hopelink

COMMUNITY
NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

2025

BERK

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Key Findings

For more than five decades, Hopelink has worked toward the vision of a community free of poverty in North and East King County. Each year, tens of thousands of residents rely on Hopelink services for urgent assistance and long-term stability. In 2023 alone, more than 62,500 people accessed food, housing, transportation, financial, energy, and educational supports that helped them meet immediate needs and build pathways to self-sufficiency.

This Community Needs Assessment (2025) provides an updated picture of the challenges facing individuals and households in Hopelink's service area. Drawing on U.S. Census data, state and county sources, and direct input from clients, staff, community partners, and community members, the assessment identifies persistent inequities and emerging trends across five domains: income, housing, transportation, food and nutrition, and barriers to accessing services. Key takeaways include:

- Incomes are rising, but rising costs are leading to **persistent rates of economic vulnerability and insufficient service response.** Human services managers in the Hopelink Needs Assessment area report that, since the pandemic, **many communities have not recovered and are still in survival mode.** Nearly 1 in 5 households in the Hopelink service area earn less than 300% of the Federal Poverty Level, the income required to meet basic needs.

- **Housing affordability remains one of the region's most destabilizing challenges.** Over 40% of renters are cost-burdened, with seniors, immigrants, and communities of color disproportionately at risk of eviction or homelessness.

- **Transit access is uneven across the region, limiting mobility and economic opportunity.** Residents in rural and East King County are burdened with long commutes, high car dependence, and transportation costs that consume up to 22% of their household income.

- **Food costs are high alongside broader cost-of-living pressures.** Food insecurity is a persistent and growing challenge. Rising food costs strain household budgets, and many eligible families are not accessing available nutrition assistance programs. Food prices rose up to 78% (2020-2023) for large households in East King County.

- **Language, age, disability, and immigration status hinder access to services.** Seniors report increased needs for housing and caregiving, while limited-English speakers face difficulty navigating service systems.

Contents

Introduction

For 54 years, Hopelink has worked toward the vision of a community free of poverty in North and East King County. Originally the ancestral home of the Duwamish people, the area has received waves of immigration since the 19th century and continues to be a home for new arrivals. Today, community members value the diverse cultures of the area, its natural beauty, safety, tranquility, and neighborliness.

The area encompasses a range of community types spanning urban, suburban, and rural-fringe communities, as well as a rich diversity of people. The area is home to some of the wealthiest people in the world as well as thousands of people experiencing poverty. More than 745,000 people live within Hopelink's Service Area. The region's cost of living requires more than 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to meet one's basic needs. An estimated 134,785 people, or 18% of the population in Hopelink's Service Area population live below this level.

The federal Community Services Block Grant Act requires community action agencies, such as Hopelink, to conduct a Community Needs Assessment every three years to understand the needs of the communities they serve and explore ways to address them. In addition to meeting the Block Grant requirements, this needs assessment will inform Hopelink's program planning, based on the unique demographics and changing needs in each of its five service areas.

Hopelink conducted its previous Community Needs Assessment in 2022. This 2025 update reports on changes in community needs since 2022, focusing primarily on North and East King County. This Needs Assessment is organized into six sections: Income, Housing, Transportation, Food & Nutrition, Barriers to Accessing Services, and Community Characteristics. A summary of community engagement completed for this assessment can be found in **Appendix A**.

About Hopelink

Each year, Hopelink supports tens of thousands of community members by meeting urgent needs and creating pathways for long-term stability and self-sufficiency. In 2023 alone, 62,500 people utilized Hopelink services.

Hopelink's mission is to equip people to exit poverty through comprehensive services, impactful partnerships, and advocacy for equitable opportunities for all. Guided by values of inclusion, dignity, accessibility, and accountability, Hopelink centers the voices and lived experiences of its clients in shaping programs and services.

Hopelink is guided by its Theory of Change, which reflects a holistic, circular model that places clients at the center (**Exhibit 1**). Services such as food, housing, financial aid, transportation, education, and family development surround each individual, supporting them with dignity and flexibility. Beneath this foundation are three pillars: community education, advocacy, and impactful partnerships, which ensure Hopelink's work not only responds to immediate needs but also addresses the systemic barriers that perpetuate poverty.

Exhibit 1. Hopelink's Theory of Change, 2025

Hopelink's Theory of Change shows how we support community members at any stage—whether they're facing immediate challenges or building toward long-term security. Our programs provide both stability and the tools needed to exit poverty. Through advocacy, partnerships, and community education, we work to address the root causes of poverty and expand equitable opportunities for all.

Source: Hopelink, 2025.

Hopelink delivers both immediate support and long-term opportunities, offering a continuum of programs that clients can access at any stage in their journey. Examples include:

- Financial Assistance: $1.2 million in emergency funding supported King County residents with rent, moving costs, and other urgent expenses. More than $1.1 million was directed to housing stability.

- Housing with Case Management: Across six sites, 636 people were housed in 2023, with 92% maintaining or increasing housing stability after exiting Hopelink facilities.
- Transportation: Hopelink provided 745,466 trips to medical appointments, along with filling critical gaps in access for employment, community, and health needs.
- Food Assistance: Over 4.1 million meals were distributed to 13,691 people in 2023.

Additional programs, including energy assistance, adult education, employment support, financial coaching, and family development, expand opportunities for residents to build skills and pursue long-term economic independence.

Hopelink works to achieve its vision of a community free of poverty through services across nine categories of assistance designed to support community members in achieving stability and exiting poverty.

Stability Programs

- Food Assistance
- Financial Assistance
- Energy Assistance
- Housing for Families Experiencing Homelessness
- Non-Emergency Medical Transportation

Equipped to Exit Poverty

- Adult Education
- Housing and Case Management
- Family Development
- Financial Counseling
- Mobility Management
- DART Transportation

Approach and Methods

Hopelink serves the needs of its clients and their communities throughout North and East King County, with transportation programs serving all of King and Snohomish counties. When possible, this Needs Assessment summarizes data by five service areas delineated by census tracts. **Exhibit 2** shows the Hopelink Needs Assessment area and its Service Areas as defined using census tract boundaries. Census tracts are statistical subdivisions of a county defined by the U.S. Census Bureau and roughly correspond to a neighborhood. The population of each census tract typically ranges from 1,200 to 8,000 people, and the geographic area can vary significantly. Areas in western King County have higher population densities than in eastern King County, so census tracts with similar populations will have different geographic extents.

The Needs Assessment Area is presented in five service areas. These are:

- **Shoreline Service Area.** Located north of Seattle on the border of King and Snohomish counties. It includes areas associated with the cities of Shoreline and Lake Forest Park along the top of Lake Washington.

- **Kirkland/Northshore Service Area.** East of the Shoreline Service Area and covering south along Lake Washington to include the cities of Kirkland, Kenmore, Woodinville, and parts of the city of Bothell, along with some unincorporated areas of the Northshore School District.

- **Redmond Service Area.** Includes the cities of Redmond and Sammamish, along with unincorporated areas to the northeast, such as Union Hill-Novelty Hill.

- **Bellevue Service Area.** Follows Lake Washington south from Kirkland to encompass the cities of Bellevue, Mercer Island, Newcastle, and Issaquah, with unincorporated areas south of Issaquah, such as Mirrormont and East Renton Highlands.

- **Snoqualmie Valley Service Area.** Due to the size of census tracts in rural areas, this service area is by far the largest of the five, covering most of the eastern half of King County. It encompasses the cities of Duvall, Carnation, Snoqualmie, North Bend, and the surrounding unincorporated areas.

The predominant source of estimates of individual and household attributes is the U.S. Census Bureau, which, along with its Decennial Census, conducts an annual survey of residents across the country through the American Community Survey (ACS). To bolster the quality of the data, the survey results are averaged in 5-year increments. The principal ACS product this Needs Assessment uses is the 2019-2023 5-year Estimates.

Exhibit 2. Hopelink Needs Assessment Area & Service Areas by Census Tracts
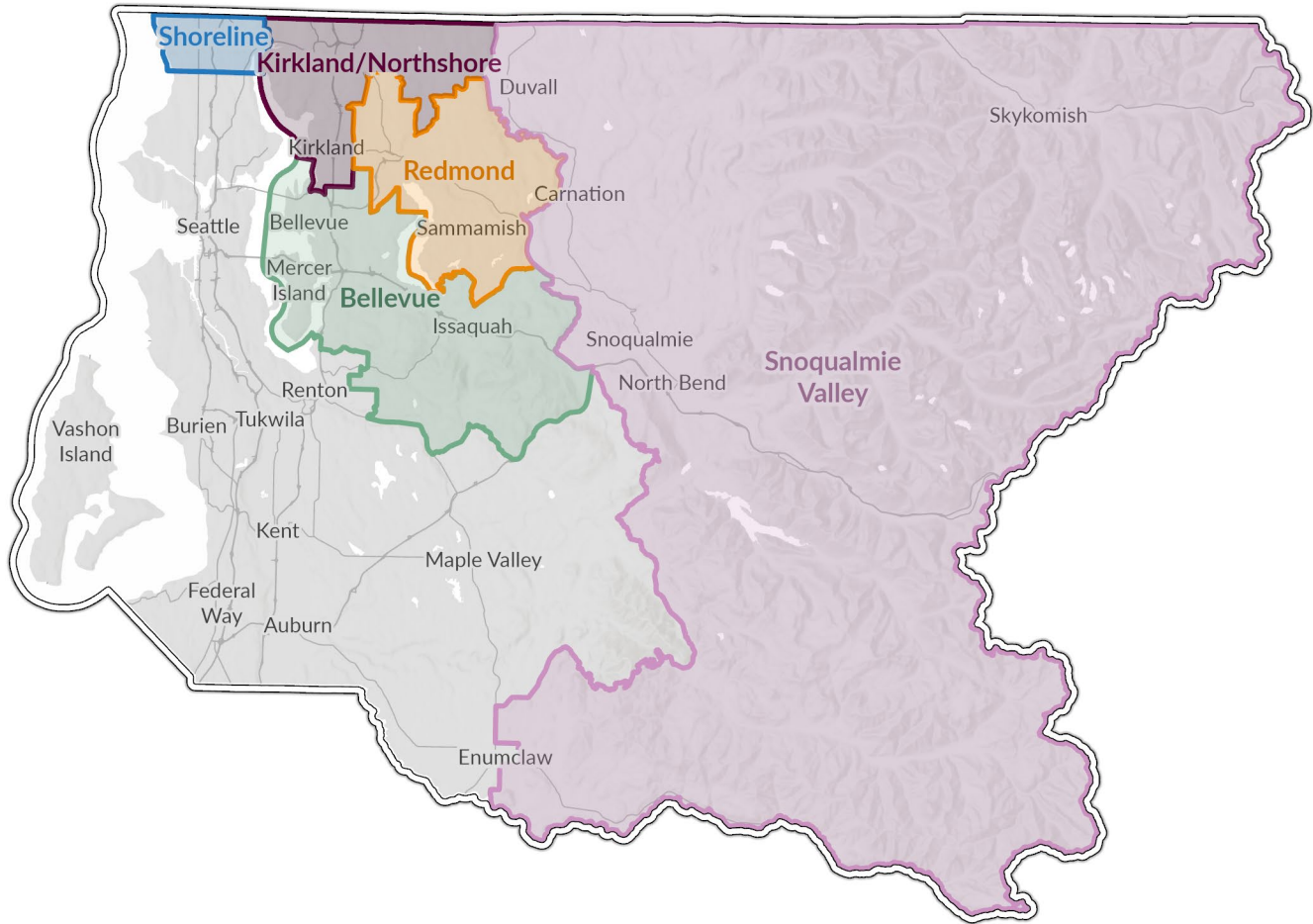
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020; BERK, 2025.

Some sources use alternative geographies to collect and publish data. State agencies that report on students and youth may use school district boundaries instead, such as the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), and the Department of Children, Youth, & Families (DCYF). **Exhibit 3** shows the Needs Assessment Area and Service Areas as defined by school district boundaries.

Exhibit 3. Hopelink Needs Assessment Area & Service Area by School Districts
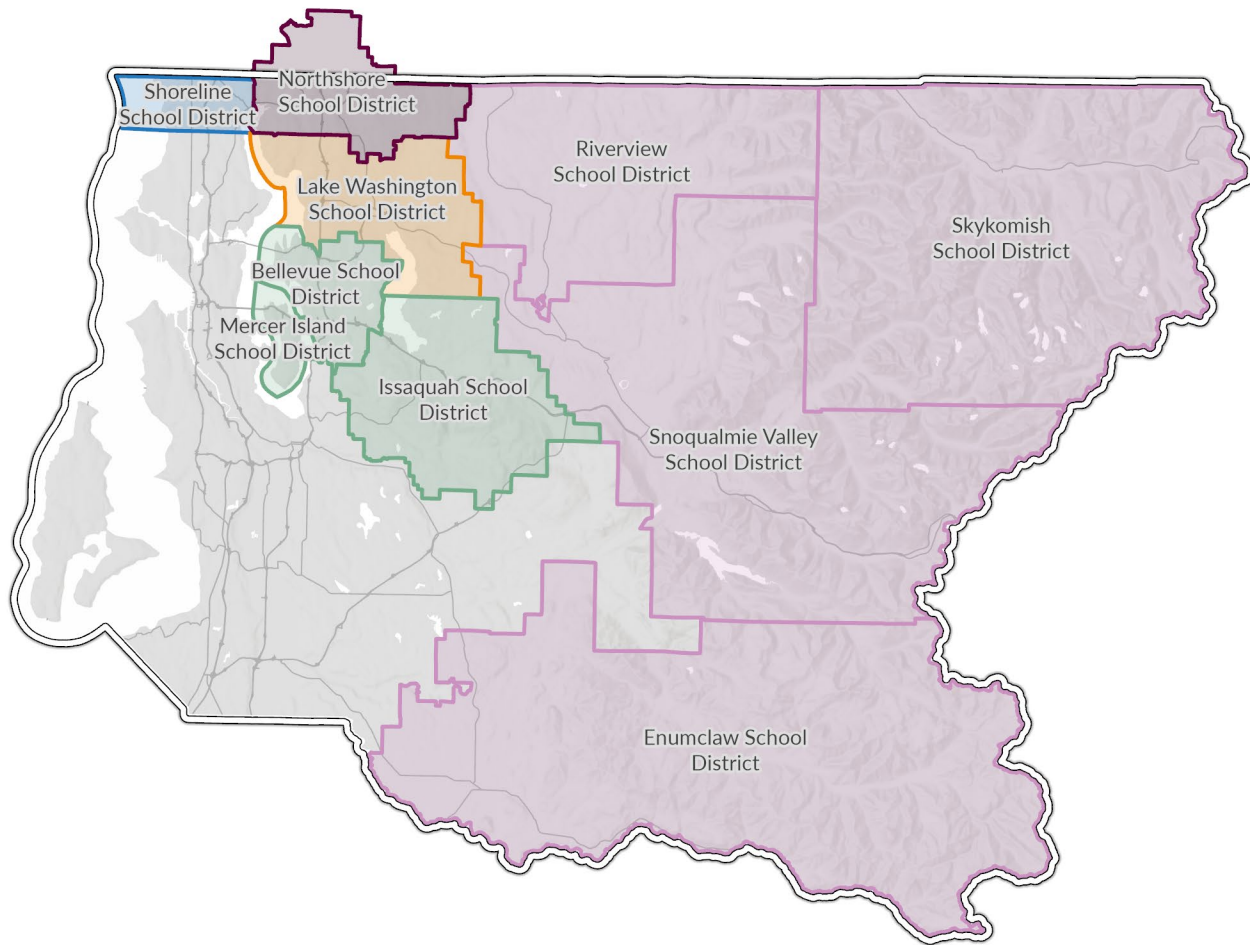
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020; BERK, 2025.

Data Sources

Where possible, data is aggregated by Service Area. For some information, such as counts of residents, this may be as simple as summing values within each area. For more complicated data pieces, such as median income by household, weighted averages and other data manipulation methods may be used. **Exhibit 4** lists each data source used in this Needs Assessment along with its data vintage and level of geography.

Exhibit 4. Data Sources, Vintage, and Geography

Data Source	Vintage	Geography
Center for Neighborhood Technology	2022	Census tract
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	2024	Census tract
Child Care Aware of Washington	2025	King County
Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap	2019-2023	King County

Healthy Youth Survey	2023	King County
King County Regional Homelessness Authority	2024	King County
King County Metro	2025	King County
Public Health Seattle-King County	2022	Health Reporting Area (HRA)
Sound Transit	2025	King County
U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey	2013-2023	Census tract
U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, Consolidated Housing Affordability Strategy	2017-2021	Census tract
U.S. Department of Transportation, Census Transportation Planning Products	2017-2021	Census tract
University of Washington, Center for Women's Welfare	2025	North & East King County
WA Department of Children, Youth, & Families	2025	School district
WA Department of Social and Health Services	2017-2022	School district
WA Office of Financial Management	2014-2024	Census tract
WA Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction	2024	School district

Community Input

In addition to secondary data sources, the Needs Assessment draws on input from community members and stakeholders. The goal of community engagement activities was to understand service needs, gaps in services not currently provided by Hopelink, and explore barriers to accessing available supports. Stakeholders include Hopelink staff and clients, community members, volunteers, and institutional representatives. Opportunities for input took place through workshops, focus groups, interviews, and the 2025 In-Depth Customer Satisfaction Survey. See **Appendix A** for the complete list of who we spoke with and the learning objectives for the engagement.

Income

This section presents patterns of regional prosperity and individual economic security, examining how income levels, poverty rates, and public benefit access vary across geography, household type, and demographic characteristics in the Hopelink Needs Assessment Area. The data show that while many residents thrive, others, particularly communities of color and lower-income renters, face persistent economic insecurity.

Despite regional prosperity, many individuals and households do not have enough income to meet their basic needs.

In the Hopelink's Needs Assessment Area, many residents struggle to generate enough income to meet their basic needs. Service providers report that they are seeing more people in crisis, including those who previously were stable. This includes families with steady jobs who are now unable to keep up with rent, utilities, or food costs. Most Spanish-speaking individuals interviewed as part of the needs assessment process report struggling to cover their monthly expenses and frequently working second jobs. They note these effects have been especially noticeable after the pandemic.

As shown in **Exhibit 5,** median household incomes vary widely across service areas, with households in the Bellevue and Redmond Service Areas reporting significantly higher incomes than households in the Shoreline and Snoqualmie Valley Service Areas. Median household income rose in all service areas between 24% and 31% between 2018 and 2023, higher than the change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) over the same timeframe (19.18%). This suggests that, overall, household income has increased in real terms since 2018. The overall rise in income, relative to inflation, may be the result of state minimum wage laws passed by Washington voters in 2016. As of January 1, 2025, the minimum wage in unincorporated King County is $20.29 with some exceptions. This is one of the highest minimum wage standards in the United States; however, it is less than a living wage in the region for many households.

The MIT living wage calculator[1] for the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue metro area estimates that the living wage is:

- $29.44 for a single adult with no children
- $46.82 for a three-person household with one working adult, one non-working adult, and a child.
- $36.86 for a household with two working adults and two children.

In addition, while minimum wage standards can increase the earning potential for some workers, they can also displace low-skill workers from the workforce, particularly for teens, young adults, and the less educated (Neumark & Shirley, 2022). There is a growing segment of the population that earns too much to qualify for public benefits but not enough to stay afloat, especially with rising housing and utility costs.

Exhibit 5. Median Household Income, 2023

Service Area	Median Household Income	5-year Change
Shoreline Service Area	$126,111	+30% 5-year Change
Kirkland/Northshore Service Area	$152,710	+28%
Redmond Service Area	$189,161	+24%
Bellevue Service Area	$169,149	+31%
Snoqualmie Valley Service Area	$161,276	+31%
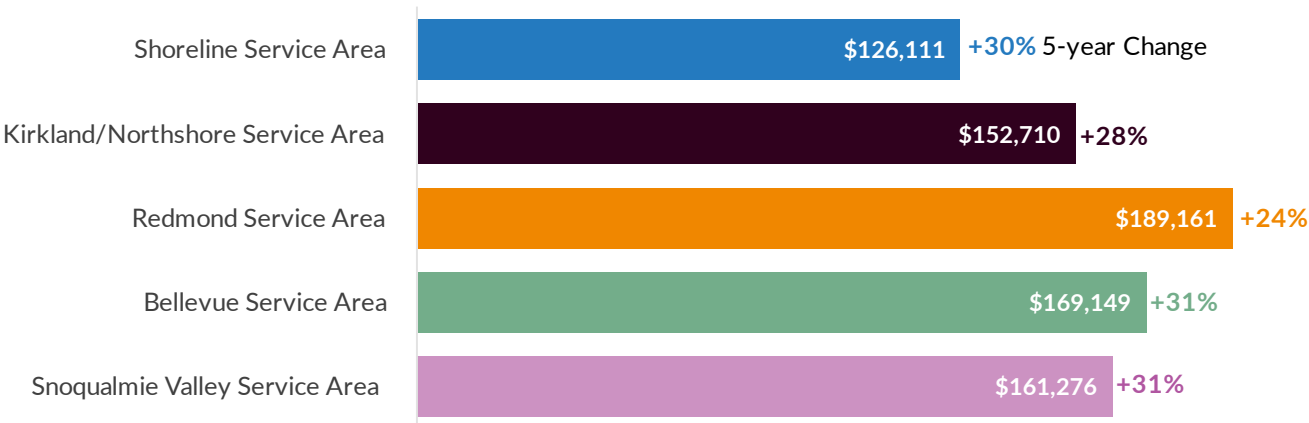
Note: Service Area summary estimate based on the weighted average of median income by tract.
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S1903, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Exhibit 6 provides more detail on the heterogeneity of median household income by census tract in each Hopelink Service Area. All service areas except the Shoreline Service Area have areas in which the median household income exceeds $200,000, and all service areas except the Redmond Service Area have areas in which the median household income is less than $100,000.

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[1] Living wage data sourced from the Living Wage Institute via *https://livingwage.mit.edu.*

Exhibit 6. Median Household Income, 2023

Median Household Income
- $200,000+
- $150,000 - $200,000
- $100,000 - $150,000
- ≤$100,000
- Unpopulated Area
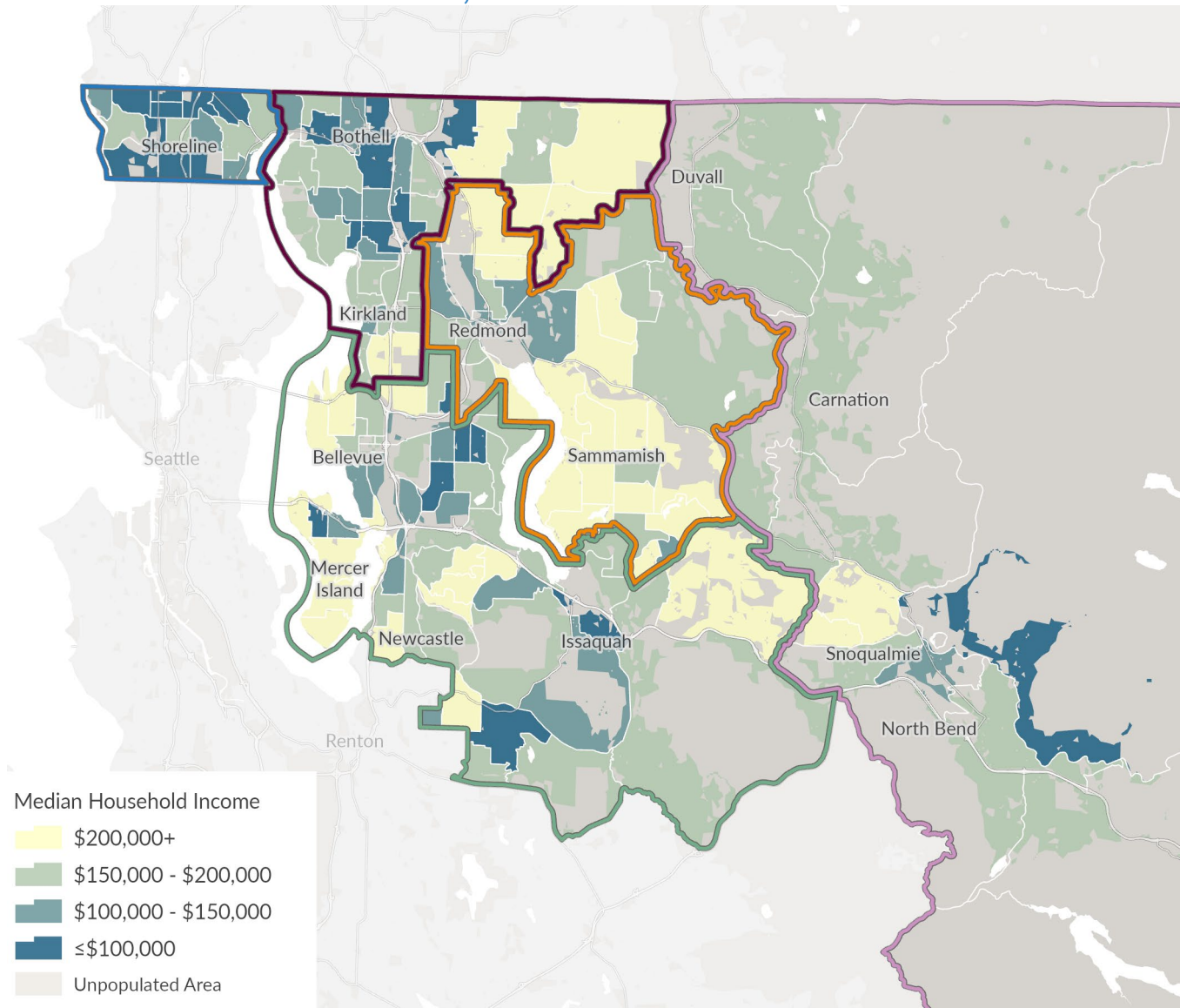
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S1903, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Historical and current system disadvantages contribute to and reproduce income disparities by race and ethnicity. **Exhibit 7** presents the median household income by race and ethnicity, revealing significant disparities in median household income of households with a householder who identifies as White and Asian compared with Black, Hispanic/Latino, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander households experiencing substantially lower incomes. These disparities reflect persistent structural barriers related to factors that protect and build household wealth, such as access to homeownership, quality educational and job opportunities, and financial services.

Exhibit 7. Median Household Income by Race & Ethnicity, Needs Assessment Area, 2023

Race/Ethnicity	Median Household Income
Asian	$194,855
Black	$35,695
Hispanic/Latino	$98,047
Other	$56,933
Multiple	$119,006
White	$154,142
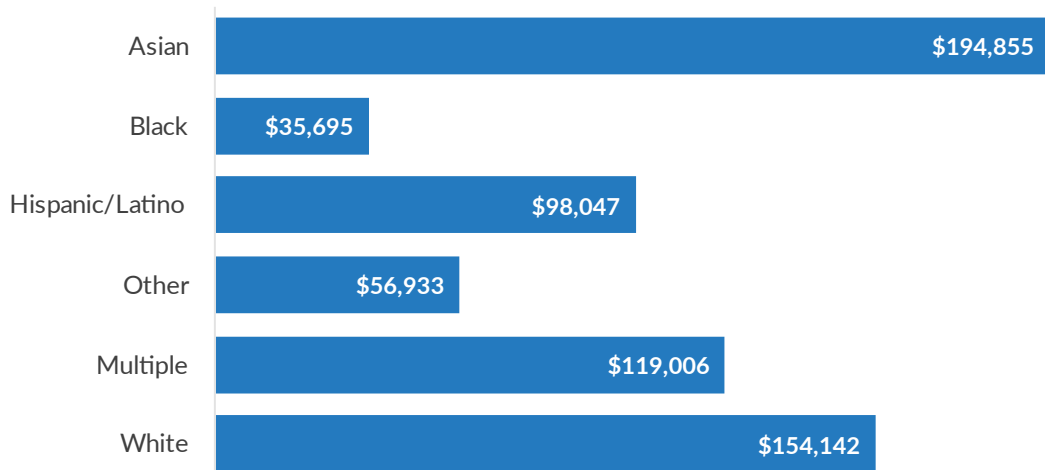
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S1903, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

A closer look at these patterns county-wide, presented in **Exhibit 8**, demonstrates a great deal of heterogeneity within each racial group. Grouping households by income in $25,000 increments indicates that the higher median household income for White and Asian households (shown in **Exhibit 7)** is skewed higher due to a large group of households with incomes greater than $200,000. In fact, despite overall affluence within the racial category, there are more White and Asian households with household incomes in the lower ranges than all other racial groups.

## Exhibit 8. Household Income in the past 12 Months, King County, 2023
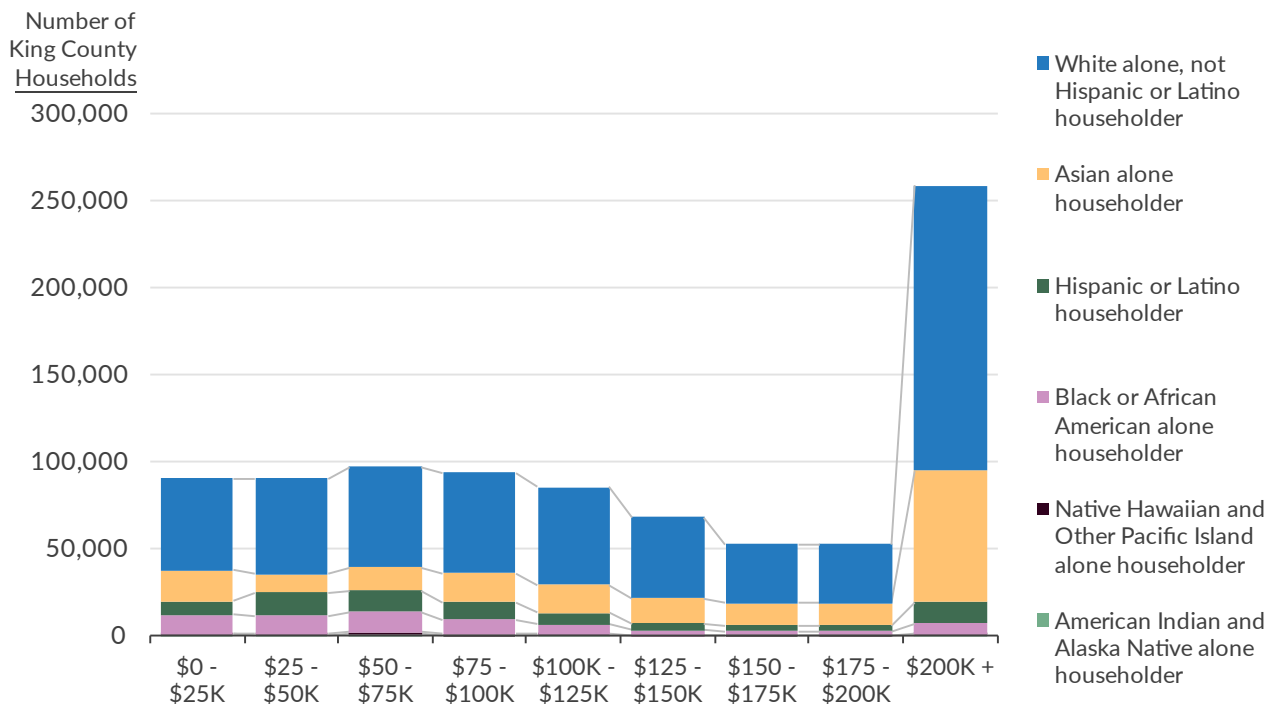
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table B19001, 2019 – 2023; BERK, 2025

Income Trends

Exhibit 9 presents trends in median household income from 2017 to 2023 adjusted to 2023 dollars across the Needs Assessment Area. Over this seven-year period, all areas experienced income growth in real terms between 2017 and 2023, though the rate of growth varies by service area. The Redmond Service Area consistently holds the highest median income, reaching $189,161 in 2023, followed by the Bellevue Service Area at $169,149. Snoqualmie Valley and Kirkland Service Areas show similar trajectories, with 2023 medians of $161,276 and $152,710, respectively. The Shoreline Service Area consistently has the lowest median income ($126,111) yet follows the overall pattern of growth. The persistent income gap between Shoreline and higher-income areas, such as Redmond, suggests persistent regional disparities in access to high-wage employment and economic opportunities.

Notably, the velocity of income growth ebbed for all service areas, beginning in 2021, with some experiencing a decline in income in real terms by 2023. This suggests that the purchasing power for many households is declining. Since 2023, the rate of inflation has returned to its pre-COVID range of around 3% annually.

