration of it.” Mortgage lenders would generally refuse to issue loans in these neighborhoods.<sup>5</sup> In 1940, 0.9% of Tacoma residents were Asian American, and 0.6% of Tacoma residents were African American. Additionally, 14.5% of Tacoma residents were “foreign-born white,” e.g. native-born Italians. Barriers to home ownership made it more difficult for families of color and foreign-born white families to pass down wealth and build economic mobility.<sup>6</sup>



*Tacoma redlining map, 1940.*  
*Source: Mapping Inequality (Source #5)*

### *African American Activism*

During the Civil Rights Movement, the African American community in Pierce County, historically adversely affected by structural racism, became more organized. The Tacoma Urban League was founded in 1968 to help African Americans and other residents achieve “social equality and economic independence.”<sup>7</sup> In 1969, the Mother’s Day Disturbance took place in Hilltop, the largest African American neighborhood, as a result of racially-dividing city politics.<sup>8,9</sup> African American community leaders helped contain the violence, successfully bringing in more neighborhood services and obtaining African American representation on the police and fire departments. The Mother’s Day Disturbance also led to the founding of the Black Collective, which, to this day, holds weekly discussion on community priorities such as education, employment, and health care.<sup>9</sup>

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### *The Latino Community*

The Latino community in Pierce County mostly migrated from eastern Washington. In the early 20th century, Latino agricultural migrant workers would work throughout Washington during harvest time each year. They begin to settle in the Yakima Valley in the 1930s. World War II brought more international workers to support the booming wartime agricultural industry in eastern Washington. For example, Mexican workers were brought to eastern Washington through the Bracero program as part of the US-Mexico Mexican Farm Labor Agreement. In the 1960s and 1970s, young Latinos moved to urban areas of Washington, such as Pierce County, in search of more economic opportunity.<sup>10</sup>

### *The Puyallup Tribe*

In 1854, the Puyallup Tribe signed the Treaty of Medicine Creek under duress and was forced to cede much of the Tribe's traditional lands over to the United States federal government for fishing and hunting rights. Although a reservation was allotted to the Puyallup Tribe, much of those lands were taken away in the 1880s due to the General Allotment Act and the Territory of Washington achieving statehood. The injustice forced members of the Tribe to assert their rights to the lands. It took more than a century to reach the 1990 Puyallup Land Claims Settlement, which gave back the Tribe's land and fishing rights and brought economic development and social services to the community.<sup>2,11</sup>

### **Local Economy and Major Employers**

Historically the port, coal mining and timber were the most important sectors of the Pierce County economy. Lumber and shipyard industries grew rapidly during the world wars. In the 1980s, Microsoft moved to the adjacent King County and positioned the region to become a technology center, prompting transition in Pierce County's industries.<sup>1,2</sup>

Today, a high proportion of workers in Pierce County are employed by public entities. The largest public employer in the county is Joint Base Lewis McCord, with over 53,000 federal workers. The State of Washington, the City of Tacoma, Pierce County Government, school districts and the United States Postal Service each employ thousands of workers. The health care sector is the largest private employer in Pierce County, with MultiCare Health System and CHI Franciscan Health each employing more than 5,000 workers. Many residents also commute to jobs at companies, such as Boeing and Microsoft, in King County.<sup>12</sup>

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## Looking Forward

Pierce County is full of natural resources and has a historically diverse community with rich culture. In the face of inequitable policies and acts of aggression fueled by racism, racial minorities in Pierce County responded with persistence and fought for justice. Their hard work rectified many policies and practices, but the lingering effects of oppression still exist in the community. Today, residents in the three zip codes of interest faces challenges rooted in the past as well as new challenges from the changing society. In the following sections of this report, we will present these current challenges, raise questions to dig deeper about root causes, and discuss opportunities for the community and cross-sector partners to come together and build resilience.

## Sources:

1. Pierce County History: <https://www.co.pierce.wa.us/197/History#:~:text=The%20first%20settlers%20of%20the,an%20abundant%20selection%20of%20food.>
2. Pierce County - Thumbnail History: <https://www.historylink.org/File/8001/>
3. "Tacoma expels the entire Chinese community on November 3, 1885.": <https://www.historylink.org/File/5063>
4. Fear grips immigrants who fled here to escape genocide - 'They're going to try to deport me': <https://www.thenewstribune.com/article230266884.html>
5. Redlining Map: <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=12/47.232/-122.491&city=tacoma-wa>
6. City of Tacoma's Office of Equity and Human Rights (OEHR): [https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city\\_departments/equity\\_and\\_human\\_rights/why\\_equity](https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_departments/equity_and_human_rights/why_equity)
7. Tacoma Urban League: <https://thetacomaurbanleague.org/about-us>
8. Black Past: Mother's Day Disturbance: <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/mother-s-day-disturbance-1969/>
9. The Black Collective: <https://theblackcollective.org/about-us>
10. Revisiting Washington: Latino Heritage: <https://revisitwa.org/latino-heritage/>
11. Puyallup Land Claims Settlement (1990): <https://www.historylink.org/File/20157>
12. Washington State Employment Security Department - Pierce County Profile: <https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/county-profiles/pierce>

# **Section 2: Demographic Information**

# Households with Children

There are almost 8,500 households in the Franklin Pierce community and 5,000 households in East Tacoma/Salishan with children under 18. Compared with Washington State and Pierce County overall, **these communities have a higher percentage of households with children** (35-41% in Franklin Pierce/East Tacoma vs 30% in Washington state vs. 33% in Pierce County). Generally, 22% of the Pierce County population are children under 18, and 6-7% are children under 5. The three zip codes of interest have similar population size, and together account for more than 10% of Pierce County's population.

|  |                  | Franklin Pierce |                | East Tacoma/Salishan |                       |                |                      |
|--|------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
|  | Washington State | Pierce County   | 98444 Zip Code | 98445 Zip Code       | Parkland census tract | 98404 Zip Code | Midland census tract |
| Total population                         | 7,294,336        | 859,840         | 33,965         | 32,504               | 37,185                | 35,100         | 9,208                |
| Total households with a child under 18   | 861,147          | 105,589         | 4,395          | 4,155                | 4,692                 | 4,610          | 1,172                |
| % of households with a children under 18 | 30.80%           | 33.20%          | 34.90%         | 36.70%               | 35.20%                | 40.50%         | 34.80%               |
| Total children under 18                  | 1,632,875        | 203,938         | 7,988          | 8,133                | 8,589                 | 9,797          | 2,302                |
| Total children under 5                   | 453,008          | 58,112          | 2,287          | 2,383                | 2,510                 | 2,717          | 673                  |

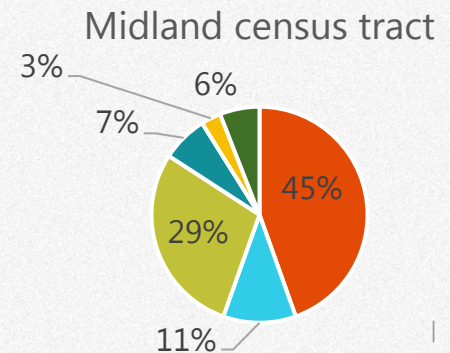
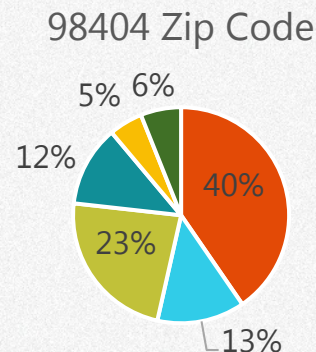
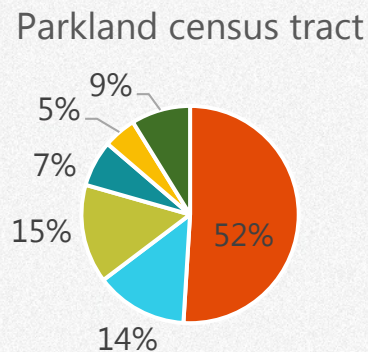
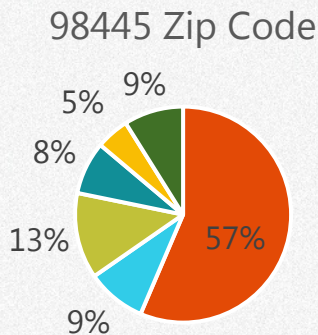
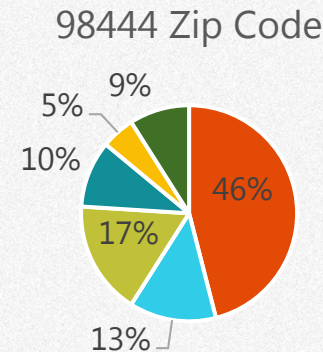
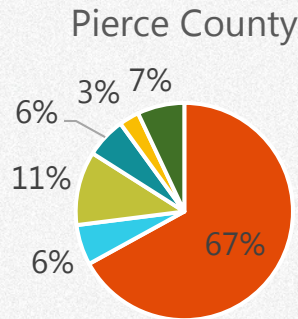
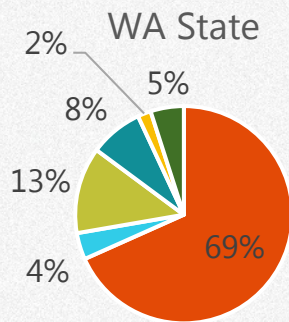
Source: ACS 2018 5-year Estimate



# Household Race & Ethnicity

Approximately 30-35% of residents in Washington state and Pierce County are people of color. As we zoom into the zip-code level, we see that the Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan communities have a **much higher proportion of residents of color**. The western portion of Franklin Pierce (98444) is populated by 54% residents of color, including close to 20% Hispanic residents, 13% Black residents, and 10% Asian residents. East Tacoma/Salishan (98404) is home to 60% residents of color, including 23% Hispanic residents, 13% Black residents, and 12% Asian residents.

■ White 
 ■ Black 
 ■ Hispanic 
 ■ Asian 
 ■ American Indian, Alaska Native, Pacific Islander 
 ■ Two or More Races



# Labor Force Participation

Roughly 65% of all Washington, Pierce County, Franklin Pierce, and East Tacoma/Salishan residents over age 16 are in the labor force. Residents of Western Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma are **more likely to work in the service industry (25-27%) and less likely to work in management, business, science, and arts** compared with Pierce County as a whole. This difference can partially be explained by the lower proportion of individuals with Bachelor's degree in Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma. Workers in the service industry are more likely to have experienced adverse effects on their health, wellbeing, and economic stability during the COVID-19 pandemic.\*

|  | WA State | Pierce County | Franklin Pierce |                | Parkland census tract | East Tacoma/Salishan |                      |
|--|----------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
|  |          |               | 98444 Zip Code  | 98445 Zip Code |                       | 98404 Zip Code       | Midland census tract |
| % residents over 16 in labor force                                   | 64%      | 65%           | 64%             | 65%            | 65%                   | 64%                  | 66%                  |
| % in service occupation  | 17%      | 18%           | 25%             | 18%            | 22%                   | 27%                  | 27%                  |
| % in sales and office occupation                                     | 20%      | 22%           | 24%             | 24%            | 24%                   | 19%                  | 16%                  |
| % labor force in management, business, science, and arts occupations | 41%      | 34%           | 21%             | 30%            | 25%                   | 21%                  | 24%                  |
| % in production and transportation                                   | 12%      | 15%           | 18%             | 17%            | 18%                   | 21%                  | 20%                  |
| % in construction or maintenance                                     | 10%      | 10%           | 12%             | 11%            | 11%                   | 13%                  | 14%                  |
| % residents have BA or higher  | 35%      | 26%           | 15%             | 16%            | 15%                   | 16%                  | 10%                  |

Source: ACS 2018 5-year Estimate

\* <https://www.brookings.edu/research/who-are-the-workers-already-impacted-by-the-covid-19-recession/>

# Family Labor Force Participation & Income

About 60-70% of households have all parents in the labor force. This data is similar among Washington State, Pierce County, Franklin Pierce, and East Tacoma/Salishan. However, **median family income in western Franklin Pierce and the East Tacoma/Salishan communities is lower than the Pierce County average (\$50K-72K vs \$80K)**. The difference in median family income could, in part, be explained by the occupation distribution and educational attainment distribution seen in the previous page.

|   |          | Franklin Pierce |                | East Tacoma/Salishan |                       |                |                      |
|---|----------|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
|   | WA State | Pierce County   | 98444 Zip Code | 98445 Zip Code       | Parkland census tract | 98404 Zip Code | Midland census tract |
| % households with children under 6 where all parents are in the labor force | 60%      | 58%             | 61%            | 59%                  | 61%                   | 59%            | 73%                  |
| % households with children 6-17 where all parents are in the labor force    | 69%      | 67%             | 66%            | 62%                  | 62%                   | 66%            | 60%                  |
| Median family income  | \$84,212 | \$80,328        | \$50,051       | \$71,644             | \$58,618              | \$57,050       | \$52,211             |

Source: ACS 2018 5-year Estimate

# Caregiver Information

There is a **higher proportion of single mothers in zip codes 98444 (western Franklin Pierce) and 98404 (East Tacoma/Salishan), compared with Pierce County overall (11% vs. 7%)**. Additionally, 2% of the Pierce County population and 3% of the Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma population consist of grandparents living with their grandchildren (close to 3,000 grandparents total). The proportion of these grandparents being considered 'responsible' for their grandchildren is similar if not lower than that of Pierce County. However, **a higher proportion of these grandparents (17-18%) have been caregiving for over 5 years**.

|   |          | Franklin Pierce |                | East Tacoma/Salishan |                       |                |                      |
|---|----------|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
|   | WA State | Pierce County   | 98444 Zip Code | 98445 Zip Code       | Parkland census tract | 98404 Zip Code | Midland census tract |
| % of households with a single mother and children <18                       | 5%       | 7%              | 11%            | 7%                   | 10%                   | 11%            | 11%                  |
| Number of grandparents living with grandchildren                            | 135,746  | 17,337          | 905            | 979                  | 896                   | 959            | 161                  |
| % of grandparents living with grandchildren & responsible for grandchildren | 32%      | 33%             | 27%            | 35%                  | 27%                   | 24%            | 48%                  |
| % grandparents responsible for child for >5 years                           | 12%      | 14%             | 18%            | 17%                  | 20%                   | 17%            | 8%                   |

# Household Language Spoken, Nativity, and Education

Residents in zip codes 98404 (East Tacoma/Salishan) and 98444 (western Franklin Pierce) are **more likely to be foreign-born, more likely to be multi-lingual, and more likely to be limited in English proficiency** compared with Pierce County and Washington State overall. Residents in 98445 (eastern Franklin Pierce) are more like the overall populations in terms for language abilities and place of birth.

|   | Franklin Pierce |               |                |                | East Tacoma/Salishan  |                |                      |
|---|-----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
|   | WA State        | Pierce County | 98444 Zip Code | 98445 Zip Code | Parkland census tract | 98404 Zip Code | Midland census tract |
| % residents who are foreign-born                            | 14%             | 10%           | 19%            | 12%            | 14%                   | 22%            | 21%                  |
| % residents who speak a language other than English at home | 19%             | 15%           | 29%            | 20%            | 23%                   | 37%            | 35%                  |
| % residents who speak English less than "very well"         | 8%              | 6%            | 13%            | 8%             | 10%                   | 18%            | 16%                  |

Source: ACS 2018 5-year Estimate

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# Key Takeaways & Questions

Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan have a smaller proportion of residents with a college degree, lower median household income, and a smaller proportion of workers with occupations in management, business, science, and arts. Although we do not have definitive proof about causal relationships, these three factors are likely related. For example, lower educational attainment prevents residents from obtaining jobs in the management, business, science, and arts sectors, which in turn leads to lower median household income.

