



**EDC**  
**ISLAND**  
**COUNTY**

# Island County Demographics Report

*Released January 2023*

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for Island County  
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# Introduction

Demographics is the study of a population based on age, race, sex, and a host of other factors that play an integral role in any local economy. For instance, the goods and services needed to support a family with young children differ dramatically from those needed for a retired couple. Governments, corporations, nongovernment organizations, and many others use demographics to learn more about a population's characteristics for a multitude of purposes, including policy development and economic market research.

This report presents basic demographic data about Island County so the reader can gain an understanding of how demographics might affect their local area. When reading this report, it's important to understand the difference between median and mean.

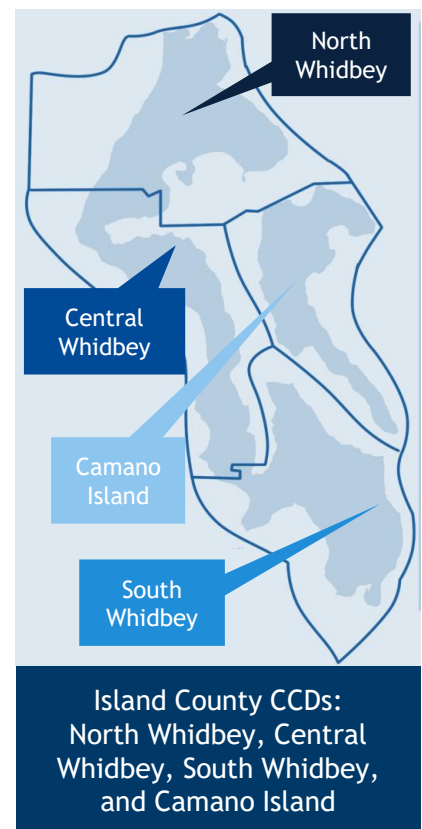
- Median: the middle value in a series arranged from smallest to largest.
- Mean: a value computed by dividing the sum of a set of terms by the number of terms.

For the median, Census finds the point smack dab in the middle of the data set (all reported incomes). For the mean, Census takes reported income from all Island County households, adds them together, and divides by the number of households.

## Source of Information

The primary source for all the information in this report comes from the *U.S. Census's American Community Survey, 2021 5-year estimates using 2021 inflation-adjusted dollars* except where noted. The use of various data sets is normal because of the time needed to aggregate and consolidate data for a specific period of time. This data is relevant and allows a baseline from which subsequent years can be compared. All data is estimated using statistical projections and contains varying margins of error.

In the first half of the report, North Whidbey, Central Whidbey, South Whidbey, and Camano Island serve as "Census County Divisions (CCD)." A CCD is a subdivision of a county or equivalent entity that is a relatively permanent statistical area established cooperatively by the Census Bureau and state, tribal, and local government authorities.