Exhibit 9. Median Household Income Over Time, Inflation Adjusted, 2017 – 2023
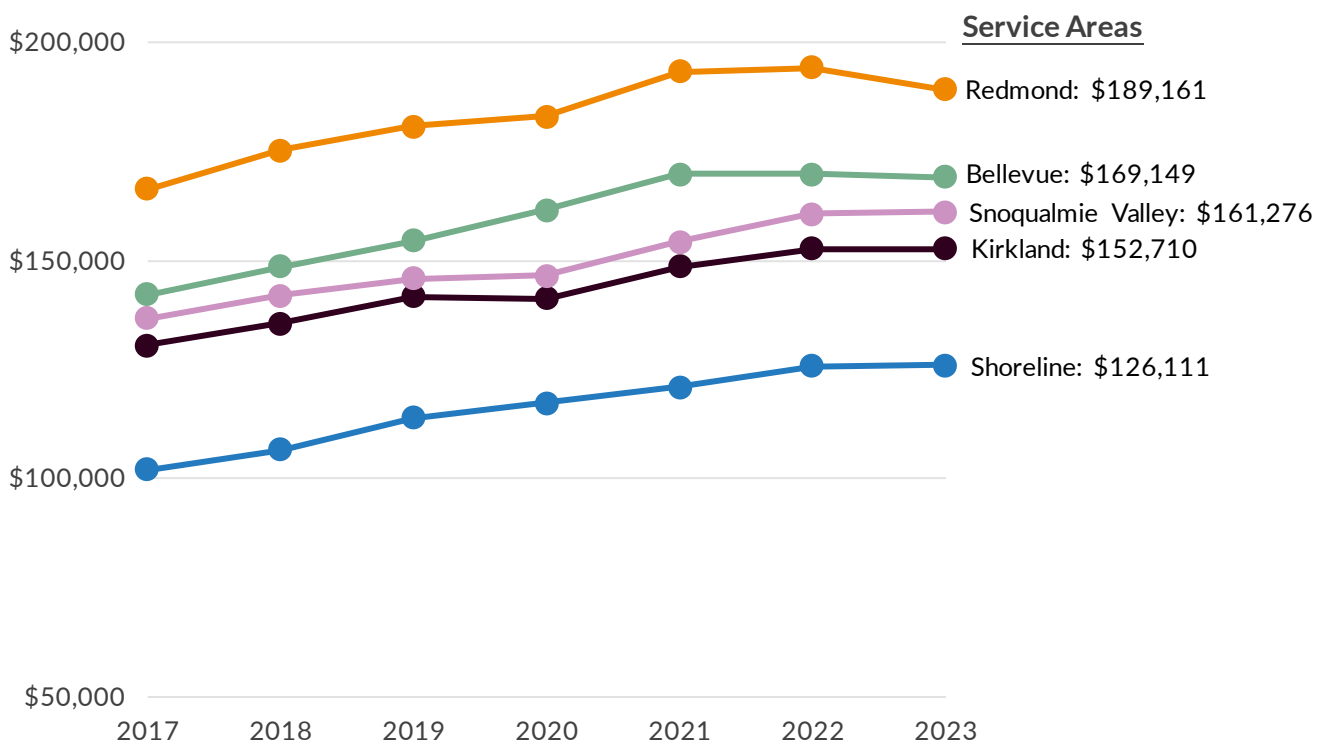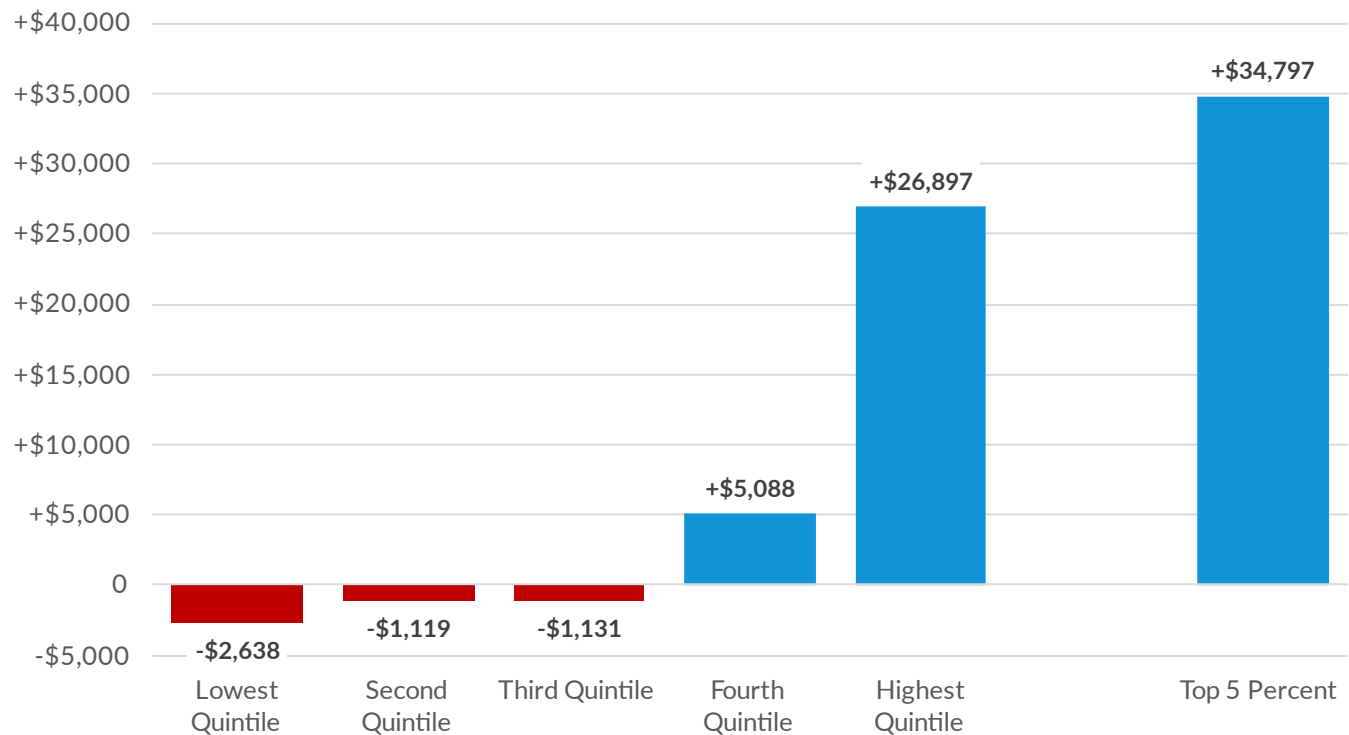

Note: values are inflation-adjusted to 2023 dollars.
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S1903, 2013-2023; BERK, 2025.

In 2019, the mean King County household income of the middle 20% of households (third quintile) was $103,381. The mean household income grew to $121,073 by 2023, representing a nominal increase of $17,692 over the four-year period. However, when accounting for the high inflation between 2019 and 2023, the purchasing power of the mean household income decreased by $1,131. **Exhibit 10** presents the 2019 – 2023 change in mean income for all King County households by quintile, and for the top 5 percent of households. When accounting for the relatively high inflation, the data suggest a decrease in purchasing power for mean income households in three of the five quintiles. While the lower-income households have experienced a decline in purchasing power, households in higher-income categories are experiencing income growth in real terms, leading to greater income inequality. Indeed, the top 5% of households saw the greatest change in mean income, estimated at $34,797 (2023 dollars), with a mean of $753,211.

Exhibit 10. Change in Mean Household Income by Quintile, 2019 and 2023, King County

Note: values are inflation-adjusted to 2023 dollars
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table B19081, 2023; BERK, 2025

Income Sufficiency and Poverty

Income sufficiency refers to whether a household's income is enough to consistently meet its basic needs – including housing, food, transportation, healthcare, and other essentials – without relying on public assistance, going into debt, or making tradeoffs that compromise well-being.

Income sufficiency is foundational to household stability, affecting everything from housing and transportation to health and education. The poverty threshold, otherwise known as the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), is a single income standard for the whole country published by the federal government and does not account for regional differences in costs. In 2023, the FPL was $15,850 for individuals under 65 years of age. The FPL is considered to be far below the income needed to prevent significant economic hardship. As a result, many social support programs use thresholds that are a multiple of the poverty level. For example,

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits extend beyond the FPL.

- Medicaid eligibility can extend up to 400% of the FPL.

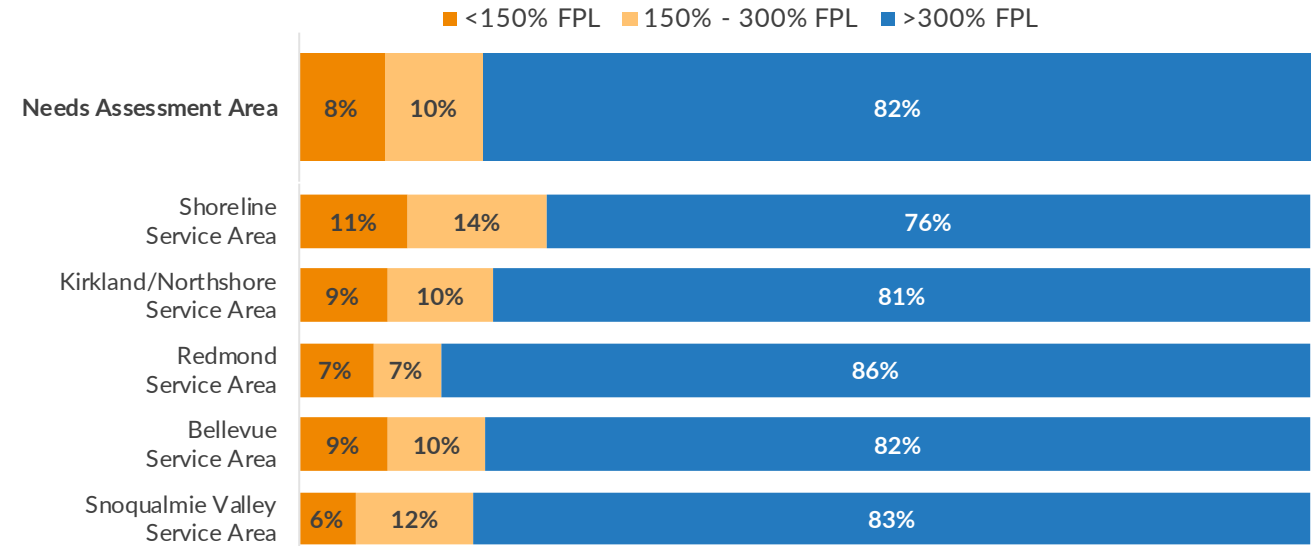- Housing assistance programs frequently serve between 200% and 300% of the FPL.

Income data across the Needs Assessment Area reveal that a significant portion of residents live with an income that is less than what is considered sufficient for meeting basic needs in the region. While 82% of individuals (610,667) earn more than 300% of the FPL, a common proxy for income sufficiency in high-cost areas. Nearly one in five households (134,785) earn below that threshold.

Because service areas vary significantly in population size, it is important to examine both the number and proportion of individuals with incomes below 300% FPL. Each lens offers a different but essential perspective: counts help illustrate the scale of need, and percentages highlight the intensity of economic insecurity within a given area.

Exhibit 11 and **Exhibit 12** present the number and share of service area populations by ratios of income and FPL. The Bellevue Service Area has the highest number of people with incomes less than 300% of the FPL, with 49,740 people (19%) falling under this threshold. Redmond follows with 23,225 people (14%), despite having the lowest percentage share among the service areas. Shoreline, while smaller in population, has 17,756 people (25%) below 300% FPL, the highest proportion among all service areas, including 7,795 households (11%) in deep poverty (below 150% FPL).

Shoreline stands out as the service area with the highest share of people living with insufficient income: 25% (17,756) live below 300% FPL, including 11% (7,795) in deep poverty (below 150% FPL). In contrast, the Redmond Service Area has the lowest share of residents in this category, with only 14% earning less than 300% FPL. This underscores the continued need for targeted support, particularly in areas with high concentrations of economic insecurity, and highlights how regional prosperity can mask significant disparities in household stability.

Exhibit 11. Income as Ratio of Federal Poverty Level, 2023

Legend: ■ <150% FPL ■ 150% - 300% FPL ■ >300% FPL

Area	<150% FPL	150% - 300% FPL	>300% FPL
Needs Assessment Area	8%	10%	82%
Shoreline Service Area	11%	14%	76%
Kirkland/Northshore Service Area	9%	10%	81%
Redmond Service Area	7%	7%	86%
Bellevue Service Area	9%	10%	82%
Snoqualmie Valley Service Area	6%	12%	83%

	<150% FPL	150% - 300% FPL	>300% FPL
Needs Assessment Area	**62,316**	**72,469**	**610,667**
Shoreline Service Area	7,795	9,961	55,003
Kirkland/Northshore Service Area	15,298	18,477	142,208
Redmond Service Area	12,081	11,174	143,263
Bellevue Service Area	23,792	25,948	220,820
Snoqualmie Valley Service Area	3,350	6,909	49,373

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S1701, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Exhibit 12. Percent of Population with Income Below 300% Federal Poverty Level, 2023
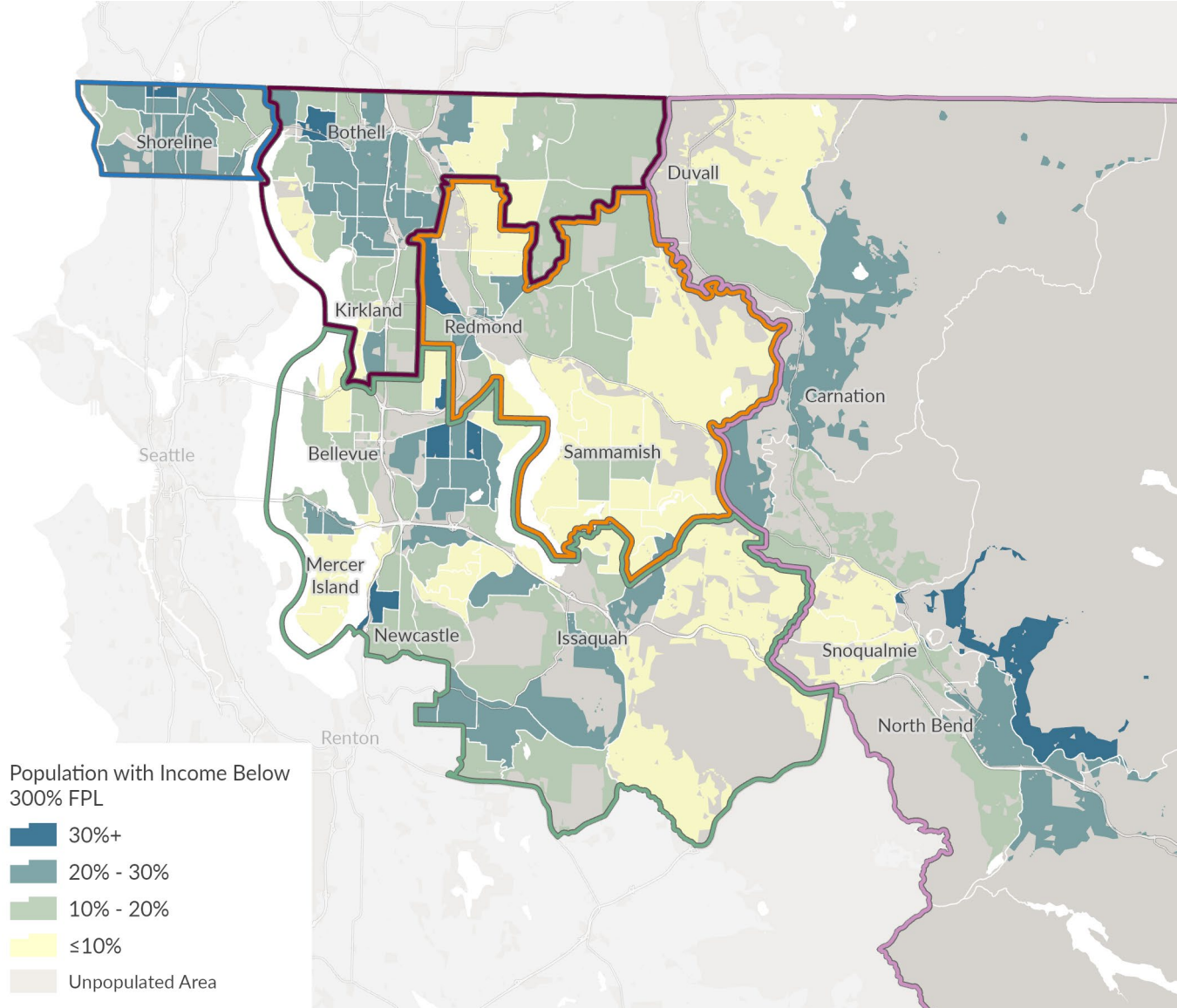
Population with Income Below
300% FPL

- 30%+
- 20% - 30%
- 10% - 20%
- ≤10%
- Unpopulated Area

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S1701, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Exhibit 13 shows that poverty in the Needs Assessment Area disproportionately affects residents of color. In 2023, the percentage of the population living below the FPL was the highest among Black residents at 18.1%, followed by Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander residents at 13.1%, and Hispanic/Latino residents at 11.0%. Other race (9.8%), individuals of multiple races (8.8%), and American Indian/Alaska Native residents (7.3%) also had poverty rates above those of Asian (4.6%) and White (5.0%) residents. Notably, while the racial groups of Asian and White have the lowest proportion of the population experiencing poverty, there are more people in those combined racial groups experiencing poverty than all the other racial groups combined.

Exhibit 13. Percent of Population with Income Below the Federal Poverty Level by Race, Needs Assessment Area, 2023

Race	Percent
Asian	4.6%
White	5.0%
American Indian/Alaska Native	7.3%
Multiple races	8.8%
Other race	9.8%
Hispanic/Latino of any race	11.0%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	13.1%
Black	18.1%
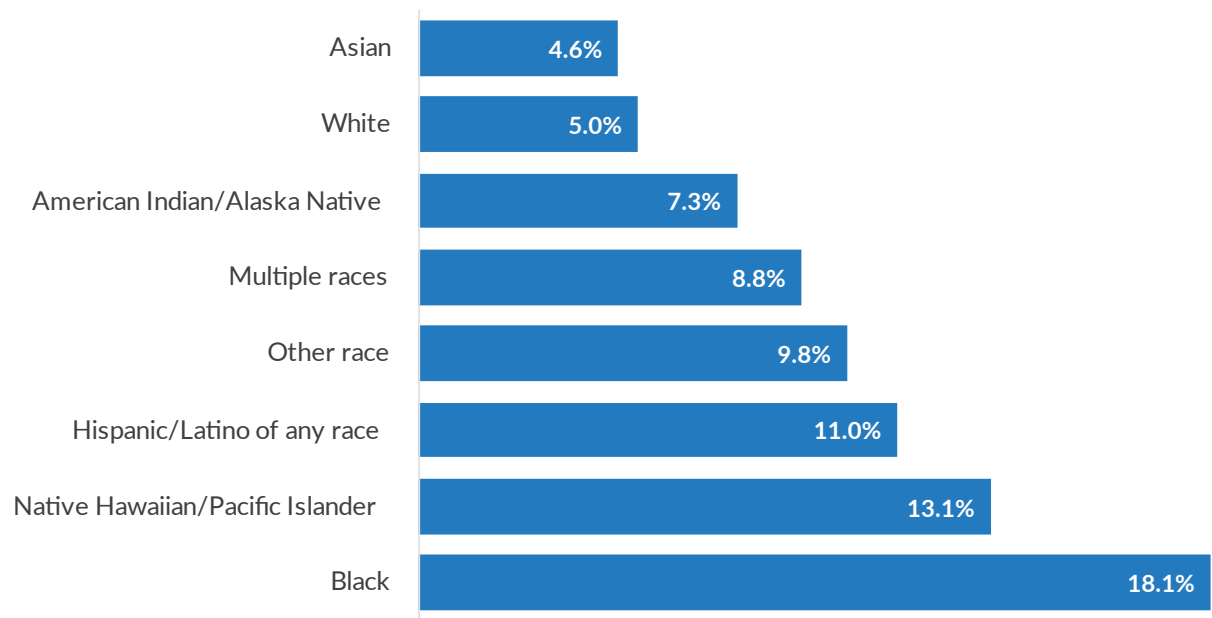
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S1701, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Childhood poverty is vital to consider, given the impact that it can have on children's physical and mental development, educational outcomes, and health. **Exhibit 14** presents a map of the percentage of children (population under 18 years of age) experiencing poverty. Similar to the patterns above, the Hopelink Assessment Area exhibits considerable heterogeneity in economic hardship. Areas of higher rates of childhood poverty (>15%) are found throughout the region.

Exhibit 14. Percent of Under 18 Population Experiencing Poverty, 2023
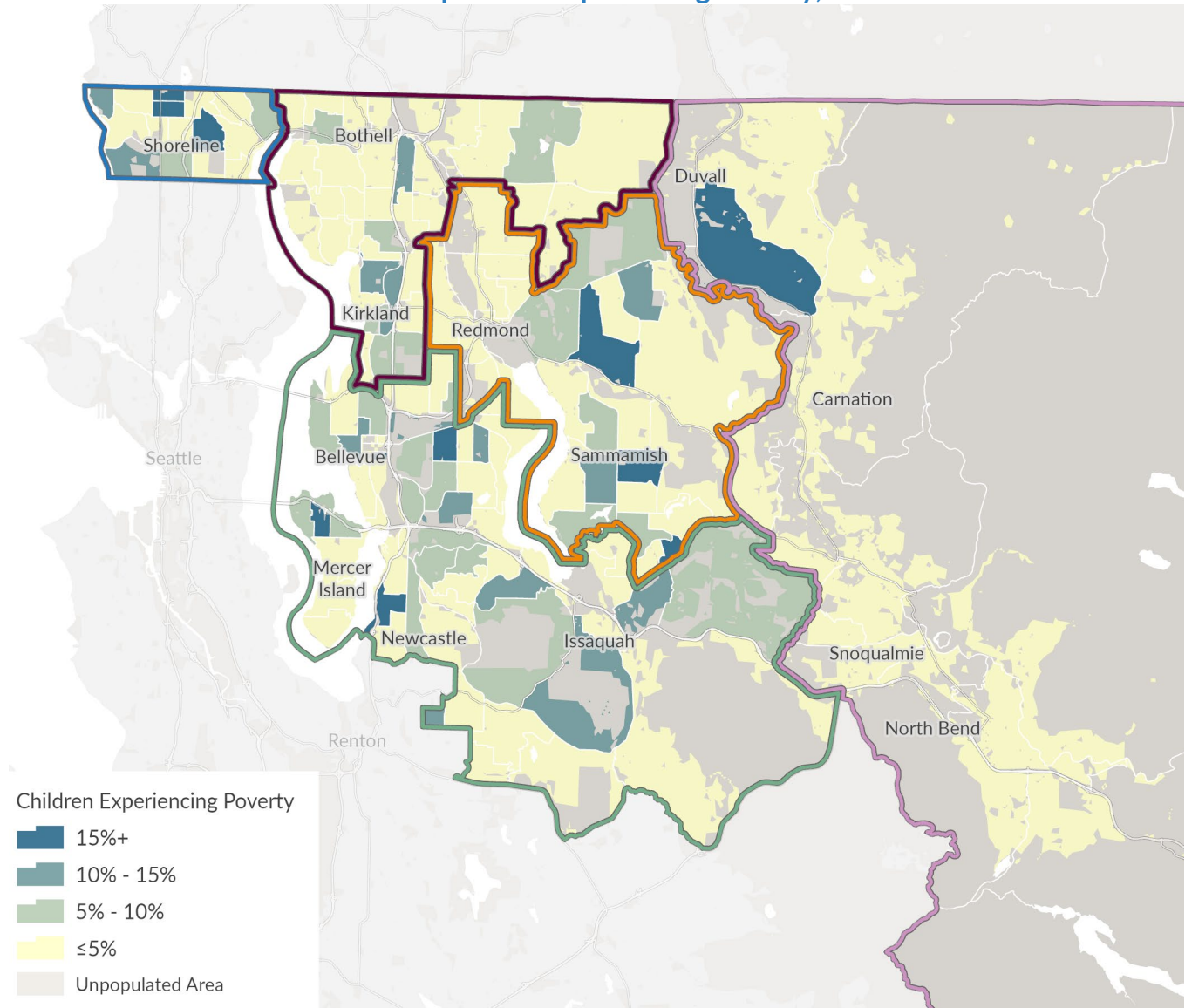
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S1701, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Income Support

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a key income support program for households with low incomes. **Exhibit 15** highlights the number of TANF recipients across service areas. The Bellevue Service Area has the largest number of recipients (1,710 individuals), followed by the Redmond Service Area (1,028). Enrollment is lower in the Kirkland/Northshore (579), Shoreline (504), and Snoqualmie Valley (501) service areas. While differences in population size may explain some of the variation, these figures may also indicate gaps in outreach, barriers to enrollment, or varying eligibility patterns across communities. Notably, areas like the Shoreline and Snoqualmie Valley Service Areas, which have a relatively high share of households living below the 300% FPL, show modest TANF participation, raising concerns about whether the program is reaching all who need it. These findings underscore the importance of evaluating not only economic conditions but also the effectiveness and accessibility of public support systems.

Exhibit 15. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Enrollment, 2022
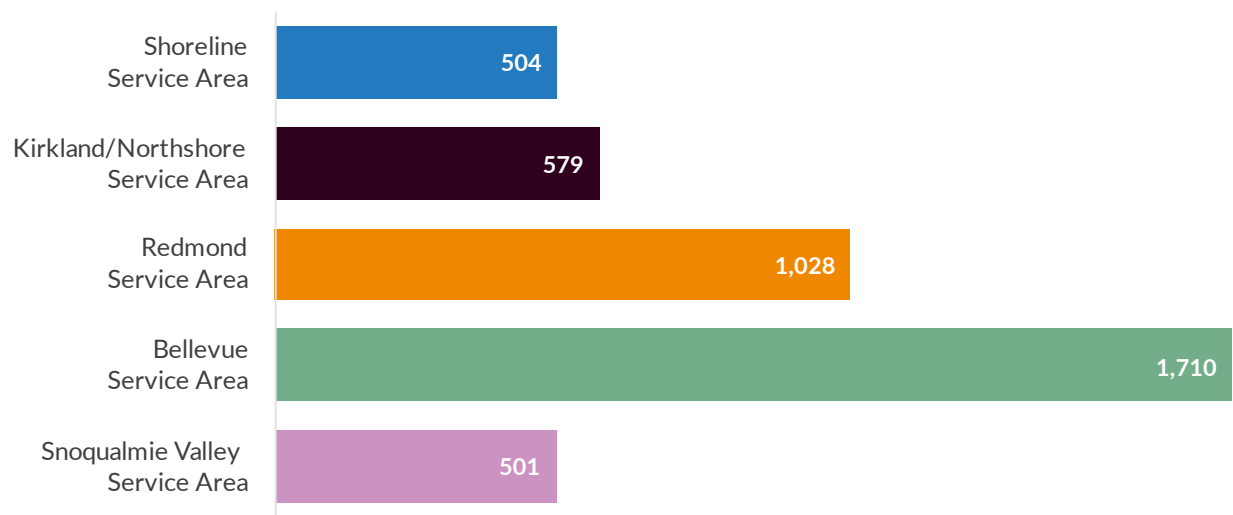
Sources: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, 2022; BERK, 2025.

Housing

Experiences of housing stability are not uniform and often depend on the length of time households and communities have lived in the region. Service providers noted that many in the Russian and Ukrainian community on the east side of King County secured housing 15 or more years ago—often through Section 8 or other subsidized programs, or by living with children who own homes—which has allowed them to remain in place with extended family and services nearby. By contrast, newer immigrant groups and younger renters often face higher housing costs, limited access to subsidies, and more precarious rental arrangements, putting them at greater risk of displacement and in need of different kinds of support. While living with their adult children is a strategy many seniors use to reduce their housing costs, some express a desire to live independently but are limited by high housing costs. Senior centers also report that an increasing number of seniors are requesting support for finding affordable housing, as well as a need for more caregiving services and home repair assistance to help seniors remain safe and independent in their own homes.

"For older adults that want to stay in their homes or stay in the [Snoqualmie] Valley, there's not another place for them to go in the Valley." -Interviewee

Tenure

Housing tenure influences the type of support households require to maintain stability and prevent displacement or homelessness. **Exhibit 16** shows the percentage of households that rent and own their home by household size in the Needs Assessment Area. More than half of one-person households are renters (54%), and the rate of home ownership goes up with the number of people in the household, up to 79% in a 5-person household.

Exhibit 16. Households by Size and Tenure, Hopelink Needs Assessment Area, 2023
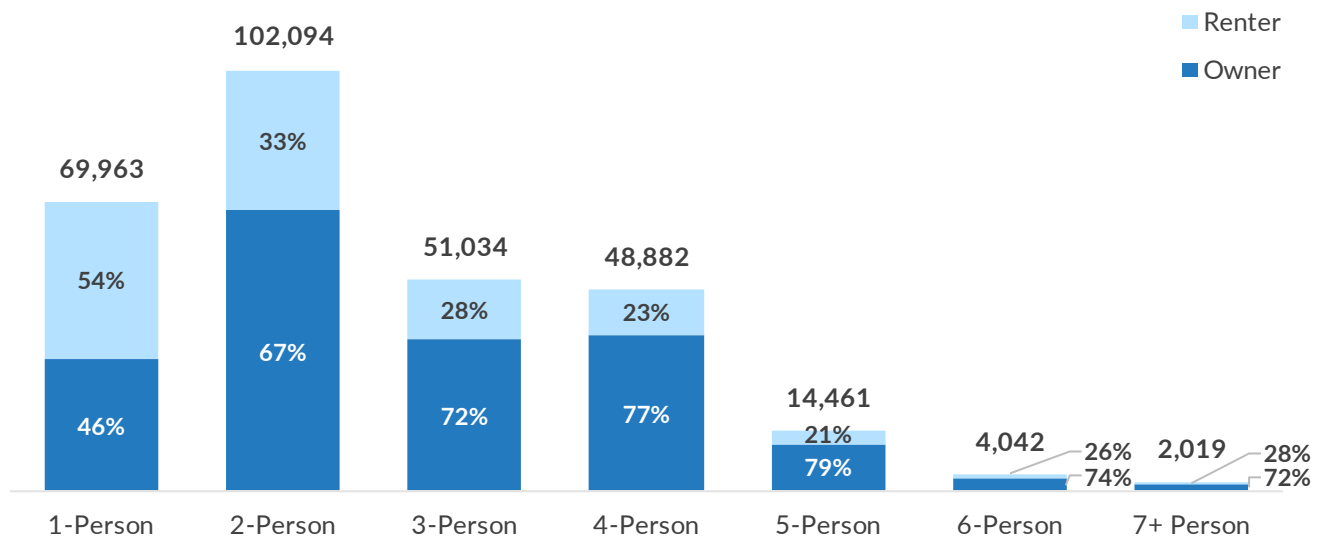
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table B25009, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Housing costs vary significantly across different market areas in the United States, so housing needs and housing affordability are defined in relationship to the region's median household income. The data in this section is presented relative to King County's Area Median Income (AMI), defined as the midpoint of a region's income distribution – half of the families in a region have household incomes higher than the AMI, and half have household incomes lower than the AMI. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) publishes local income thresholds for each affordability bracket, with consideration of household size, for determining eligibility for federal housing programs. HUD estimates the 2021 area median income (AMI) for King County to be $115,700 for a four-person household.

HUD's affordability brackets are defined as follows:

- <30% AMI is considered an Extremely Low-Income household
- 30 – 50% AMI is Very Low-Income
- 50 – 80% AMI is Low Income
- 80 – 100% AMI is Moderate Income
- >100% AMI is Above Median Income

Households with income below 30% of AMI would translate roughly to households with incomes of 185% of the FPL.

Exhibit 17 summarizes the households in the Needs Assessment Area within each affordability bracket, by housing tenure. Owner-occupied households comprise larger shares of higher income brackets. Households with lower incomes are more likely to be renters, with almost 60% of households making less than 30% AMI renting their homes. Households with low incomes that rent their housing are particularly vulnerable to housing cost increases, leading to housing

cost burden (paying more than they can afford on housing), displacement, eviction, and homelessness.

Exhibit 17. Households by Tenure and Income, Needs Assessment Area, 2021
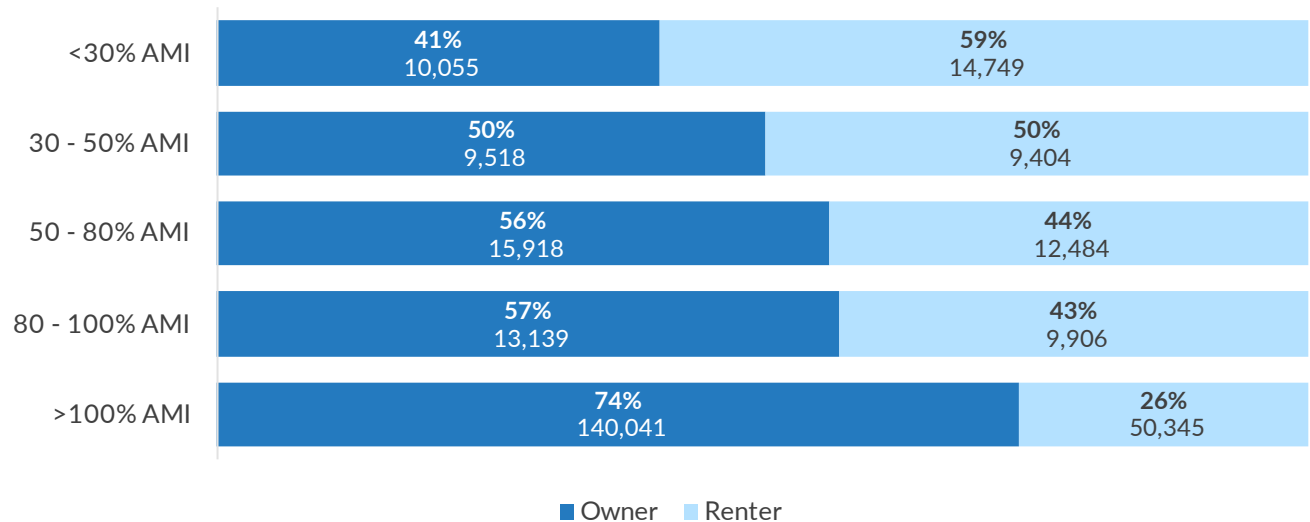
Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Consolidated Housing Affordability Strategy, 2017-2021; BERK, 2025.

Cost Burden

The housing cost burden highlights the strain many households face in balancing housing costs with other essential needs. When a significant portion of income goes toward housing, families have fewer resources for food, healthcare, transportation, and savings. Across nearly every interview, organizations emphasized that families are struggling to afford and stay in their homes. Even those with housing vouchers or stable jobs are falling behind on rent due to rising costs. While rising rent is one factor, individuals are also experiencing a rise in fees, such as parking fees and utility costs. Service providers see households fall behind on utility bills, particularly for water and electricity. While programs exist to help with utility costs, income limits, documentation requirements, and administrative delays often make them difficult to access. Service providers and individuals expressed a desire to see additional rental assistance and prevention of eviction, as well as more transitional and senior housing options, to help mitigate this crisis.

Exhibit 18 shows the distribution of gross rents across service areas. Below is a summary of monthly rental cost ranges alongside the approximate minimum annual household income needed to afford them without being cost burdened (defined as paying no more than 30% of income on housing):

Monthly Rent Range	Annual Income to Avoid Cost Burden
$0 – $1,499	Up to $60,000
$1,500 – $2,499	$60,000 to $100,000
$2,500+	$100,000 or more

In the Bellevue Service Area, nearly half (48%) of rental units cost $2,500 or more per month, which requires households to earn at least $100,000 annually to avoid being cost-burdened. Snoqualmie Valley Service Area and Redmond Service Area also have significant portions of high-cost rentals, at 44% and 41% respectively. In contrast, the Kirkland/Northshore Service Area and Shoreline Service Area have lower shares of high-cost rentals, with 36% and 23% respectively. Redmond and Bellevue have the lowest share of affordable units in the range of $0 - $1,499, rent levels affordable to households earning under about $60,000 annually, at 9% and 11% respectively. Snoqualmie Valley has the most even distribution across rent levels, with 25% of units under $1,500 and 31% in the mid-range. These differences highlight varying levels of affordability and market pressure across the region.