We also see a higher proportion of residents in these communities with limited English proficiency and a higher proportion of families led by single mothers. Families led by single mothers (or a single parent in general) may require additional support from family, neighbors, and community-based resources to sustain stability. For example, they may need childcare support in order to access health care. On the other hand, families with limited English proficiency may have a more difficult time accessing resources they need due to language barrier.

Resilient Pierce County collective action should focus on education, job opportunities, and living wage as key issues. Single-parent households and individuals with limited English proficiency are high priority populations. Collective action should build upon the community's strength in racial/ethnic diversity and the existing community support structure as much as possible. In other words, support the efforts already in place by helping increase their capacity and sustainability.

**Gaps:** educational attainment, occupation types, income

**Opportunities:** provide support for single-parent families, families with limited English proficiency, and build upon rich diversity

## Question to Dig Deeper:

1. What systemic factors are driving the disparity in educational attainment, occupation, and income?
2. How has COVID-19 impacted residents in the service industry and how have systems and services been supporting their families?

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# Policy Opportunities: WA Poverty Reduction Workgroup Recommendations

## *Improving Education & Literacy Opportunities*

**Recommendation 3a-ii. Strengthen literacy programs and services for children and adults across the entire education and workforce-development pipeline.** Limited English proficiency is a major barrier for immigrants and refugees. There are currently over 250,000 people in Washington state aged five and older who do not speak English proficient enough to navigate social, education, and employment opportunities. Ensuring all children and adults have access to culturally relevant literacy programs and services will improve education and employment outcomes.

**Additional Information:** Washington State Institute for Public Policy – a non-partisan research firm – has found that literacy outcomes could likely be improved by employing a comprehensive teacher professional development model that uses coaching for teachers as a primary strategy to improve instructional practices. The program model, the Literacy Collaborative provides up to 35 days of training at university sites to literacy coaches before placement in schools, as well as on-going training and support.

**Recommendation 3a-vi. Increase the availability of affordable childcare and housing for student parents on or near college campuses.** Parental education – especially maternal education – is one of the best supports to lift families out of intergenerational poverty. Yet, student parents, especially single parents with young children, face significant obstacles to furthering their education due to a lack of affordable childcare

and housing. Programs like the Jeremiah Program and Keys to Degrees, co-locate high-quality early learning, human services, affordable housing, and peer-to-peer support systems on college campuses, and have a proven track record of breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

**Recommendation 3viii. Increase opportunities for WA students and adults who are disconnected from the educational system to prepare for and access affordable and high-quality postsecondary educational pathways.** Recommendations to improve post-secondary outcomes in Washington state include: 1) leverage the Washington College Grant and increase awareness of the importance of completing financial aid applications, 2) support College Bound Scholarship students from low-income families with college readiness activities; 3) reach adults through the new statewide adult reengagement College and Career Compass initiative; 4) increase the number of low-income students enrolled in dual-credit courses (receiving college credit while in high school); 5) understand and address basic needs of college students including food and housing insecurity; and 6) continue to pursue equity-focused policies and strategies to increase educational postsecondary success of students of color.

**Additional Information:** Identifying support to sustain a partnership with an organization with expertise in helping secondary students become college-ready is a potential strategy. The [Washington College Access Network](#), for example, focuses on helping jurisdictions increase the number of first-generation, students of color who are experiencing poverty.

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# Policy Opportunities: WA Poverty Reduction Workgroup Recommendations

## *Labor Force Development*

**Recommendation 8a. Adopt the recommendations detailed in the Future of Work Taskforce report, and bolster it with more specific, intentional strategies to achieve equity for workers of color, women, immigrants and refugees, and rural Washingtonians.** The Future of Work Taskforce recommends 13 actions within the following strategies: 1) provide comprehensive worker upskilling and lifelong learning opportunities; 2) prepare for use and adoption of advancing technology in the workplace; 3) improve labor market data and credentialing transparency; 4) modernize worker support systems; and 5) ensure equal access to economic development resources across Washington state.

**Recommendation 8a-i. Dramatically expand mentorship and career-connected learning for people of color, refugees and immigrants, people with disabilities, and rural communities.** In the ever-changing economy, there is an even higher premium on social capital, connections to employers, and direct workplace experience. To increase mentorship and career-connected learning programs for people of color, immigrants and refugees; rural communities, and people with disabilities: 1) explore requiring or incentivizing mentorship from employers, community members, or other caring adults for youth and adults in career-connected learning programs; 2) create a 1:1 state-employer matching fund for programs that combine mentorship, career planning, and career-connected learning with helping people move out of poverty; and 3) work in partnership with the business community to ensure appropriate supports are in place to

address individual trauma and the wrap-around services needed for staff from low-income backgrounds to succeed in the workplace.

**Recommendation 8a-ii. Accelerate pathways for immigrants and refugees with advanced degrees and/or training from their home country to become accredited in the U.S.** Many immigrants and refugees in the community bring considerable education, training, and professional experience from their home countries, but face obstacles to employment in the U.S. because states fail to recognize their education and employment credentials obtained outside the U.S. Accelerating accreditation for immigrants and refugees with advanced training and degrees will increase economic security for the refugee and immigrant families and provide Washington state with much needed talent to fill shortages in high-demand occupations, such as medicine, education, science, and engineering. Specific to medical graduates, WA can: 1) create a Limited License for International Medical Graduates (LLIMG) who have passed all the United States Medical License Examinations to practice under the supervision of a Board Certified Physician; 2) ensure Managed Care Organizations that serve Medicaid clients provide credentialing and reimburse international medical graduates who hold a Limited License to practice medicine (LLIMG); 3) ensure 10% of Washington funded ACGME accredited residency positions are dedicated to immigrant and refugee doctors living in Washington; and 4) create a committee that oversees state funded residency positions and assures that residency programs are actively integrating immigrant and refugee doctors into our health care system.



# **Section 3: Built Environment and Public Infrastructure**

# Pierce County Public Transit

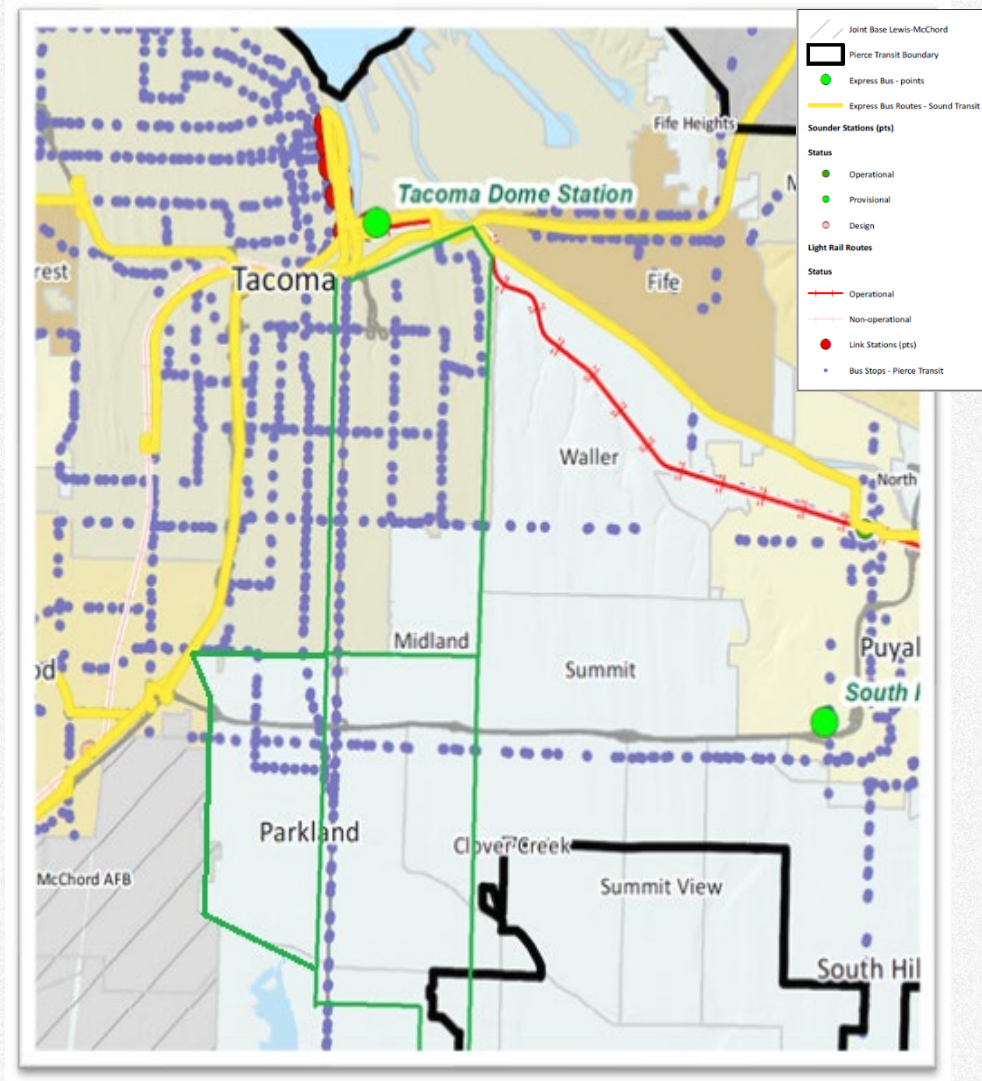
Public transit access is crucial to ensure that families receive needed services, connect, and commute - regardless of access to personal transportation. While the average employed Pierce County resident commutes by car an average of 30 minutes each day, there are many households in the Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma neighborhoods that do not have access to a personal vehicle.

## The Franklin Pierce neighborhood:

- Includes dozens of local bus stops (~60) but **lacks stops in its southern region.**
- **Lacks close proximity** to light rail stations or an express bus stop.

## The East Tacoma/Salishan neighborhood:

- Includes dozens of local bus stops (~75), except in its southeast quadrant.
- Provides close proximity to **one express bus stop** in the northern end of the community, which is accessible via a pedestrian walkway over several highway lanes.
- Has several light rail stations within walking distance and close to bus stops in its northern end.



Source: TPCHD Health Equity Maps

(Continued, next page)

# Pierce County Public Transit (Cont.)



Pierce Transit BRT Map.  
 Source: Pierce Transit BRT

## Unincorporated Area

Tacoma city boundary seems to be the determining factor for public transit access. Despite having similar population density (around 5,000 to 5,500 people/squared miles), western Franklin Pierce (98444) appears to have fewer bus stops compared with zip codes within the City of Tacoma, such as Central Tacoma (98405) and North End (98406). In fact, there seems to be less access to public transit in western Franklin Pierce than East Tacoma (98404), where the population density is lower (about 4,000 people/squared miles).

## Rapid Bus Transit

The new Rapid Bus Transit (RBT) being built in 2020-2022 will go straight down Route 1 from Tacoma to Spanaway. It could improve the efficiency at transporting residents in East Tacoma/Salishan and Franklin Pierce to opportunities and resources in Tacoma. However, it could also make the neighborhoods more attractive for transit-induced gentrification.\*

**QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY:** Franklin Pierce appears to have less access to public transit, compared with communities to the north. Do residents consider current public transit options adequate to access services and employment—especially for families without a car?

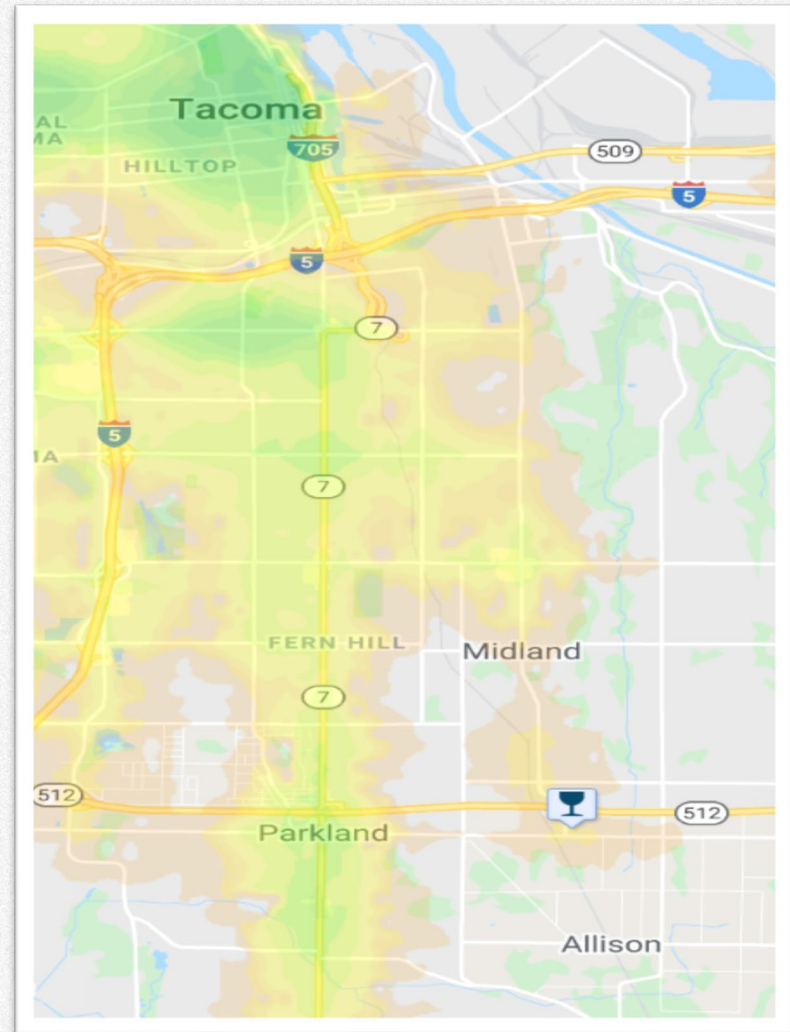
\* Casey Dawkins & Rolf Moeckel (2016) Transit-Induced Gentrification: Who Will Stay, and Who Will Go?, Housing Policy Debate, 26:4-5, 801-818, DOI: [10.1080/10511482.2016.1138986](https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2016.1138986)

# Pierce County Walkability Score

**The Franklin-Pierce neighborhood has a “walkability score” of 36 out of 100**, indicating that the area is largely “car dependent” with most errands requiring a car. This is especially concerning given many families in this neighborhood do not have access to a personal vehicle (see page 55).

**The East Tacoma/Salishan neighborhood has a “walkability score” of 52 out of 100**, indicating that it is “somewhat walkable” and that some errands can be accomplished on foot.

**QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY:** Do residents feel that their wellbeing and access to services would improve if their neighborhoods were more “walkable”? For residents in Franklin Pierce with low access to public transit and no vehicle, how are they accessing services?



Source: [Walk Score](#)

# Pierce County Library, Park, and School Locations

Parks, schools, and libraries provide important spaces for community to gather, exercise, play, access resources, and learn from one another.