Exhibit 18. Rental Units by Gross Rent Cost, 2023

Legend: ■ $0 - $1,499 ■ $1,500 - $2,499 ■ $2,500+

| Service Area	$0 - $1,499	$1,500 - $2,499	$2,500+
Shoreline Service Area	25% / 2,213	52% / 4,509	23% / 1,980
Kirkland/Northshore Service Area	14% / 3,454	50% / 12,237	36% / 8,818
Redmond Service Area	9% / 2,155	50% / 11,265	41% / 9,335
Bellevue Service Area	11% / 4,689	41% / 17,818	48% / 20,826
Snoqualmie Valley Service Area	25% / 736	31% / 907	44% / 1,277
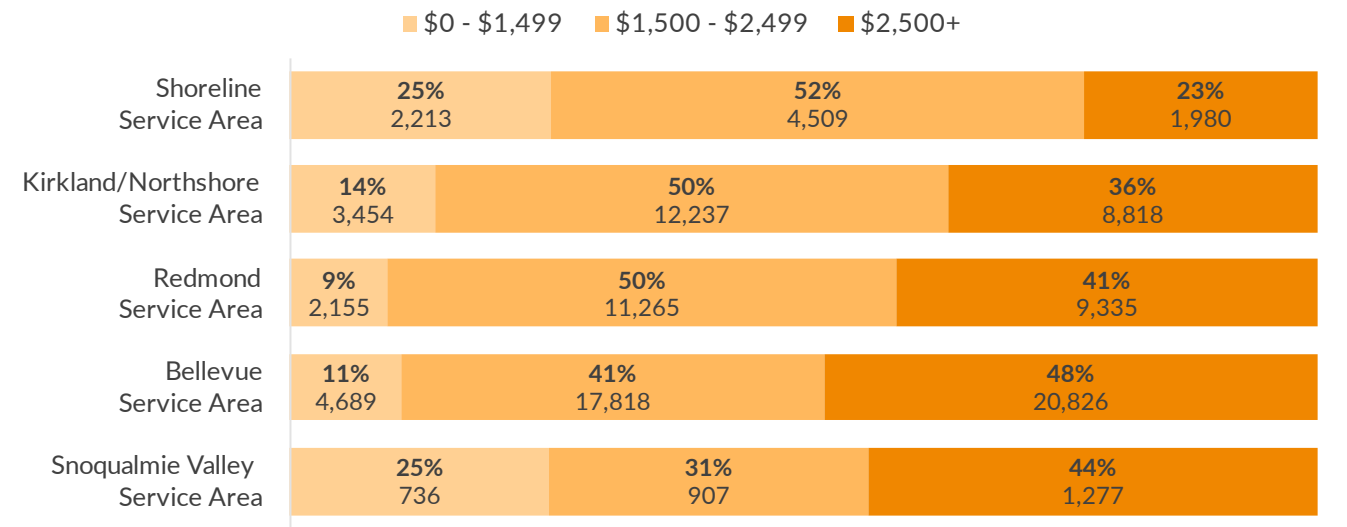
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table DP04, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Exhibit 19 shows the median gross rent for rental units from 2017 to 2023. Rents rose most sharply between 2020 and 2022. Since then, the pace of increases has slowed in the Bellevue, Redmond, and Shoreline service areas, while rents in the Snoqualmie Valley service area have declined. In contrast, the Kirkland/Northshore Service Area continues to see steady rent growth into 2023.

Between 2023 and 2025, rental trends across East and North King County have been shaped by both market shifts and broader economic factors. In cities like Bellevue, Redmond, and Kirkland, rent growth has remained positive but more moderate compared to the rapid increases earlier in the decade. This stabilization has been driven in part by a wave of new apartment construction completed in 2022 and 2023, which expanded supply and eased some pressure on prices. However, as new development has slowed significantly since then, some anticipate that rent prices may increase again in the years to come as demand increases without concurrent increases in housing supply (Santos, 2025).

Exhibit 19. Median Gross Rent for Rental Units Over Time, 2017 – 2023
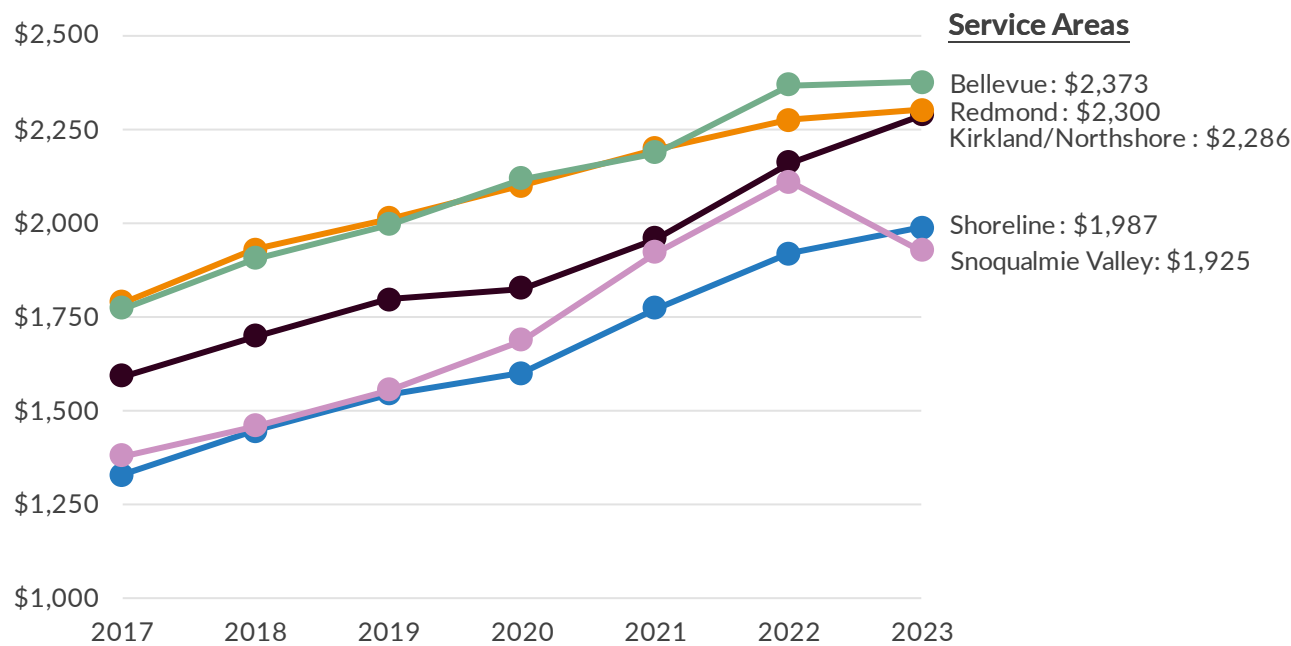
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table DP04, 2013-2023; BERK, 2025.

Exhibit 20 through **Exhibit 23** present data on housing cost burden. HUD deems housing to be affordable if a household spends no more than 30% of its gross income on housing costs (rent plus basic utilities or gross monthly owner costs). Households are cost-burdened if they spend more than 30% of their income towards housing costs. When households spend a large share of their income on housing, they may have insufficient resources for other essential needs. The inability to access affordable housing does not just affect where people live, it impacts their ability to pay for food, utilities, transportation, healthcare, and other daily expenses. Households allocating more than 50% of their income towards housing costs are considered severely cost-burdened. Being severely cost-burdened leaves households with only half their income to cover

all other expenses, making it challenging to meet all their basic needs and vulnerable to financial crisis due to an unexpected expense.

Exhibit 20 shows the cost-burdened status of households in each service area, by tenure. In all service areas, households that rent their housing are more likely to be moderately or severely cost-burdened than households that own their housing. Households in the Shoreline Service Area (54%) and the Snoqualmie Valley Service Area (43%) have the highest rates of renter households that are moderately or severely cost-burdened, followed closely by the Kirkland Service Area (42%). Cost-burdened status for homeowners ranges between 18% in the Redmond Service Area to 25% in the Shoreline Service Area.

Exhibit 20. Households by Cost-burdened Status by Tenure, 2021
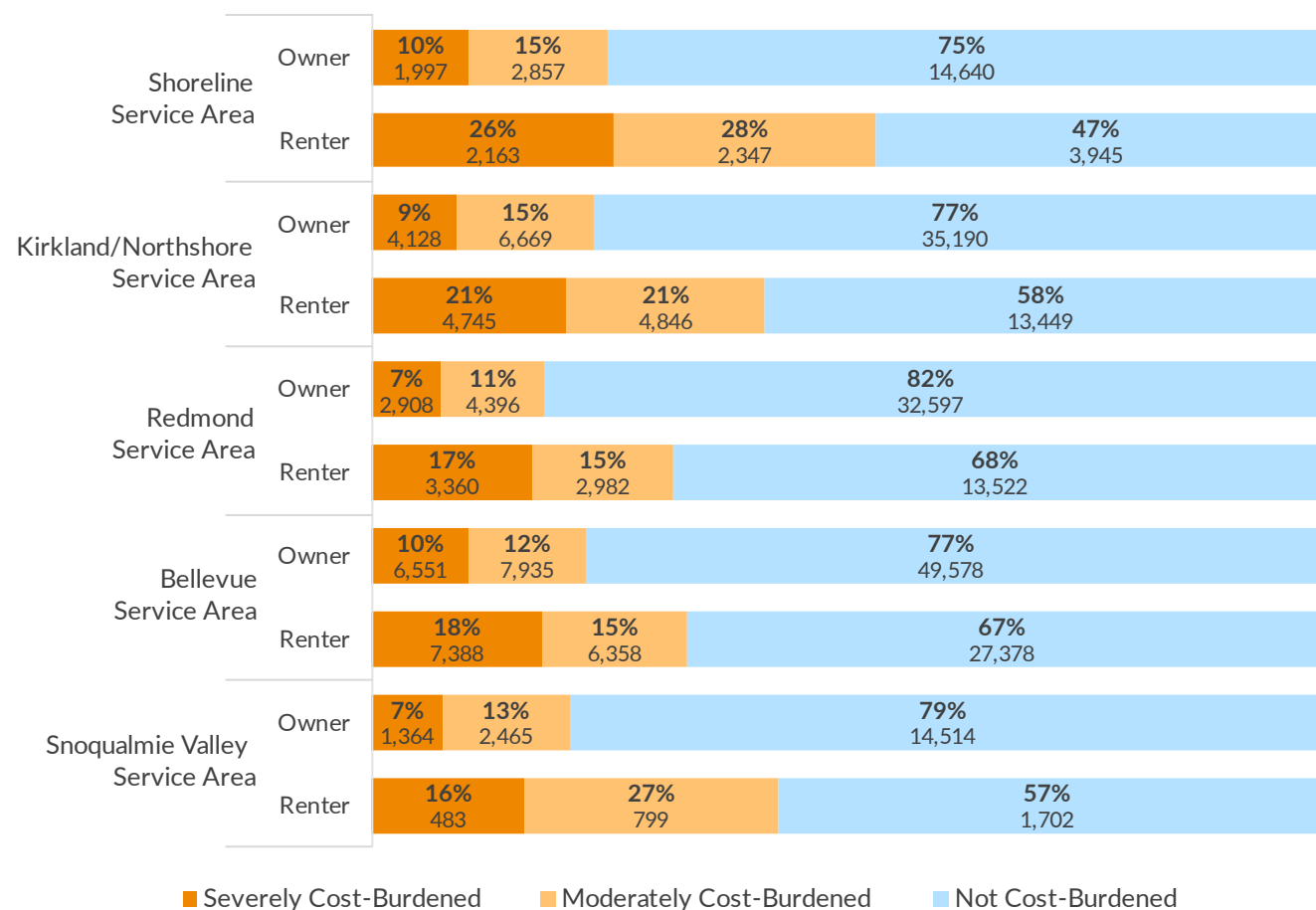
- ■ Severely Cost-Burdened
- ■ Moderately Cost-Burdened
- ■ Not Cost-Burdened

Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Consolidated Housing Affordability Strategy, 2017-2021; BERK, 2025.

Exhibit 21 illustrates how this burden disproportionately affects lower-income households, indicating an inadequate supply of affordable housing options for a significant portion of the population. Most households (61%) with incomes between 50 and 80% AMI are moderately or severely cost-burdened, and three-quarters of households with incomes between 30 and 50% AMI are moderately or severely cost-burdened.

Exhibit 21. Households by Cost-burdened Status and Income, Needs Assessment Area, 2021
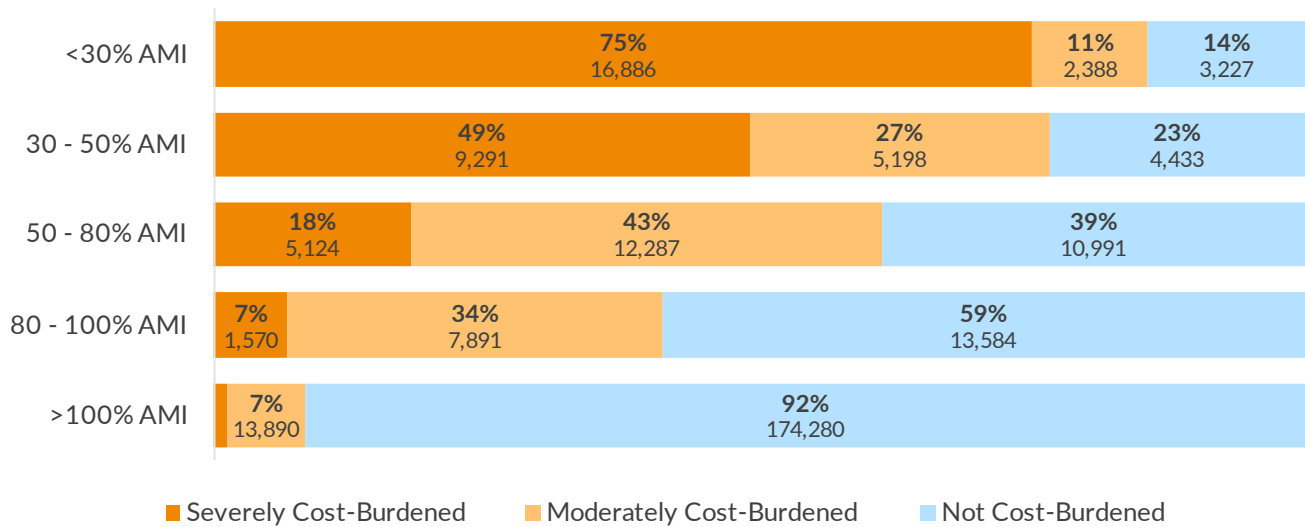
Income Level	Severely Cost-Burdened	Moderately Cost-Burdened	Not Cost-Burdened
<30% AMI	75% / 16,886	11% / 2,388	14% / 3,227
30 - 50% AMI	49% / 9,291	27% / 5,198	23% / 4,433
50 - 80% AMI	18% / 5,124	43% / 12,287	39% / 10,991
80 - 100% AMI	7% / 1,570	34% / 7,891	59% / 13,584
>100% AMI	7% / 13,890		92% / 174,280

■ Severely Cost-Burdened ■ Moderately Cost-Burdened ■ Not Cost-Burdened

Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Consolidated Housing Affordability Strategy, 2017-2021; BERK, 2025.

Exhibit 22 presents the household cost-burdened status by race. Black, Pacific Islander, and Hispanic/Latino households experience higher rates of cost-burden, reflecting long-standing disparities rooted in discriminatory housing policies such as redlining, exclusionary zoning, and unequal access to lending and homeownership supports. These structural barriers have contributed to persistent racial gaps in homeownership, housing stability, and housing affordability.

Exhibit 22. Households by Cost-burdened Status by Race, Needs Assessment Area, 2021

Race	Severely Cost-Burdened	Moderately Cost-Burdened	Not Cost-Burdened
Asian Alone	9% / 5,922	12% / 7,347	79% / 50,092
White Alone	13% / 23,839	15% / 28,738	72% / 136,259
Multiple Races	14% / 1,615	16% / 1,835	69% / 7,749
American Indian/ Alaska Native Alone	18% / 85	15% / 68	67% / 312
Hispanic/Latino	17% / 2,344	20% / 2,695	63% / 8,694
Pacific Islander Alone	10% / 44	27% / 114	62% / 263
Black Alone	23% / 1,217	18% / 925	59% / 3,139

■ Severely Cost-Burdened ■ Moderately Cost-Burdened ■ Not Cost-Burdened

Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Consolidated Housing Affordability Strategy, 2017-2021; BERK, 2025.

More than 80% of Hopelink's clients are renters. **Exhibit 23** shows the cost-burdened status of renters in the Hopelink Needs Assessment Area. As with all households (see **Exhibit 21**), the share of cost-burdened renters decreases as household income increases. Notably for renters, almost 20% of households with incomes less than 30% AMI are not cost burdened, suggesting that rental assistance programs such as housing vouchers or Section 8 are helping some of the lowest-income households afford their housing. However, the majority of households (74%) with incomes less than 30% AMI are severely cost burdened, as well as the majority of renters with incomes 30 to 50% AMI (59%).

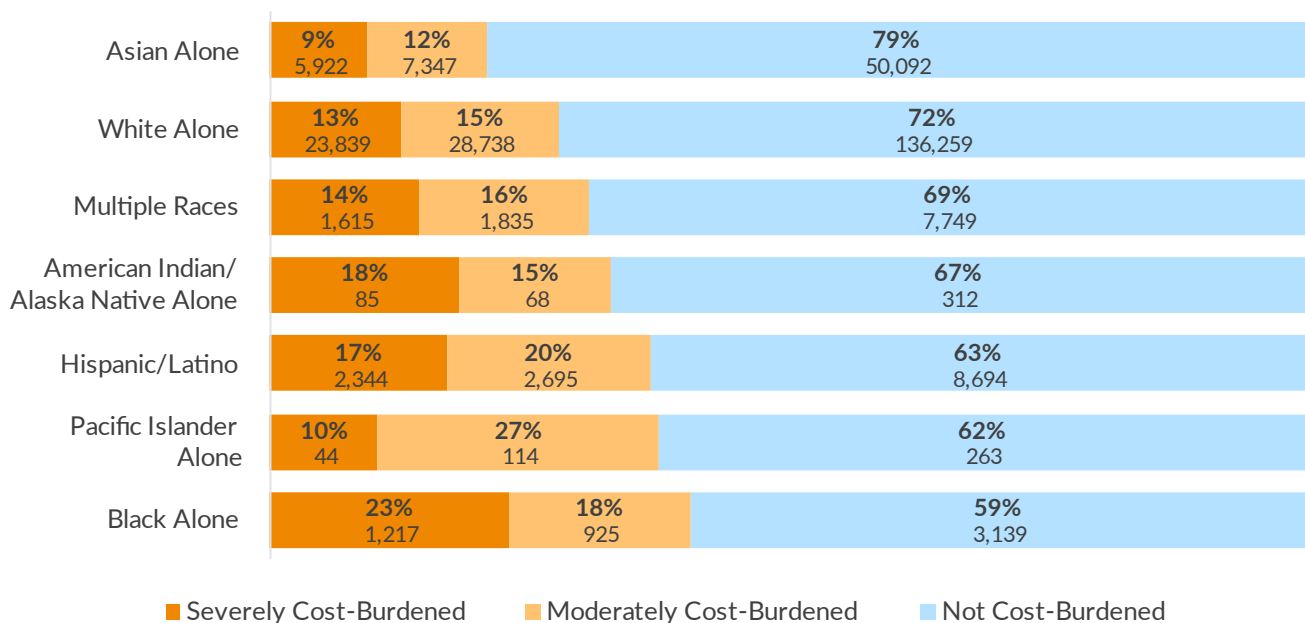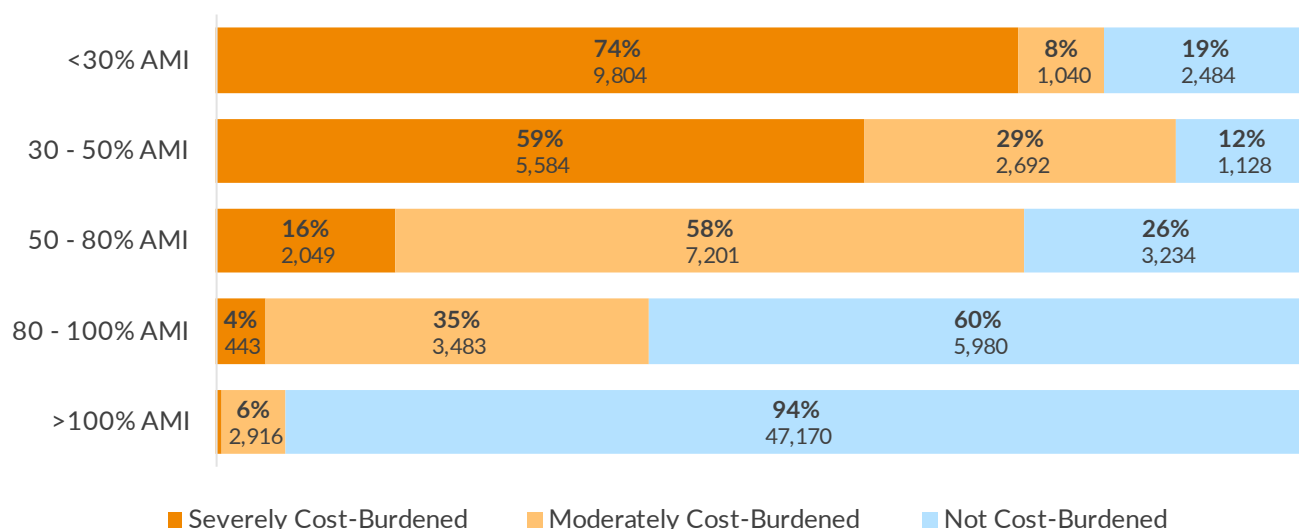**Exhibit 23. Renter Households by Cost-burdened Status and Income, Needs Assessment Area, 2021**

Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Consolidated Housing Affordability Strategy, 2017-2021; BERK, 2025.

Housing Conditions

In addition to cost burden, many households face challenges related to the quality of their housing. HUD collects self-reported data on housing condition factors, including:

- Lack of complete kitchen facilities
- Lack of complete plumbing facilities
- Overcrowding (more than one person per room)

HUD considers a household to have a housing problem if it experiences any of the above conditions. **Exhibit 24** shows the share of households in each service area experiencing one or more of these housing unit problems. At least one-quarter of households in all service areas are facing one or more of these challenges.

Exhibit 24. Households by Housing Condition, 2021

	One or More Housing Unit Problems	No Housing Unit Problems
Shoreline Service Area	35% / 9,815	65% / 18,205
Kirkland/Northshore Service Area	32% / 22,004	68% / 47,070
Redmond Service Area	25% / 15,229	75% / 44,585
Bellevue Service Area	29% / 30,925	71% / 74,330
Snoqualmie Valley Service Area	25% / 5,415	75% / 15,900

■ One or More Housing Unit Problems   ■ No Housing Unit Problems

Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Consolidated Housing Affordability Strategy, 2017-2021; BERK, 2025.

Homelessness

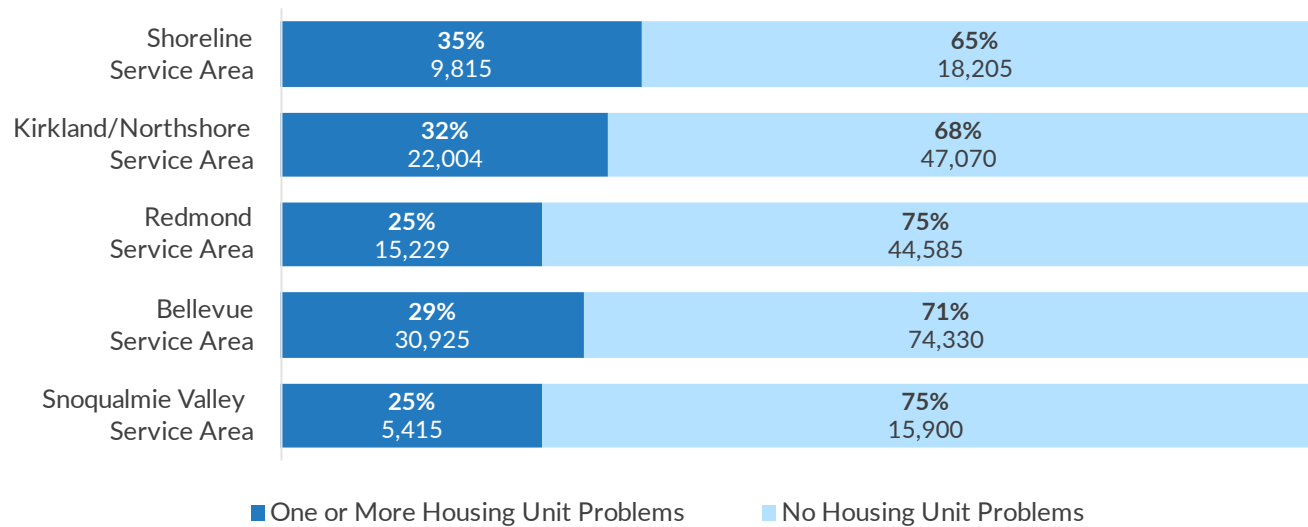The available homelessness count data is not granular enough to examine specifically for the Hopelink Needs Assessment Area. Instead, we can look at counts for the entire county. The King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA) conducts an annual point-in-time (PIT) count of homelessness. The PIT offers a snapshot of the number of people experiencing homelessness in emergency shelters, transitional housing, those sleeping outside, and in other places not meant for human habitation. Even with the assistance of homeless providers and advocates, as a non-intrusive, visual count of homeless individuals that occurs on one night, the PIT likely undercounts homeless individuals.

Exhibit 25 shows unsheltered population estimates by race and ethnicity. White and Asian individuals are underrepresented among those experiencing homelessness, while Hispanic, multiracial, Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander individuals are overrepresented.

Exhibit 25. Unsheltered Estimates by Race & Ethnicity, King County, 2024
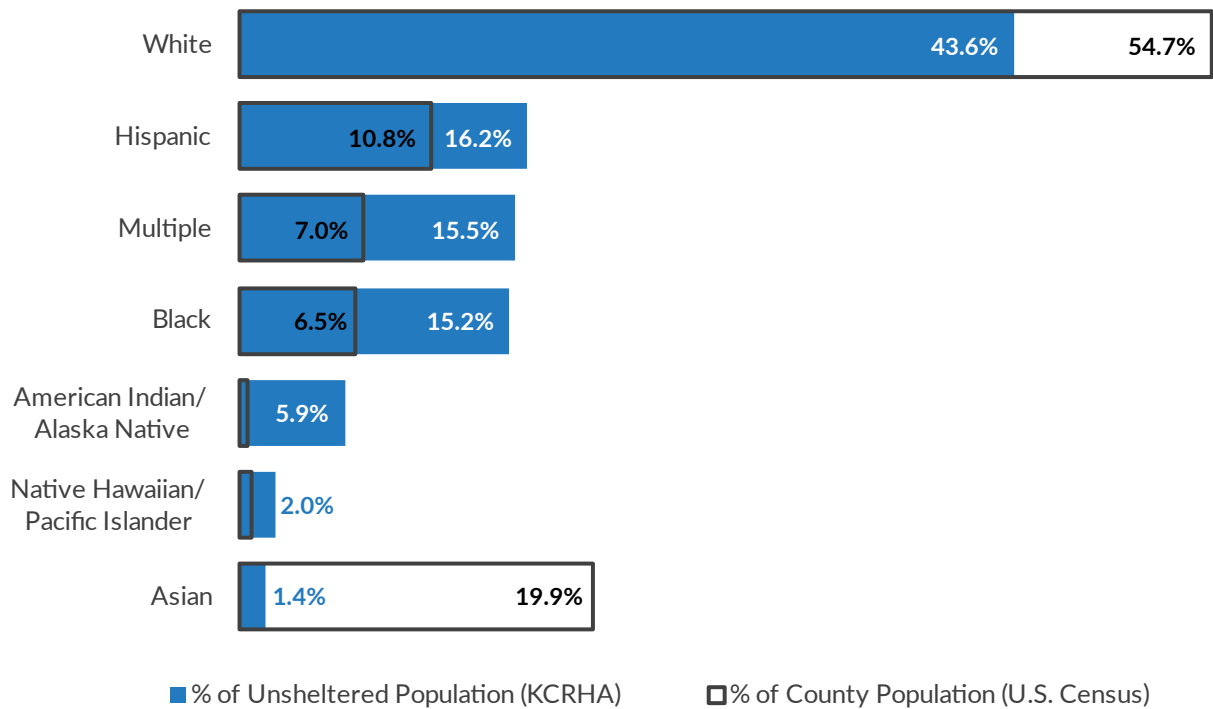
Race & Ethnicity	% of Unsheltered Population (KCRHA)	% of County Population (U.S. Census)
White	43.6%	54.7%
Hispanic	16.2%	10.8%
Multiple	15.5%	7.0%
Black	15.2%	6.5%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	5.9%	
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	2.0%	
Asian	1.4%	19.9%

■ % of Unsheltered Population (KCRHA) ☐ % of County Population (U.S. Census)

Sources: King County Regional Homeless Authority, Point-in-Time Report, 2024; BERK, 2025.

Exhibit 26 shows unsheltered estimates by gender identity in King County. Men make up a much greater proportion of people experiencing homelessness. This disparity reflects broader systemic issues, including men's overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, higher school dropout rates, and differences in access to social support networks (Moses & Janosko, 2019).

Exhibit 26. Unsheltered Estimates by Gender Identity, King County, 2024
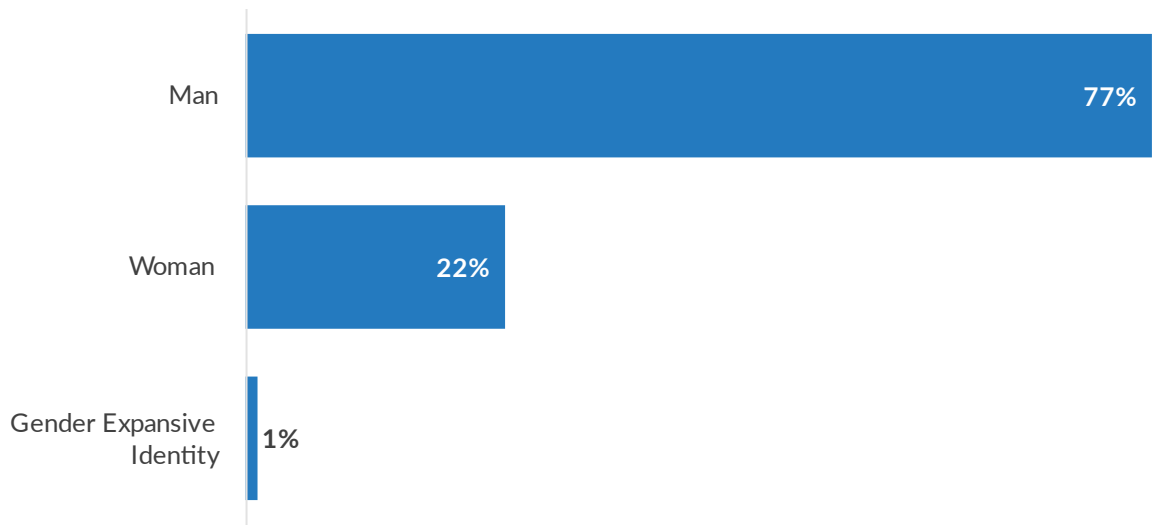
| Gender Identity	%
Man	77%
Woman	22%
Gender Expansive Identity	1%

Sources: King County Regional Homeless Authority, Point-in-Time Report, 2024; BERK, 2025.

Exhibit 27 shows unsheltered estimates by age in King County. Almost a third of people experiencing homelessness (31.1%) are between the ages of 35 to 44, while nearly one-fourth (23.6%) are between the ages of 45 to 54. People aged 50 or older are the fastest-growing group of people experiencing homelessness in the United States (Stevens, 2024).

Exhibit 27. Unsheltered Estimates by Age, King County, 2024

| 3.5% | 22.1% | 31.1% | 23.6% | 17.2% | 2.5% |

■ 18 - 24   ■ 25 - 34   ■ 35 - 44   ■ 45 - 54   ■ 55 - 64   ■ 65+
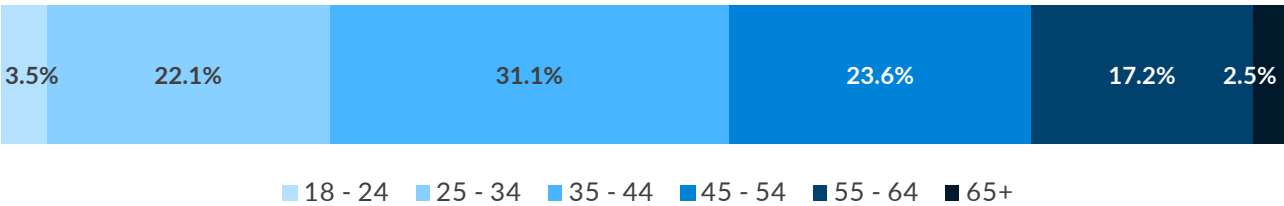
Sources: King County Regional Homeless Authority, Point-in-Time Report, 2024; BERK, 2025.

Public schools report on students who are experiencing homelessness, as defined in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The Act defines homeless children and youth as those lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including those living in cars, parks, motels, shelters, or doubled up with others due to economic hardship. **Exhibit 28** shows the number of students experiencing homelessness, aggregated based on the schools located within the Hopelink service area. The Bellevue and Redmond Service Areas have the highest numbers of students experiencing homelessness, likely due to having the two largest service area populations. Despite being the service area with the lowest total population, the Snoqualmie Valley Service Area has the third-largest student population experiencing homelessness, at 238. The Kirkland/Northshore Service Area has the lowest reported student population experiencing homelessness, despite having the third-largest population.

Exhibit 28. Students Experiencing Homelessness, 2024

Service Area	Students
Shoreline Service Area	185
Kirkland/Northshore Service Area	92
Redmond Service Area	498
Bellevue Service Area	712
Snoqualmie Valley Service Area	238
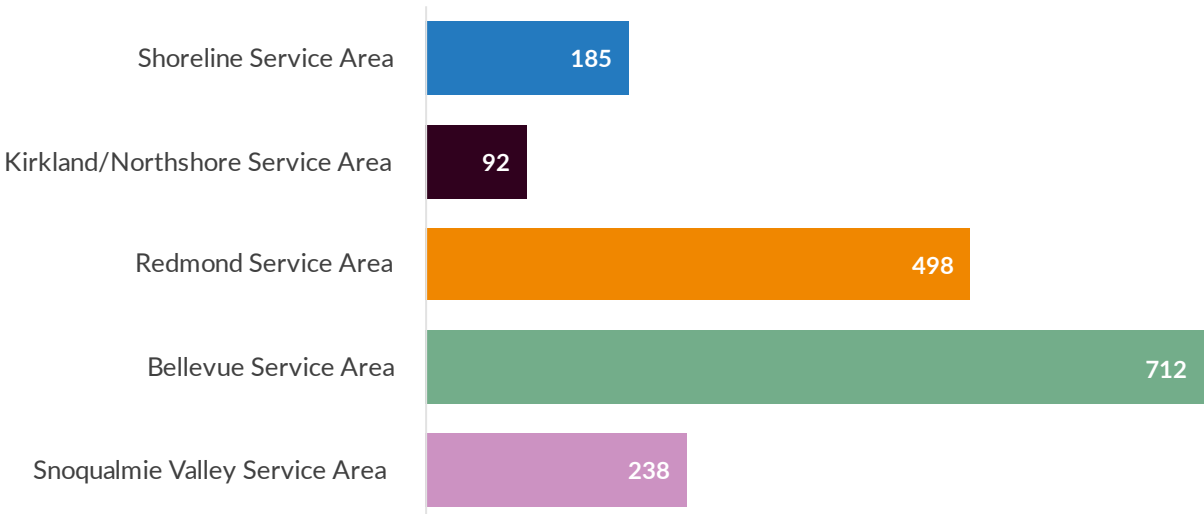
Sources: Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2024; BERK, 2025.

There are several factors that can lead to an individual or family becoming homeless. **Exhibit 29** shows self-reported contributing conditions to homelessness by gender identity. Men were more likely to report losing a job as an event or condition that contributed to their experience of homelessness (50.4% vs 27.7% of women). Women and individuals with a gender-expansive identity were more likely than men to report eviction as a reason (18.2% for women, 13.8% for individuals with a gender-expansive identity, and 6.5% for men). Notably, individuals of a gender expansive identity were more likely to report mental health issues, medical problems, or arguments with friends, family, or roommates as contributing factors.

"People need help before they get the eviction notice — not after." - Interviewee

Exhibit 29. Contributing Conditions to Homelessness by Gender Identity, King County, 2024

	Man	Woman	Gender Expansive Identity
Lost job	50.4%	27.7%	
Eviction	6.5%	18.2%	13.8%
Other	6.0%	6.9%	
Could not afford rent increase	4.9%	3.5%	
Incarceration or detention	5.0%	2.0%	
Mental health issues	3.4%	6.2%	26.2%
Divorce/separation/break-up	4.1%	4.1%	
Illness/medical problem	3.3%	5.9%	18.5%
Argument with family/friend/roommate	2.8%	5.0%	16.9%
Death of a parent/spouse/child	3.3%	3.5%	
Family/friend's housing wouldn't let me stay	3.1%	3.7%	6.2%

Sources: King County Regional Homeless Authority, Point-in-Time Report, 2024; BERK, 2025.

Exhibit 30 shows the factors contributing to homelessness by race and ethnicity. Across all racial groups, losing a job was reported more often than other reasons, with the highest frequency reported among those who identify as Hispanic (66.1%) or Asian (57.8%). Eviction was cited at a high rate for those who identify as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (24%). American Indian or Alaska Native people reported arguments with household members as second to job loss (12.8%), while Asian people reported difficulty securing housing with friends or family as the second leading contributing condition (17%).

Exhibit 30. Contributing Conditions to Homelessness by Race & Ethnicity, King County, 2024

	White	Hispanic	Multiple	Black	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Other	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Asian
Lost job	40.1%	66.1%	40.8%	39.1%	38.5%	45.7%	31.2%	57.8%
Eviction	10.5%	8.1%	10.4%	8.9%	4.4%		24.0%	9.6%
Other	7.5%	6.4%	6.7%	3.9%		15.0%	4.8%	
Incarceration or detention	5.1%	1.2%	2.8%	8.1%	2.9%	5.1%		
Mental health issues	5.2%	1.6%	5.4%	4.7%	2.2%	5.4%	1.2%	
Could not afford rent increase	4.0%	0.8%	5.9%	4.5%	8.4%		9.2%	6.7%
Divorce/separation/break-up	5.3%	1.9%	5.4%	0.8%	8.4%	2.2%	4.8%	
Illness/medical problem	3.2%	2.8%	6.3%	4.4%	8.6%	2.2%	4.8%	
Argument with family/friend/roommate	4.3%	2.7%	0.8%	1.6%	12.8%		6.0%	
Death of a parent/spouse/child	4.4%	1.5%	1.9%	5.2%		9.3%		
Family/friend's housing wouldn't let me stay	2.0%	3.7%	2.9%	4.3%	4.2%	3.8%	9.2%	17.0%

Sources: King County Regional Homeless Authority, Point-in-Time Report, 2024; BERK, 2025.

Exhibit 31 shows the estimated bed availability for individuals experiencing homelessness, by location. KCRHA uses unique reporting geographies: North King County, East King County, and Snoqualmie Valley align most closely with the Hopelink Needs Assessment Area. East King County has the lowest ratio of people per bed (1.9), and North King County has the highest ratio of people per bed (9.6), with limited beds available for individuals experiencing homelessness. According to this point-in-time count, 3,925 people were experiencing homelessness in the approximate Needs Assessment Area.

Exhibit 31. Estimated Availability of Beds per Person Experiencing Homelessness, 2024

	Shelter Beds Available	Sheltered People	Unsheltered People	Total People	People per Bed
North King County (Shoreline, Kirkland, Northshore, etc.)	198	170	1,730	1,900	9.6
East King County (Redmond, Bellevue, Mercer Island, etc.)	1,018	796	1,114	1,910	1.9
Snoqualmie Valley (Snoqualmie, Carnation, Duvall, etc.)	38	66	49	115	3.0
Total	**1,254**	**1,032**	**2,893**	**3,925**	**3.1**

Sources: King County Regional Homelessness Authority, Point-in-Time Report, 2024; BERK, 2025.

Transportation

Transportation access remains a critical determinant of economic opportunity and quality of life, particularly in a region where jobs, services, and affordable housing are often dispersed. Across the Needs Assessment Area, transportation barriers continue to disproportionately affect low-income residents, people with disabilities, older adults, and those living in less urbanized areas such as the Snoqualmie Valley.

Insufficient transit options inhibit access to vital services.

Services and employment opportunities are not equitably distributed across the Needs Assessment Area. As the cost of living increases, the financial and logistical burden of travel become increasingly demanding. While much of King County and the Needs Assessment Area is designed to support personal car travel between economic and residential centers, those unable to drive – due to financial cost, disability, age, or documented status – rely on public transit as their primary means of transportation. However, gaps in existing scheduled transit services offered by King County Metro and Sound Transit leave many underserved and isolated.

To identify gaps in areas served by public transit, this analysis defines the Transit Access Area as any area within a quarter mile of an operating transit stop. While some individuals may be willing to walk or travel further to reach a stop, for many, even a quarter mile can be prohibitive. For some residents, age or disability can further complicate access to transit services, as it often requires standing for extended periods and making transfers. For those with limited English-speaking ability, the complexity of the transit network can make navigating it confusing and overwhelming.

Exhibit 32 and Exhibit 33 present the Transit Access Area within King County with Hopelink Food Markets and medical facilities. Examining the Transit Access Area across the Needs Assessment Area reveals underserved areas outside the urban core, particularly in the east and south. Residents on the eastern sides of the Kirkland/Northshore and Redmond Service Areas and the southern side of the Bellevue Service Area have low or no access to scheduled transit. The Snoqualmie Valley Service Area has the sparsest coverage, with most transit access concentrated near Snoqualmie and less in Duvall, Carnation, and the spaces in between.

As shown in Exhibit 32, Hopelink's Food Program operates five food markets: Shoreline, Kirkland, Redmond, Bellevue, and Carnation. While these food markets are well-placed along

the transit network, residents outside of the Transit Access Area may find transportation a barrier to access. Even for those with transit access, the limited hours of operation at food markets can make the logistics of using public transit to access these services especially challenging, among other factors. Clients may also be limited in how often they are allowed to visit the food markets, compelling them to stock up large amounts when they can visit. They are then burdened to carry this heavy load while walking to their stop or home, waiting for the bus, and making transfers.

Exhibit 32. Transit Access and Hopelink Food Markets, 2025

Hopelink Food Market
DART Service Area
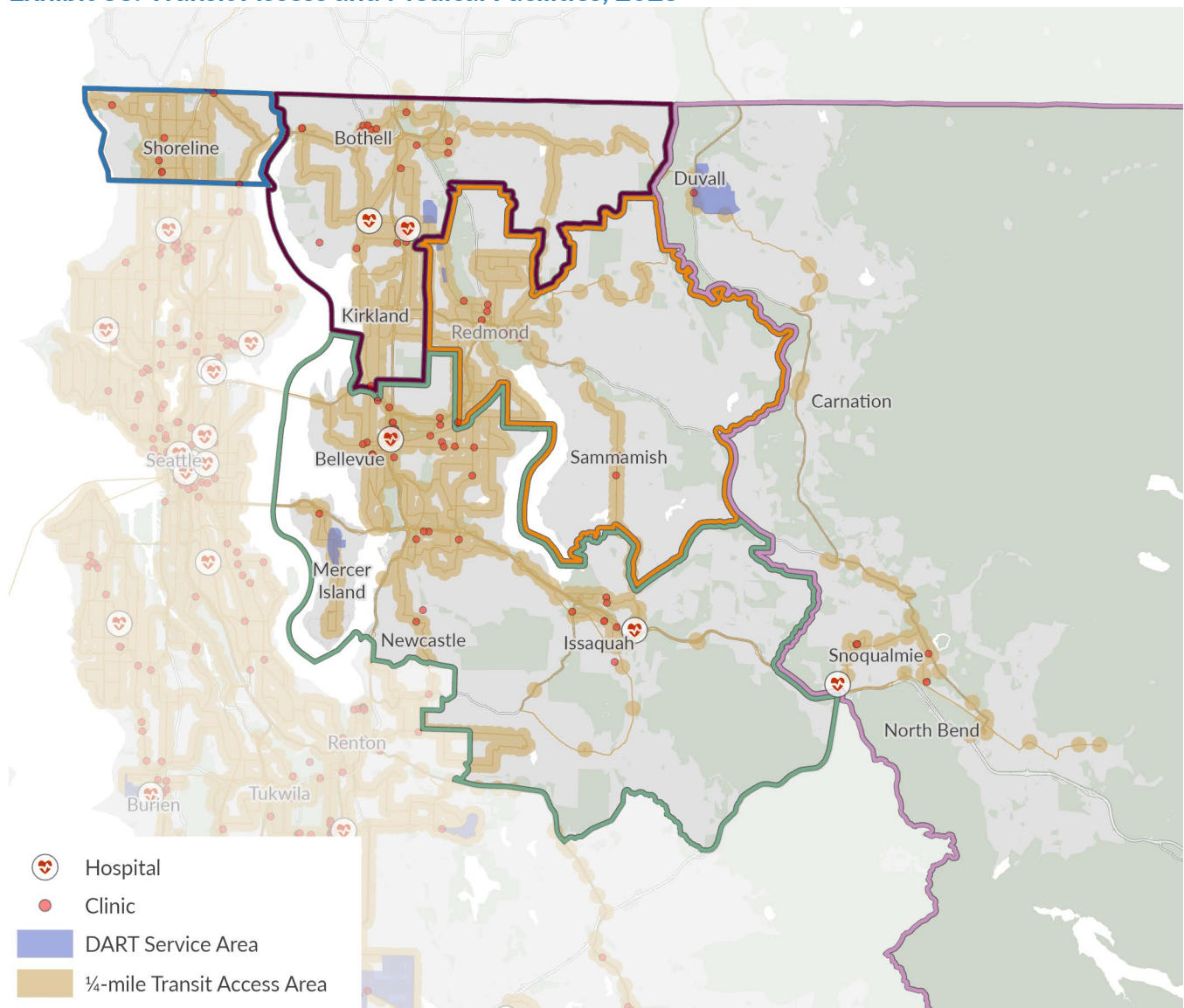¼-mile Transit Access Area
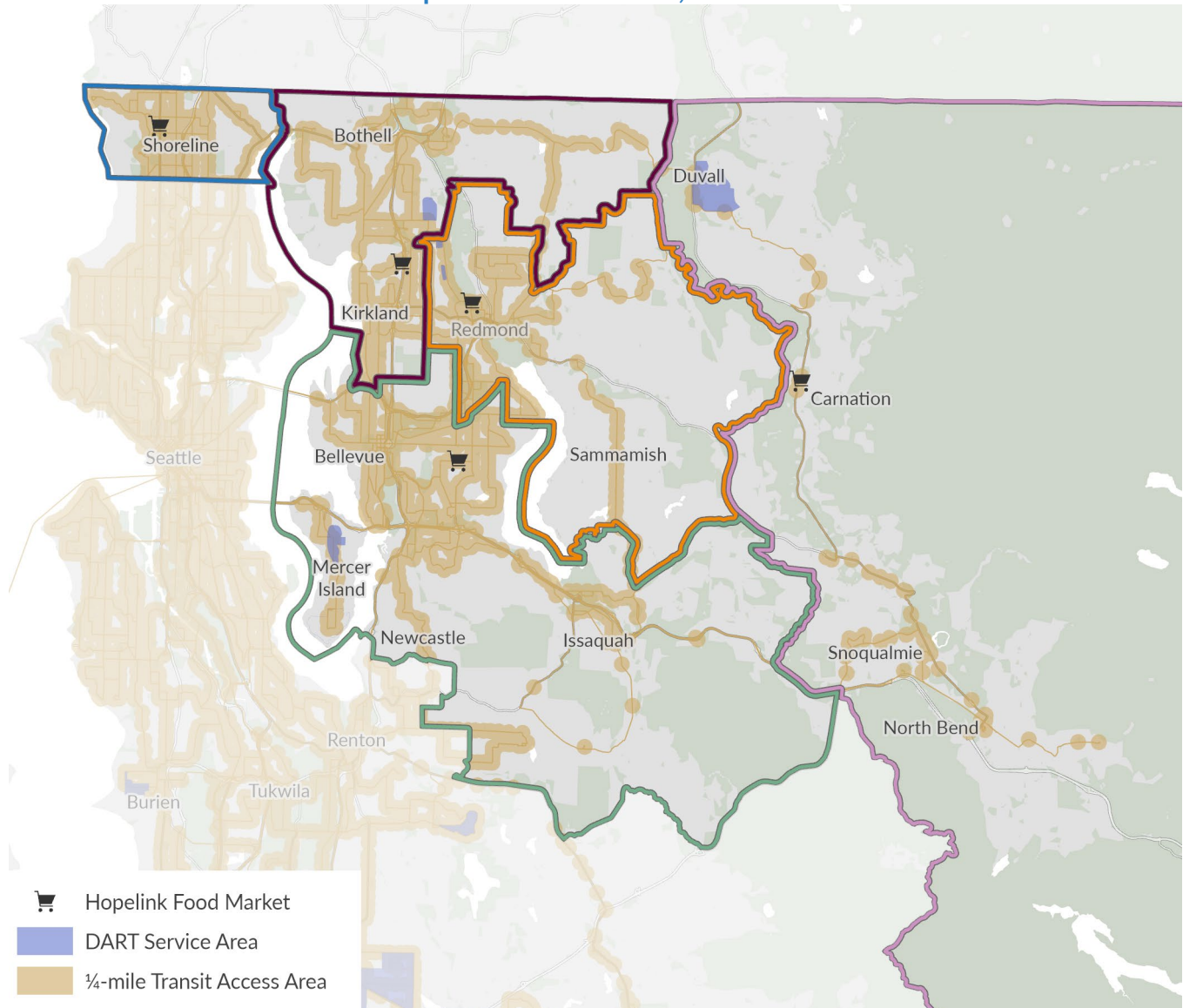
Sources: King County Metro, 2025; Sound Transit 2025; Hopelink, 2025; BERK, 2025.

Exhibit 33 maps the Transit Access Area with medical facilities and reveals a similar pattern. Residents on the eastern side of the Kirkland/Northshore and Redmond Service Areas, as well as the southern side of the Bellevue Service Area, have limited access to necessary medical

facilities. In the Snoqualmie Valley Service Area, limited transit access combined with the absence of medical facilities in the area between Duvall and Snoqualmie means residents often need to seek alternative means of transportation to healthcare services, which are frequently located farther from their homes. The nature of one's medical needs also affects the accessibility of transit services. Those receiving treatments or procedures that influence mobility, such as dialysis or chemotherapy, may find it difficult or impossible to navigate the transit network.

Exhibit 33. Transit Access and Medical Facilities, 2025

Sources: King County Metro, 2025; Sound Transit, 2025; Washington State Department of Health, 2024; OpenStreetMap, 2025; BERK, 2025.

Even those living within the Transit Access Area or who rely on the public transportation system face challenges in navigating the transit network, creating barriers to accessing services. In 2024, a Regional Mobility Survey for Priority Populations was conducted across Snohomish, King, and Pierce Counties with support from local public transit authorities. This survey asked a

sample of county populations about their experiences with transportation and mobility, and published the results broken down by demographic groups that are especially vulnerable. **Exhibit 34** presents the rate of populations in King County who sometimes or often have to skip going somewhere due to transportation problems. A wide disparity exists between income groups, with 56% of low-income residents reporting transportation challenges compared to 35% of not-low-income residents. Another particularly vulnerable population is individuals with disabilities, with 55% having to skip going somewhere due to transportation problems, versus 36% of individuals without disabilities.

Exhibit 34. Sometimes or Often Skipping Going Somewhere Due to Transportation Problems, King County, 2024

Group	Percent
Individuals with Disabilites	55%
No Disability	36%
Not English-Speaking Household	35%
English-Speaking Household	39%
Low-Income	56%
Not Low-Income	35%
BIPOC	43%
White Alone	31%
65 and Over	27%
Under 65	40%
Rural	42%
Urban	41%
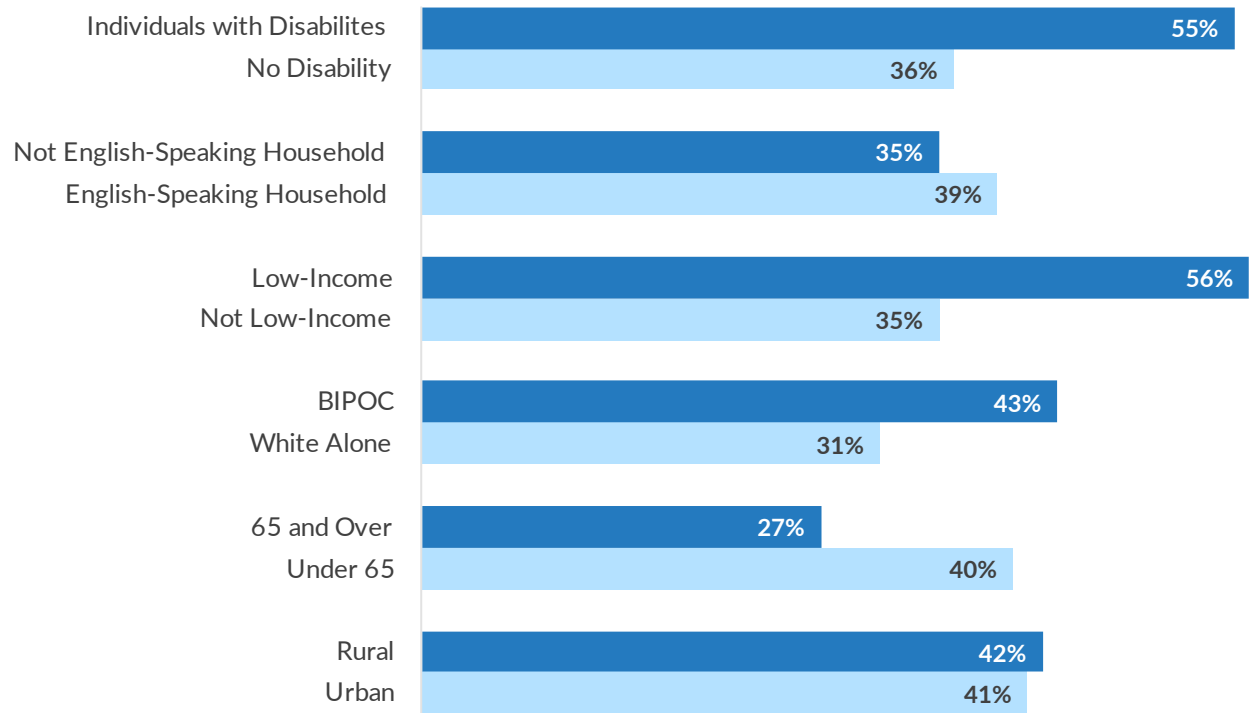
Sources: ReconMR, 2024; BERK, 2025.

The Regional Mobility Survey also asked participants if problems with transportation had required them to reschedule appointments in the previous 30 days. These problems could include buses being late or too infrequent, expensive car damage, lack of vehicle access, or other reasons that may prevent someone from reaching their destination on time. The shares of each population that had to reschedule appointments due to transportation issues are shown in **Exhibit 35.** Similar patterns are apparent as in **Exhibit 34**, but disparities are deeper and more pronounced. More than half (57%) of individuals with disabilities have had to reschedule an appointment due to transportation problems, significantly higher than the 25% of those with no disability. Almost half (49%) of low-income residents have had to reschedule appointments compared to just 25% of not-low-income individuals. This demonstrates that transit access is

not solely a function of geographic location and proximity, but also influenced by factors such as income, disability status, language, and other variables.

Exhibit 35. Sometimes or Often Having to Reschedule an Appointment Due to Transportation Problems, King County, 2024
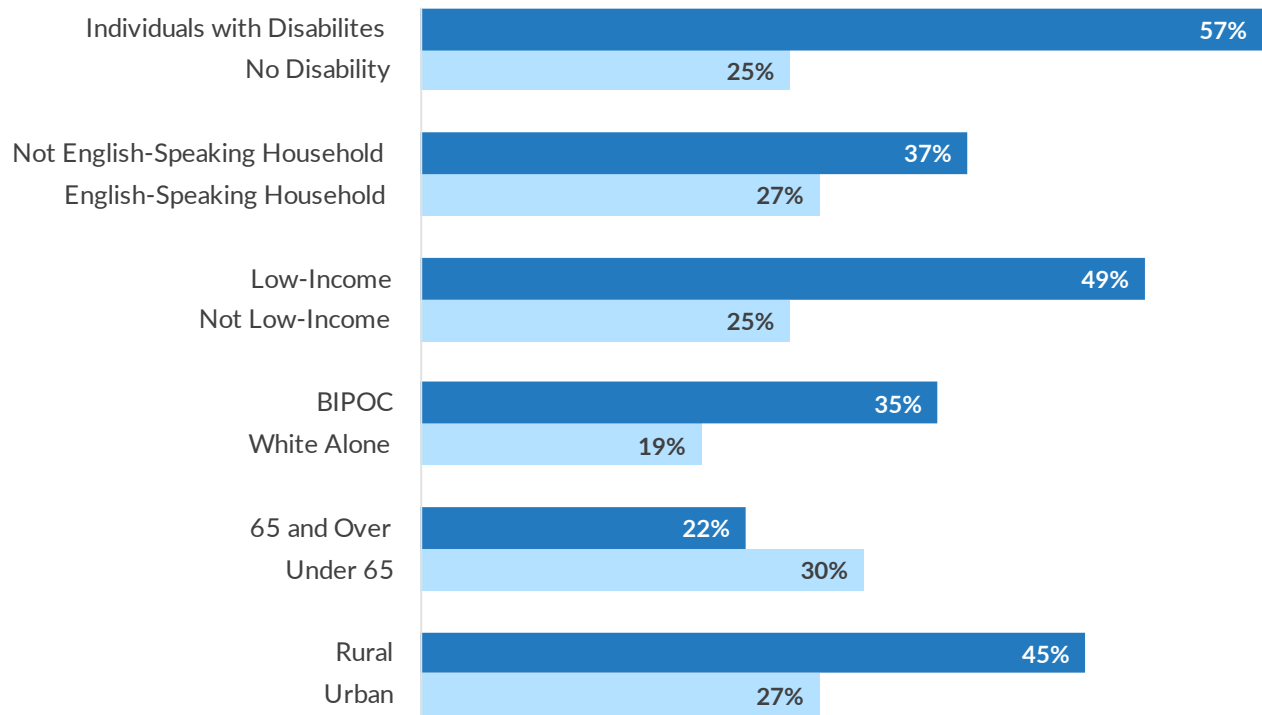
Sources: ReconMR, 2024; BERK, 2025.

Long distances to services and employment deepen reliance on personal car travel and increase transportation costs.

Like healthcare and food services, employment opportunities are not equitably dispersed across the Needs Assessment Area. **Exhibit 36** maps the Employment Access Index score by census tract across the region. The Index is a measure created by the Center of Neighborhood Technology and represents the accessibility to jobs for residents within that census tract. A higher score means greater access to employment opportunities, which also reflects access to services to support daily living. Unsurprisingly, most employment opportunities are concentrated on the western side of the Needs Assessment Area and in urban areas such as the cities of Redmond, Bellevue, and Kirkland. The places with lower access to employment include the eastern portions of the Kirkland/Northshore, Redmond, and Bellevue Service Areas. The Snoqualmie Valley Service Area has low employment access across its entire area, with slightly

higher levels of access in the Snoqualmie and Duvall areas. Comparing this map with the Transit Access Area maps shown in **Exhibit 33** reveals a clear correlation: those with lower access to transit also have lower access to jobs, further exacerbating their reliance on personal car travel.

Exhibit 36. Employment Access Index Score, 2022
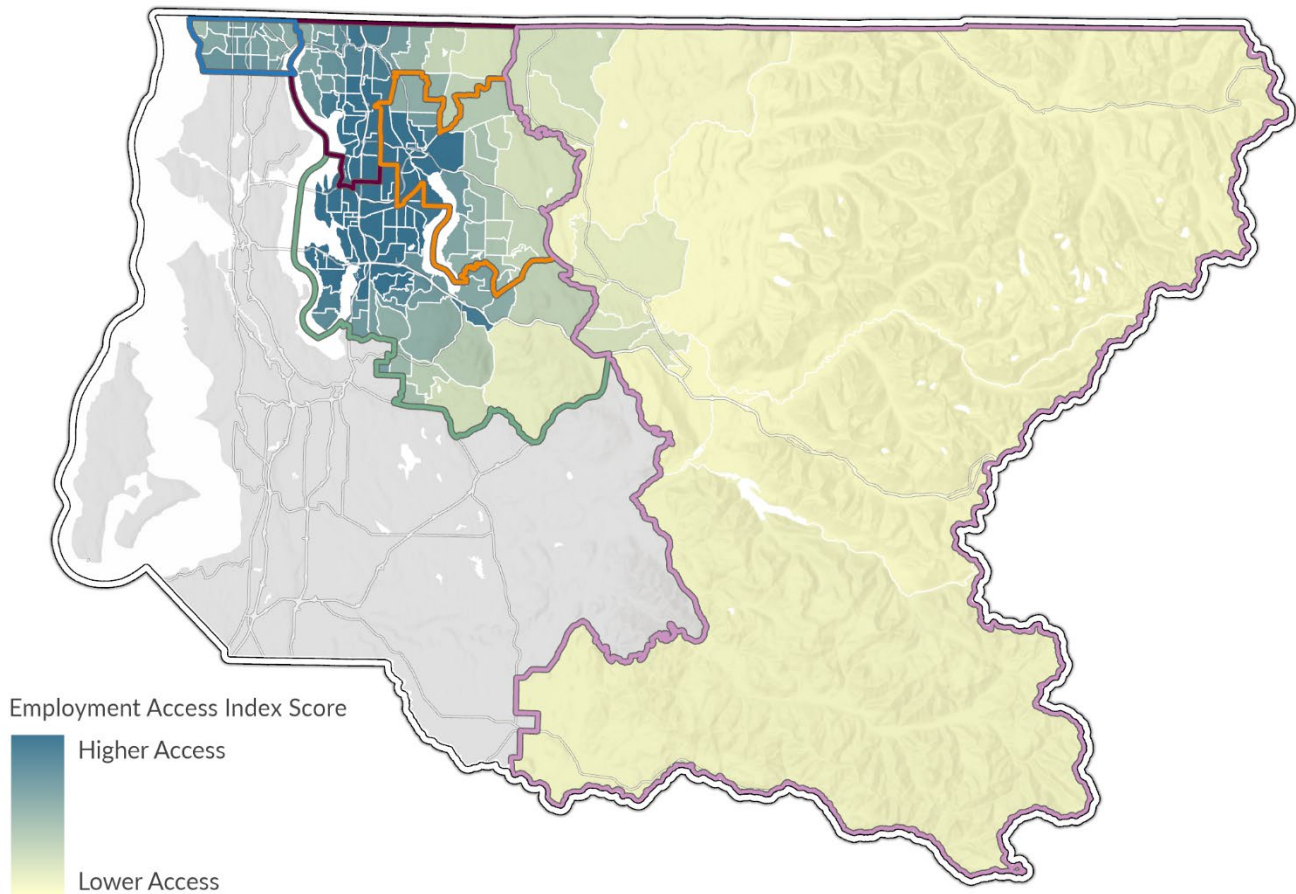
Sources: Center for Neighborhood Technology, 2022; BERK, 2025.

This pattern persists as we examine commute times for residents within the Needs Assessment Area. **Exhibit 37** maps the percentage of low-income workers per census tract with commute times of 30 minutes or longer. As expected, those who live in areas with lower employment access have longer commutes. Notable areas with higher rates of low-income workers with a commute longer than 30 minutes include areas at the north end of Lake Washington in the Shoreline Service Area and places near Bothell and northern Kirkland in the Kirkland/Northshore Service Area. In the Bellevue Service Area, areas of concern are located near Newcastle and northern Issaquah. In contrast, the Redmond Service Area experiences higher levels to the north of Sammamish and east of Redmond. The Snoqualmie Valley Service area has higher percentages of low-income workers with long commutes between Duvall and Carnation, as well as outside of North Bend. More time spent commuting means higher

transportation costs and less time to access services, spend with family, or participate in one's community.

Exhibit 37. Low-Income Workers with a Commute of 30 Minutes or Longer, 2021
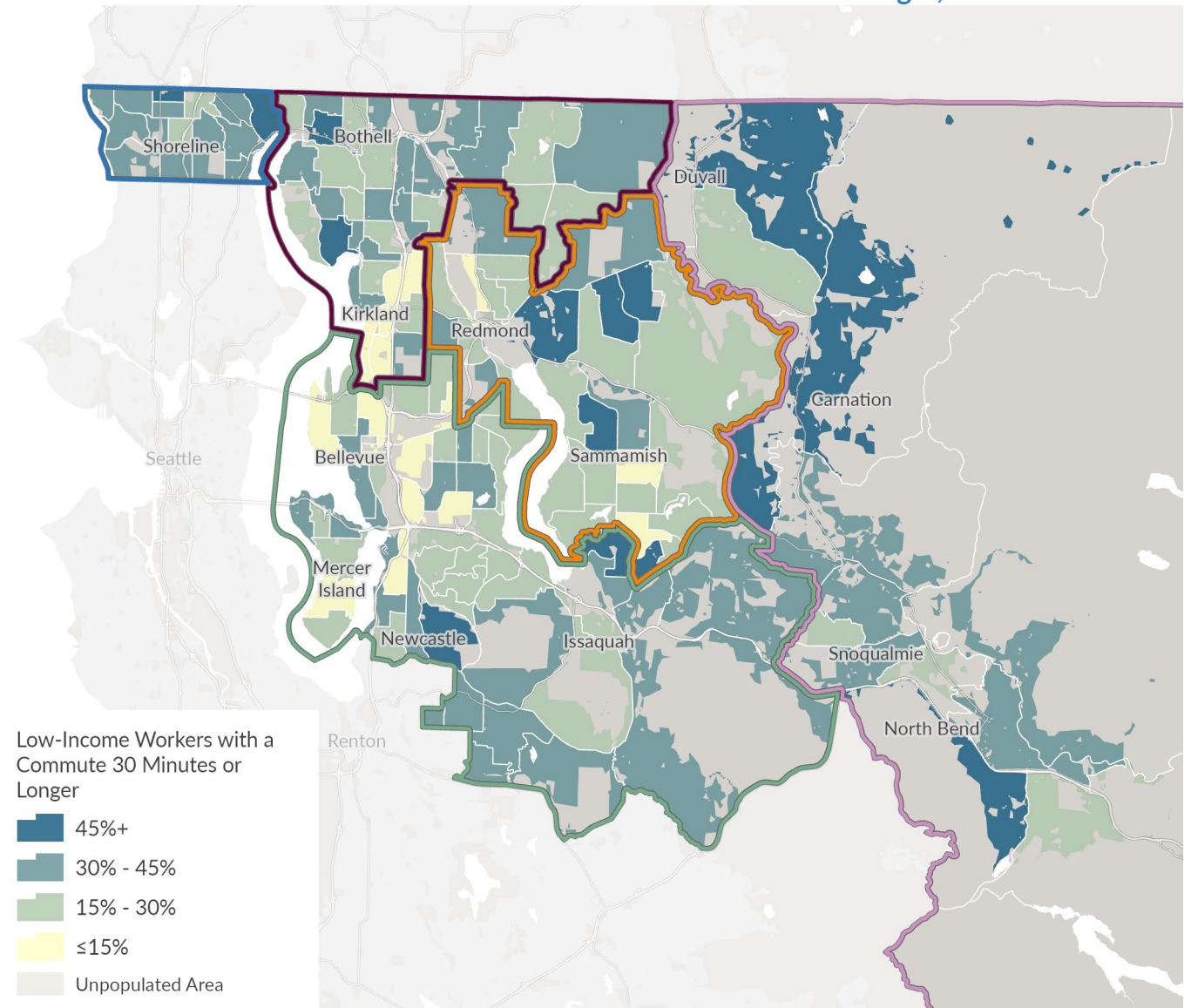
Note: Due to data availability, low-income workers are defined for this map as those earning less than $50,000, corresponding to approximately 300% FPL.
Sources: U.S. Department of Transportation, Census Transportation Planning Products, Table B103202, 2017-2021; BERK, 2025.