**The Franklin Pierce neighborhood includes:**

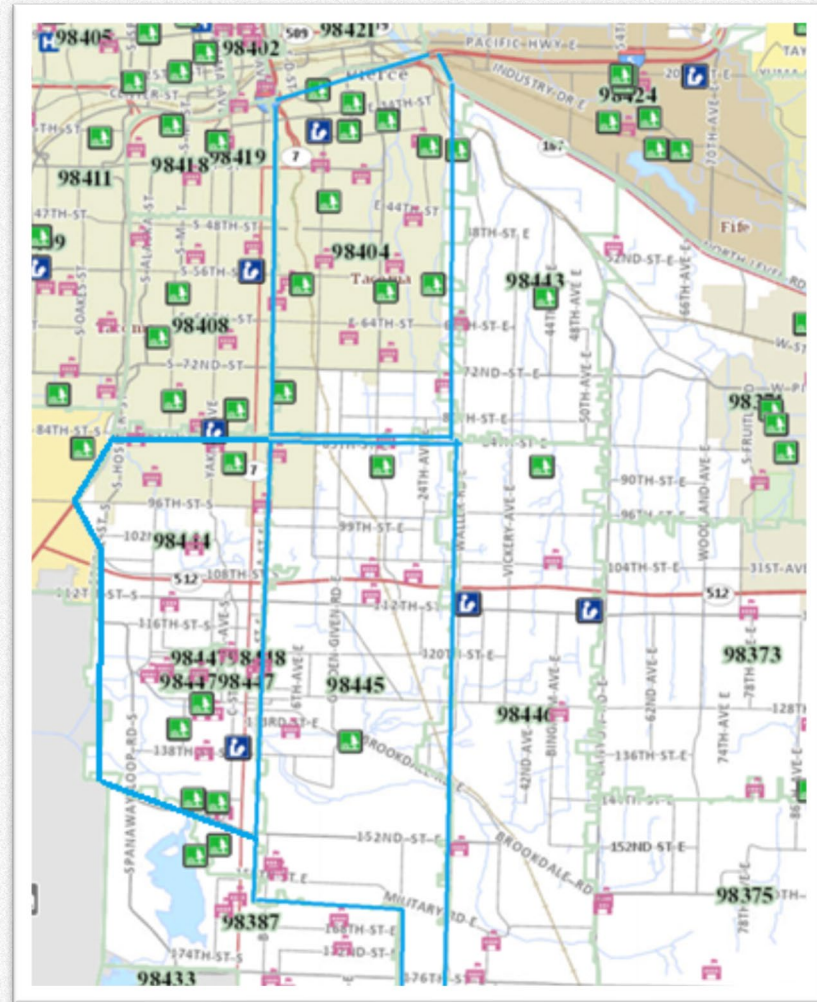
- **7 parks** and 8 neighboring parks
- **1 library** and 2 neighboring libraries
- **20 schools**

**The East Tacoma/Salishan neighborhood includes:**

- **11 parks** and 7 neighboring parks
- **1 library** and 2 neighboring libraries
- **11 schools**

**QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY:** The Franklin Pierce community has fewer parks than neighboring communities to the north despite having double the population size. Do residents feel they have adequate space for play, social connection, and exercise?

Are residents satisfied by the resources they can access at their local libraries? What else could libraries provide to improve resident wellbeing?



Source: TPCHD GIS Mapping Tool

# Pierce County Community Gardens

Pierce County's community gardens, managed by volunteers and other organizations, "are diverse forms of open space that exist throughout Pierce County where neighbors can come together to grow food and friendships."

## The Franklin Pierce neighborhood:

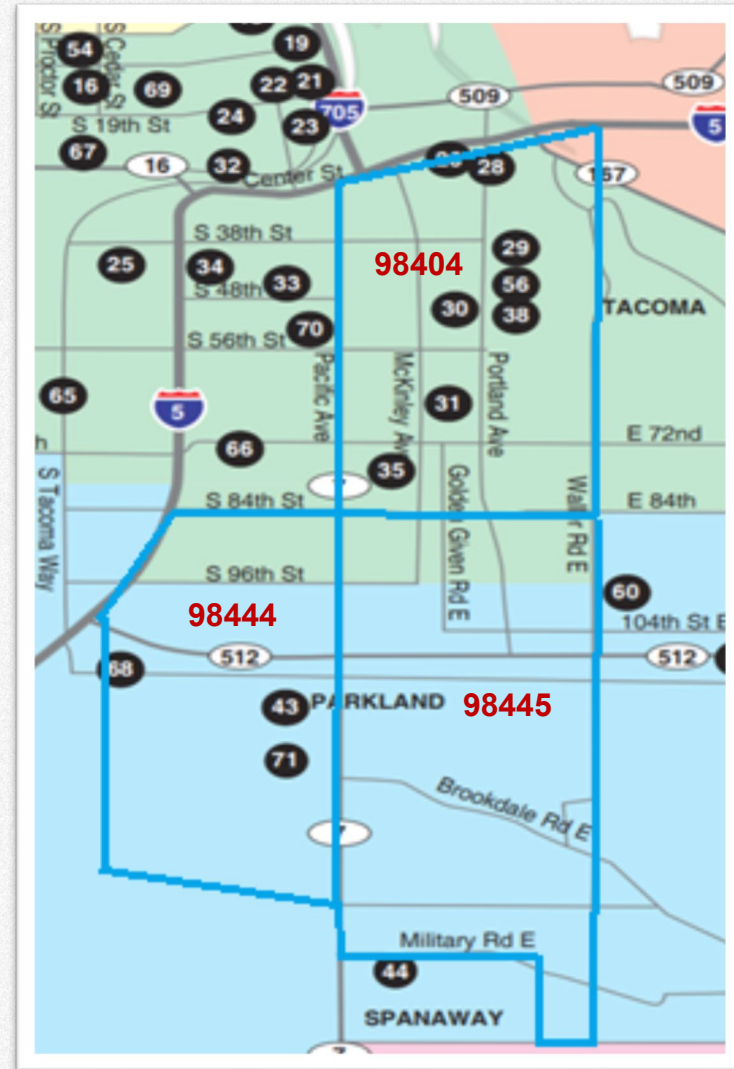
- Includes **3 community gardens** and 4 neighboring community gardens.
- Provides far fewer community gardens in the eastern portion of the community.

## The East Tacoma/Salishan neighborhood:

- Includes **8 community gardens** and 4 neighboring gardens.
- This area appears to provide an even distribution of community gardens throughout the community.

**QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY:** Are community gardens an essential source of food, nutrition, and wellness for community residents?

The Franklin Pierce community has far fewer community gardens than neighboring areas. Would Franklin Pierce residents benefit from more gardens in their community?



Source: *Pierce Community Garden Map*

# Pierce County Public Health Care Facilities

Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan residents have relatively close access to several public health care facilities serving the greater Tacoma area.

## The Franklin Pierce neighborhood:

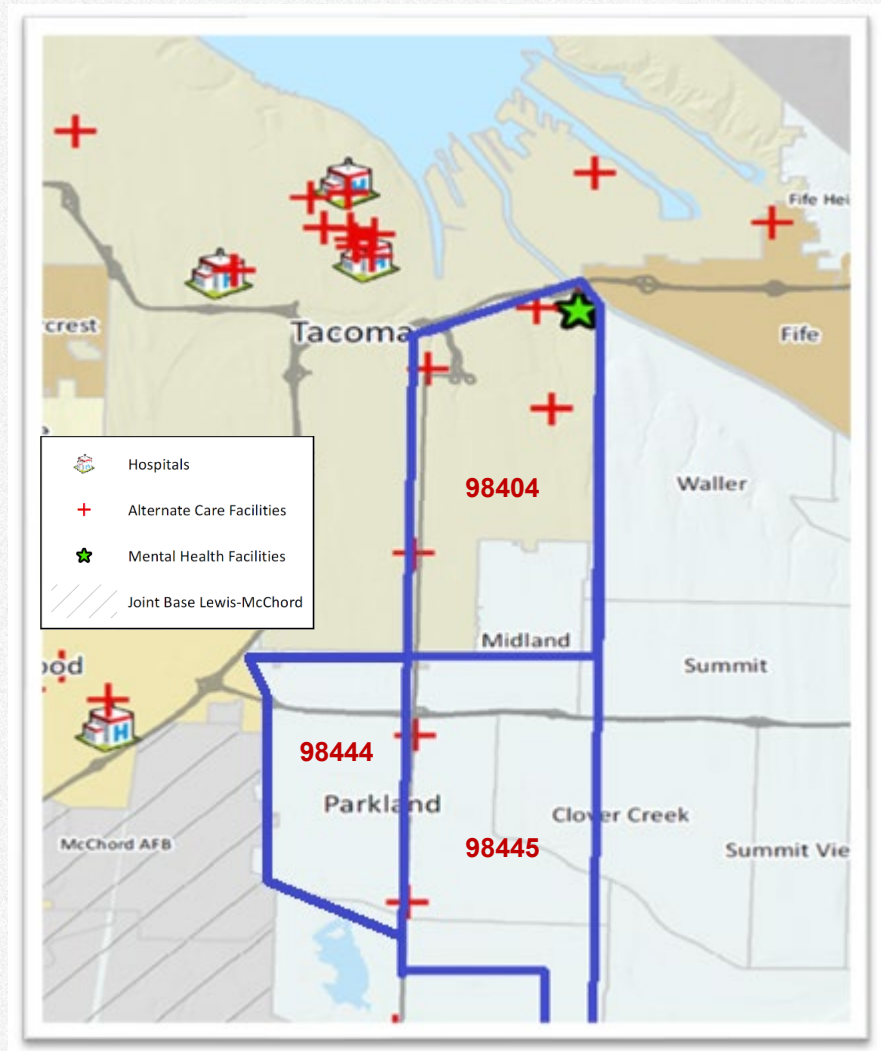
- Lacks a hospital, but has **one neighboring Level I trauma hospital**.
- Provides at least **2 medical clinics** and 2 neighboring medical clinics.
- Lacks a mental health facility; but is close to a **neighboring mental health facility in East Tacoma**.

## The East Tacoma/Salishan neighborhood:

- Lacks a hospital, but has **3 neighboring hospitals**, including two Level II trauma hospitals.
- Provides **4 medical clinics** and several neighboring medical clinics.
- Provides **1 mental health facility**.

**QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY:** Are residents satisfied with the healthcare facilities they can access in their community? Or, do they travel longer distances to access facilities they consider more adequate?

Are there perceived gaps in specific kinds of care provision (mental health, pediatric, specialty care)?



Source: TPCHD Health Equity Maps

# Pierce County Childcare Facilities

Lack of access to quality and affordable childcare is one of the largest identified stressors for Washington state families.

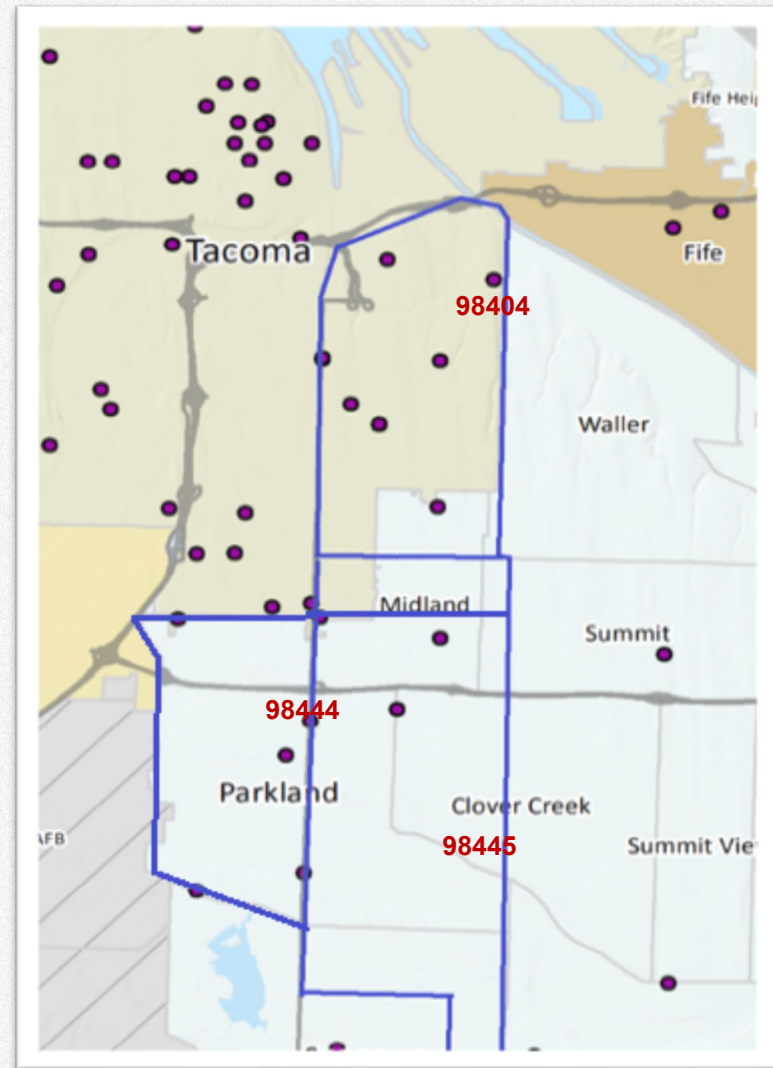
## The Franklin Pierce neighborhood:

- Provides **7 childcare facilities** and 2 neighboring childcare facilities.
- Provides less childcare facilities in the southeast and western tracts of the community.

## The East Tacoma/Salishan neighborhood:

- Offers **7 childcare facilities** and 5 neighboring childcare facilities.
- Provides a fairly even distribution of childcare facilities throughout the community.

**QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY:** Franklin Pierce appears to have fewer childcare facilities in the southeastern and western portions of the community. Are residents in other areas of this neighborhood struggling to access childcare? How satisfied are residents with the childcare facilities that are accessible? Are families met with long waitlists at these facilities? Is care affordable, and do these facilities accept vouchers?



Source: TPCHD Health Equity Maps

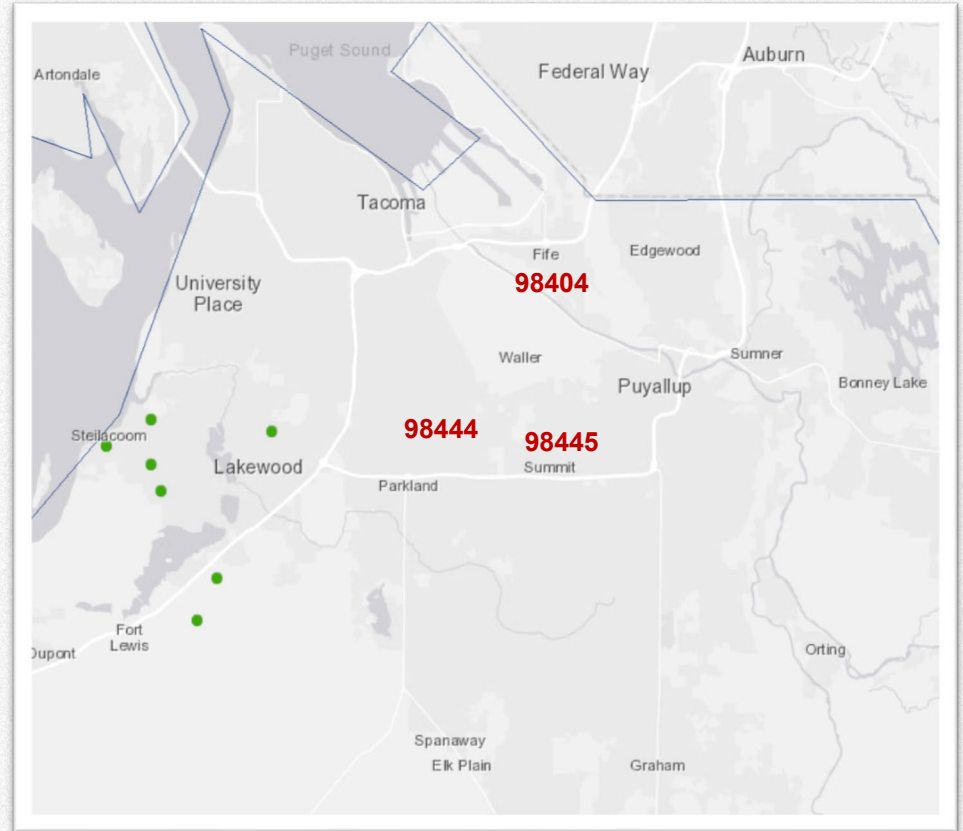


# School-Based Healthcare Centers

School-based health centers can provide a trusted source of health and wellbeing to students and their families, providing primary care, mental health care, dental care, substance abuse counseling, and more.