Exhibit 38 illustrates the variation in commute methods across the Needs Assessment Area. Driving alone remains the dominant mode across all geographies, with the highest number in the Bellevue Service Area (70,219 commuters) and the lowest in the Snoqualmie Valley Service Area (19,072). Other commute options, such as carpooling, public transit, biking, and walking, play a lesser role in current systems but are used with greater frequency in more urban areas. The Bellevue and Redmond Service Areas, for example, show the highest use of public transit

(6,814 and 3,870 commuters, respectively) and walking (4,752 and 1,683), reflecting more robust transit infrastructure and pedestrian-oriented development. In contrast, the Snoqualmie Valley Service Area reports extremely low use of transit (412 riders) and walking (351), underscoring the limited mobility option. Notably, remote work represents a large share of commute patterns and is the second most common mode after driving alone in all five service areas: over 45,000 Bellevue residents and nearly 30,000 Redmond residents report working from home. While remote work has reduced some reliance on commuting, it is not an accessible option for many low-wage and frontline workers, further highlighting the inequities embedded in transportation access and employment flexibility.

Exhibit 38. Means of Transportation to Work, Workers 16 and Older, by Hopelink Service Area, 2023

|	Driving Alone	Carpooling	Public Transit	Bicycle	Walking	Work From Home
Shoreline Service Area	22,125	2,864	2,530	300	749	9,127
Kirkland/Northshore Service Area	53,346	5,266	3,910	409	1,901	28,213
Redmond Service Area	41,902	4,829	3,870	443	1,683	29,544
Bellevue Service Area	70,219	9,217	6,814	551	4,752	45,617
Snoqualmie Valley Service Area	19,072	2,476	412	140	351	8,178
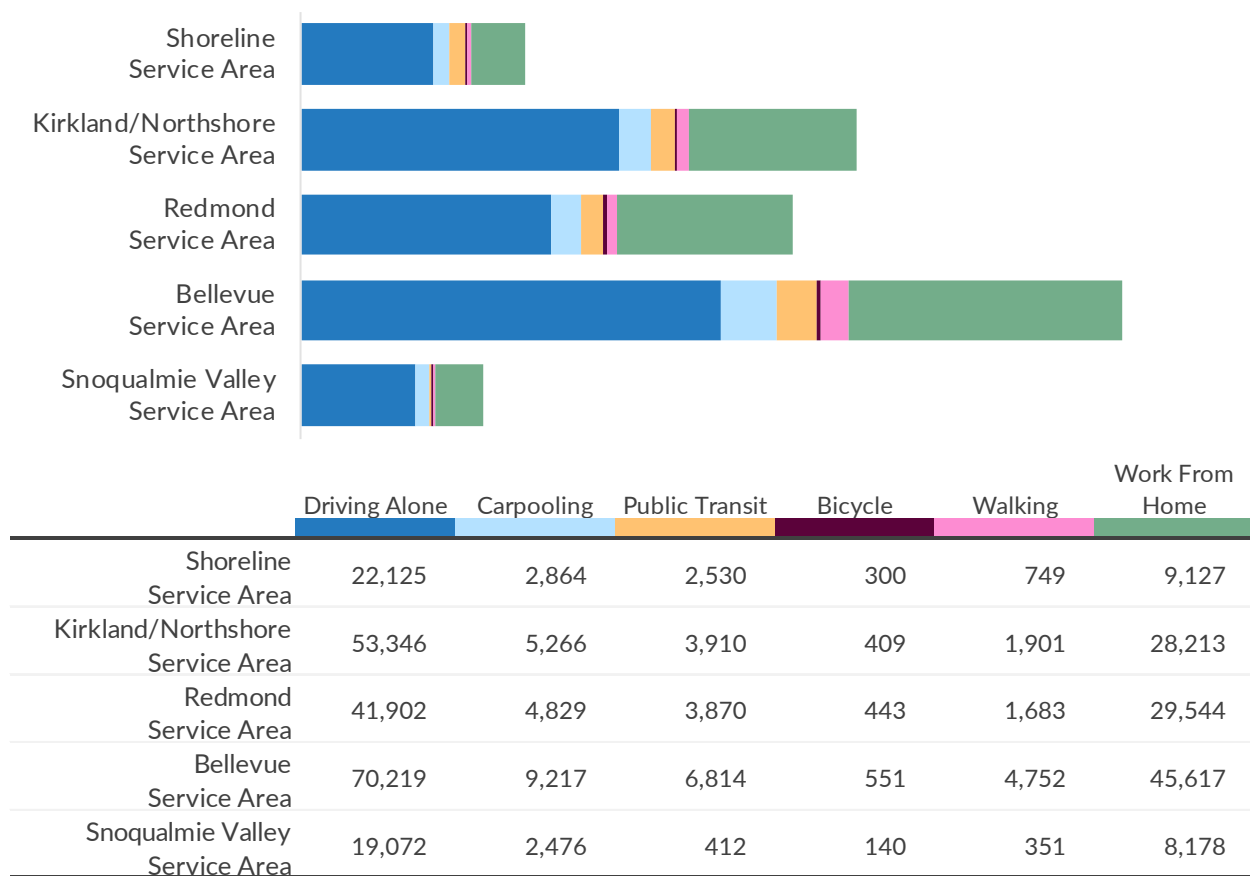
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table B08301, 2013-2023; BERK, 2025

The lack of scheduled public transit and the inequitable distribution of services and employment lead to higher transportation costs for people in rural and underserved areas. **Exhibit 39** shows the percentage of household income spent on transportation for an 80% AMI household for each service area. The Snoqualmie Valley Service Area has the highest average transportation cost burden at 22%, with the Redmond Service Area second at 20%. The Kirkland/Northshore Service Area is just under at 19%, with the Shoreline and Bellevue Service Areas both at 18%.

"People don't say that they'll take the bus when their car breaks down... they'll say they can't get to work."

-Interviewee

Exhibit 39. Average Transportation Costs per Year as a Percent of Income for a Household Making 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI), 2022
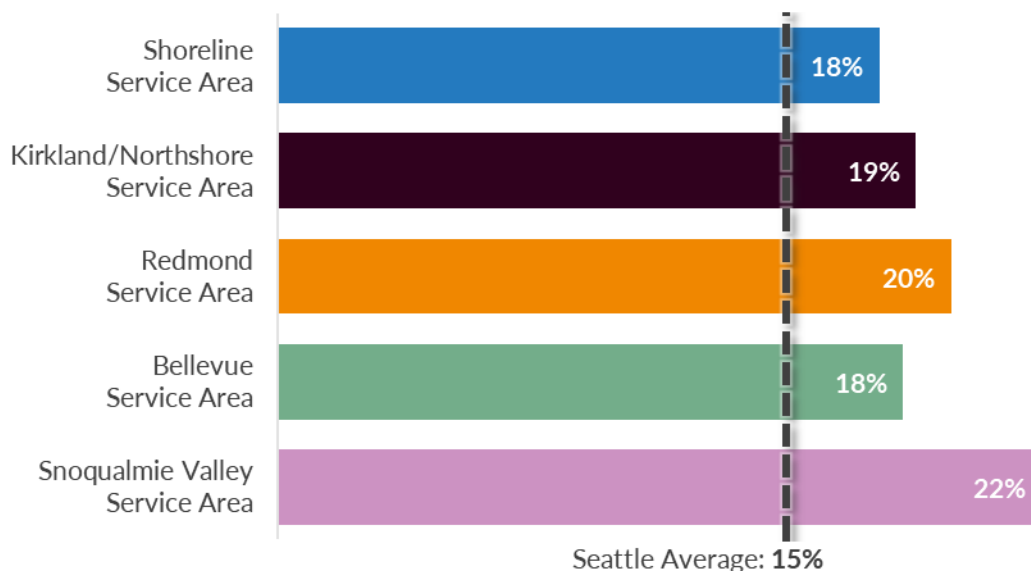
Sources: Center for Neighborhood Technology, 2022; BERK, 2025.

Language ability, age, disability, and income create additional barriers to transportation access and mobility disparities.

While the lack of transportation services greatly impacts those left outside of the Transit Access Area, other variables create additional barriers to mobility and services, even for those within reach of the transit system. People with limited English-speaking ability, disabilities, low-incomes, and/or of an older age can find using the existing transit system challenging. These

individuals often encounter a combination of structural and informational barriers that restrict their ability to connect to employment, services, and community life.

Language barriers create a significant obstacle to transit use. Residents with limited English proficiency may find the transit system confusing or intimidating to navigate, especially when service information is only available in English. A lack of translated communication materials limits awareness of available services and further isolates non-English speakers who may already struggle to connect to community resources. Without accessible information, many residents are excluded from a system that may otherwise be physically within reach.

For Spanish-speaking individuals interviewed by NiSo, an organization using a *Promotores* model for sharing information and resources with neighbors, transportation was a concern for several interviewees. Some expressed a desire to see traffic calming measures and improved intersection safety, as well as enhanced transit routes for more comfortable movement. One participant stated that parking was difficult in many new construction places, making car ownership more challenging. However, for those without access to public transit, car ownership may be their only option for traveling to work and accessing needed services.

Physical access to transit is often the primary barrier for older adults and people living with disabilities. Close and frequent transit access is essential for these groups; however, long walking distances to and between stops, combined with extended wait times, can render the service effectively unusable. A focus group with Mandarin-speaking seniors highlighted transportation challenges, including long wait times for the bus or infrequent service, the lack of a bus stop near the Hopelink facility in Kirkland, and the cancellation of routes and stops. These barriers often push many residents toward relying on car ownership, thereby reducing their access to services and social opportunities. However, for those unable to drive due to age, disability, or financial limitations, the result is increased isolation and reduced access to basic needs.

The design of existing transit services is structured around professional commuting patterns, further complicating these challenges, as it often fails to align with the needs of those who require more flexible, frequent, or local services. The issue is especially pronounced for lower-income residents. With affordable housing increasingly located outside of employment centers, many households are pushed farther into suburban or rural areas. At the same time, residents with lower incomes are disproportionately represented in occupations that involve irregular or late-night schedules, such as food service or healthcare. These are precisely the times when transit service is least available, creating a misalignment between work demands and transit access. The result is a system that does not adequately support those most reliant on it.

Food & Nutrition

Households across the Needs Assessment Area are experiencing rising food costs that intensify existing financial strain from housing and transportation. These pressures are particularly acute for large families, older adults living on fixed incomes, and immigrant or refugee households. Most individuals interviewed by NiSo *Promotores* reported relying on Hopelink's food markets for proper family nutrition. Beyond affordability, community members also report challenges in accessing food that is both culturally appropriate and geographically convenient.

Food affordability challenges mirror broader cost-of-living pressures.

Exhibit 40 illustrates how consumer food prices rose sharply during the COVID-19 pandemic, peaking in 2022 before moderating to pre-pandemic levels of inflation. Despite this stabilization, families continue to report difficulty affording groceries, as the overall cost of housing, transportation, and other essentials remains high.

Exhibit 40. Consumer Price Index, 12 Month Change for All Items and Food, May 2015 – 2025
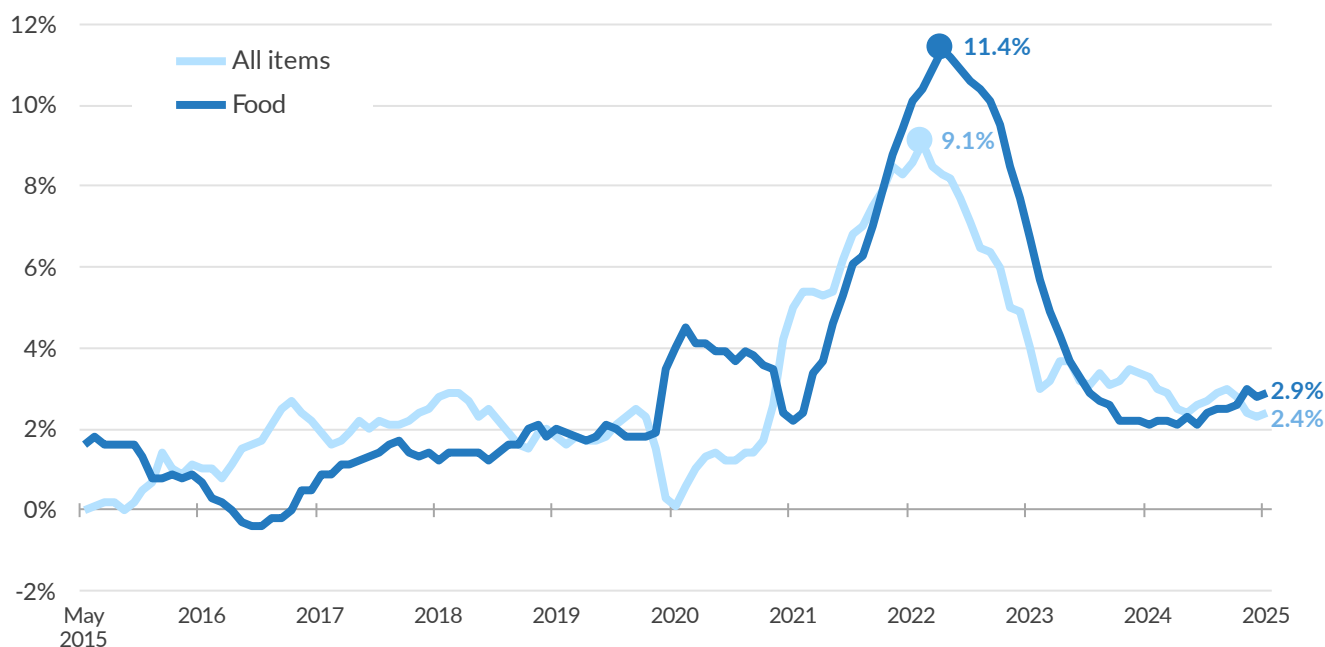
Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2025; BERK 2025

Local data highlight how these increases translate into substantial household burdens. Between 2020 and 2023, the cost of sufficient food for a single adult in East King County rose by 42%. For a household with two adults, an infant, and a preschooler, food costs grew by 78% during the same period (**Exhibit 41**). In 2023, this family type faced an estimated monthly food cost of $1,239, while smaller households, such as those consisting of an 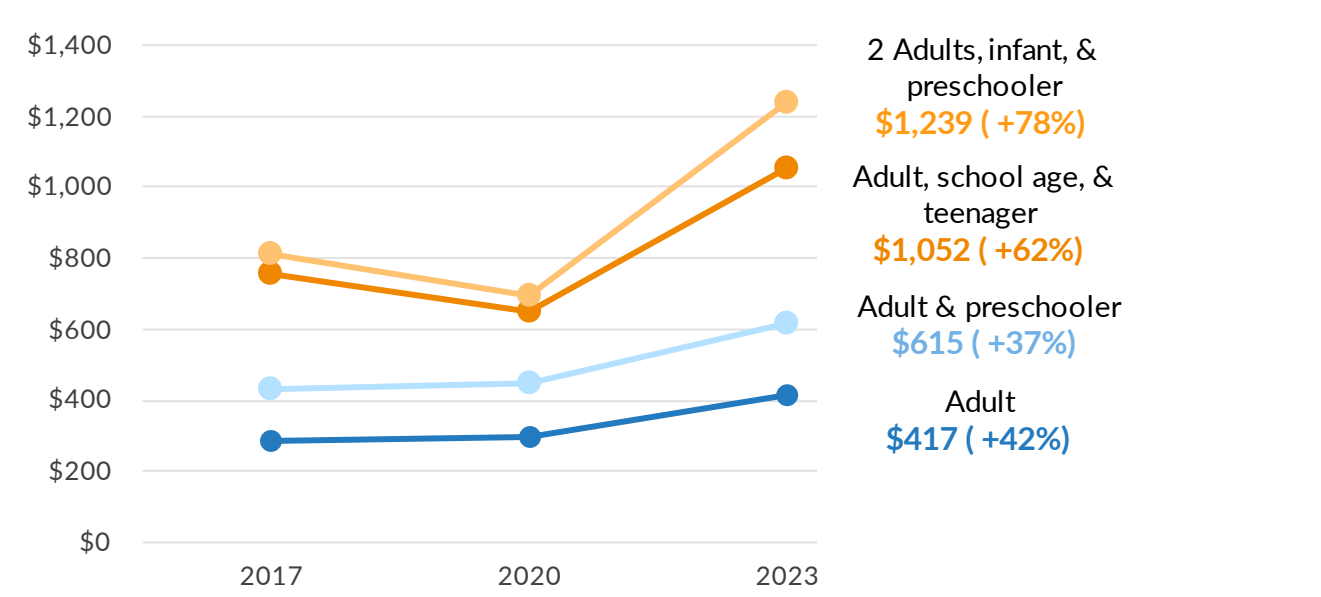adult with a preschooler, required more than $600 per month. These steep increases leave households with fewer resources to cover housing, transportation, and other necessities.

Exhibit 41. East King County Food Costs by Selected Household Types, 2017, 2020, and 2023

2 Adults, infant, & preschooler
$1,239 (+78%)

Adult, school age, & teenager
$1,052 (+62%)

Adult & preschooler
$615 (+37%)

Adult
$417 (+42%)

Sources: University of Washington, Center for Women's Welfare, 2025; BERK, 2025

Moreover, overall federal spending on nutrition assistance decreased by 16% from 2023 to 2024 as COVID-era public health emergency measures, such as the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) program and emergency allotments of additional spending on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), expired (Jones, Todd, & Toossi, July 2025). While it has always been the case that public benefits like SNAP or WIC may not be sufficient or accessible for all households experiencing need, the reduction in benefits disproportionately affects the most vulnerable households. As food costs continue to climb, ensuring access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food remains a core concern for economic stability and public health in the Needs Assessment Area.

> *"Food insecurity is higher than at the peak of the pandemic."*
> *-Interviewee*

Food insecurity is a persistent and rising challenge.

Despite regional prosperity, many households continue to struggle with food insecurity. Data from Feeding America's *Map the Meal Gap* show that the number of residents experiencing food insecurity climbed from 164,250 in 2021 to 254,530 in 2023, a 55% increase in just two years (**Exhibit 42**). The number of adults affected grew by over 70,000, while children experiencing food insecurity rose from 36,830 to 57,020, an increase of more than 50%. Both adult and child food insecurity rates now exceed pre-pandemic levels, reversing temporary improvements documented in 2021. This pattern highlights both the ongoing strain on household resources and the continued unmet need.

Exhibit 42. Food Insecurity in Children & Adults, King County, 2019 – 2023
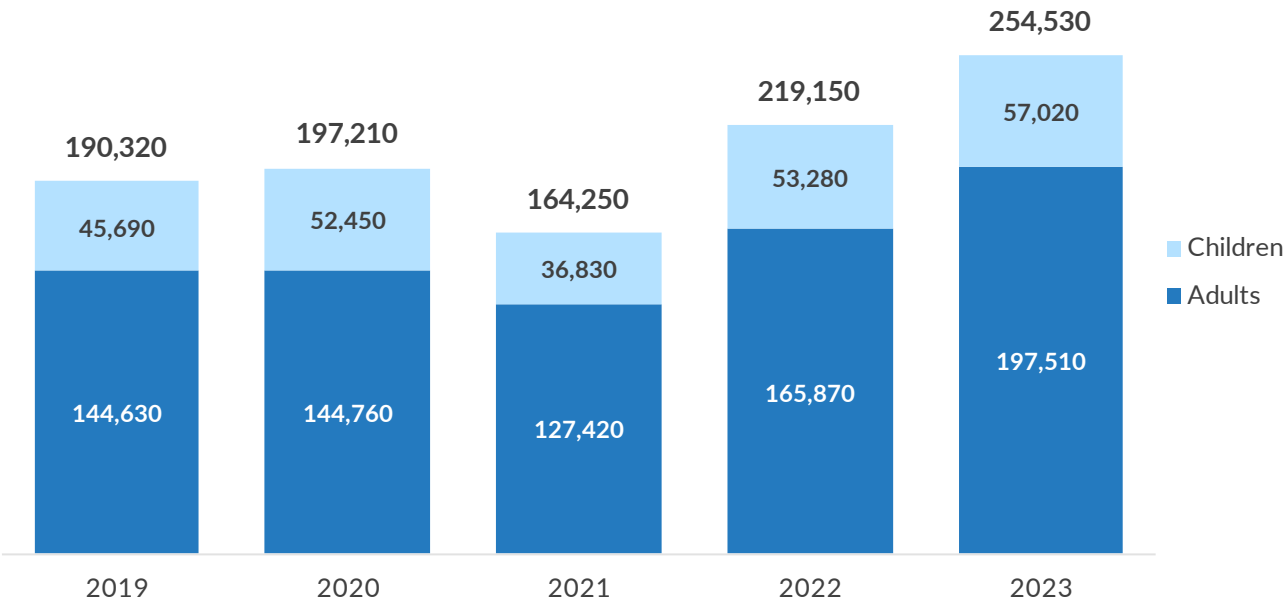
Sources: Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Further, survey data from the King County 2023 Healthy Youth Survey illustrate the lived impact of food insecurity (**Exhibit 43**). When asked how often in the past year they or their families had to cut meal sizes or skip meals due to a lack of money for food, almost 6% of surveyed 8th and 10th grade students reported experiencing this at least once. Specifically, 2.6% said this occurred in some months but not every month, while an additional 2.2% reported experiencing it in one or two months. Although fewer students (1.1%) reported skipping meals almost every month, these numbers represent hundreds of youth and their families in the region facing inconsistent access to food. These experiences can have far-reaching impacts on academic performance, mental health, and long-term well-being. The data underscore that even in

relatively high-income areas, food insecurity remains a pressing issue, especially for families with children.

Exhibit 43. Students Reporting Cutting Meal Sizes or Skipping Meals at Home, Grades 8 & 10, King County, 2023

"How often in the past 12 months did you or your family have to cut meal size or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?"

Almost Every Month	Some Months, but Not Every Month	Only 1-2 Months
1.1%	2.6%	2.2%
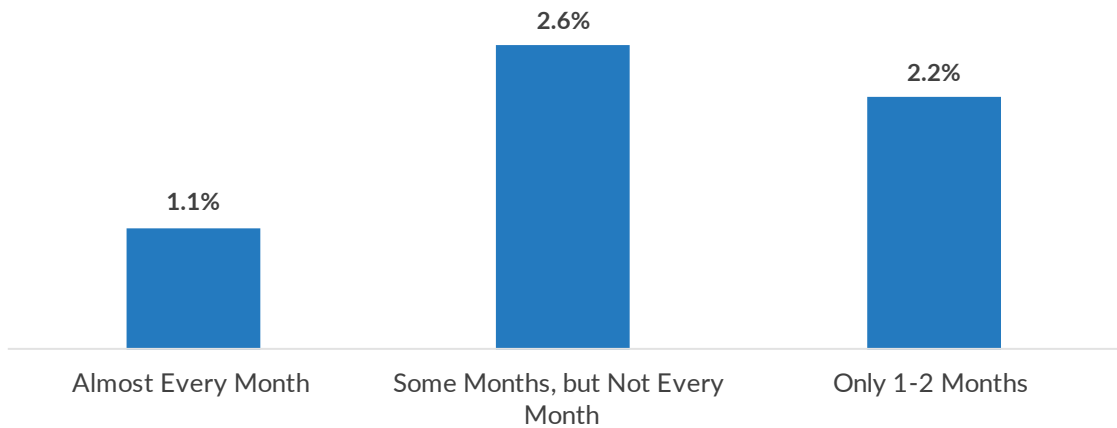
Sources: Healthy Youth Survey, King County, 2023; BERK, 2025.

Federal nutrition assistance programs are not widely utilized.

Federal and local programs, such as SNAP and Basic Food, provide essential support but reach only a fraction of eligible households. SNAP benefits are associated with better health outcomes for children ages 6 to 16, lower suicide rates, and improved cognitive decline in older adults (East, 2020; Rambotti, 2020; Lu, et al., 2022). In 2023, more than 11,000 households in the Needs Assessment Area accessed SNAP benefits to help meet their food needs (**Exhibit 44**). The Bellevue Service Area had the highest number of SNAP households (4,110), while the Redmond Service Area had the highest proportion below FPL (51%). However, SNAP participation covers only 27% of residents below the FPL, leaving nearly three-quarters without this support (**Exhibit 45**).

Exhibit 44. Household SNAP Enrollment and Poverty Status, 2023
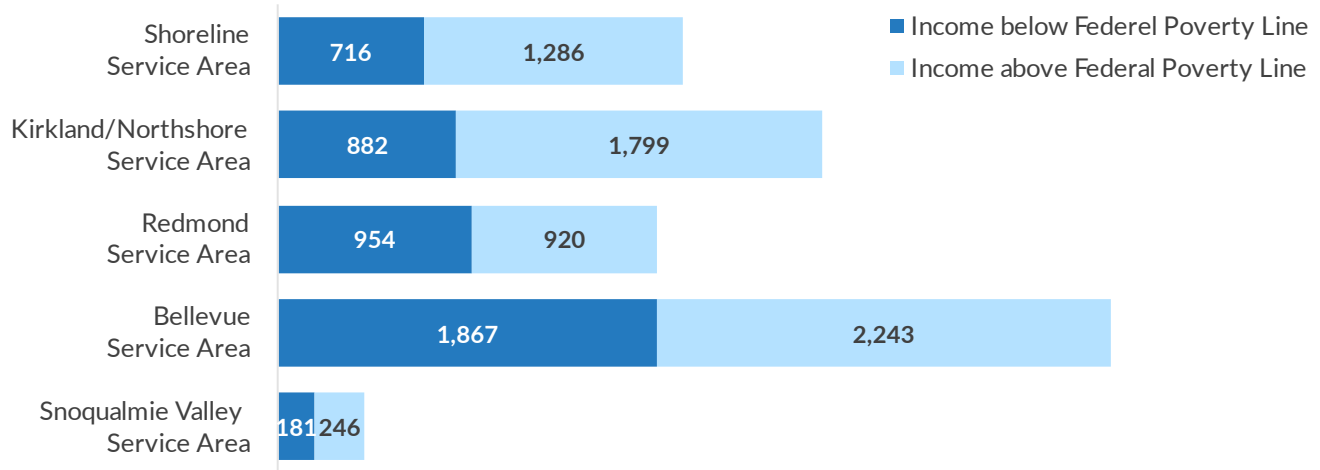
Legend:
- Income below Federel Poverty Line
- Income above Federal Poverty Line

Service Area	Income below Federal Poverty Line	Income above Federal Poverty Line
Shoreline Service Area	716	1,286
Kirkland/Northshore Service Area	882	1,799
Redmond Service Area	954	920
Bellevue Service Area	1,867	2,243
Snoqualmie Valley Service Area	181	246

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table B22003, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Exhibit 45. Household SNAP Enrollment by Poverty Status, Needs Assessment Area, 2023

	Received SNAP	Did not receive SNAP
Income above Federal Poverty Line	2%	98%
Income below Federal Poverty Line	27%	73%
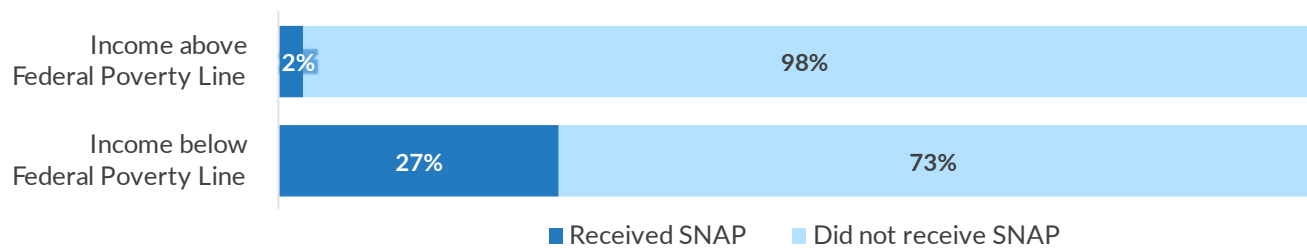
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table B22003, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Eligibility for SNAP is based on the household's size, income, and expenses. However, there are program limitations, eligibility exclusions, and other factors that prevent everyone in need of nutritional assistance from receiving SNAP benefits. Even among enrolled households, service providers observed that benefits are often insufficient to meet monthly food needs, requiring families to rely on additional services such as food banks or community markets.

Participation varies by geography. From 2017 to 2023, SNAP enrollment declined in four of the five Hopelink service areas: Snoqualmie Valley (-60%, 639 households), Shoreline (-18%, 430 households), Bellevue (-18%, 923 households), and Kirkland/Northshore (-8%, 218 households) (**Exhibit 46**). Only the Redmond Service Area saw an increase (+30%, 433 households).

Exhibit 46. Change in Household SNAP Enrollment, 2017 & 2023

■ 2017   ■ 2023

Shoreline Service Area
- 2017: 2,432
- 2023: 2,002

Kirkland/Northshore Service Area
- 2017: 2,899
- 2023: 2,681

Redmond Service Area
- 2017: 1,441
- 2023: 1,874

Bellevue Service Area
- 2017: 5,033
- 2023: 4,110

Snoqualmie Valley Service Area
- 2017: 1,066
- 2023: 427
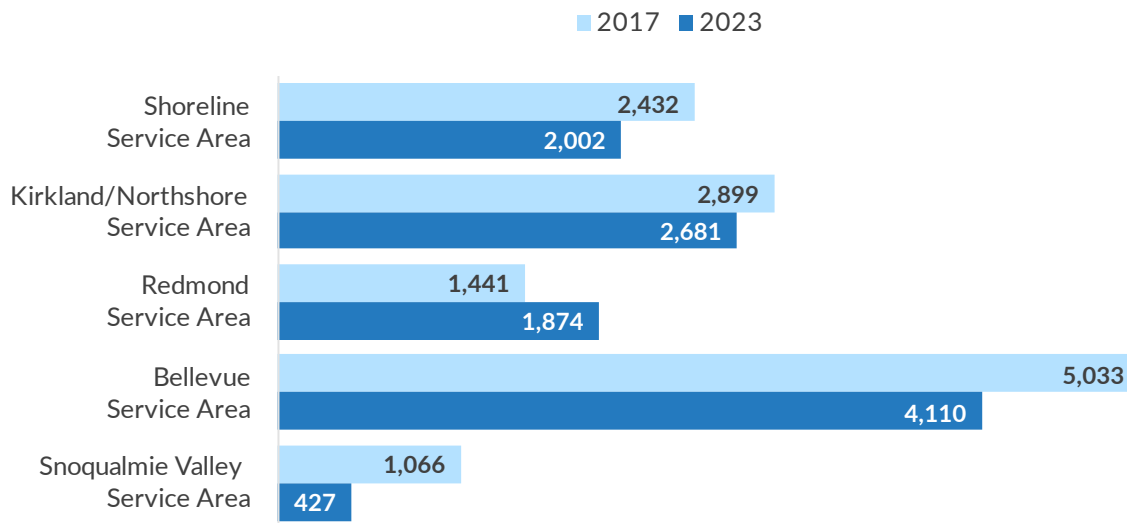
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S2201, 2013-2023; BERK, 2025.

Enrollment trends in the Basic Food program, Washington State's version of SNAP, also reflect pandemic-era shifts. After declines in 2017 through 2019, most areas experienced increased enrollment between 2020 and 2022. The Bellevue Service Area consistently reports the highest overall enrollment (12,955 participants in 2022), followed by the Redmond Service Area (8,289), and the Kirkland/Northshore Service Area (6,393) (**Exhibit 47**).

Exhibit 47. Basic Food Program Enrollment Over Time, 2017 – 2022

Service Areas

- Bellevue: 12,955
- Redmond: 8,289
- Kirkland/Northshore: 6,393
- Shoreline: 6,119
- Snoqualmie Valley: 4,959
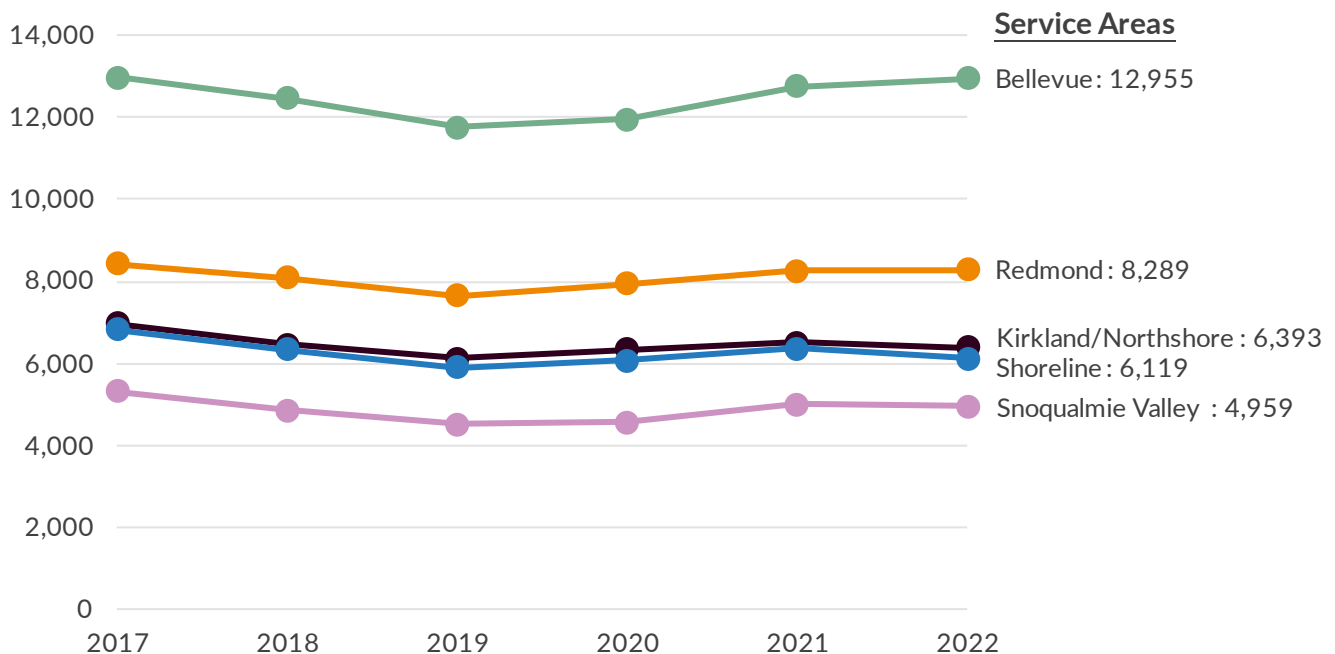
Sources: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, 2017-2022; BERK, 2025.

Age patterns reveal that adults aged 18 to 64 make up the largest share of Basic Food participants across all service areas, followed by youth, and then seniors (age 65 or older) (**Exhibit 48**). The Bellevue Service Area leads in all categories, with 6,371 adults, 3,912 youth, and 2,672 seniors. The Snoqualmie Valley Service Area stands out for its nearly equal numbers of adults (1,706) and seniors (1,650), indicating a proportionally higher share of older adults utilizing nutrition assistance in this service area.

Exhibit 48. Basic Food Program Enrollment by Age Group, 2022

Sources: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, 2022; BERK, 2025.

Exhibit 49 shows the proportion of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals across school districts in the Needs Assessment Area, of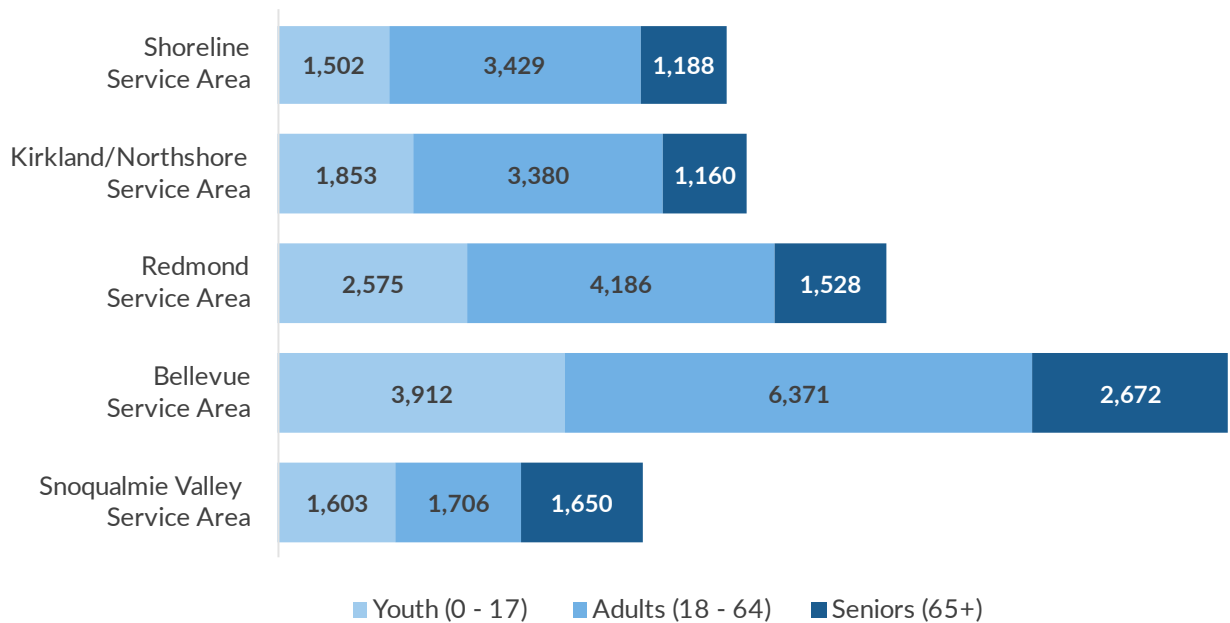fering a proxy indicator of childhood poverty and household economic need. The Shoreline and Snoqualmie Valley service areas stand out with the highest overall eligibility rates. In the Shoreline School District, 31% of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals, representing 2,366 students eligible for free meals and 616 for reduced-price meals. In the Snoqualmie Valley Service Area, the Enumclaw School District reports the highest combined eligibility rate at 32%, with 1,409 eligible students. Strikingly, the Skykomish School District shows an even higher rate (80%), though the total number of students is below 10, limiting generalizability. In contrast, most school districts in the Redmond, Bellevue, and Kirkland/Northshore Service Areas report eligibility rates below 5%, suggesting a concentration of childhood poverty in specific parts of the region. These disparities reflect an uneven distribution of childhood poverty across school districts and highlight how geographic and administrative boundaries intersect with need. This underscores the importance of localized support strategies to ensure that students facing food insecurity receive necessary assistance.

Exhibit 49. Free and Reduced-Price Meal Program Enrollment, 2024

	% of Student Body Enrolled
Shoreline Service Area	
Shoreline SD	31%
Kirkland/Northshore Service Area	
Northshore SD	16%
Redmond Service Area	
Lake Washington SD	12%
Bellevue Service Area	
Bellevue SD	23%
Mercer Island SD	<5%
Issaquah SD	13%
Snoqualmie Valley Service Area	
Riverview SD	17%
Skykomish SD	80%
Snoqualmie Valley SD	12%
Enumclaw SD	32%

Note: For anonymity, data for school districts with less than 10 students or less than 5% of the student body enrolled in free or reduced-price meals are suppressed.
Sources: Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2024; BERK, 2025.

Rising food costs, growing rates of food insecurity, and persistent gaps in nutrition assistance underscore the interconnection between access to adequate nutrition and broader cost-of-living pressures. While local and federal programs provide essential support, the data show that many households, particularly those with children, older adults, and residents in high-poverty areas, are not fully reached by existing systems. Addressing these challenges requires strategies that go beyond emergency food provision to include improving affordability, ensuring cultural and geographic fit, and removing barriers to program participation. Without such action, the combined pressures of housing, transportation, and food costs will continue to erode household stability and community health across the Needs Assessment Area.

Barriers to Accessing Services

Ensuring that services are accessible to those who need them most is crucial for programs to have a meaningful impact in addressing community needs. When barriers limit access, even high-quality services may fail to reach the populations they are designed to serve, ultimately widening, rather than reducing, disparities. Communities experiencing the greatest need, such as seniors, individuals with limited English proficiency, and immigrant families, often face the steepest challenges navigating systems of support. The following insights, drawn from service providers as well as Chinese-speaking and Spanish-speaking individuals, describe challenges facing individuals with limited English proficiency, seniors, and immigrant individuals and families.

Individuals with Limited English Proficiency

Barriers to accessing services and navigating daily life can be significant for community members with limited English proficiency. While phone-based interpretation is often available, it can be difficult to use, and many prefer direct support from bilingual, culturally informed staff. Spanish-speaking participants from NiSo emphasized the need for more bilingual staff at Hopelink locations, particularly at food banks and customer service desks. They highlighted the importance of stronger outreach to non-English-speaking communities.

> *"Interpreters over the phone is nice, but for people to be able to access resources on a daily basis, it's not enough." -Interviewee*

Even when resources are available, individuals with limited English proficiency, as well as others, may not know how to locate or qualify for them. Complex application processes, limited intake capacity, and inaccessible online systems create frustration. As a result, many community members rely on word of mouth or community navigators rather than formal service systems. Service providers also described challenges in accessing medical care for individuals who do not speak English proficiently and who are unfamiliar with the complexities of the American healthcare system. Without adequate language and cultural supports, many cannot fully navigate or benefit from available programs.

Members of the Chinese-speaking focus group reported that they do not use the Hopelink website, as they were unaware that it can be translated into Chinese. Instead, they rely on friends or posters for information, which has led to missed deadlines for programs such as

energy assistance. They also expressed a need for more precise guidance on how to apply for senior housing.

English classes are not only important for accessing work opportunities, but also for navigating daily life and building social connections. Spanish-speaking and Chinese-speaking individuals discussed the desire to see expanded English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

Exhibit 50 illustrates the linguistic diversity of households in the Needs Assessment Area in 2023. While English is the most widely spoken language at home, used by 474,204 households, a significant share of households speak a language other than English. Asian or Pacific Islander languages are spoken in 115,878 households, making them the second most common language group. Other Indo-European languages, including French, Russian, and Hindi, are spoken in 71,621 households. Spanish is spoken in 32,346 households, and an additional 14,058 households speak languages categorized as "Other."

Exhibit 50. Households by Language Spoken at Home, Needs Assessment Area, 2023
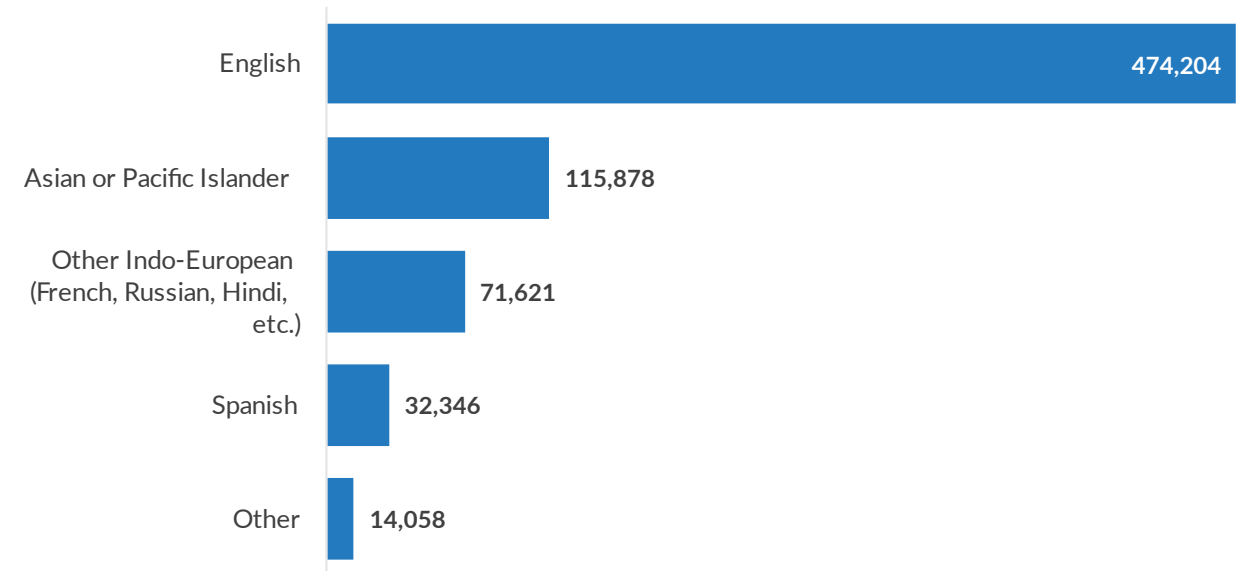
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S1601, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Across the service areas, English is the most prevalent language. The share of households speaking other languages varies widely (**Exhibit 51**).

The Bellevue Service Area stands out as the most linguistically diverse, with large numbers of households speaking Asian or Pacific Islander languages (56,323), Other Indo-European languages (28,993), and Spanish (11,687). The Redmond Service Area follows closely, with 32,373 households speaking Asian or Pacific Islander languages and 22,458 speaking Other Indo-European languages. These two service areas together account for the majority of non-English-speaking households in the Needs Assessment Area.

The Kirkland/Northshore Service Area also has substantial linguistic diversity, with 17,700 households speaking Asian or Pacific Islander languages and 15,540 speaking Other Indo-

European languages. In contrast, the Shoreline and Snoqualmie Valley Service Areas have smaller counts of households speaking languages other than English. The Snoqualmie Valley Service Area has the lowest number of non-English-speaking households overall, with just 1,957 households speaking Asian or Pacific Islander languages and 2,649 speaking Spanish.

These patterns suggest that language access services are especially critical in the Bellevue, Redmond, and Kirkland/Northshore Service Areas, where a large portion of the population speaks a language other than English at home. Tailoring outreach and support to meet the linguistic needs of these communities can help reduce barriers to essential services and foster more inclusive engagement across the region.

Exhibit 51. Households by Language Spoken at Home, Hopelink Needs Assessment Area, 2023
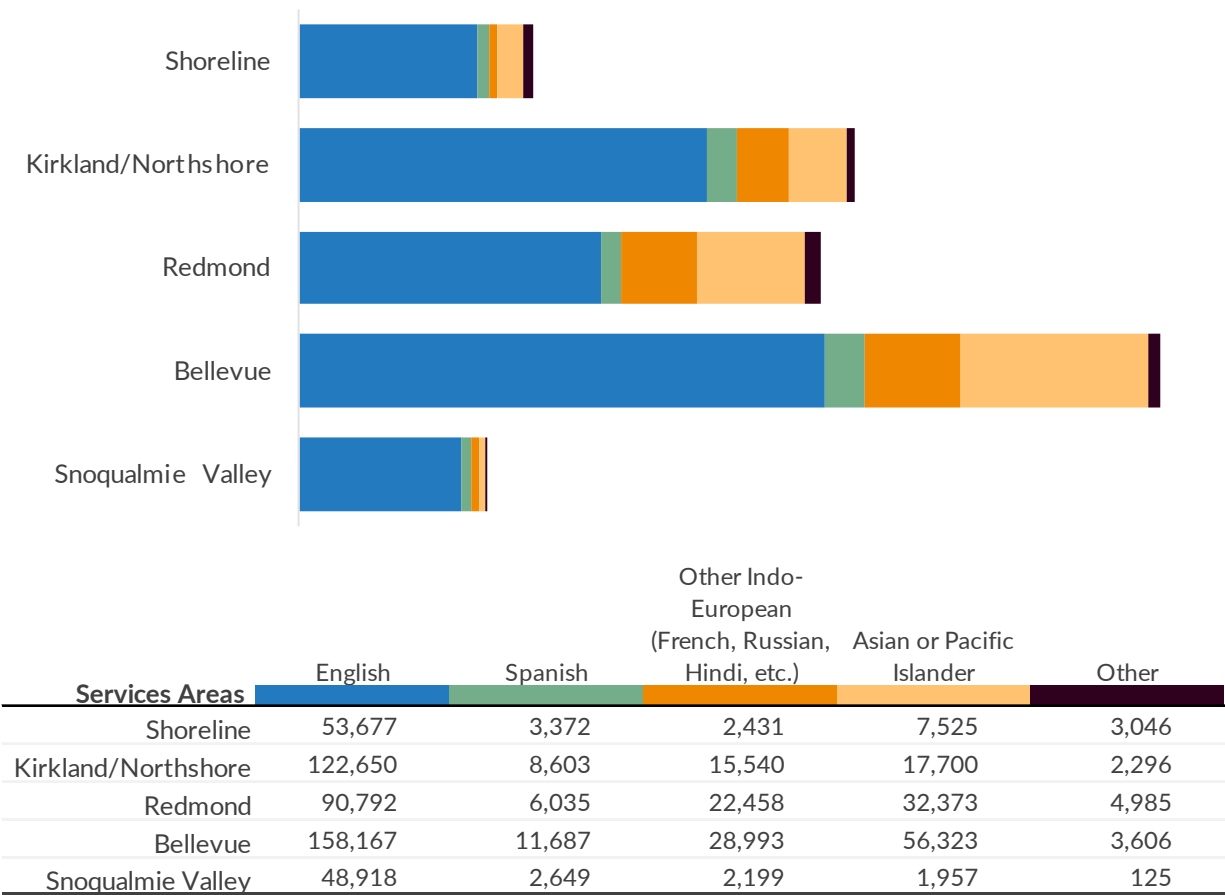
Services Areas	English	Spanish	Other Indo-European (French, Russian, Hindi, etc.)	Asian or Pacific Islander	Other
Shoreline	53,677	3,372	2,431	7,525	3,046
Kirkland/Northshore	122,650	8,603	15,540	17,700	2,296
Redmond	90,792	6,035	22,458	32,373	4,985
Bellevue	158,167	11,687	28,993	56,323	3,606
Snoqualmie Valley	48,918	2,649	2,199	1,957	125

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S1601, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Households in the Needs Assessment Area speak a wide range of languages, and the proportion with limited English proficiency varies considerably by language group (**Exhibit 52**). Chinese-speaking households (including Mandarin and Cantonese) represent the largest non-English-speaking group, with 26,541 households, 6,740 of which (25%) have limited English proficiency. Other Asian and Pacific Island languages are spoken in 17,978 households, with 2,246 (12%)

reporting limited English proficiency. Among Indo-European languages, 21,299 households fall into this category, with 1,273 (6%) having limited English proficiency.

Several other language groups also show notable proportions of limited English households: Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages (7,716 total; 1,433 limited English), Korean (4,817 total; 1,349 limited English), Spanish (13,842 total; 1,308 limited English), Vietnamese (2,855 total; 651 limited English), and other or unspecified languages (3,800 total; 561 limited English). In contrast, some groups have relatively low shares of limited English-speaking households, such as Tagalog (2,613 total; 93 limited English) and French, Haitian, or Cajun (2,505 total; 87 limited English).

Exhibit 52. Households by English Proficiency by Language Spoken at Home, Needs Assessment Area, 2023

Legend: ■ Total Households ■ Limited English Households
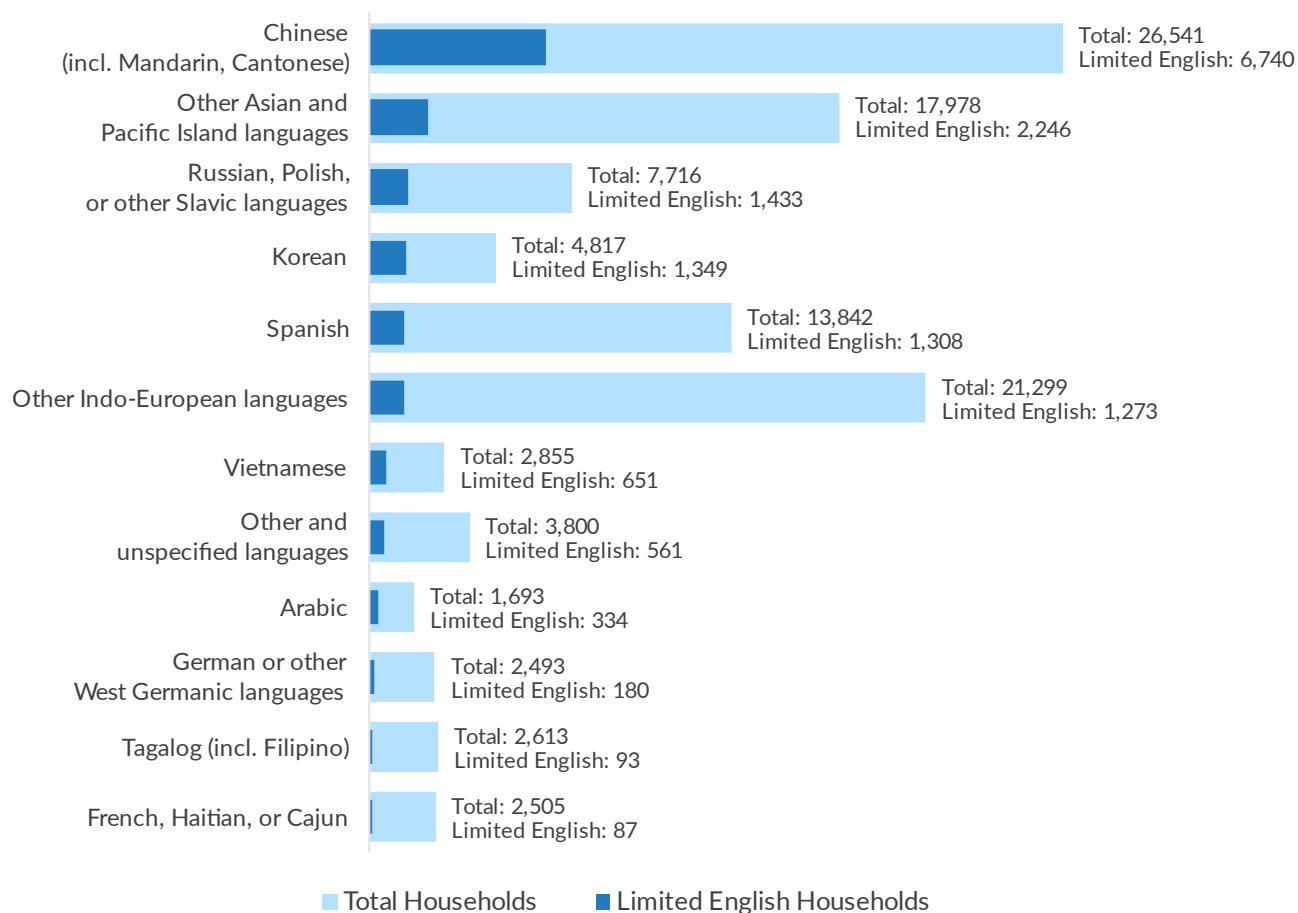
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table B16002, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Seniors

In addition to the challenges described elsewhere in this report, such as the shortage of senior housing and difficulties with public transit, seniors may also face barriers to accessing services. Seniors – residents 65 years old or older –struggle with online appointment systems, which can make it difficult to schedule or access needed services. Homebound older adults may experience limited access to meals, healthcare, and other essential supports, yet be unable to seek assistance for these needs.

"Hopelink offers Puget Sound Energy appointments, but the easiest way is to get that appointment online. How can a senior get that appointment if they're not technologically savvy?" -Interviewee

Older adults in the Needs Assessment Area face varying degrees of economic vulnerability and social isolation, with important implications for regional service planning. In 2023, approximately 7% of seniors (7,532 individuals out of 107,200) are experiencing poverty (**Exhibit 53)**. Poverty rates were highest in the Shoreline Service Area (10%) and lowest in Snoqualmie Valley (4%), with Bellevue, Kirkland/Northshore, and Redmond falling in between.

Exhibit 53. Seniors Experiencing Poverty, 2023

		Seniors in Poverty		Total Senior Population*
		%	#	
Needs Assessment Area		7%	**7,532**	**107,200**
Shoreline Service Area		10%	1,358	13,846
Kirkland/Northshore Service Area		7%	1,871	26,278
Redmond Service Area		6%	1,179	18,557
Bellevue Service Area		7%	2,863	41,104
Snoqualmie Valley Service Area		4%	261	7,415

Note: Population for whom poverty status is determined.
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S1701, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Median household income among senior households also varies across the region, reflecting similar geographic patterns. While the average was $89,820 (**Exhibit 54)** for the entire Needs Assessment Area, median incomes for households with senior householders ranged from a high of $94,104 in the Bellevue Service Area to a low of $80,722 in Shoreline. The Kirkland/Northshore Service Area also fell below the area average at $83,012, suggesting pockets of economic vulnerability even in otherwise high-income communities.

Exhibit 54. Median Household Income for Households with Senior Householder, 2023

Service Area: $89,820

Service Area	Median Income
Shoreline Service Area	$80,722
Kirkland/Northshore Service Area	$83,012
Redmond Service Area	$93,505
Bellevue Service Area	$94,104
Snoqualmie Valley Service Area	$92,189
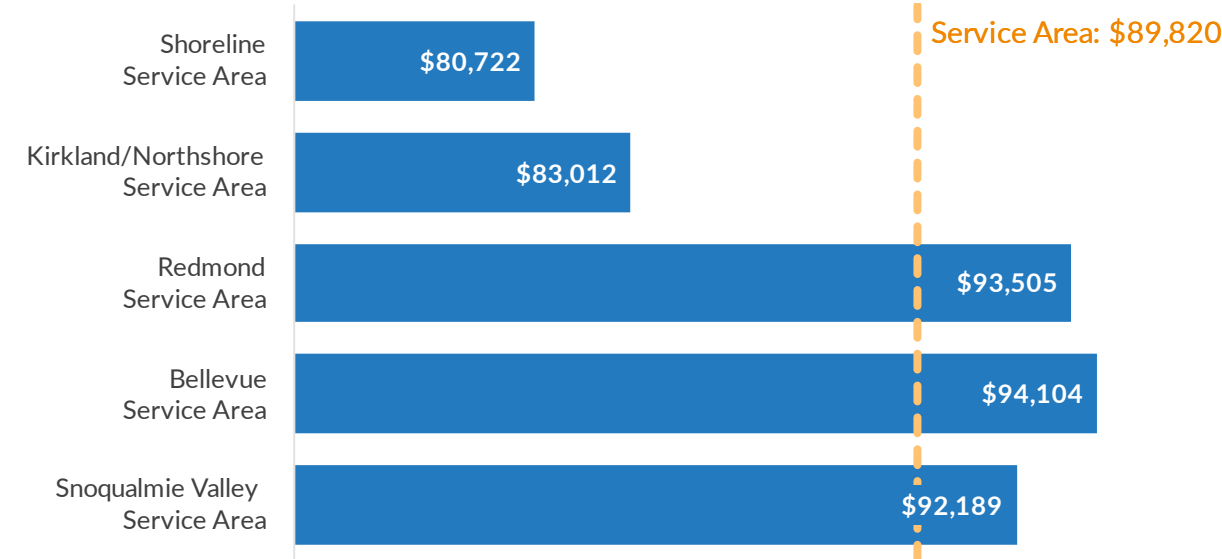
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table B19049, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

In addition to income disparities, a significant share of seniors live alone; 24% across the Needs Assessment Area, or about 25,432 individuals (**Exhibit 55**). This figure rises to 26% in both the Shoreline and Kirkland/Northshore Service Areas. The Bellevue and Redmond Services Areas report slightly lower shares at 23%, while the Snoqualmie Valley Service Area aligns with the area average.

Exhibit 55. Seniors Living Alone, 2023

	Seniors Living Alone		Total Senior Population*
	%	#	
Needs Assessment Area	24%	**25,432**	**105,144**
Shoreline Service Area	26%	3,459	13,126
Kirkland/Northshore Service Area	26%	6,672	25,915
Redmond Service Area	23%	4,276	18,407
Bellevue Service Area	23%	9,266	40,292
Snoqualmie Valley Service Area	24%	1,759	7,404

Note: Population 65 and over in households.
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table B09021, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

These indicators point to a need for targeted support in areas where older adults are more likely to experience poverty, have lower household incomes, or live alone. Strategies such as affordable housing, food assistance, and in-home or community-based services may be especially valuable in the Shoreline and Kirkland/Northshore Service Areas, which consistently report higher levels of need across multiple indicators.

Nativity

Nativity status, or experience as an immigrant, particularly undocumented status, can create additional obstacles. Many service providers recognized the depth of exclusion faced by undocumented individuals and households, especially in areas like utility and rental assistance, where relief programs often come with documentation requirements. While these households have long faced barriers, the urgency and awareness around nativity status have increased since Hopelink's 2022 Needs Assessment. Fear of immigration and other law enforcement agencies has made individuals hesitant to engage with formal institutions, even when eligible. Trust in community-based navigators or familiar organizations is often a key factor in connecting immigrant households to the services they need, highlighting the importance of culturally competent outreach and trusted intermediaries.

Nearly 30% of residents in the Needs Assessment Area are foreign-born (**Exhibit 56**), but this share ranges from 39% in the Redmond and 35% in the Bellevue Service Areas to just 11% in the Snoqualmie Valley Service Area. In areas with higher proportions of foreign-born residents, Asia is by far the most common region of origin. This is particularly notable in the Redmond Service Area, where Asian-born residents make up 31% of the total population. Conversely, in the Shoreline and Snoqualmie Valley Service Areas, the foreign-born population is both smaller and more evenly distributed across regions of origin, including Europe, Asia, and Latin America. These patterns highlight significant differences in demographic composition and cultural backgrounds across the service areas, factors that may influence community needs, language access, and culturally responsive programming.

Exhibit 56. Foreign-born Population, 2023
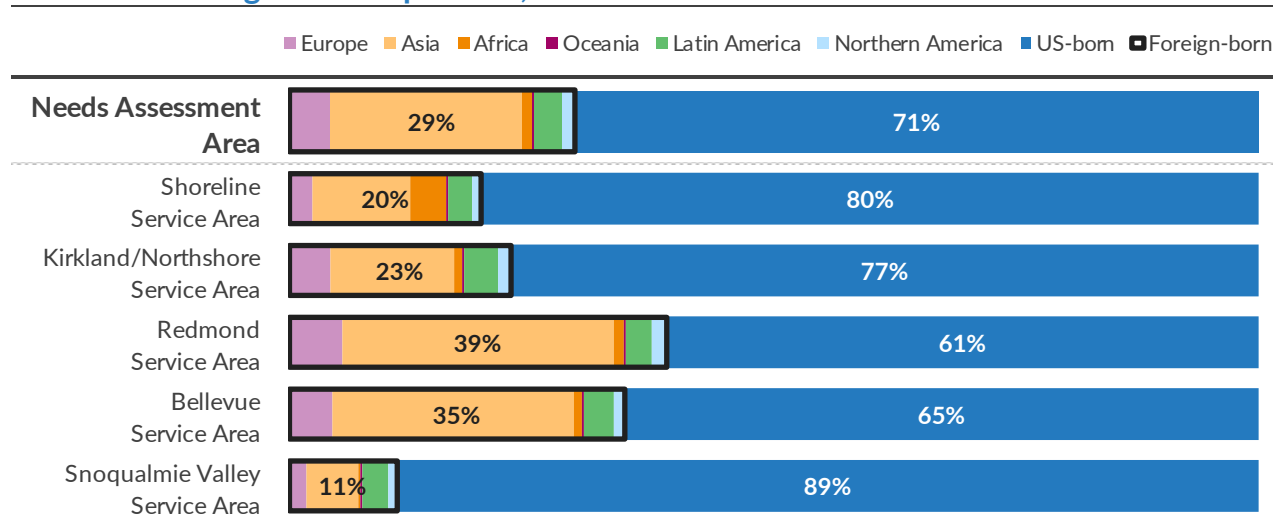
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table B05002, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Community Characteristics

Population

Population growth across the five service areas over the last decade reveals notable regional variation (**Exhibit 57**). The Bellevue Service Area remains by far the most populous, growing from approximately 240,000 residents in 2014 to around 279,470 in 2024. This is a nearly 16% increase, though growth has slowed slightly since 2020. The Kirkland/Northshore Service Area follows with 185,115 residents in 2024, adding more than 30,000 people during the same period. The Redmond Service Area experienced similarly strong growth, reaching 173,486 residents, with particularly sharp increases between 2018 and 2022, likely tied to ongoing tech sector expansion and new housing.

In contrast, the Shoreline and Snoqualmie Valley Service Areas, the smallest of the five, saw less notable total population growth. The Shoreline Service Area grew by just over 10,000 residents, reaching 76,463, while the Snoqualmie Valley Service Area increased to 64,334.

Exhibit 57. Population Over Time by Service Area, 2014 - 2024
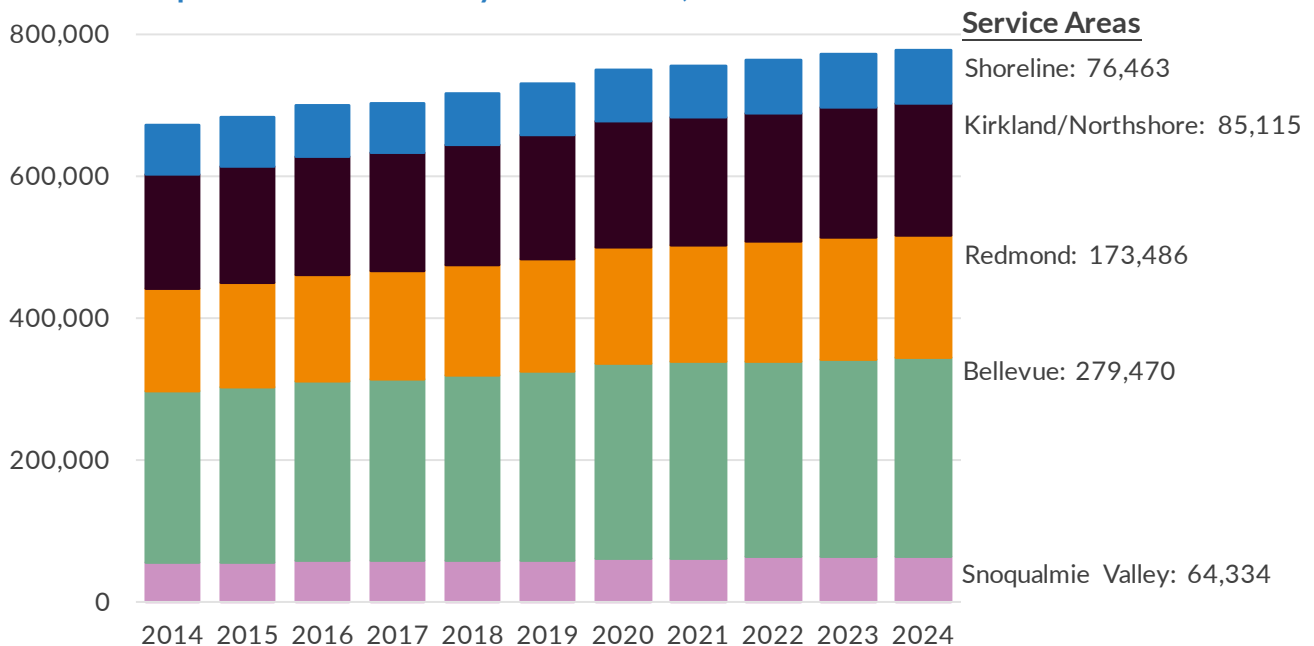
Sources: Washington Office of Financial Management, 2025; BERK, 2025.

Race & Ethnicity

In the Needs Assessment Area, White residents make up the majority (57%; 430,001) of the population, followed by Asian (26%; 196,471), Hispanic/Latino (7%; 54,280), and Black (2%; 14,989) residents (**Exhibit 58)**. The remaining categories, American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Other, and Multiple races, make up 8% (58,004 residents) of the population. Racial and ethnic diversity varies across the Needs Assessment Area. The Bellevue and Redmond Service Areas have the highest numbers of Asian residents, 93,421 and 59,110, respectively, accounting for over one-third of each city's total population (34% and 35%, respectively). The Shoreline Service Area, in contrast, has a relatively higher proportion of Black (6%; 4,203) and Hispanic/Latino (8%; 5,646) residents than the other subareas, though it also has the smallest Asian population (14%; 10,249). The Snoqualmie Valley Service Area stands out for its comparatively limited racial diversity, with more than three-quarters of the population identifying as White (77%; 45,851) and smaller counts across all other racial groups. While smaller in number, residents who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native (224), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (15), Other race (231), or Multiple races (3,437) contribute to the overall diversity of the region and may have distinct cultural or service needs that are often overlooked in broader racial categories.