According to the School Based Healthcare Center Mapping Tool, there are 51 school-based health centers in Washington state; 7 of these centers are based in Pierce County. Franklin Pierce's first school-based healthcare center opened in Spanaway Middle School in 2019. This center aims to provide urgent care, annual checks, vaccinations, dental care, medication, insurance enrollment, vision care, mental health care, and other services.

**QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY:** Does the school-based healthcare center at Spanaway Middle School provide a trusted source of care for Franklin Pierce students and their families?



Source: *SBHC Mapping Tool*

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# Key Takeaways & Questions

Much of the communities of interest—Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan—are unincorporated areas. When assessing built environment and public infrastructures, the disadvantage of being an unincorporated area is brought to the forefront. Public transit access, walkability, public educational resource access, health care access, and childcare resources all appear to be lacking in these three zip codes despite the high population density.

Living in an unincorporated area means the residents have less direct means to advocate for public infrastructures they need compared with Tacoma residents living just a few miles away. Resilience Pierce County could help residents in Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan organize and advocate for the county to provide more infrastructure. Another possible approach—if residents are interested—is to advocate for municipal incorporation or be annexed into the City of Tacoma. Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan communities are being considered for annexation.\* Organized advocacy efforts could speed up the process.

**Gaps:** Less public infrastructure compared with communities within the Tacoma city boundary despite high population density.

**Opportunities:** Support organizing efforts for county-level advocacy work.

## Questions to Dig Deeper:

1. Which public infrastructures do residents consider as essential and are lacking?
2. What kind of community dialogue needs to occur to develop next steps?
3. Who are Resilience Pierce County's potential partners for advocacy work?

\*[Moving Forward Together presentation](#) by Pierce County Planning and Public Works. August 2018.

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# Policy Opportunities: WA Poverty Reduction Workgroup Recommendations

## *Improving Healthcare and Mental Health Services*

**Recommendation 4c. Expand culturally and linguistically appropriate home visiting so all eligible families can benefit from this service.** Home visiting programs provide health services and social supports as well as referrals to expectant mothers and families with young children to optimize early childhood development. Currently, just one in four eligible families receive home visiting, leaving more than 29,000 families underserved.

**Additional Information:** To address this gap, policy efforts should support covering multi-lingual, culturally-appropriate doula services under Medicaid to help improve birth outcomes and reduce perinatal disparities – [a key recommendation](#) of the Washington Center for Health Innovation and Policy Science at Washington University.

**Recommendation 5g. Improve integration of behavioral health treatment in early learning settings and K-12.** Children struggling with a behavioral health issue may not be adequately or accurately screened or cared for at school, which can negatively affect their learning, social relationships, and physical well-being.

However, early learning settings and schools are often trusted family-centered spaces which should be leveraged. Services can be improved by: 1) increased training for teachers and school health providers to support screening and early recognition/intervention; 2) improving the Individual Education Plan (IEP) system to increase flexibility and minimize the removal of kids to special education classrooms or out-of-school placements; 3) increase peer counseling and mindfulness programs in schools; 4) Increase educational programming to decrease cultural stigma around mental health conditions; and improve access to appropriate after-school care and programming.

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# Policy Opportunities: WA Poverty Reduction Workgroup Recommendations

## *Expanding Access to Childcare*

**Recommendation 3f. Adopt the Child Care Collaborative Taskforce recommendations to increase the availability of affordable, high quality early care and education.** The WA state Child Care Collaborative Taskforce (CCC Taskforce) was created in 2018 to “achieve a goal of access to affordable, high-quality childcare for all Washington families by 2025.” The recent CCC Taskforce report makes 31 recommendations within the following four strategies to accomplish this goal: Stabilize, support and sustain the child care workforce, providers and industry; increase employer supports for child care; streamline permitting and licensing to better support the construction, renovation and acquisition of child care facilities; and reduce disparities and disproportionalities in childcare service delivery and access.

**Additional Information:** A survey of childcare center workers in Washington State by the Economic Opportunity Institute found that centers face “difficulty in recruiting highly-skilled educators willing to work for low wages” and accept fewer Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) subsidized children because of low state reimbursement rates. In alignment with CCC Taskforce commendations, this is a key area to target for additional resources.

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# Policy Opportunities: More Information on Municipal Incorporation

A larger question for exploration emerged around whether residents in both areas would benefit from municipal incorporation – the process by which a city or town becomes officially recognized by state and federal law as a jurisdiction. Incorporation can bring many benefits, allowing residents to have far greater control over the use and prioritization of resources from the state and county. Incorporation has allowed some communities to produce greater access to healthcare services, better transportation, better infrastructure and increased access to emergency services. The Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC) crafted a guide for communities considering whether incorporation is right for them. Generally, the process begins with an incorporation study that identifies gaps in the social infrastructure and determines the potential impacts of incorporation.

# **Section 4: Community Environments**

# Home Ownership

Home ownership plays a vital role in providing wealth growth opportunities for communities, and is associated with better health, wellbeing, and education attainment among families. Just over 60% of Washington state and Pierce County residents own their homes. This figure is similar within the East Tacoma/Salishan and east Franklin Pierce communities. However, **far fewer residents of western Franklin Pierce community own their homes (38%)**. This suggests that there are opportunities to consider how systemic barriers to home ownership are being eliminated within the western Franklin Pierce community (for example, permitting rent history as credit, and exploring community benefit agreements with local banks).

It is also essential to note that while the average Pierce County home is valued at \$277,000, homes in western Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan are valued at close to \$100,000 less than this county average. These differences in property valuation create a smaller base for families in the Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan communities to grow wealth and access capital.

|                          |           | Franklin Pierce |                |                | East Tacoma/Salishan  |                |                      |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
|                          | WA State  | Pierce County   | 98444 Zip Code | 98445 Zip Code | Parkland census tract | 98404 Zip Code | Midland census tract |
| % residents who own home | 63%       | 62%             | 38%            | 66%            | 47%                   | 59%            | 53%                  |
| Average home value       | \$311,700 | \$277,000       | \$192,600      | \$228,300      | \$205,500             | \$185,400      | \$185,100            |

Source: ACS 2018 5-year Estimate

# Housing Cost Burden & Insecurity

Housing cost burden can be measured through the percent of residents who spend over 30% of their income on rent or their monthly mortgage. About half of Pierce County renters and one-third of the households with mortgage are experiencing housing cost burden. **The proportion of households experiencing housing cost burden is even higher in our zip codes of interest, with zip code 98444's 59% renters experiencing rent burden as the most extreme example.** This level of cost burden can put families at danger for housing insecurity.

**QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY:** Are any local housing or financial programs helpful at alleviating housing cost burden?

|   | Franklin Pierce |               |                |                | East Tacoma/Salishan  |                |                      |
|---|-----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
|   | WA State        | Pierce County | 98444 Zip Code | 98445 Zip Code | Parkland census tract | 98404 Zip Code | Midland census tract |
| % residents with rent >30% of income      | 48%             | 51%           | 59%            | 53%            | 55%                   | 52%            | 45%                  |
| % residents with mortgage > 30% of income | 30%             | 31%           | 41%            | 33%            | 36%                   | 42%            | 45%                  |
| % vacant homes                            | 9%              | 7%            | 8%             | 7%             | 8%                    | 7%             | 6%                   |

Source: ACS 2018 5-year Estimate



# Homes without Internet Access or a Computer

Access to a computer and a high-speed internet connection is a critical need for children and families in the modern era – particularly due to COVID-19 conditions that have forced many students into distance learning and parents to work from home. The digital divide is clearly seen in the zip codes of interest. **Close to a quarter of all households in western Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan do not have a computer and 10-15% of homes in these communities are also lack access to high-speed internet.** Residents of these communities are less likely to have access to these modern necessities as compared with Pierce County and Washington state residents.

|  | Franklin Pierce |               |                |                | East Tacoma/Salishan  |                |                      |
|--|-----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
|  | WA State        | Pierce County | 98444 Zip Code | 98445 Zip Code | Parkland census tract | 98404 Zip Code | Midland census tract |
| % homes without high-speed internet access | 7%              | 8%            | 11%            | 10%            | 9%                    | 14%            | 16%                  |
| % homes without a computer                 | 14%             | 14%           | 23%            | 14%            | 17%                   | 26%            | 31%                  |

Source: ACS 2018 5-year Estimate

# Chronically Absent Teachers: 98444 and 98445

Engaged and present teachers are necessary for children to thrive in school. However, some teachers are “chronically absent” throughout the school year (absent for 10 or more days throughout the school year), which can cause disruption in academic instruction and signal to a child that their education is not a priority. Chronic teacher absenteeism can occur for a variety of reasons, including stress, burn-out, and/or disengagement.

On average nationally, 30% of teachers are chronically absent throughout the school year. **In seven schools serving the Franklin Pierce neighborhood (98444 & 98445), over 40% of teachers are chronically absent.** As seen in the chart on the right, three of these schools are part of the Tacoma school district, two are part of the Franklin Pierce school district, and two are part of the Bethel school district. Teachers in these schools may require additional support and resources to be healthy, well-resourced, and engaged in the classroom for Franklin Pierce children.

| School District        | School Name                          | % Chronically Absent |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Bethel</b>          | <b>Chester H Thompson Elementary</b> | <b>53%</b>           |
| <b>Bethel</b>          | <b>Spanaway Middle School</b>        | <b>40%</b>           |
| Bethel                 | Thompson Preschool                   | 0%                   |
| <b>Franklin Pierce</b> | <b>Gates Secondary School</b>        | <b>51%</b>           |
| <b>Franklin Pierce</b> | <b>Early Learning Center</b>         | <b>50%</b>           |
| Franklin Pierce        | Franklin Pierce High School          | 35%                  |
| Franklin Pierce        | Washington High School               | 34%                  |
| Franklin Pierce        | Christensen Elementary               | 33%                  |
| Franklin Pierce        | Morris Ford Middle School            | 31%                  |
| Franklin Pierce        | Brookdale Elementary                 | 30%                  |
| Franklin Pierce        | Elmhurst Elementary School           | 28%                  |
| Franklin Pierce        | James Sales Elementary               | 25%                  |
| Franklin Pierce        | Harvard Elementary                   | 24%                  |
| Franklin Pierce        | Perry G Keithley Middle School       | 20%                  |
| Franklin Pierce        | Midland Elementary                   | 16%                  |
| <b>Tacoma</b>          | <b>Fern Hill</b>                     | <b>57%</b>           |
| <b>Tacoma</b>          | <b>Helen B. Stafford Elementary</b>  | <b>48%</b>           |
| <b>Tacoma</b>          | <b>Larchmont</b>                     | <b>39%</b>           |

*Source: ProPublica MisEducation Data*

# Chronically Absent Teachers: 98404

In 14 schools serving the East Tacoma/Salishan neighborhood (98404), over 40% of teachers are chronically absent. Absenteeism is particularly high in the Roosevelt, Lyons, First Creek, and Boze schools, where nearly 80% of all teachers are chronically absent.

As seen in the chart on the right, 10 of these schools are part of the Tacoma school district, two are part of the Franklin Pierce school district, and two are part of the Bethel school district. Teachers in these schools may require additional support and resources to ensure that they are healthy, well-resourced, and engaged in the classroom for East Tacoma/Salishan children.

**QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY:** Are teachers in schools under-resourced and overly stressed? What kind of support do teachers need?

| School District | School Name                    | % Chronically Absent |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Bethel          | Chester H. Thompson Elementary | 53%                  |
| Bethel          | Spanaway Middle School         | 40%                  |
| Bethel          | Thompson Preschool             | 0%                   |
| Franklin Pierce | Gates Secondary School         | 51%                  |
| Franklin Pierce | Early Learning Center          | 50%                  |
| Franklin Pierce | Franklin Pierce High School    | 35%                  |
| Franklin Pierce | Washington High School         | 34%                  |
| Franklin Pierce | Christensen Elementary         | 33%                  |
| Franklin Pierce | Morris Ford Middle School      | 31%                  |
| Franklin Pierce | Brookdale Elementary           | 30%                  |
| Franklin Pierce | Elmhurst Elementary School     | 28%                  |
| Franklin Pierce | James Sales Elementary         | 25%                  |
| Franklin Pierce | Harvard Elementary             | 24%                  |
| Franklin Pierce | Perry G Keithley Middle School | 20%                  |
| Franklin Pierce | Midland Elementary             | 16%                  |
| Tacoma          | Roosevelt                      | 81%                  |
| Tacoma          | Lyon                           | 80%                  |
| Tacoma          | First Creek Middle School      | 79%                  |
| Tacoma          | Boze                           | 74%                  |
| Tacoma          | Lister                         | 59%                  |
| Tacoma          | Blix Elementary                | 58%                  |
| Tacoma          | Fern Hill                      | 57%                  |
| Tacoma          | Fawcett                        | 49%                  |
| Tacoma          | Helen B. Stafford Elementary   | 48%                  |
| Tacoma          | Larchmont                      | 39%                  |

Source: ProPublica MisEducation Data

# Unemployment & Lack of Health Insurance

Residents in the Franklin Pierce community experience higher rates of unemployment than the rest of Pierce County and Washington state.

This figure may increase due to the COVID-19 pandemic because of the higher proportion community residents who work in service industry. Additionally, a higher percentage of Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan residents are uninsured, as compared with Pierce County at-large (10-13% vs 7%). While the rate of uninsured children in these neighborhoods is low, it is still higher than the state and county average (5-6% vs 3% uninsured children).

**QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY:** What resources have been helpful during the pandemic to support unemployed and uninsured families?

|   | Franklin Pierce |               |                |                | East Tacoma/Salishan  |                |                      |
|---|-----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
|   | WA State        | Pierce County | 98444 Zip Code | 98445 Zip Code | Parkland census tract | 98404 Zip Code | Midland census tract |
| % residents unemployed                        | 5%              | 6%            | 9%             | 8%             | 9%                    | 6%             | 7%                   |
| % residents without health insurance coverage | 7%              | 7%            | 11%            | 10%            | 10%                   | 13%            | 18%                  |
| % children without health insurance coverage  | 3%              | 3%            | 2%             | 5%             | 3%                    | 6%             | 7%                   |

Source: ACS 2018 5-year Estimate

# Child Poverty

Half of all western Franklin Pierce families fall into the “ALICE” category – a more inclusive measure of family economic hardship defined as “asset limited, income constrained, and employed” families. A higher proportion of Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan families are both in the ALICE category and below the federal poverty line—a more traditional but less inclusive measure—when compared with Pierce County at-large.

To note, close to 45% of single female households in East Tacoma live below the poverty line, as compared with 32% of single female households in larger Pierce County. (11% of all households in East Tacoma are single-female households, as compared with 7% of all Pierce County households.)