Exhibit 58. Race and Ethnicity, 2023

	Total Population
Needs Assessment Area	**749,745**
Shoreline Service Area	73,689
Kirkland/Northshore Service Area	177,463
Redmond Service Area	166,940
Bellevue Service Area	271,835
Snoqualmie Valley Service Area	59,818

	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian	Black	Hispanic/ Latino	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Other	Multiple	White
Needs Assessment Area	**1,706**	**196,471**	**14,989**	**54,280**	**1,002**	**5,405**	**45,891**	**430,001**
Shoreline Service Area	227	10,249	4,203	5,646	127	485	5,012	47,740
Kirkland/Northshore Service Area	400	29,180	2,677	14,010	177	1,241	11,573	118,205
Redmond Service Area	386	59,110	2,693	10,160	143	937	8,410	85,101
Bellevue Service Area	469	93,421	5,092	19,239	540	2,511	17,459	133,104
Snoqualmie Valley Service Area	224	4,511	324	5,225	15	231	3,437	45,851

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table B03002, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Age

The age distribution in the Needs Assessment Area mirrors the overall pattern in King County (**Exhibit 59**). Most residents fall between the ages of 20 and 49, with the largest age groups being 30–34 (61,673 residents) and 35–39 (63,396 residents), closely followed by 40–44 (59,590 residents). There is a notable dip in the number of residents in their early 20s; after age 19, the population decreases by 11,969 residents, before increasing substantially in the 25–29 age group (+17,958 residents) and again in the 30–34 age group (+12,264 residents). This trend could reflect a pattern of individuals leaving the area for education or other opportunities in early adulthood and returning later. Population levels begin to steadily decline after age 55. Youth under 20 also represent a sizable portion of the population, including 41,638 children under 5, 46,386 aged 5–9, 48,626 aged 10–14, and 43,420 aged 15–19.

Exhibit 59. Age Groups by Population, King County & Needs Assessment Area, 2023
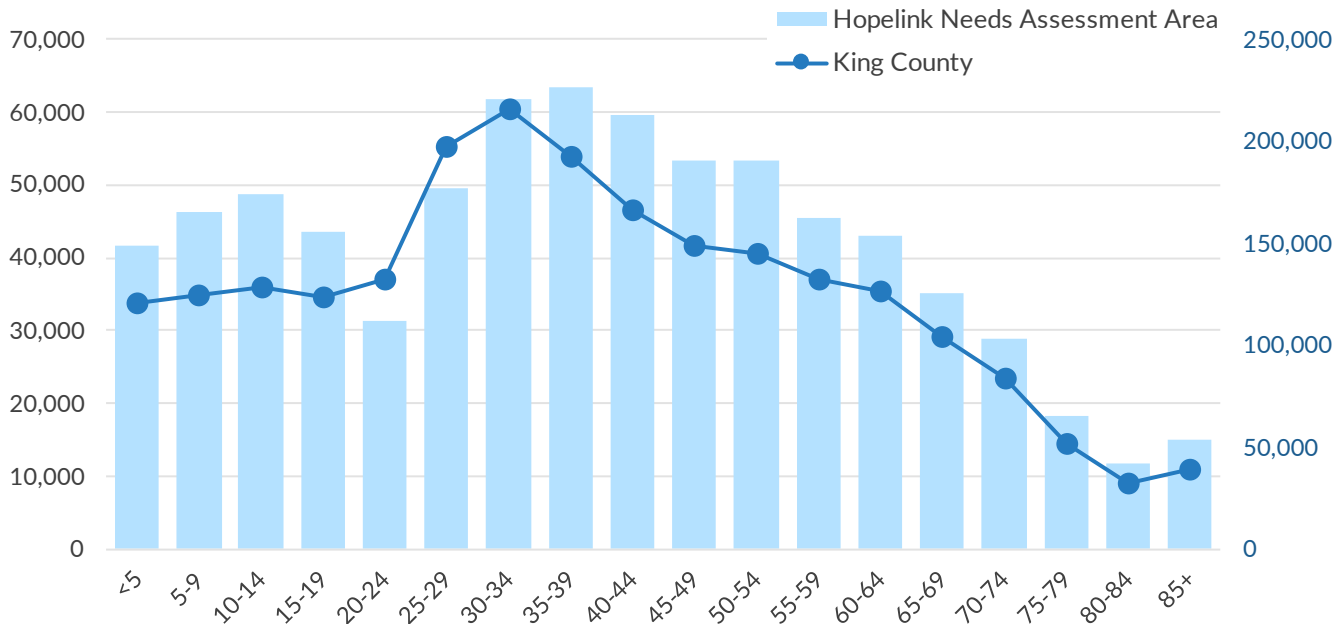
Legend:
- Hopelink Needs Assessment Area (bars)
- King County (line)

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S0101, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Across the service areas, age distributions are relatively consistent (**Exhibit 60**). Adults aged 20–49 make up the largest age group across all geographies, comprising 43% of the population overall and ranging from 39% in the Snoqualmie Valley Service Area to 44% in the Redmond Service Area. Youth under 20 account for 21% - 28% of residents across the service areas, with the Redmond and Snoqualmie Valley Service Areas showing the highest shares of school-age children. Children under 5 make up 5% - 7% of the population in all areas. Older adults also comprise a notable share, with the 50–64 age group making up 17% to 21% across geographies. The 65+ population is most prominent in the Shoreline Service Area at 20%, compared to just 11% in the Redmond Service Area. Median ages vary slightly, from 39.3 in the Redmond Service Area to 42.6 in the Shoreline Service Area, with the entire Needs Assessment Area at 40.4. These patterns reflect a largely middle-aged population, with some variation in the concentration of younger and older residents across service areas.

Exhibit 60. Age Distribution and Median Age, 2023

	Median Age	<5	5-19	20-49	50-64	65+
Needs Assessment Area	40.4	6%	18%	43%	19%	15%
Shoreline Service Area	42.6	5%	16%	40%	20%	20%
Kirkland/Northshore Service Area	39.7	6%	17%	43%	19%	15%
Redmond Service Area	39.3	6%	21%	44%	17%	11%
Bellevue Service Area	40.4	5%	18%	43%	19%	15%
Snoqualmie Valley Service Area	40.0	7%	21%	39%	21%	12%
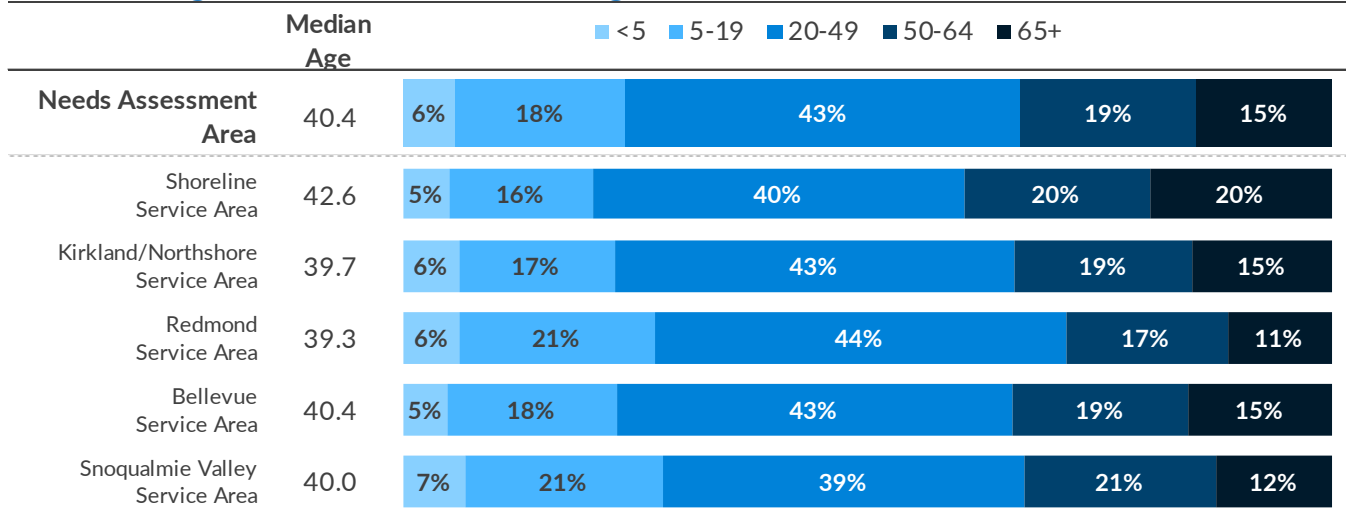
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S0101, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Trends in median age over time remain mostly consistent but further highlight subtle shifts in the population profile across the service areas (**Exhibit 61**). The Shoreline Service Area has consistently had the highest median age, remaining above 43 throughout the 2017 – 2023 period. In contrast, the Snoqualmie Valley Service Area experienced a steady decline in median age, from over 42 in 2018 to 40 in 2023, suggesting an influx of younger residents or the outmigration or passing of older adults. The Bellevue, Kirkland/Northshore, and Redmond Service Areas have remained relatively stable, with only minor year-to-year fluctuations.

Exhibit 61. Median Age Over Time, 2017–2023

Service Areas

Shoreline: 42.6
Bellevue: 40.4
Snoqualmie Valley: 40.0
Kirkland/Northshore: 39.7
Redmond: 39.3
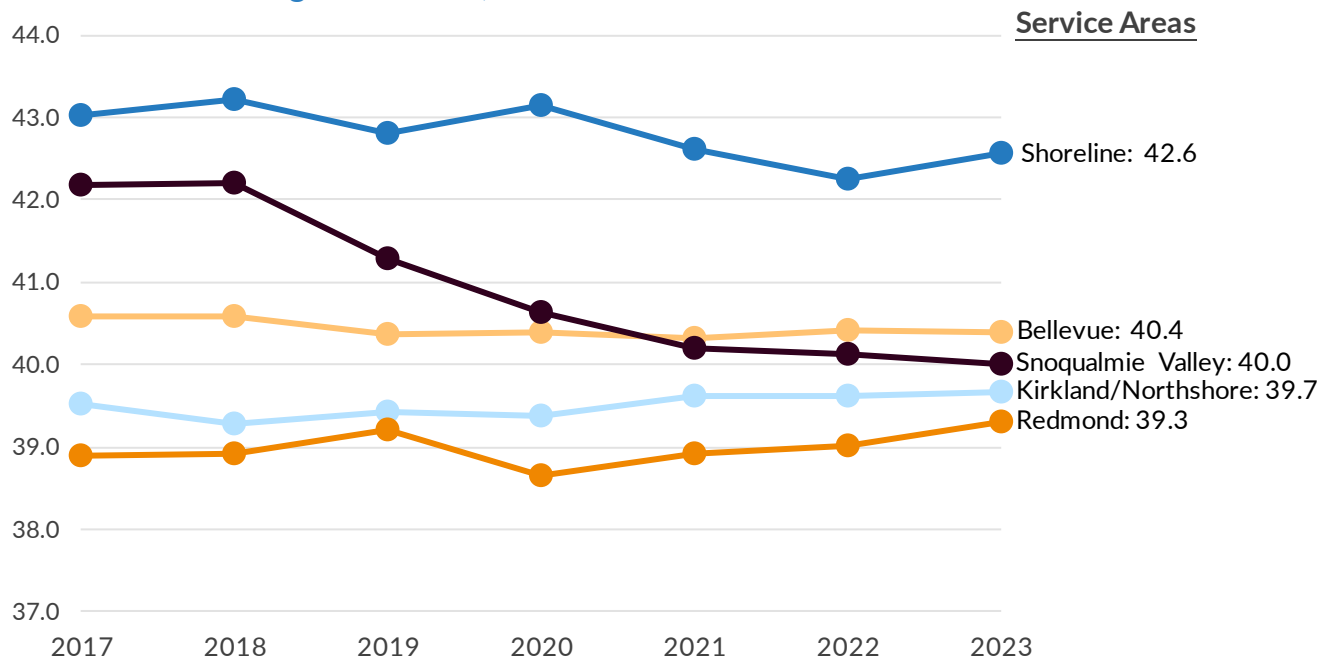
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S0101, 2013-2023; BERK, 2025.

Exhibit 62 maps census tracts across the Needs Assessment Area by the percentage of their population under 18 years old. Notably, there is a strong consistency across all service areas of 10% to 30% of the tract population being minors. The northeastern portion of the Redmond Service Area stands out as one of the few places with less than 10%, along with the census tract that includes the City of Kirkland. Also in the Redmond Service Area, the region around Sammamish has a higher rate of youth population than most of the Needs Assessment Area. Both the Shoreline and Kirkland/Northshore Service Areas have more consistent rates of 10% to 30% minor populations. The Snoqualmie Valley Service Area has a consistent rate around 20% to 30% with the area near the City of Snoqualmie showing as 30%+ of residents being under 18 years old.

Exhibit 62. Percent of Population Under 18 Years Old by Census Tract, Needs Assessment Area, 2023
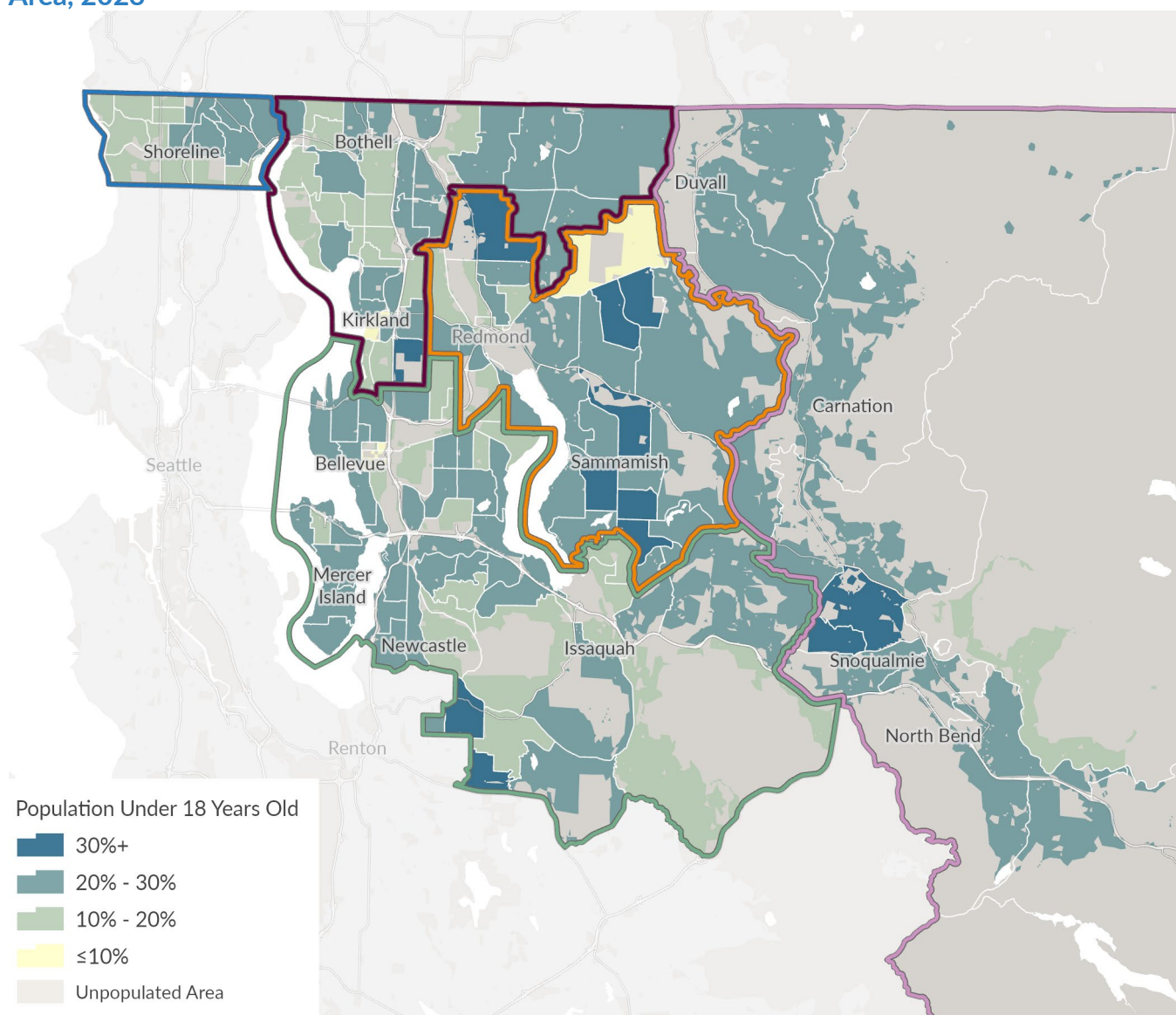

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S0101, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Similarly, **Exhibit 63** maps the percentage of each census tract's population as residents 65 years old or older. Unsurprisingly, the areas with higher percentages of residents under 18 tend to have lower percentages of those 65 or older. However, there are more areas with less than 10% of the population over 65 than areas with less than ten percent of minors. These areas are especially concentrated within the Redmond Service Area, near the cities of Redmond and Sammamish, with some other clusters near the cities of Snoqualmie, North Bend, Duvall, Issaquah, and Bothell. The Shoreline Service Area stands out as the service area with the most consistently high percentage of its population as residents over 65 years old.
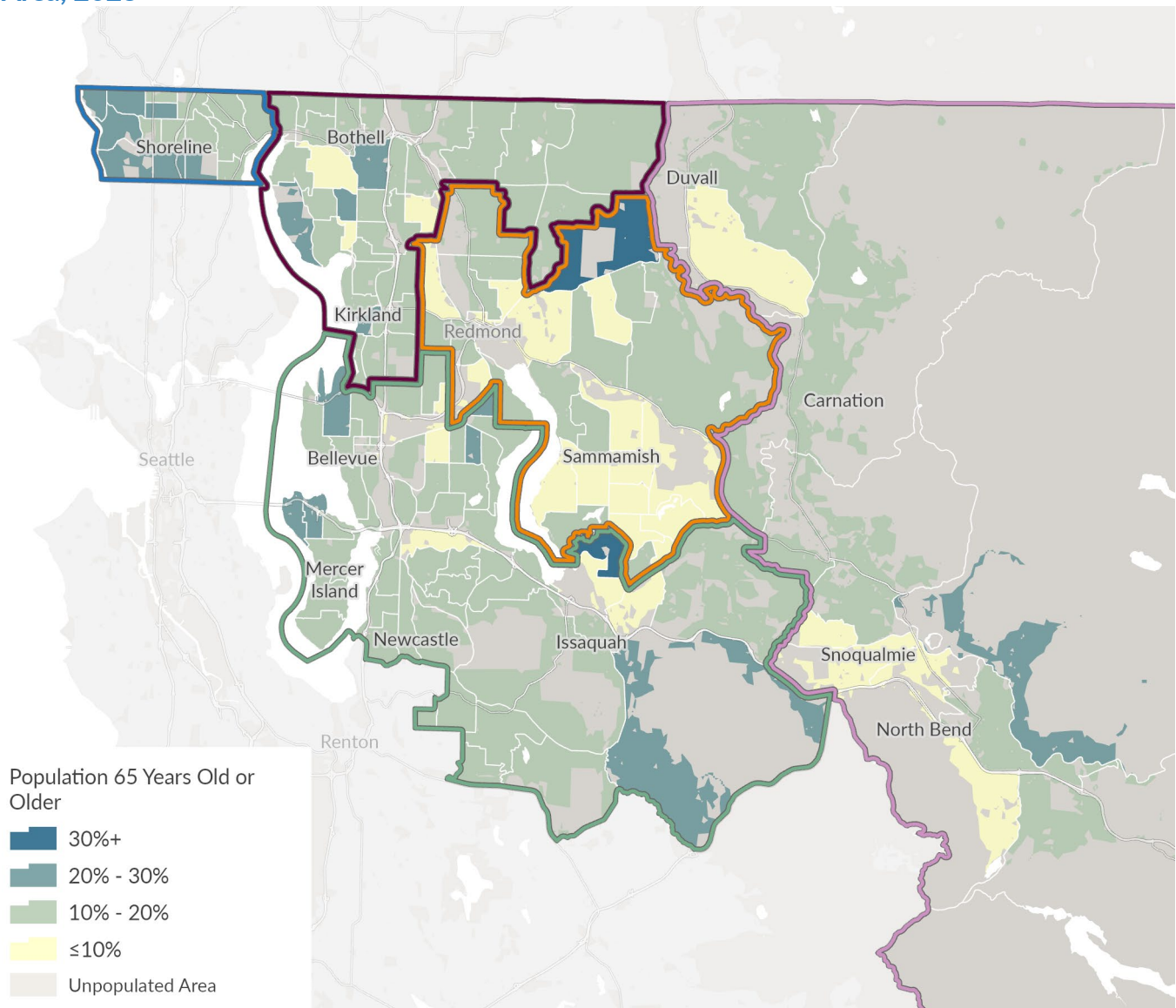
**Exhibit 63. Percent of Population 65 Years Old or Older by Census Tract, Needs Assessment Area, 2023**

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S0101, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Veterans

Veterans represent a significant population in the Needs Assessment Area, with notable variation in both age distribution and total count across service areas (**Exhibit 64**). The Bellevue Service Area has the highest number of veterans at 9,018, with more than one-third (36%) aged 75 or older. Shoreline shows a similar pattern, with 37% of its 2,884 veterans in the oldest age group. In contrast, the Snoqualmie Valley Service Area, though home to fewer veterans overall (2,948), has a more evenly distributed age profile, including a relatively large share (35%) between ages 35 and 54. Redmond and Kirkland/Northshore also host sizable veteran populations, skewing somewhat older.

These differences suggest varying needs for veteran services by geography. Older veterans in the Bellevue, Shoreline, and Kirkland/Northshore service areas may require greater access to aging-related supports such as health care, transportation, and housing stability. Meanwhile, the broader age range seen in places like Snoqualmie Valley points to the importance of offering age-diverse services, including employment and family support resources.

Exhibit 64. U.S. Military Veterans by Age, 2023
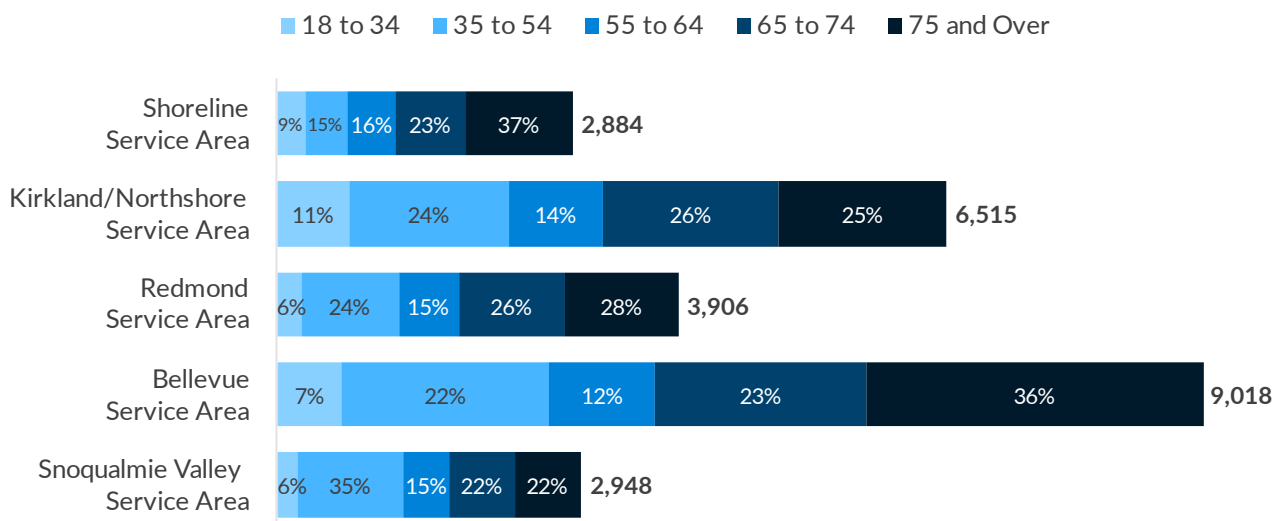
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, S2101, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Household Type

Household composition in the Needs Assessment Area is largely made up of married couples, who represent nearly 68% of all households (200,065) (**Exhibit 65**). The Bellevue Service Area has the highest number of married-couple households (73,002), followed by the Kirkland/Northshore Service Area (46,322) and the Redmond Service Area (45,256).

Other living arrangements also represent a meaningful share of the population. Female householders with no spouse present account for 9% of households (27,314 total), and male householders with no spouse present make up approximately 3% (172,751 households). A total of 18,299 households consist of individuals living alone, with the largest concentrations in the Bellevue and Kirkland/Northshore Service Areas. Another 18,299 households fall into the "other non-family" category, which includes roommates or unrelated individuals living together, again most commonly found in the Bellevue Service Area (6,870).

Exhibit 65. Households by Type, 2023

	Total	Married Couple	Male, No Spouse	Female, No Spouse	Living Alone	Other Non-Family
Needs Assessment Area	**292,495**	**172,751**	**9,015**	**18,299**	**69,963**	**22,467**
Shoreline Service Area	28,895	15,535	1,126	2,203	7,748	2,283
Kirkland/Northshore Service Area	71,032	39,494	2,371	4,457	18,291	6,419
Redmond Service Area	63,188	39,971	1,900	3,385	13,451	4,481
Bellevue Service Area	108,160	63,093	3,039	6,870	26,933	8,225
Snoqualmie Valley Service Area	21,220	14,658	579	1,384	3,540	1,059

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table B11001, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Household composition also varies considerably by income level (**Exhibit 66**). Among those earning more than 100% of Area Median Income (AMI), small families make up the majority at 58%, while just 5% are elderly non-family households. At the opposite end of the income spectrum, the makeup shifts significantly: only 25% of households below 30% AMI are small families, compared to 32% that are elderly non-family and 27% that fall into the "other" category.

As household income declines, the presence of elderly individuals increases across both family and non-family structures. Elderly family households rise from 12% in the highest income group to 20% at 50–80% AMI and 32% in the lowest income tier. A similar trend is seen among elderly non-family households, which grow from just 5% above 100% AMI to nearly one-third of households below 30% AMI. Meanwhile, large families remain a small share across all income levels, peaking at just 8% in the highest bracket.

Exhibit 66. Households by Income Group and Type, Needs Assessment Area, 2021
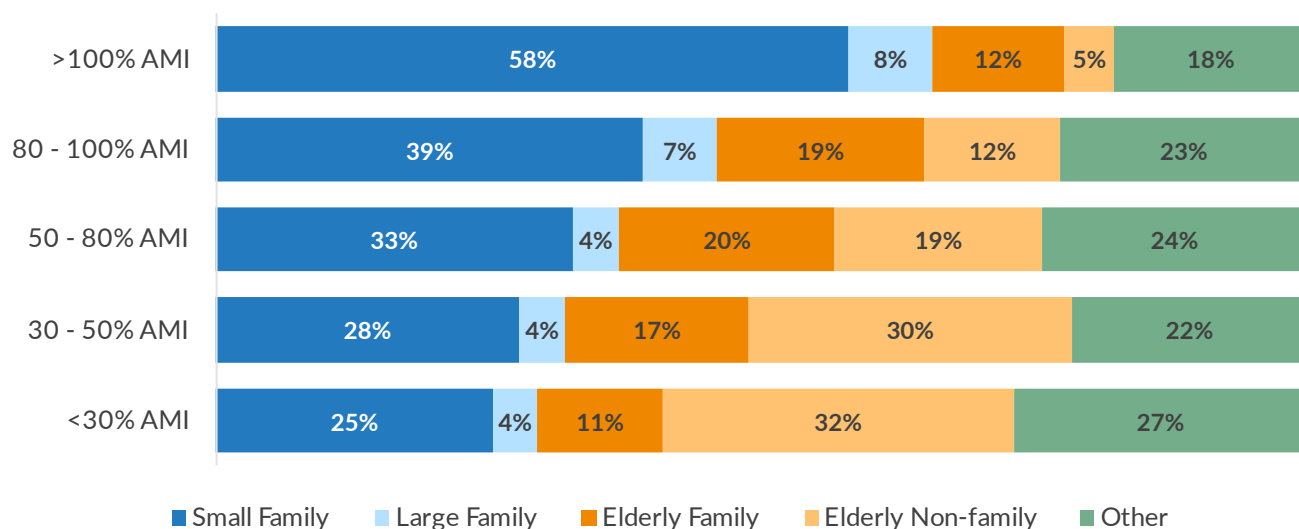
Income Group	Small Family	Large Family	Elderly Family	Elderly Non-family	Other
>100% AMI	58%	8%	12%	5%	18%
80 - 100% AMI	39%	7%	19%	12%	23%
50 - 80% AMI	33%	4%	20%	19%	24%
30 - 50% AMI	28%	4%	17%	30%	22%
<30% AMI	25%	4%	11%	32%	27%

■ Small Family ■ Large Family ■ Elderly Family ■ Elderly Non-family ■ Other

Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Consolidated Housing Affordability Strategy, 2017-2021; BERK, 2025.

Employment

Exhibit 67 displays the unemployment rates for each of the service areas, compared to the overall rate for the Hopelink Needs Assessment Area (3.7%). The Shoreline Service Area (4.3%) and the Kirkland/Northshore Service Area (4.1%) have the highest rates, both exceeding the service area average. The Redmond Service Area (3.8%) is just above the average, while the Bellevue Service Area (3.6%) falls slightly below it. The Snoqualmie Valley Service Area reports the lowest rate at 2.4%.

Exhibit 67. Unemployment Rate, 2023

Service Area	Rate
Shoreline Service Area	4.3%
Kirkland/Northshore Service Area	4.1%
Redmond Service Area	3.8%
Bellevue Service Area	3.6%
Snoqualmie Valley Service Area	2.4%

Service Area: 3.7%
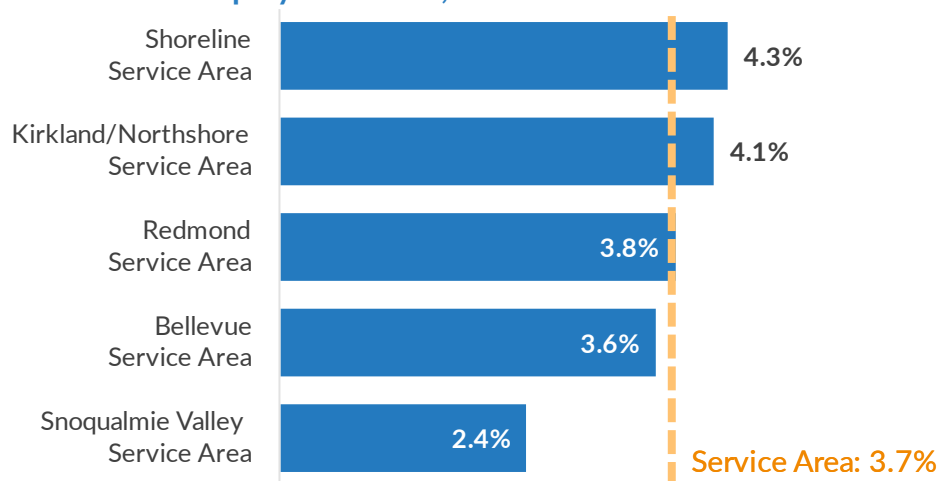
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table B23025, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Median earnings and workforce size vary widely across industries in the Needs Assessment Area, reflecting a mix of high-wage, knowledge-based sectors and lower-wage service industries (**Exhibit 68**). The Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industry employs the largest number of workers (224,311) and offers high median earnings of $156,707. Retail Trade and Health Care and Social Assistance also have large workforces, 148,955 and 146,903 workers, respectively, but significantly lower median earnings, both around $71,000.

Some industries with smaller workforces offer much higher wages. For example, the Information sector has median earnings of $179,580 with just 55,359 workers, while Finance and Insurance ($127,692) and Management of Companies and Enterprises ($235,077) also pay well despite having relatively few employees.

In contrast, several sectors combine low wages with modest workforce sizes. Accommodation and Food Services ($26,346), Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation ($31,065), and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting ($41,250) all fall into this category. These industries may be more vulnerable to job instability and may benefit from targeted economic support.

These disparities suggest a dynamic in which higher-paying industries are less accessible to large portions of the workforce, which can have implications on economic mobility, job quality, and equity in employment opportunities.