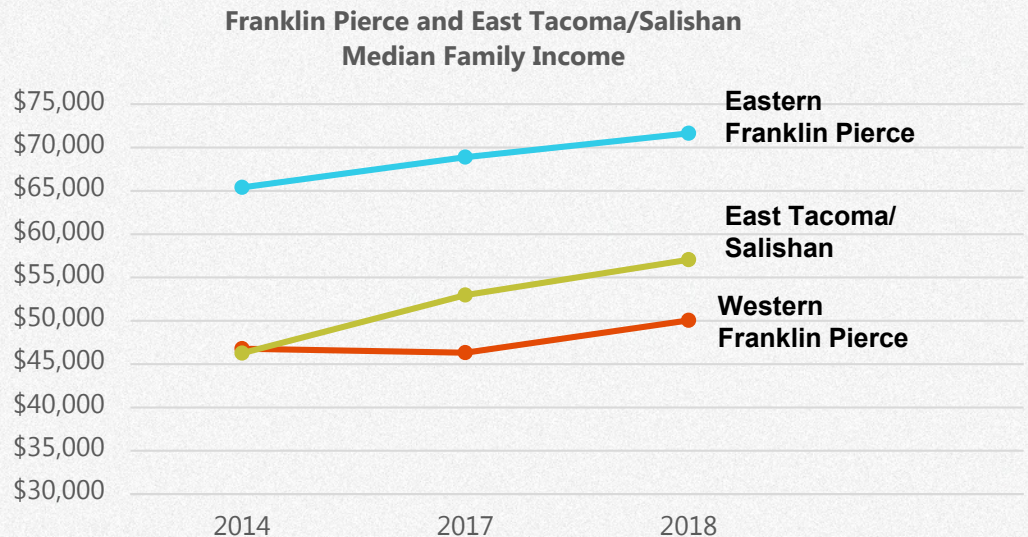
|   |          | Franklin Pierce |                |                | East Tacoma/Salishan  |                |                      |
|---|----------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
|   | WA State | Pierce County   | 98444 Zip Code | 98445 Zip Code | Parkland census tract | 98404 Zip Code | Midland census tract |
| % families in the ALICE category                    | NA       | 31%             | 49%            | 37%            | 45%                   | 37%            | 52%                  |
| % families in poverty with children                 | 12%      | 12%             | 20%            | 14%            | 18%                   | 24%            | 13%                  |
| % single female households in poverty with children | 32%      | 32%             | 36%            | 33%            | 40%                   | 43%            | 24%                  |

Source: ACS 2016 5-year Estimate (ALICE category)  
 ACS 2018 5-year Estimate (Family and child poverty) |

# Economic Wellbeing

Steady growth in income is essential to improving a family's economic wellbeing. In addition to providing families with the opportunity to accumulate wealth, increasing incomes ensure that families will not fall into the ALICE category.

As compared with the eastern Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma communities, the eastern Franklin Pierce community has a substantially higher median family income. It is important to note that **while the median family income for all three communities has been increasing since 2014, western Franklin Pierce's income increase has been lagging behind East Tacoma**. All three communities have seen comparative, steady rates of employment since 2014, with 65% labor force participation. This rate is slightly higher than the national average, at 63%.



# Community Violence

Pierce County currently has one of the higher rates for violent crime in Washington state, **averaging 458 violent crime incidents per 100,00 residents each year**. In comparison, the average rate in Washington state is 294 violent crimes per 100,000 residents.

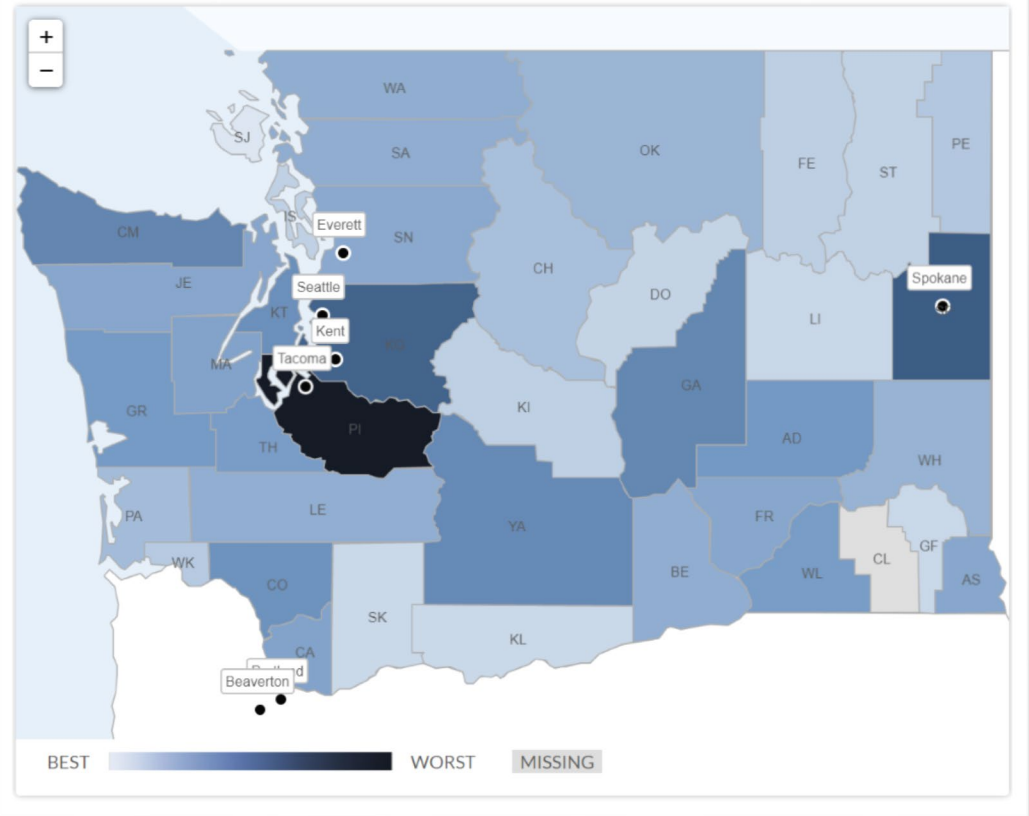
**QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY:** How does local violent crime impact family wellbeing? Are there processes in place to support survivors, witnesses and next-of-kin of victims of violent crime? How does the community perceive their current relationship with local police?

## Violent crime

Number of reported violent crime offenses per 100,000 population.

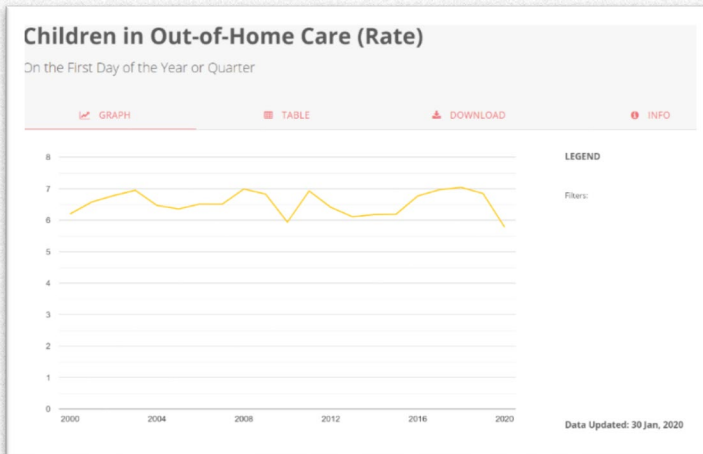
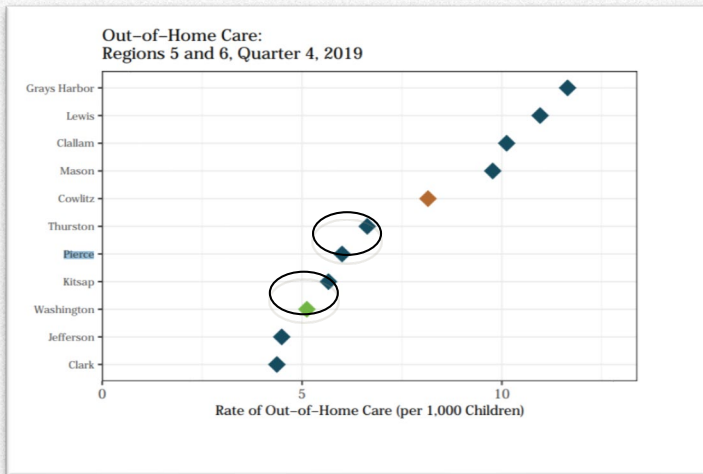
The 2020 County Health Rankings used data from 2014&2016 for this measure.

[Map](#) | [Data](#) | [Description](#) | [Data Source](#) | [Strategies](#)



Source: 2014/2016 County Health Rankings

# Stable Family Environment



Foster care in Pierce County is provided for children who have been temporarily separated from their families while the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families works with their family to return them home safely. Among those children placed in out-of-home care settings, **40-45% of youth are placed in kinship care** in both Pierce County and Washington State, which can provide a level of stability to the child and family.

The rate of child welfare investigations and out-of-home placement within Pierce County are comparable to state averages (16-17 investigations per 1,000 children and 6-7 placements per 1,000 children). **These placement rates are lower than several other regions**, and have remained steady since 2000. However, Pierce County has been losing foster homes over the past decade due to foster family frustration with the system - which has resulted in some children being matched with families further away from their school and support network (such as in King County). Additionally, Pierce County sees higher rates of children who have exited out-of-home care re-entering within one year, as compared with state averages (16% vs 12%). These trends suggest that there are opportunities for providing improved stability for children experiencing out-of-home care.

**QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY:** What economic and mental health support do families need to prevent re-entry into the foster care system?

Source: *Partners for Our Children 2020 Report; Investigate West; The News Tribune*



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# Key Takeaways & Questions

Several indicators in this section point to adversities observed in the home environment. A disproportionately higher number of families are experiencing housing cost burden and are at risk for housing instability, which can lead to numerous negative health outcomes.\* A higher proportion of families falling into the ALICE category suggests many families are stretched thin and can benefit from additional financial support and resources. The fact that a higher proportion of individuals in Franklin Pierce have no health insurance means that families who are already stretched thin and/or experiencing housing instability could face financial crisis if a family member becomes ill. COVID-19 may have already exacerbated the compound effects of housing, finance, and health needs for families in Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan.

Two strengths were highlighted in this section: steady increase in family income specifically within Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan, and Pierce County's consistent low proportion of out-of-home care for children.

Resilient Pierce County's collective actions should focus on housing and finance strategies to help families build on their increasing income. For example, affordable housing options funded through public or private means can divert more incomes into savings or paying for other essential needs instead of housing. In the next three pages, we also discuss finance and tax related policy opportunities.

**Gaps:** Family-level housing-finance-health needs, especially when multiple needs occur at the same time

**Opportunities:** Steady increase in family income

## Questions to Dig Deeper:

1. What community efforts are already in place to address housing, finance, and health needs?
2. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected housing, finance, and health in Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan?

\* [Housing Instability](#). Healthy People 2020.

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# Policy Opportunities: WA Poverty Reduction Workgroup Recommendations

## *Protecting Families from Housing Insecurity*

**Recommendation 3g. Increase and preserve affordable housing for renters and owners.** Increasing the availability of affordable housing including rentals and pathways to ownership will reduce homelessness and increase social and economic mobility for all Washingtonians. Also, targeting investments to communities historically excluded from wealth-building opportunities is essential for eliminating the racial wealth gap. Specifically: 1) increase the state's Housing Trust Fund to build 10,000 subsidized housing units in 2021, and an additional 90,000 subsidized units over the next decade; 2) increase state funding for weatherization to lower the cost of existing housing and offset increased energy costs due to potential future carbon reduction initiatives; and 3) provide housing vouchers for homeownership in community land trusts (CLT) that build individual capital while preserving long-term affordability in a community, preventing displacement of future generations.

**Additional Information:** A community land trust is a nonprofit corporation or public entity that develops and stewards affordable housing, community gardens, civic buildings, commercial spaces and other community assets on behalf of a community. Community land trusts can preserve long-term affordable homes by acquiring land and building homes, selling the homes to qualified borrowers but leasing the land using a

long-term ground lease at affordable monthly rent. By removing the cost of land associated with a home purchase, affordability can be maintained.

## **Recommendation 5c. Increase the number of emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing options.**

Increasing the number of affordable housing units across WA is the most preventive approach to the homelessness crisis, but it is a long-term strategy. To address the urgency of the current crisis, public and private partners at the state and local levels should increase investment in the availability of housing options across the spectrum of need and ensure human service supports are embedded at every stage of the process.

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# Policy Opportunities: WA Poverty Reduction Workgroup Recommendations

## *Improving Access to Financial Resources*

**Recommendation 3c. Expand access to no- or low-cost financial resources and education that empower, rather than prey upon, people experiencing poverty.** For people living on low incomes, debt is a significant barrier to escaping poverty. Consumers need strong protections that safeguard their crucial assets and their ability to meet their basic needs, especially in times of crisis. Specific recommendations include: 1) establish Individual Development Account programs for children and adults to encourage savings and investments in their future, like education and purchasing a home; 2) expand and subsidize financial institutions that lower the cost of banking, lending, and moving money for people with low incomes, 3) maintain and expand protections on the payday lending industry to ensure that fringe financial services cannot take advantage of low-income consumers; and 4) regulate debt buying and debt collection practices so that the process for collecting debt is transparent to consumers.

**Recommendation 5e. Create a Medical-Financial Partnership model for Washington state.** Financial stress has been shown to impact health outcomes among low-income children and their families. Medical-Financial Partnerships (MFP) models are showcasing positive impacts on the social determinants of health via this cross-sector collaboration in which health care systems and financial service organizations

are co-located (in the same area in the medical building) to improve health and reduce patient financial stress.

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# Policy Opportunities: WA Poverty Reduction Workgroup Recommendations

## *Building More Equitable Tax Environments*

**Recommendation 3h. Enact changes to the tax system that support equitable economic growth.** Enacting reforms to Washington’s tax system – which taxes people with low incomes more than any other state – can provide the funding needed to invest in the income, education, and employment opportunities people need to thrive. The most promising policies to ensure economic growth that is more widely shared include: 1) taxes on personal and corporate wealth above a specified threshold which are used to invest in opportunities critical to social and economic mobility for all Washington residents, such as early care and education, higher education, rural economic development, affordable housing, and workforce development; and 2) tax incentives for businesses that are accountable to specific, anti-poverty outcomes and promote equitable education, training, and job opportunities in rural area and communities of color.

**Recommendation 3d. Enact changes to the state tax system that lower the effective tax rate for low-income households.** Specific, evidence-based strategies include: 1) offer refundable state Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC) that extend to all households, including immigrants and refugees, 2) property tax “circuit breakers” that limit the amount of property taxes low- to moderate-income homeowners and renters of all ages pay as a share of their income; and 3) refundable child tax credits that support the stability of families with young children that gradually

phase out as children enter school. Recent research suggests refundable child tax credits can be structured to have sizable anti-poverty effects.