Exhibit 68. Industry by Median Earnings and Number of Workers, Needs Assessment Area, 2023
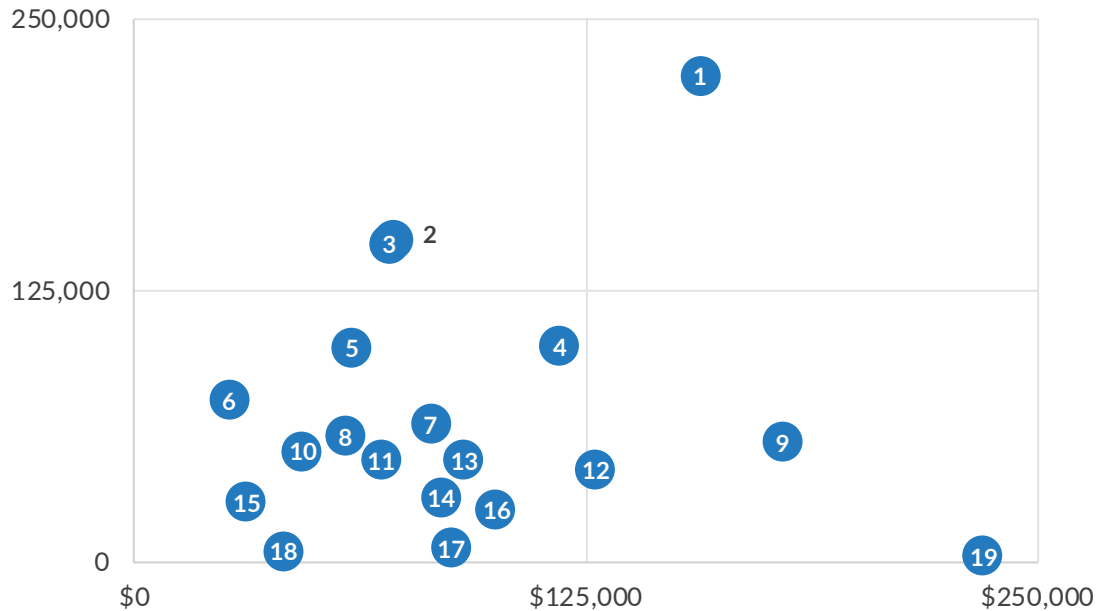
Industry	Median Earnings	Workers
1 Professional, scientific, and technical services	$156,707	224,311
2 Retail trade	$71,955	148,955
3 Health care and social assistance	$70,720	146,903
4 Manufacturing	$117,974	99,613
5 Educational services	$60,417	99,075
6 Accommodation and food services	$26,346	74,736
7 Construction	$82,155	63,690
8 Transportation and warehousing	$58,571	58,073
9 Information	$179,580	55,359
10 Other services, except public administration	$46,638	51,530
11 Administrative and support and waste management services	$68,304	47,012
12 Finance and insurance	$127,692	42,884
13 Public administration	$91,295	47,012
14 Real estate and rental and leasing	$84,839	30,196
15 Arts, entertainment, and recreation	$31,065	27,692
16 Wholesale trade	$100,263	24,662
17 Utilities	$87,647	6,621
18 Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	$41,250	5,501
19 Management of companies and enterprises	$235,077	2,987

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Tables B24031 & C24030, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.
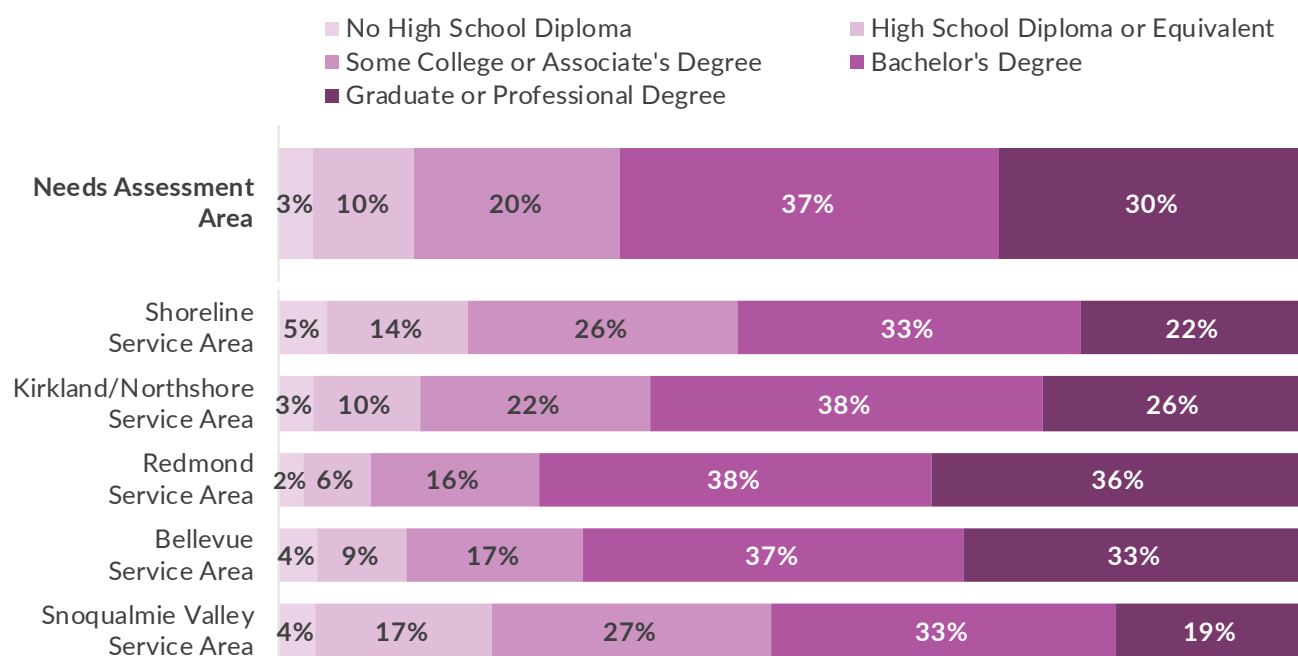
Educational Attainment

Many adults over age 25 in the Needs Assessment Area have completed postsecondary education, though levels vary by service area (**Exhibit 69**). Overall, 67% of adults have at least a bachelor's degree, with 37% holding a bachelor's degree and 30% holding a graduate or professional degree. Just 3% of the population has not completed high school, and 10% hold only a high school diploma.

The Bellevue and Redmond Service Areas have the highest educational attainment, with 33% and 36% of residents, respectively, holding graduate or professional degrees, well above the service area average. In contrast, the Snoqualmie Valley Service Area has a larger share of residents with only a high school diploma (17%) or some college/associate's degree (27%), and the lowest share with a graduate or professional degree (19%).

The Shoreline Service Area has the highest percentage of residents without a high school diploma (5%) and a larger proportion with only a high school education (14%). While the Kirkland/Northshore Service Area has a relatively high share of adults with bachelor's degrees (38%), its graduate degree attainment (26%) is closer to the overall average.

These differences reflect the uneven geographic distribution of educational opportunity and may correlate with income levels, workforce composition, and access to higher-paying industries. They also point to the need for tailored workforce development and adult education strategies across the service areas.

Exhibit 69. Educational Attainment for Population Over 25 Years Old, 2023

Legend:
- No High School Diploma
- High School Diploma or Equivalent
- Some College or Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Graduate or Professional Degree

Service Area	No High School Diploma	High School Diploma or Equivalent	Some College or Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
Needs Assessment Area	3%	10%	20%	37%	30%
Shoreline Service Area	5%	14%	26%	33%	22%
Kirkland/Northshore Service Area	3%	10%	22%	38%	26%
Redmond Service Area	2%	6%	16%	38%	36%
Bellevue Service Area	4%	9%	17%	37%	33%
Snoqualmie Valley Service Area	4%	17%	27%	33%	19%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S1501, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Four-year high school graduation rates in the Needs Assessment Area are consistently high across all service areas, ranging from 91% to 95% (**Exhibit 70**).The Kirkland/Northshore Service Area has the highest rate at 95%, followed closely by the Bellevue Service Area at 94% and the Redmond Service Area at 93%. The Shoreline Service Area reports a graduation rate of 92%, while the Snoqualmie Valley Service Area has the lowest, though still strong, at 91%. These consistently high rates suggest that students in the region are generally well-supported in reaching on-time graduation.

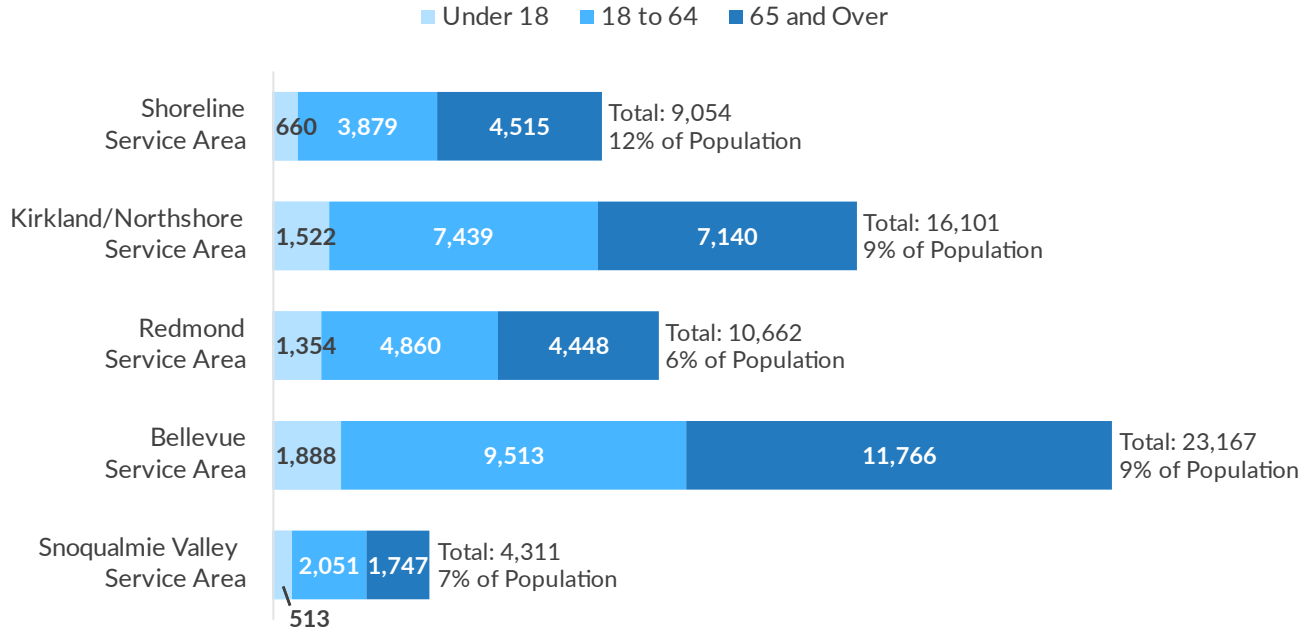**Exhibit 70. Four-year Graduation Rate, 2023-24**
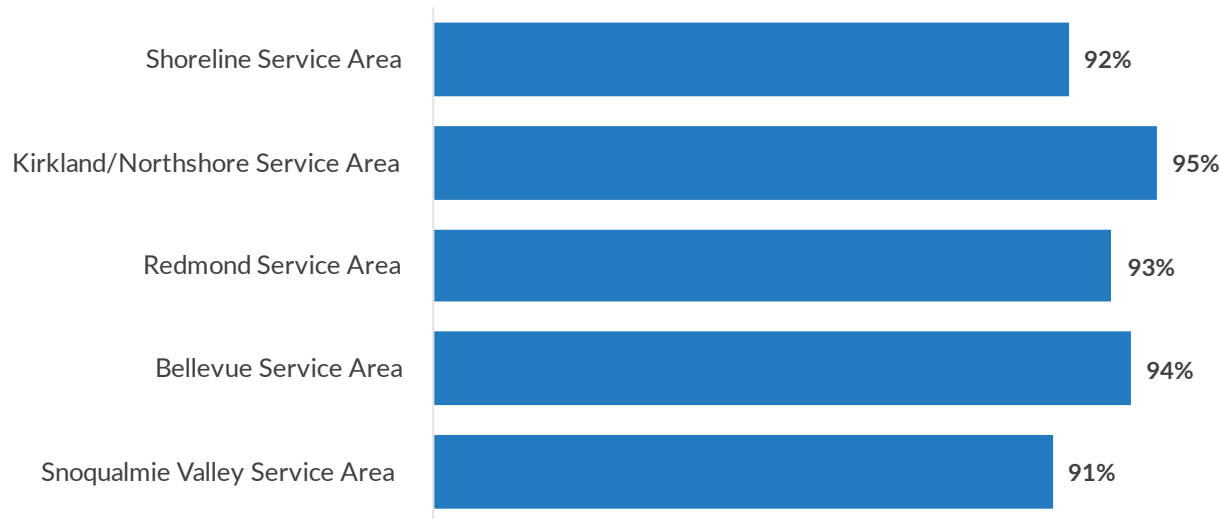
Sources: *Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2024; BERK, 2025.*

Disability

Disability affects residents of all ages, with the highest numbers observed in the Bellevue and Kirkland/Northshore Service Areas, as presented in **Exhibit 71**. Bellevue reports over 11,700 seniors, 9,500 working-age adults, and nearly 1,900 children living with a disability. Similar patterns are observed in the Kirkland/Northshore Service Area, whereas the Redmond, Shoreline, and Snoqualmie Valley service areas report lower numbers. These trends underscore a particular need to enhance services for seniors and adults with disabilities in high-population areas, such as the Bellevue and Kirkland/Northshore Service Areas.

Exhibit 71. Individuals Living with Disabilities by Age, 2023

Legend: ■ Under 18 ■ 18 to 64 ■ 65 and Over

Shoreline Service Area
660 | 3,879 | 4,515
Total: 9,054
12% of Population

Kirkland/Northshore Service Area
1,522 | 7,439 | 7,140
Total: 16,101
9% of Population

Redmond Service Area
1,354 | 4,860 | 4,448
Total: 10,662
6% of Population

Bellevue Service Area
1,888 | 9,513 | 11,766
Total: 23,167
9% of Population

Snoqualmie Valley Service Area
513 | 2,051 | 1,747
Total: 4,311
7% of Population

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table B18101, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Healthcare and Health

Access to health insurance also varies by geography. The Bellevue Service Area has the highest number of uninsured residents (13,189), followed by the Kirkland/Northshore (8,887) and Redmond (7,133) Service Areas. Fewer residents lack coverage in the Shoreline and Snoqualmie Valley Service Areas. While these patterns partly reflect overall population size, they may also point to gaps in access to employer-based or public insurance programs (**Exhibit 72**). Expanding outreach, enrollment assistance, and coverage options may be particularly impactful in areas with high numbers of uninsured individuals.

Exhibit 72. Population without Health Insurance, 2024
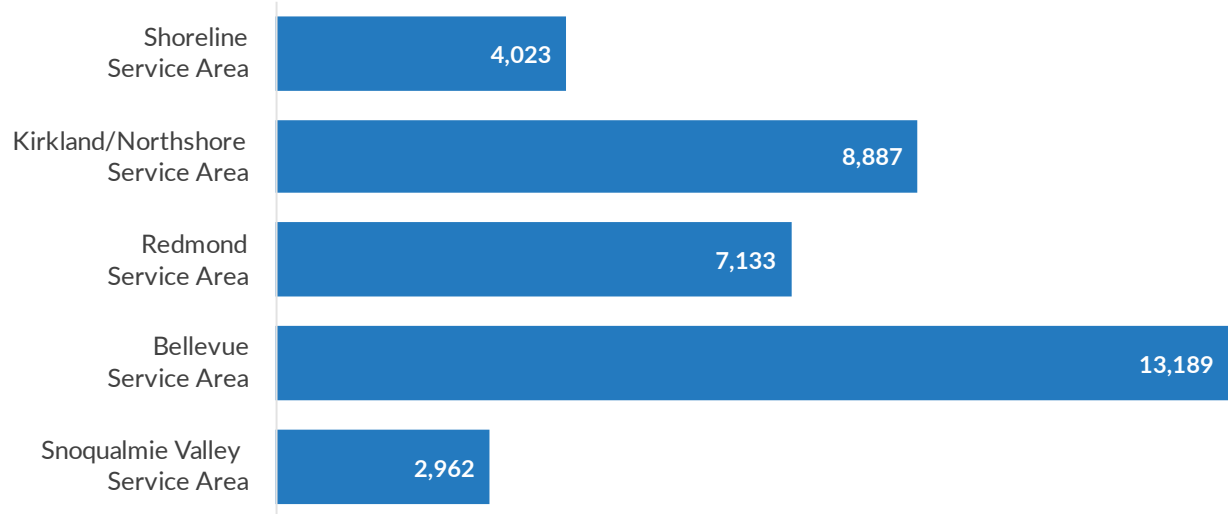
Sources: Centers for Disease Control, 2024; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S0101, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Drug abuse data show stark geographic differences, with some areas facing significantly higher drug-induced death rates (**Exhibit 73**). The Shoreline Service Area reports the highest observed rate, 24.4 deaths per 100,000. In contrast, the Redmond Service Area has some of the lowest drug-related mortality rates, with Redmond North at just 6.8. The Bellevue and Kirkland/Northshore Service Areas show mixed outcomes, with relatively low rates in some areas and higher rates in others. Enumclaw/Black Diamond/SE King County, part of the Snoqualmie Valley Service Area, reports the highest drug-induced death rate across all reporting areas at 29.9 per 100,000 residents. These disparities may reflect differences in drug abuse prevalence, socioeconomic status, and access to care.

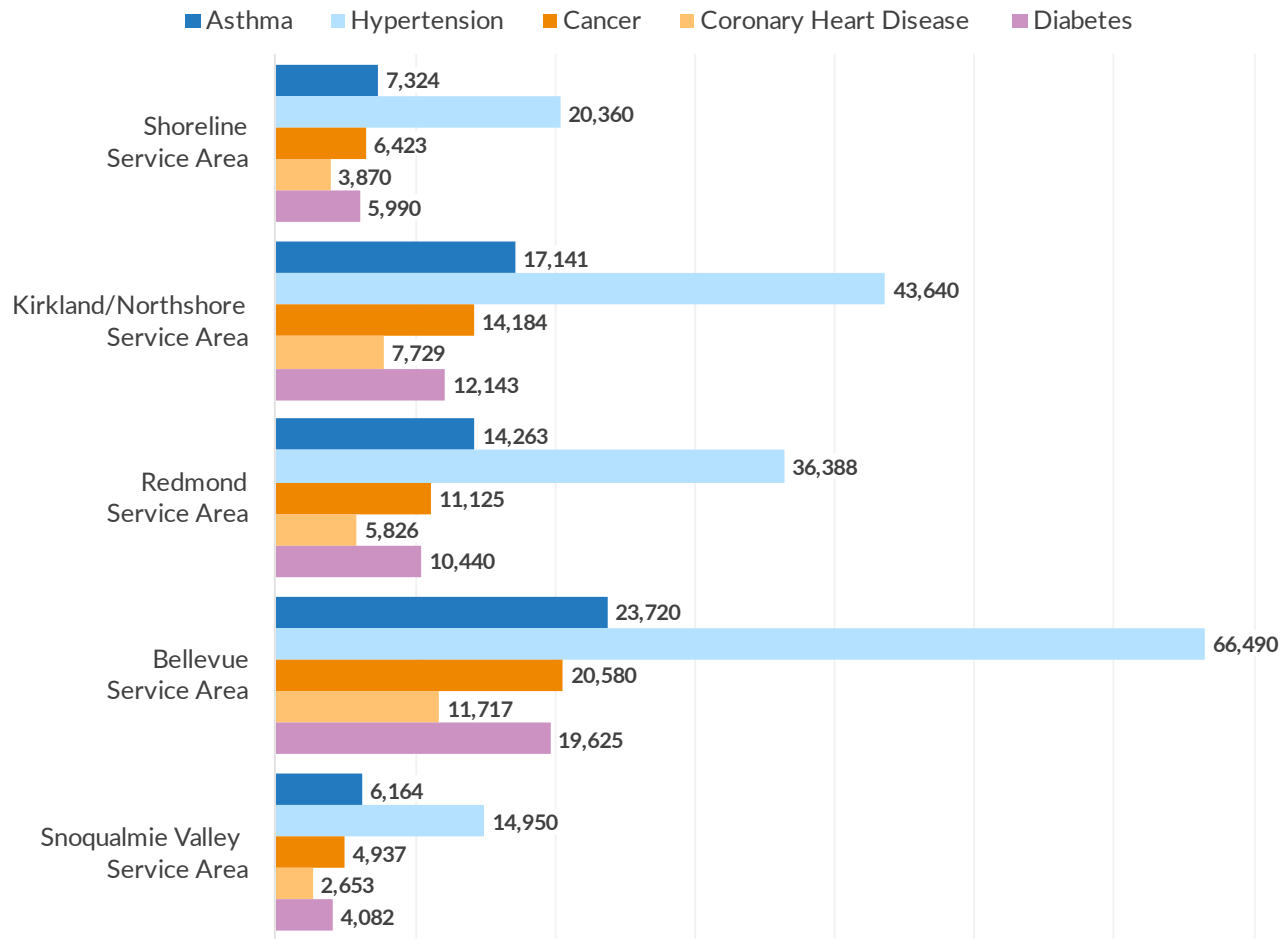## Exhibit 73. Drug-induced Deaths per 100,000, Adults, 2022

Health Reporting Area	Deaths per 100,000
Shoreline Service Area	
Shoreline HRA	24.4
Kirkland/Northshore Service Area	
Kenmore/Lake Forest Park	19.4
Bothell/Woodinville	10.6
Kirkland North	14.1
Kirkland South	10
Redmond Service Area	
Redmond North	6.8
Redmond South	7.4
Sammamish	7.7
Bellevue Service Area	
Bellevue Northeast	12
Bellevue West	10.4
Bellevue Central	15.7
Bellevue South	-
Mercer Island/Point Cities	-
Issaquah	12.4
Newcastle/Four Creeks	21.1
Snoqualmie Valley Service Area	
Bear Creek/Greater Sammamish	9.6
Duvall/Carnation/Skykomish/NE King County	19.1
Snoqualmie/North Bend	9.3
East Highlands/Hobart/Greater Maple Valley	23.3
Enumclaw/Black Diamond/SE King County	29.9

Note: HRAs reporting very low numbers are suppressed for anonymity and marked with a hyphen (-).
Sources: Public Health Seattle-King County, 2022; BERK, 2025.

Chronic conditions such as hypertension, asthma, diabetes, cancer, and coronary heart disease are widespread, with Bellevue reporting the highest case counts across nearly all categories **(Exhibit 74)**. Hypertension is the most common condition across all service areas, affecting 66,490 Bellevue residents alone. Rates are also high in Kirkland/Northshore and Redmond. These data underscore the need for chronic disease prevention and management programs, especially in higher-density areas where the number of affected individuals is greatest.

Exhibit 74. Common Chronic Health Conditions, 2024

Legend: ■ Asthma ■ Hypertension ■ Cancer ■ Coronary Heart Disease ■ Diabetes

Shoreline Service Area
- Asthma: 7,324
- Hypertension: 20,360
- Cancer: 6,423
- Coronary Heart Disease: 3,870
- Diabetes: 5,990

Kirkland/Northshore Service Area
- Asthma: 17,141
- Hypertension: 43,640
- Cancer: 14,184
- Coronary Heart Disease: 7,729
- Diabetes: 12,143

Redmond Service Area
- Asthma: 14,263
- Hypertension: 36,388
- Cancer: 11,125
- Coronary Heart Disease: 5,826
- Diabetes: 10,440

Bellevue Service Area
- Asthma: 23,720
- Hypertension: 66,490
- Cancer: 20,580
- Coronary Heart Disease: 11,717
- Diabetes: 19,625

Snoqualmie Valley Service Area
- Asthma: 6,164
- Hypertension: 14,950
- Cancer: 4,937
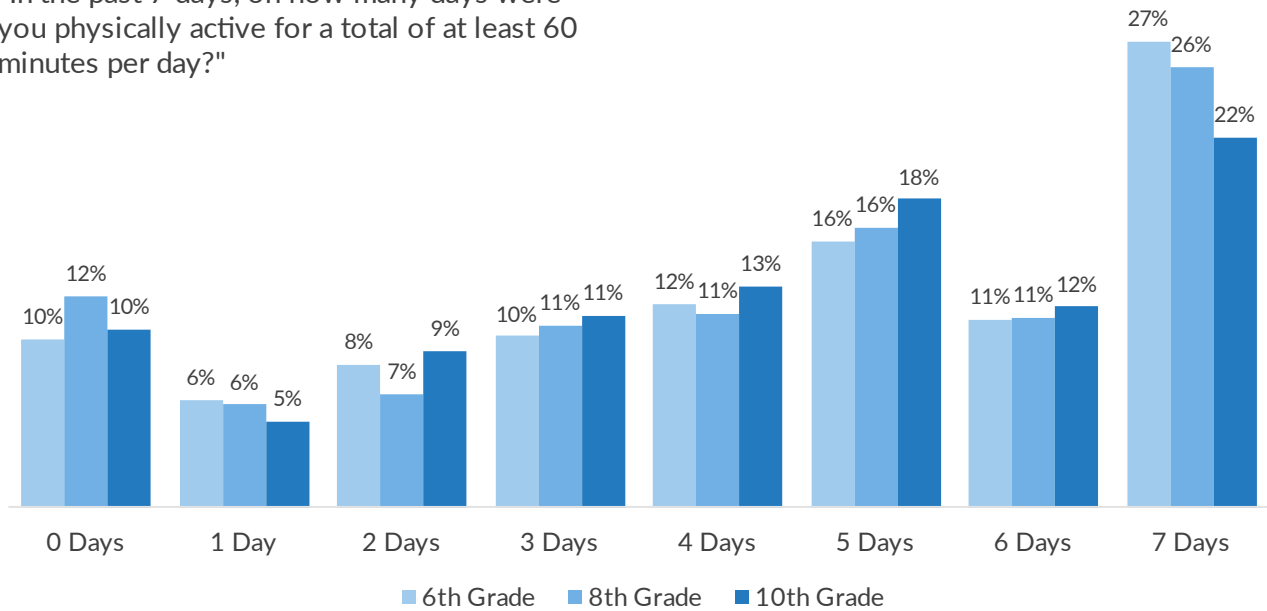- Coronary Heart Disease: 2,653
- Diabetes: 4,082

Sources: Centers for Disease Control, 2024; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S0101, 2019-2023; BERK, 2025.

Among school-age populations, health-related concerns also vary by age. In 2023, physical activity declined with grade level: 27% of 6th graders were active for at least 60 minutes on all seven days of the week, compared to 26% of 8th graders and 22% of 10th graders (**Exhibit 75**). This drop suggests the need to maintain access to physical education, recreation spaces, and safe transportation as students grow older.

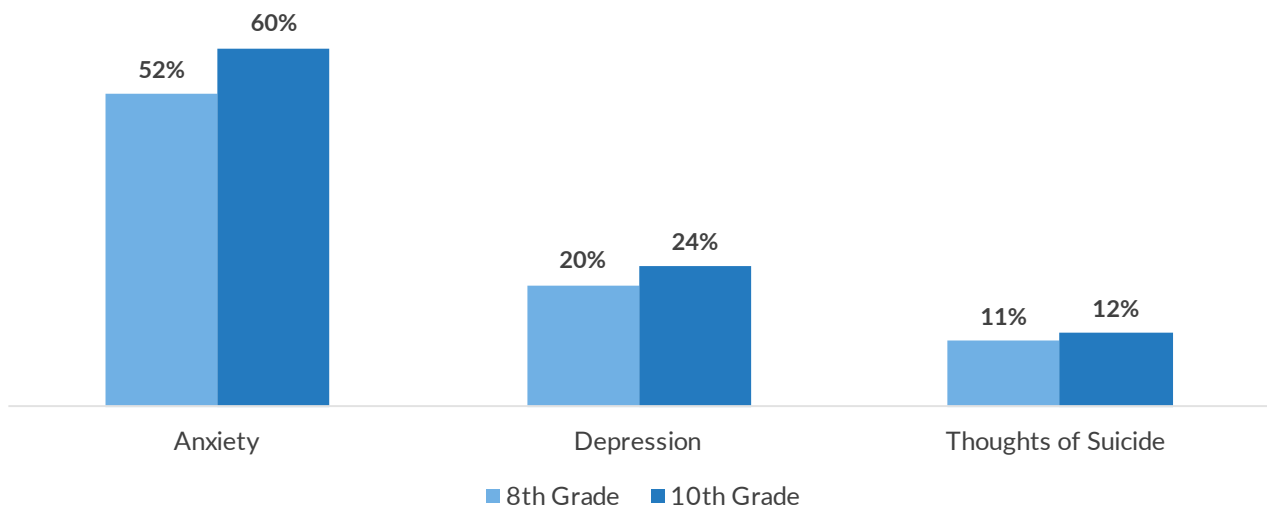## Exhibit 75. Physical Activity in Students, King County, 2023

"In the past 7 days, on how many days were you physically active for a total of at least 60 minutes per day?"

Legend: 6th Grade, 8th Grade, 10th Grade

Data points:
- 0 Days: 10%, 12%, 10%
- 1 Day: 6%, 6%, 5%
- 2 Days: 8%, 7%, 9%
- 3 Days: 10%, 11%, 11%
- 4 Days: 12%, 11%, 13%
- 5 Days: 16%, 16%, 18%
- 6 Days: 11%, 11%, 12%
- 7 Days: 27%, 26%, 22%

Sources: Healthy Youth Survey, 2023; BERK, 2025.

Mental health challenges were also significant, particularly among older students (**Exhibit 76**). Sixty percent of 10th graders and 52% of 8th graders reported experiencing anxiety, with 24% and 20%, respectively, reporting symptoms of depression. Around one in ten students in both grades reported suicidal thoughts. These figures emphasize the urgent need for school-based mental health services, early intervention, and supportive peer environments.

Exhibit 76. Mental Health of Students, King County, 2023

Legend: 8th Grade, 10th Grade

Data points:
- Anxiety: 52%, 60%
- Depression: 20%, 24%
- Thoughts of Suicide: 11%, 12%

Sources: Healthy Youth Survey, 2023; BERK, 2025.

Together, these data highlight opportunities to improve health outcomes through age- and place-specific strategies, whether by expanding insurance access, investing in chronic disease management, or strengthening support for youth mental and physical health.

Child Care

Across the Needs Assessment Area, demand for child care and early learning services significantly outpaces available supply **(Exhibit 77)**. The Bellevue Service Area exhibits the greatest overall need, with an estimated 31,391 children remaining unserved, while only 10,675 receive care. Redmond and Kirkland/Northshore Service Areas also have high numbers of unserved children, 27,251 and 21,730, respectively, compared to 8,231 and 4,595 in care. The Snoqualmie Valley and Shoreline Service Areas have fewer children overall, but similarly large service gaps: only about 1,640 children are in care in Snoqualmie Valley compared to 13,402 unserved, and in Shoreline, just 1,926 children are served out of a need exceeding 9,800.

Exhibit 77. Child Care and Early Learning Need, 2025
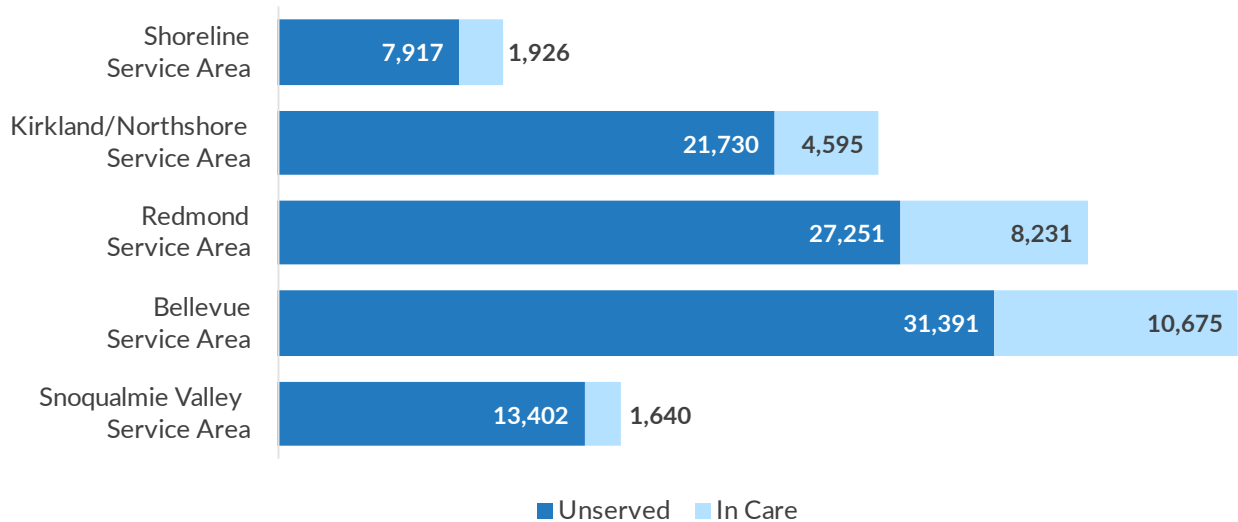
Sources: Washington State Department of Children, Youth & Families, 2025; BERK, 2025.

Child care costs in King County vary by age group, with the highest rates charged for the youngest children (**Exhibit 78**). In 2025, the median monthly rate for infant care at licensed centers is $2,530, followed by $2,167 for toddlers and $1,820 for preschoolers. School-age care is significantly lower at $433 per month. These high rates, particularly for infants and toddlers, highlight the financial strain on families and underscore the importance of affordable care options to support early childhood development and family economic stability.

Exhibit 78. Median Monthly Rates for Child Care at Care Centers by Age Group, King County, 2025

Age Group	Median Monthly Rate
Infant	$2,530
Toddler	$2,167
Preschool	$1,820
School-age	$433

Sources: Child Care Aware of Washington, 2025; BERK, 2025.

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Appendix A

Summary of Community Engagement Activities

The Hopelink Community Needs Assessment process included a program of stakeholder engagement designed to complement the data analysis for identifying community needs. An Engagement Plan guided the stakeholder engagement activities with the following objectives:

Learning Objectives

- Identify service needs among existing clients in Hopelink's service area, especially North and East King County.

- Identify services that do not exist in Hopelink's model, particularly in Hopelink's program areas of food assistance, employment services, financial assistance, housing, transportation, adult education, financial capabilities, energy assistance, and family development.

- Identify barriers that prevent people who need services from accessing them, including reasons they may be underserved or served by other providers, as well as distinctions between rural, suburban, and urban access.

- Identify community strengths and positive community associations from community members.

- Identify and articulate community perceptions about poverty, homelessness, and housing in Hopelink's service area.

Process Objectives

While the learning objectives relate to what we hope to learn from stakeholders, the process objectives guide the engagement approaches. Community engagement activities will be designed to:

- Leverage existing efforts, such as the Hopelink Customer Satisfaction Survey, to utilize client feedback and reduce respondent fatigue.

- Gather first-person perspectives on poverty and needs in King and Snohomish Counties to ensure resulting policies and strategies benefit from local knowledge, experience, and wisdom.

- Engage clients and potential clients who do not speak English as their first language.
- Report back to participants on assessment results to demonstrate accountability and close the feedback loop.

Exhibit 79. Engagement Efforts

Event Description	Participants
HOPELINK STAFF (INDIVIDUALS AND VOLUNTEERS)	
Engagement Plan Development	▪ Karen Rodriguez, VP of Community Affairs ▪ Staci Sahoo, Director of Mobility Management ▪ Wes Barga, Director of Organizational Excellence ▪ Catalina Gomez, Senior Manager of Community Affairs
Hopelink Volunteers	▪ 5 volunteers ▪ Program involvement includes food banks, mobile market, van driver, English for work
CLIENT AND COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS	
Community Organizations	10 organizations ▪ Africans on the Eastside ▪ Bellevue Lifespring ▪ Chinese Information and Service Center ▪ Eastside Pathways ▪ Food Lifeline ▪ Mary's Place ▪ Muslim Community Resource Center ▪ Neighborhood House ▪ SnoValley Senior Center ▪ Sound Generations
Russian-speaking individuals	▪ Interviews with staff at Chinese Information and Service Center ▪ 3 community members
Chinese-speaking seniors	▪ 10 participants ▪ Participants live in Bellevue and Redmond ▪ 4 self-identified as clients of Hopelink
Community-Liaison-led Interviews with Spanish-speaking individuals	▪ 40 community members ▪ Participants live mostly in Bellevue and Redmond ▪ 34 self-identified as clients of Hopelink
INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATIVES	

Human Services Managers	▪ Brenda Parker – City of Issaquah
	▪ Jen Boone - City of Kirkland
	▪ Ruth Blaw - City of Bellevue
	▪ Suni Tolton - City of Shoreline
	▪ Brooke Buckingham - City of Redmond
Snoqualmie Valley Local Advocacy Team (SVLAT)	▪ 10 participants