# **Section 5: Childhood Experiences**

# Adverse Childhood Experiences

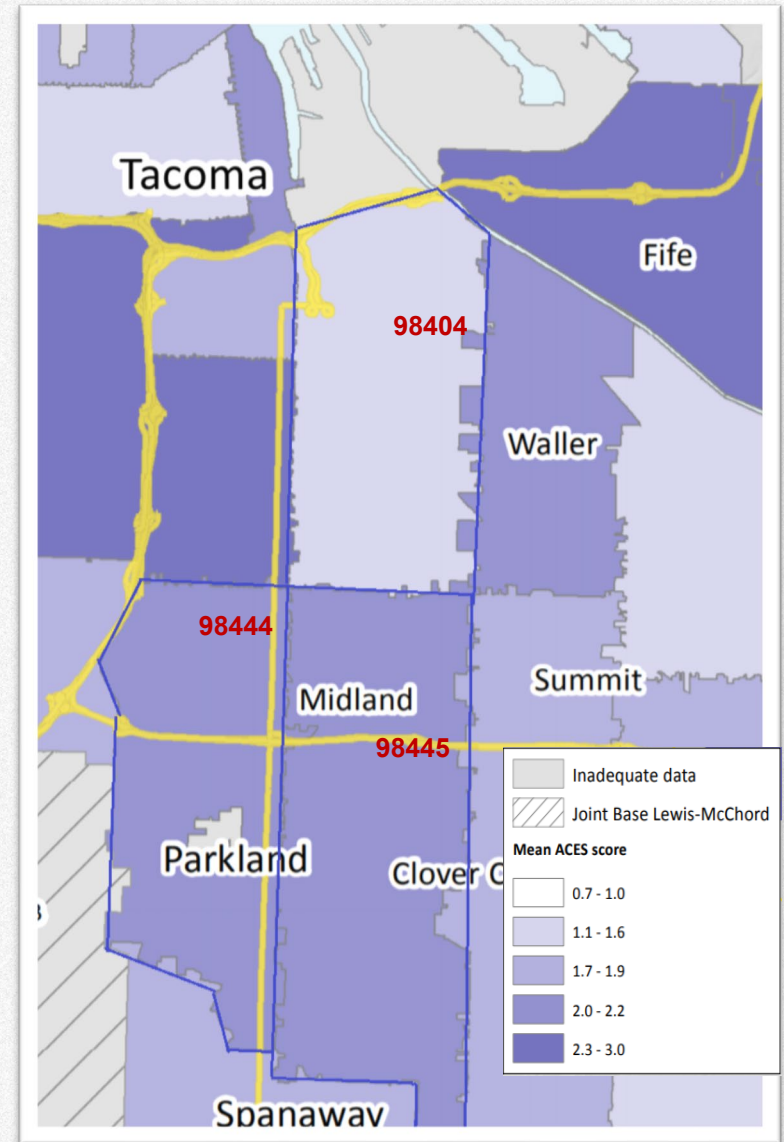
It is estimated that 19% of Washington State and Pierce County children aged 0-17 have experienced two or more adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in their lives (2016 National Survey of Children's Health 2016).

Zip code-level Pierce County ACEs data was last gathered by the 2011 Washington Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS). However, it is important to note that the BRFSS gathers **adult** ACEs data, and does not gather ACE data in youth.

The 2011 BRFSS found that **the Franklin Pierce neighborhood** has experienced on average of 2 ACEs per adult and **the East Tacoma/Salishan neighborhood** has experienced on average of 1.1-1.6 ACEs per adult. In 2018, the 2018 Healthy Youth Survey gathered ACEs data among Pierce County **students**. However, these school-district data are considered restricted – data from this survey must be requested directly from each school district.

## QUESTIONS FOR RESILIENT PIERCE COMMUNITY:

Does the collaborative see benefit in requesting 2018 Healthy Youth Survey ACEs data directly from the Franklin Pierce school district? How might these data be used to inform an overall wellness strategy?



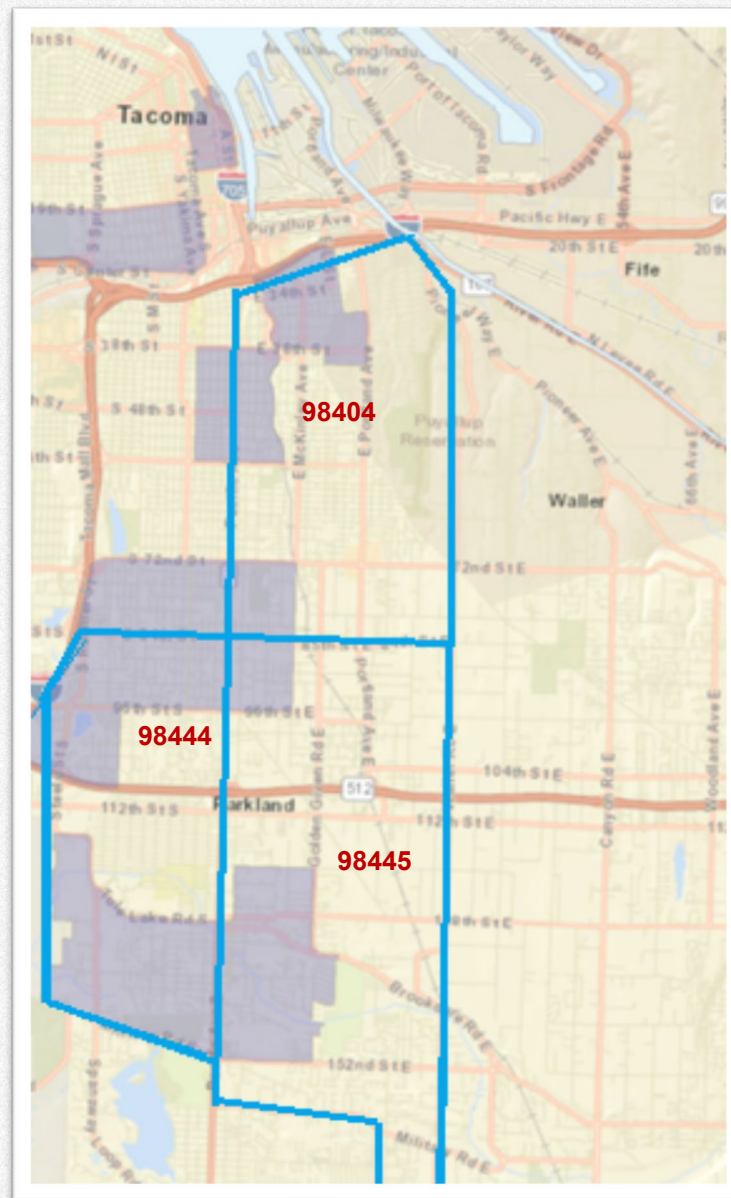
Source: *TPCHD Health Equity Maps/2011 BRFSS*

# Food Insecurity

The map to the right indicates Pierce County communities that are considered “low income and low food access” (shown in purple). In particular, this map shows low-income areas in Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma where **over 100 housing units do not have a vehicle and are over a half-mile from a supermarket.**

**A significant portion of the western Franklin Pierce community falls into the “low food access” category, particularly the northern and southern regions of the community.** When families do not have access to a car and are over a half-mile from a supermarket, these households are more likely to be food insecure, as well as turn to more accessible options such as convenience stores and fast food outlets that provide more expensive and less healthy nutrition options.

**QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY:** How do households without a vehicle access grocery stores? Where are households obtain food, if not from a grocery store?



# Food Insecurity

18% of families of middle and high schoolers in the Franklin Pierce School District currently report experiencing food insecurity – that’s nearly 1 in 5 students. This figure can be compared with families in other Pierce County School Districts, such as Eatonville and White River (11% who experience food insecurity).

There are nine food banks spread across the Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma neighborhoods. Community members may be able to shed light on how useful, accessible, or acceptable these facilities are among food insecure families.

Percentage of Pierce County Families Reporting Food Insecurity, Grades 6, 8, 10, 12

| School District  | Distr. number | Proportion |
|------------------|---------------|------------|
| Steilacoom Hist. | 1             | 12.1%      |
| Puyallup         | 3             | 14.3%      |
| Tacoma           | 10            | 18.3%      |
| Carbonado        | 19            |            |
| Sumner           | 320           | 12.0%      |
| Orting           | 344           |            |
| Clover Park      | 400           | 18.8%      |
| Peninsula        | 401           | 11.9%      |
| Franklin Pierce  | 402           | 17.8%      |
| Bethel           | 403           | 15.8%      |
| Eatonville       | 404           | 11.4%      |
| White River      | 416           | 11.7%      |

Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State Report Card.

Food Banks in Pierce County



Source: *TPCHP 2016 Mobile Market Readiness Assessment: Addressing Food Access in Tacoma, WA*

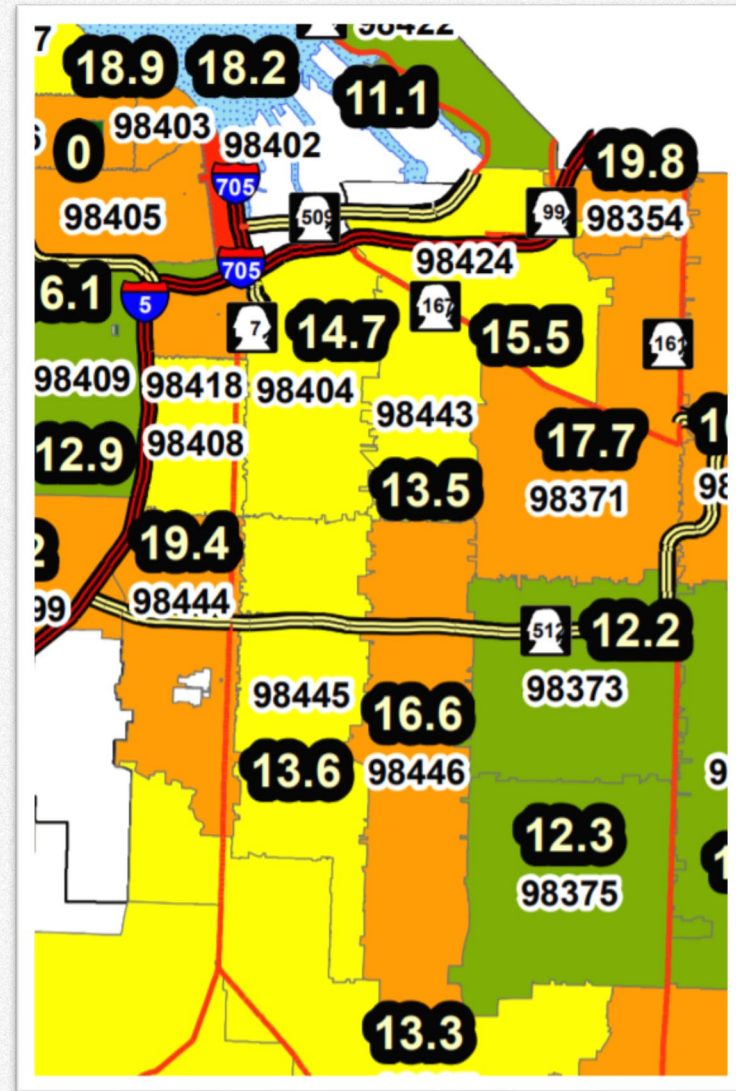


# Adult Mental Health Distress

2017 BRFSS data indicate 12% of Pierce County adults describe their mental health as “poor.” **A higher proportion of Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma adults reported poor mental health (15-20% of community adults).**

Within Pierce County, “hot spots” emerge regarding suicidality such as in **western Franklin Pierce (98444) where the suicide rate is 19.4 per 100,000 residents.** Eastern Pierce County and East Tacoma experience lower rates, at 13.6 and 14.7 suicides per 100,000 residents, respectively. The national average for suicides is 13 per 100,000 and the Washington state average being significantly higher than the national average at 17.2 per 100,000.

**QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY:** What local resources are available to families to support mental health? Do families know where to go to get mental health and emotional support if they need it? What role may stigma play in accessing care and resources to prevent suicide?



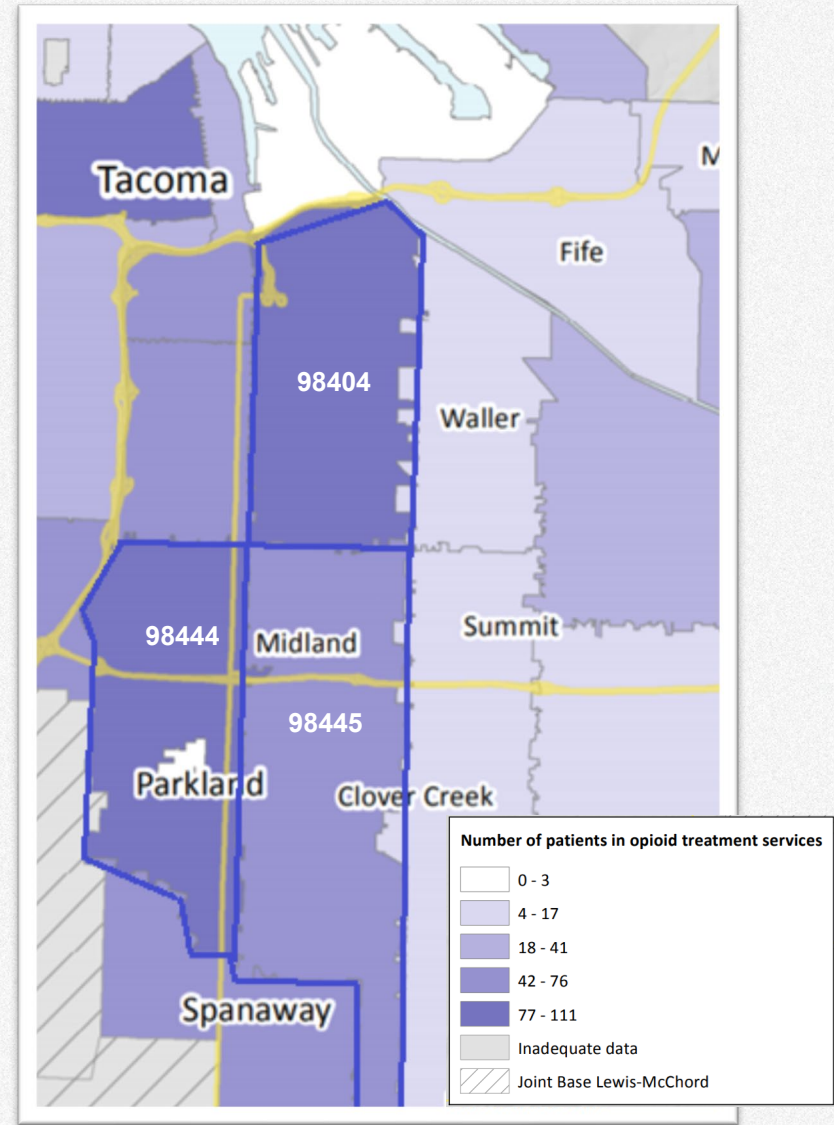
Source: *TPCHD Health Equity Maps/2016 BRFSS*

# Opioid Misuse & Treatment

The map to the right depicts the number of individuals in Pierce County who are currently receiving opioid treatment services. Opioid misuse can have serious, long-lasting impacts on the physical, emotional, and economic health of families and their children – and can be indicative of underlying struggles with mental health.

**The western Franklin Pierce community and East Tacoma community appear to be “hot spots” for opioid misuse and treatment. Approximately 77-111 individuals in each neighborhood were in treatment as of 2017 data.**

These numbers are higher than neighboring communities to the east such as Summit, Clover Creek, Waller, and Fife, where 4-17 individuals were in treatment in each community. (As a comparison point, the average population in each of the zip codes shown is 30-35K.)



Source: TPCHD Health Equity Maps/2017 Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department's treatment service data

# Chronically Absent Students

Full presence and participation at school is key to the academic and emotional growth of children. However, a variety of compounding adversities may keep some youth from attending school regularly, including housing insecurity, needing to act as a childcare provider to younger siblings, food insecurity, family disruptions, poor mental health, and more. A child is considered “chronically absent” from school if they miss more than 15 days throughout the school year.

On average nationally, 15% of youth are chronically absent. In nine schools serving the Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan neighborhoods **over 30% of students are chronically absent – double the national rate.**

As seen in the chart on the right, three of these schools are based in the Franklin Pierce school district, two are based in the Bethel school district, and four are based in the Tacoma school district. (Note: Absenteeism appears to be particularly high in Gates Secondary School, but this may be a result of reporting error.)

| School District | School Name                    | % Chronically Absent |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Bethel          | Chester H. Thompson Elementary | 37%                  |
| Bethel          | Spanaway Middle School         | 38%                  |
| Bethel          | Thompson Preschool             | 0%                   |
| Franklin Pierce | Gates Secondary School         | 100%                 |
| Franklin Pierce | Washington High School         | 44%                  |
| Franklin Pierce | Franklin Pierce High School    | 34%                  |
| Franklin Pierce | Christensen Elementary         | 28%                  |
| Franklin Pierce | James Sales Elementary         | 28%                  |
| Franklin Pierce | Morris Ford Middle School      | 28%                  |
| Franklin Pierce | Brookdale Elementary           | 28%                  |
| Franklin Pierce | Midland Elementary             | 25%                  |
| Franklin Pierce | Perry G Keithley Middle School | 24%                  |
| Franklin Pierce | Elmhurst Elementary School     | 22%                  |
| Franklin Pierce | Harvard Elementary             | 19%                  |
| Franklin Pierce | Early Learning Center          | 0%                   |
| Tacoma          | First Creek Middle School      | 52%                  |
| Tacoma          | Roosevelt                      | 41%                  |
| Tacoma          | Lister                         | 32%                  |
| Tacoma          | Fawcett                        | 31%                  |
| Tacoma          | Boze                           | 29%                  |
| Tacoma          | Blix Elementary                | 28%                  |
| Tacoma          | Larchmont                      | 28%                  |
| Tacoma          | Fern Hill                      | 25%                  |
| Tacoma          | Lyon                           | 25%                  |
| Tacoma          | Helen B. Stafford Elementary   | 15%                  |

Source: 2015 U.S. Department of Education Civil Rights Data Collection

# School Suspensions

Across the US, children of color are far more likely to be suspended from school, as compared with their white peers. Out-of-school suspension can cause severe disruptions to the educational process, as well as have negative impacts on a child’s mental and physical wellbeing. Suspension can cut children off from critical resources they access daily at school, including meals, medical care, mentorship, and social support.

In Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan middle schools and high schools, national trends are mirrored. **Black children in particular are far more likely to receive out-of-school suspension, as compared to their white peers. For example, although Black children make up 12% of the Spanaway Middle School population, they comprise 22% of the out-of-school suspensions.** Additionally, although children of two or more races make up 12% of the student body at Spanaway, these children comprise 32% of the out-of-school suspensions. *(Continued, next page)*

| School District | School Name                 | School Composition  | Out-of-School Suspensions  |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Bethel          | Spanaway Middle School      | % white: 40%<br><b>% Black: 12%</b><br>% Hispanic: 20%<br>% Asian/PI/NH/AI: 13%<br><b>% Two or More Races: 12%</b><br>% Native American: 3% | % white: 21%<br><b>% Black: 22%</b><br>% Hispanic: 7%<br>% Asian/PI/NH/AI: 16%<br><b>% Two or More Races: 32%</b><br>% Native American: 2% |
| Franklin Pierce | Franklin Pierce High School | % white: 46%<br><b>% Black: 9%</b><br>% Hispanic: 22%<br>% Asian/PI/NH/AI: 12%<br>% Two or More Races: 10%<br>% Native American: 1%         | % white: 33%<br><b>% Black: 19%</b><br>% Hispanic: 21%<br>% Asian/PI/NH/AI: 9%<br>% Two or More Races: 13%<br>% Native American: 4%        |
| Franklin Pierce | Gates Secondary School      | % white: 42%<br><b>% Black: 6%</b><br>% Hispanic: 23%<br>% Asian/PI/NH/AI: 13%<br>% Two or More Races: 12%<br>% Native American: 3%         | % white: 23%<br><b>% Black: 13%</b><br>% Hispanic: 26%<br>% Asian/PI/NH/AI: 17%<br>% Two or More Races: 11%<br>% Native American: 0%       |
| Franklin Pierce | Morris Ford Middle School   | % white: 41%<br><b>% Black: 8%</b><br>% Hispanic: 28%<br>% Asian/PI/NH/AI: 11%<br>% Two or More Races: 12%<br>% Native American: 0%         | % white: 39%<br><b>% Black: 14%</b><br>% Hispanic: 30%<br>% Asian/PI/NH/AI: 6%<br>% Two or More Races: 12%<br>% Native American: 0%        |

# School Suspensions

Among children in these middle and high schools, Black children are more likely to be suspended as compared with their White peers. **For example, although Black students make up 22% of children at First Creek Middle School, they make up 34% of suspended students.**

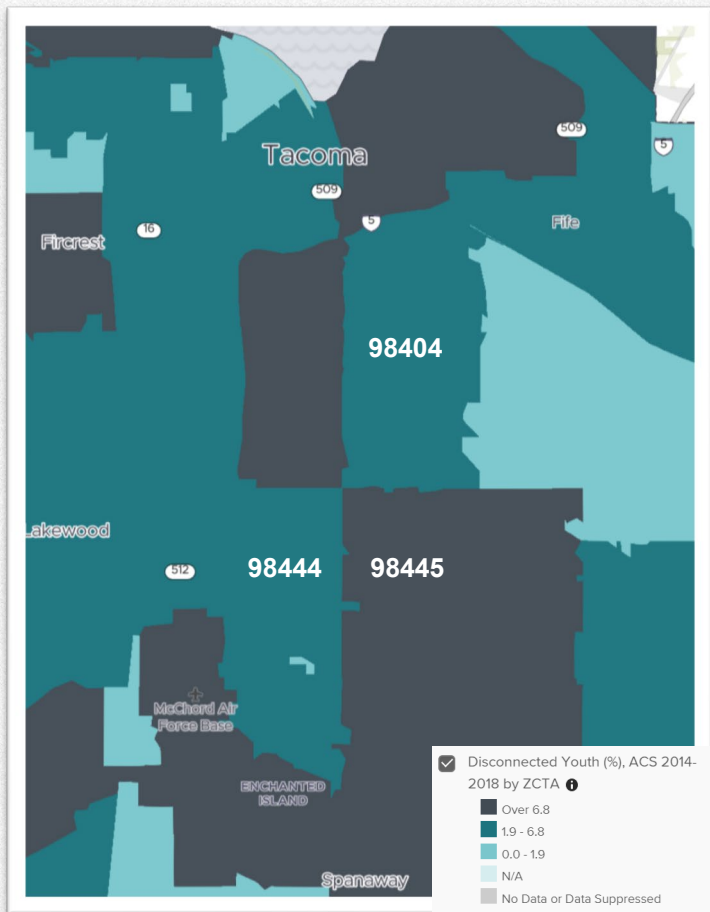
Additionally, within Perry G Keithley Middle School, although **Native American children make up only 1% of the student body, they make up 6% of suspended students.**

**QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY:** How can Resilient Pierce County partner with Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan families to address school policies and practices which currently result in higher suspension rates of African American students compared with their peers?

| School District | School Name                    | School Composition  | Out-of-School Suspensions  |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Franklin Pierce | Perry G Keithley Middle School | % white: 32%<br><b>% Black: 14%</b><br>% Hispanic: 29%<br>% Asian/PI/NH/AI: 11%<br>% Two or More Races: 14%<br><b>% Native American: 1%</b> | % white: 28%<br><b>% Black: 24%</b><br>% Hispanic: 19%<br>% Asian/PI/NH/AI: 6%<br>% Two or More Races: 16%<br><b>% Native American: 6%</b> |
| Franklin Pierce | Washington High School         | % white: 46%<br><b>% Black: 9%</b><br>% Hispanic: 22%<br>% Asian/PI/NH/AI: 12%<br>% Two or More Races: 10%<br>% Native American: 1%         | % white: 33%<br><b>% Black: 19%</b><br>% Hispanic: 21%<br>% Asian/PI/NH/AI: 9%<br>% Two or More Races: 13%<br>% Native American: 4%        |
| Tacoma          | First Creek Middle School      | % white: 16%<br><b>% Black: 22%</b><br>% Hispanic: 31%<br>% Asian/PI/NH/AI: 22%<br>% Two or More Races: 6%<br>% Native American: 2%         | % white: 13%<br><b>% Black: 34%</b><br>% Hispanic: 25%<br>% Asian/PI/NH/AI: 15%<br>% Two or More Races: 12%<br>% Native American: 2%       |

*Source: ProPublica MisEducation Data*

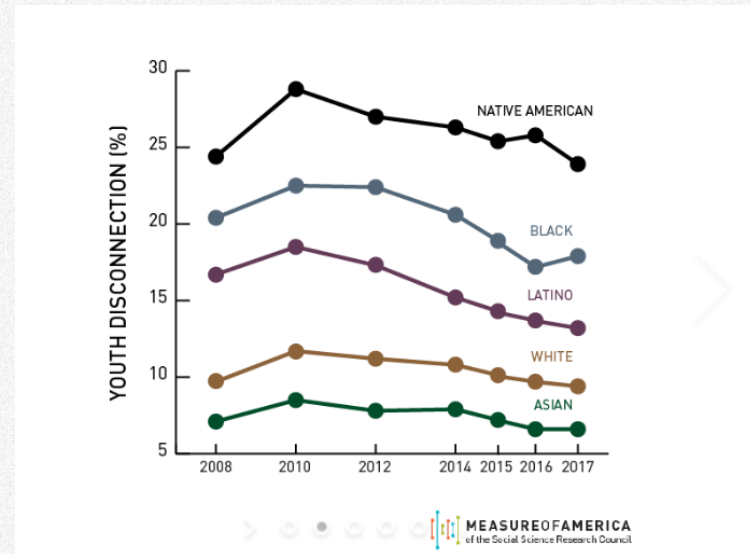
# Youth Connectedness



Source: *Broadstreet Maps, ACS 2014-2018*

Among young adults, staying connected to school or the workplace provides an essential link to the people, organizations, and experiences that can improve their educational attainment, employment opportunities, mental health, and overall economic wellbeing.

As of 2018, approximately **93-98% youth 16-24 years old in the western Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan communities were considered “connected” to school or work.** We see slightly lower rates of connected youth in the eastern portion of Franklin Pierce – **just under 93%** - with no exact figure provided by the American Community Survey (ACS). Overall, Pierce’s rates of “connectedness” are higher than the national average – nationally, 89% of youth are connected to a school or work environment. However, it is important to note that “disconnection” disproportionately impacts children of color – particularly Native American, Black, and Latino children (see figure below).



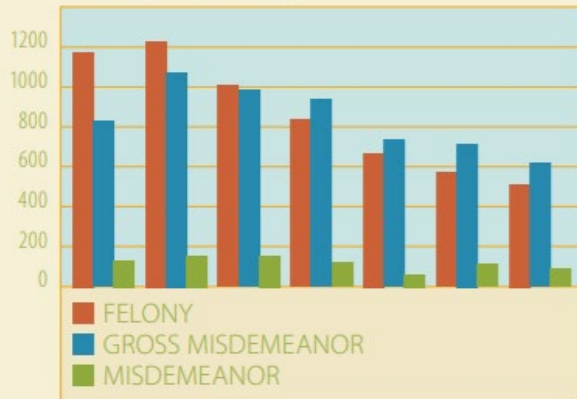
Source: *Measure for America*

# Youth Detention

## Positive Results for Pierce County

In 2012, Pierce County was number two in the nation at reducing average daily population of youth in detention.

Over the past 7 years we have seen an overall decrease in the number of juvenile charges filed in Pierce County.

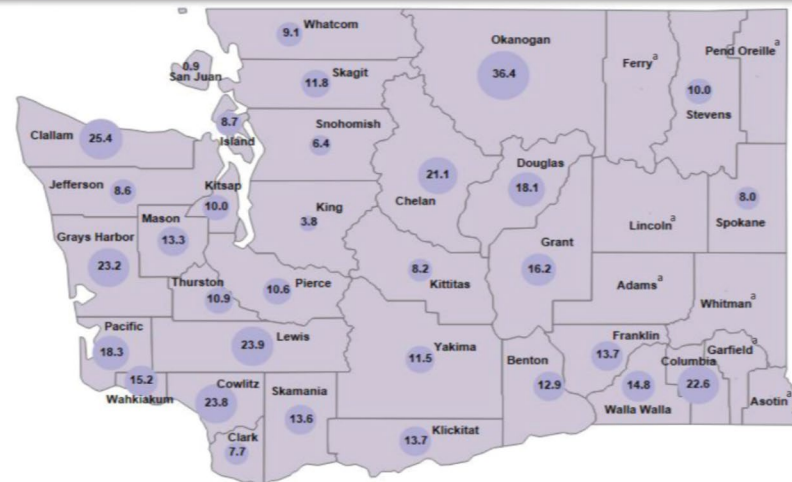


Source: *Pierce County Juvenile Court Community Report 2014*

In 2004, Pierce County Juvenile Court partnered with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to launch their Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI), working with law enforcement and community organizations to support the wellbeing of Pierce youth and families. This work has included the Juvenile Court acting on behalf of abused and neglected children, working closely to help students stay in school, and providing alternatives to entering the juvenile justice system. **From 2007 to 2014, Pierce saw a large drop in the number of juvenile charges filed in the county.** As of 2016, Pierce County's overall rate of juvenile detention is lower than many other state regions (**10.6 youth per 1,000**).

However, it is important to note that Pierce has a largely disproportionate number of youth of color in its juvenile justice system. **Although Black residents make up 6% of the Pierce County population, Black children currently make up 31% of the Pierce County juvenile justice system.**

Figure 3. Youth-Level Detention Rates by County. This figure shows the number of youth (per 1,000 youth age 10-17 in the county) who had at least one detention stay in 2016.

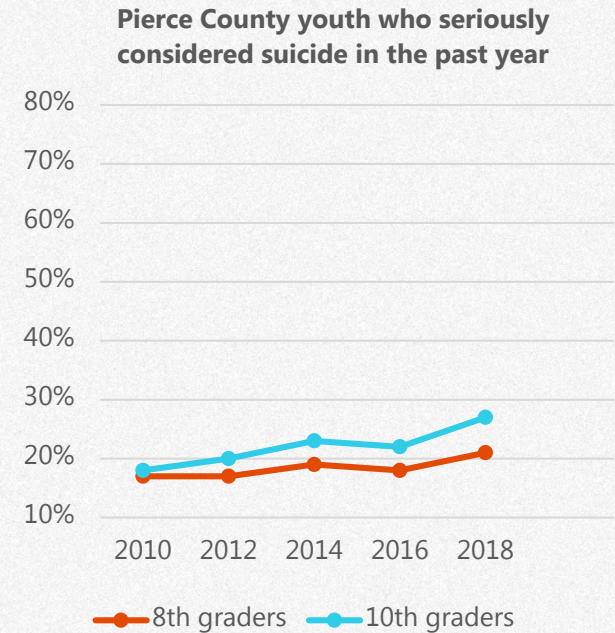
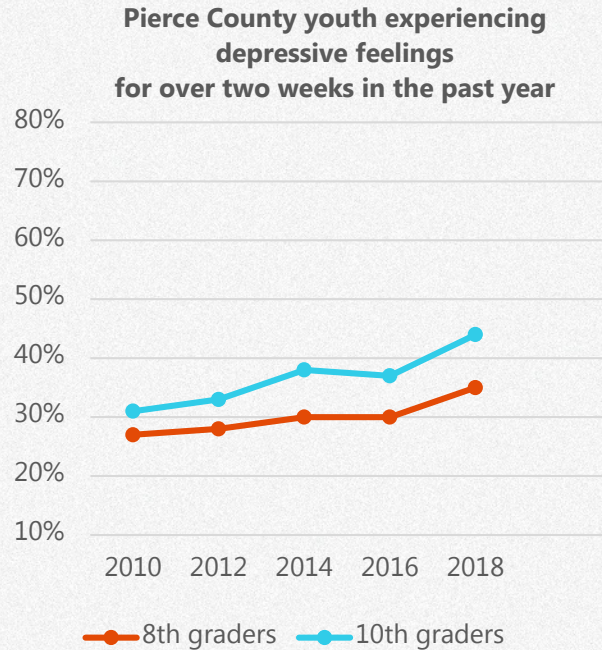
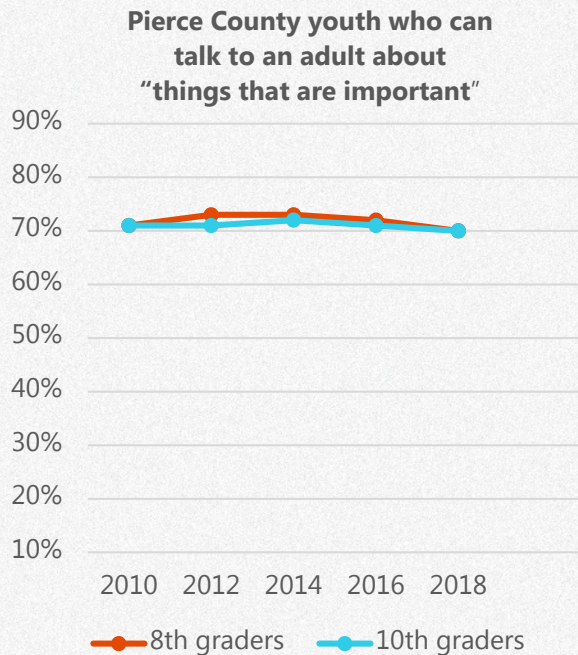


Detention data were not available for the full 2016 calendar year from these counties.

Source: *WA Juvenile Detention 2016 Annual Report*

# Youth Mental Health

Source: WA State Healthy Youth Survey



Having a trusted adult to talk to has been shown to be essential to youth’s mental health and educational success - a support that nearly three-quarters of Pierce students report having since 2010. Over the past decade, **71-73% of Pierce students have reported consistently that they have an adult that they can talk to about “things that are important”**. (Note: While these data are not available at the zip code-level, data are available at the school district level upon request to district headquarters.)

However, **student reports of depressive feelings and mental health distress has been on the rise in Pierce County over the past decade**. Among 10<sup>th</sup> graders in 2018, 43% reported depressive feelings within the past year, and 27% seriously considered suicide (up from 31% and 18%, respectively, in 2010). These rates are slightly higher than Washington State averages. Increasing trends in mental health distress suggests that Pierce youth may need greater access to mental health supports (such as school-based healthcare centers which provide mental health services).



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# Key Takeaways & Questions

Data presented in this section point to food insecurity, mental health needs, and educational participation as three major adverse experiences in Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan. All three school districts (Tacoma, Franklin Pierce, Bethel) have disproportionately high levels of food insecurity, and the three zip codes each have areas considered “low food access.” Food insecurity can lead to numerous health issues, including heightened mental health needs among both parents and children.\* While food insecurity is unlikely the only cause of mental health needs, we do observe higher level of adult mental health needs compared with the rest of Pierce County. Furthermore, depressive feelings and suicidal ideation have been increasing among Pierce County students over the years. While mental health needs is unlikely the only cause, it likely contributes to the high rate of chronic absenteeism among students in Tacoma, Franklin Pierce, and Bethel school districts.

Two strengths we see in the aggregate data (for Pierce County) are: high proportion of youth connected to school or work and relatively low proportion of justice-involved youth. However, when we disaggregate the data by race, we see that African American youth and Native American youth have disproportionately high numbers of school suspension, youth detention, and youth disconnection—a school-to-prison pipeline. Evidence suggest the education, juvenile justice, and employment systems are operating with racial bias and/or are perpetuating the racial inequities in community environments.

**Gaps:** Compound effects of food insecurity, mental health needs, and educational participation; school-to-prison pipeline

**Opportunities:** Youth connectedness trending positively across all races/ethnicities

## Questions to Dig Deeper:

1. Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department declared racism as a public health crisis. How can Resilient Pierce County partner with the health department to work towards racial equity?
2. How can local businesses be involved to address food insecurity? Work opportunities for African American and Native American youth?

\* Craig Gundersen and James P. Ziliak (2015) Food Insecurity And Health Outcomes. Health Affairs, 34, No. 11: 1830–1839. doi: [10.1377/hlthaff.2015.0645](https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2015.0645)

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# Policy Opportunities: WA Poverty Reduction Workgroup Recommendations

## *Addressing Suspension & Racial Bias in Schools*

**Recommendation 1a. Require entities to collaborate with the emerging Office of Equity to develop trainings on historical trauma, institutional racism, and implicit bias that are required of all public employees in systems that touch upon the lives of people experiencing poverty** (e.g., health care providers, child care and early learning providers, educators, police, state patrol, caseworkers, judges, etc.). The curriculum should be developed in collaboration with Indigenous- and people of color-led organizations, and be free of charge to organizations working in partnership with Washington state.

**Recommendation 3a-iii. Eliminate harsh discipline practices in schools and replace them with culturally responsive social, emotional, and engagement supports.** Practices such as suspension and expulsion disproportionately affect children that are Indigenous, Black, Brown, male, non-binary, low income, disabled, homeless, involved in the foster care system, or with a special education plan, leading to their increased involvement with the child welfare, juvenile justice, and criminal justice systems (a.k.a. the “school-to-prison pipeline”). Replacing discipline with stronger social and emotional programs and family and community engagement strategies can keep more kids in school and improve equity in graduation rates.

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# Policy Opportunities: WA Poverty Reduction Workgroup Recommendations

## *Increasing Access to Preventive and Supportive Services for Children, Adults, and Families*

**Recommendation 5f. Improve access to prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.** Expand efforts to enhance WA’s behavioral health prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery programs. These efforts should continue to promote solutions that reduce harm to children, adults, and families with deadly, preventable diseases such as depression, substance abuse, and addiction: 1) incentivize insurers to provide a broader range of inpatient/outpatient services, including stabilization, counselling, diversion, and respite care; 2) integrate and co-locate services across housing, social, health, education, and workforce development systems and bolster community-led programs; 3) use human-centered design and other person-centered practices to define a reimagined, modernized continuum of care across jurisdictions.

**Recommendation 5d. Develop stronger public-private partnerships to increase opportunities for supported education, job training, and employment.** Children, adults, and families experiencing homelessness, violence, or a behavioral health issue often require significant time to stabilize their situation, connect with support services, and heal from trauma. Embedding supportive services in education and employment settings provide a continuum of ongoing supports that can meet a wide range of needs.

**Recommendation 6e. Smooth on-ramps and off-ramps for programs.** Individuals or families applying for assistance are often under significant stress, especially if they are experiencing homelessness, mental illness, addiction, or violence. Many programs impose immediate, onerous requirements or intake processes (identifying career goals before stably housed, etc.), which can exacerbate stress and undermine well-being. On-ramps and off-ramps can be smoothed by: 1) giving children, adults, and families time to “take a breath” by addressing urgent needs and stability before making onerous program requirements; 2) removing asset limits to qualify for public assistance programs; 3) easing harsh sanction and time limit policies in the TANF program; 4) eliminating the cash, child care, and medical “cliff effects”; 5) allow for categorical eligibility when possible and appropriate; and 6) align eligibility across programs to ensure people can meet foundational needs as they work along the continuum of care.

**Recommendation 6d. Increase cash assistance and make it unconditional upon work.** Evidence suggests that unrestricted cash assistance is an effective strategy for poverty reduction. Furthermore, the majority of literature shows that work requirements are just as likely to increase poverty as decrease it and that employment-focused poverty reduction strategies do not result in meaningful poverty reduction.

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# Policy Opportunities: WA Poverty Reduction Workgroup Recommendations

## *Prevent Families from Engaging with the Criminal Justice System*

**Recommendation 7b. Rapidly engage families and connect them to support services when a child or adult is at risk of entering the juvenile or criminal justice systems.** Families also experience significant trauma when a child or adult family member is at-risk of being arrested and/or detained. Assessing the needs of a whole family and connecting them to assistance and support services early can stabilize family environments and break cycles of violence.

**Additional Information:** “Risk” of arrest should be interpreted broadly and include situations in which a juvenile’s family has been directly impacted by violence.

**Recommendation 7a. Decriminalize and destigmatize poverty by shifting resources toward diversion, healing, and support services.** Shifting resources away from arrest and detention toward services that prevent entry into the juvenile and criminal justice systems get children and adults the health care they need, while simultaneously reducing the likelihood of future arrest, reducing racial and ethnic disparities, and breaking the cycle of poverty in families. Specifically: 1) reduce resources spent on detention, and redirect them to diversion, treatment, and support services; 2) increase law enforcement training on trauma-informed interventions and de-escalation training, especially for lower-level, non-violent street crimes; and 3) expand access to treatment for mental health, substance abuse, and addiction for children and adults at risk of being detained.

## *Addressing Food Insecurity*

**Recommendation 4e. Increase administrative funding to support culturally appropriate outreach for WIC, the Farmers Market Nutrition Program, and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition program.** Identify and reduce other barriers to participation and use of these programs for people of color, immigrants and refugees.

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# Policy Opportunities: WA Poverty Reduction Workgroup Recommendations

## *Improving Supports for Children Interacting with the Foster Care or Juvenile Justice System*

### **Recommendation 7c. Increase in-home assistance and support services to keep children in the care of people and environments that make them feel the most stable and safe.**

Keeping children in friend and family networks, communities, and schools they feel most connected to can mitigate trauma and build resilience. Specifically: 1) create clearer, culturally-informed standards for what constitutes “high quality” parenting to reduce stigma of parents with low incomes; 2) create age-appropriate opportunities for children and youth to voice their opinions and be an active participant in case decisions; 3) establish a transportation fund for students to reduce school changes for children becoming involved with the child welfare system; 4) increase financial assistance to children and their kinship caregivers by ensuring payments are at parity with foster parents and create a child-only benefit within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; and 5) pilot school-based recruitment for foster homes so children can stay in their school systems and friendship networks.

### **Recommendation 7d. Provide robust, trauma-informed case management to children, adults, and families involved in child welfare, juvenile, and criminal justice systems.**

Specifically, 1) increase the number of providers - including mental health professionals, case managers, and social workers – with expertise in trauma and rehabilitative care to expand high quality services for children, youth, and adults involved in these systems; and 2) create an early detection system to quickly identify children and families with a criminal justice-involved family member so they can be connected to case managers, assistance, and support services if needed.

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# Policy Opportunities: WA Poverty Reduction Workgroup Recommendations

## *Investing in Quality Youth Education, Navigation, and Mentorship*

**Recommendation 3a-iv. Increase investment in Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) statewide.** ELOs are high-quality youth development programs that provide innovative, hands-on learning after school and throughout the year, including summer. Research shows that quality ELO programs improve grades and attendance, and decrease juvenile crime. Continued investment is needed to support a connected high-quality care continuum, birth through youth, for programs that serve as a workforce support to families.

**Recommendation 3a-v. Increase investments to improve high school graduation and post-secondary enrollment of children and youth experiencing foster care and/or homelessness.** Specifically: 1) align, coordinate, and monitor policy, services, resources and outcomes to ensure academic success for students experiencing foster care/homelessness statewide, and 2) use data to inform real time, individualized education supports for students, as well as longitudinal analysis of education outcomes.

**Recommendation 6f. Revamp policies, programs, and practices to inspire hope and build resilience.** The emerging science of hope and resilience suggests that it is one of the most essential elements of well-being and success. Specifically, 1) develop and train coaching and navigator care teams to support people as they navigate state and local resources and services; and, 2) invest in community-based peer-to-peer support models for individuals, children, and adults experiencing poverty.

# Sample Analysis & Next Steps

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# Sample Analysis: Income, Physical Mobility, and Social and Health Needs

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Below, we highlight some initial connections regarding income and physical mobility. It serves as an example of how Resilient Pierce County can connect the dots between data to assess pressing community adversities and community strengths in a multi-level approach.

## Sample Analysis: Income, Physical Mobility, and Social and Health Needs

*Demographic Level:* Families with **lower income** are more likely in need for services and resources. **Single parent families** and individuals with **limited English proficiency** already face greater barriers that could prevent them from accessing resources.

*Infrastructure Level:* Limited access to **public transportation** and low **walkability** score together presents a difficult environment for families to physically move around beyond the immediate proximity of their homes.

*Community Environment Level:* Households experiencing high **housing cost burden** are less likely to own vehicles, limiting their options for transportation and increasing their need to rely on public transportation or walking. However, Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan's lack of physical mobility infrastructure means families have a difficult time with everyday travel to work and school as well as for accessing resources. The difficulty is further heightened by a high rate of **violent crime** in Pierce County, making safety a concern and streets less walkable than the walk score indicates.

(Continued, next page)



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# Sample Analysis: Income, Physical Mobility, and Social and Health Needs

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## *Childhood Experience Level:*

- **Food insecurity** - Low income communities with limited access to nearby grocery stores are further affected by the lack of physical mobility. Residents living in western Franklin Pierce (98444) likely experience these compounded effects the greatest, with the lowest walkability score and the largest area experiencing “low income and low food access.” As discussed in Section 5, food insecurity could lead to physical and mental illnesses.
- **Access to health care and mental health care** - Spanaway Middle School is the only school with a school-based health care center, which means students at other schools likely need to travel to community-based providers for health care. Limitations on physical mobility could prevent students from accessing the care they need. For students experiencing food insecurity, limited access poses an additional risk to their health.
- **Education access and quality** - Limited transportation options may prevent students from arriving at school on-time and contributing to high chronic absenteeism. For students already managing food insecurity and/or limited access to health care, being chronically absent from school would further impede their ability to learn and matriculate on schedule.

The culminating effect of adversities described above is a reinforcing cycle that perpetuates generational poverty and poor health outcomes. Nevertheless, community members are resilient and have strengths to build upon. We are already seeing **youth in Pierce County more connected** to school and work than they’ve been the past 5-10 years, and **median family income** has been steadily increasing for Franklin Pierce and East Tacoma/Salishan. Following the questions asked in the next page, Resilient Pierce County can work towards developing a plan of multi-level strategies.

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# Key Questions for Potential Next Steps

1. Which **key issues** outlined in this report does Resilient Pierce County want to prioritize for strategic partnership and collaboration?
2. What kind of **community dialogue** needs to happen to obtain more meaningful information for next-step planning?
3. As Resilient Pierce County continues its community conversations, can **stories** be gathered specifically by zip-code area, to allow stories to be tied to the **data** presented in this report?
4. What are the potential **policy** pathways outlined in this report would Resilient Pierce County want to prioritize? What policies are most important to prioritize in a post-COVID environment?



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