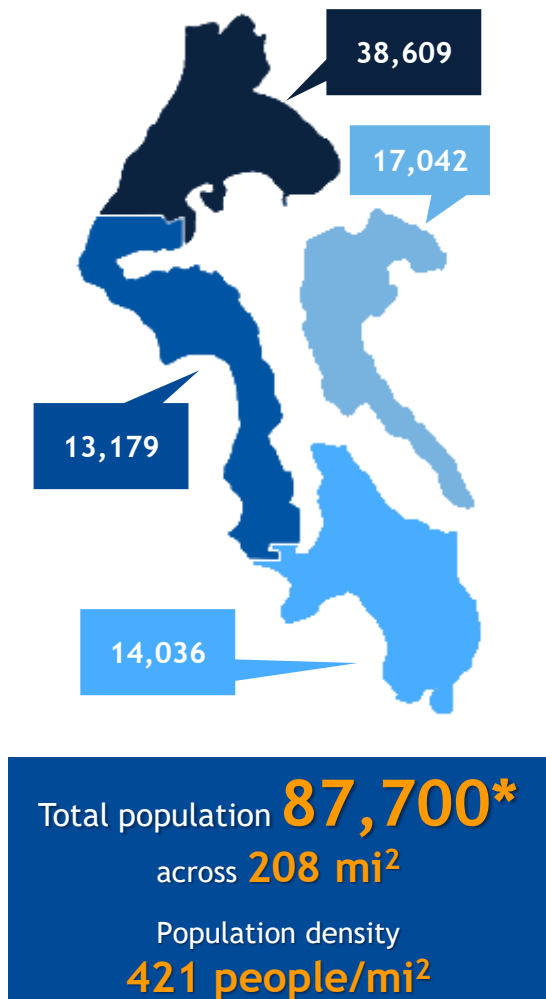
## Population

**ISLAND COUNTY** is a unique area, well known for its exceptional quality of life. Residents and tourists alike marvel at the fantastic views of the snow-covered Cascade and Olympic mountains, the scenic waters of Puget Sound and Strait of Juan de Fuca, and primordial rainforests mingled with pastoral vistas of this diverse island setting.

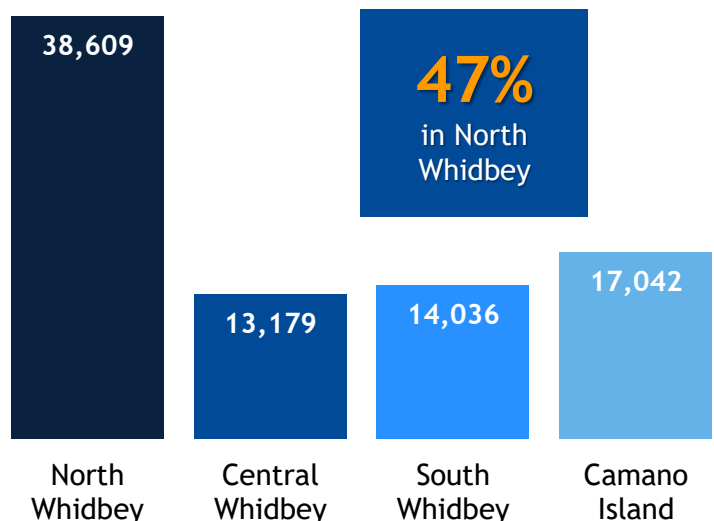
Island County is comprised of Whidbey, Camano, Ben Ure, Smith, Deception, Strawberry, Minor, and Kalamut Islands, with Whidbey, Camano, and Baby as the three settled islands. Whidbey Island is the 5th longest island in the contiguous U.S.—45 miles long with 148 miles of shoreline. Camano is 16 miles long and has 52 miles of shoreline.

The effect of population size and growth can be positive or negative depending on the circumstances. Large populations have the potential to be great for economic development. Generally, the more people an area has, the more work is done, and the more work is done, the more value (or money) is created.

Unfortunately, it isn't that simple. In a wealthier county with abundant resources and money, a larger population is an asset. But that isn't always the case in counties with limited resources. Combined limited resources and a larger population put pressure on existing resources. A larger population means more people to feed, more healthcare and education services to provide, and generally more stress on infrastructure.



### Population by CCD



\*Washington State Office of Financial Management, June 29, 2022, official population estimates update.

The size of the U.S. population and its age distribution at any point in time are the result of historical trends in birth rates, mortality rates, and immigration rates. Today's aging U.S. population results from the sharp decline in the birth rate in the 1960s, which marked the end of the Baby Boom, and the long-running decline in mortality rates. Immigration can offset these demographic forces to some degree but has not been of sufficient magnitude to reverse population aging.

Workers in different age groups may be substitutes or complements to one another and therefore the productivity of one age group can depend on interactions with workers in other age groups. Such productivity spillovers could occur between older and younger workers if, for example, an older worker's greater experience increases not only their own productivity but also the productivity of those who work with them.

*"The Effect of Population Aging on Economic Growth, the Labor Force and Productivity," 2016*

The effective labor input depends on the employment rate in the economy and the human capital of the workforce, and both of these components are potentially shaped by the population age structure. Among individuals, labor supply behavior varies by age and over time.

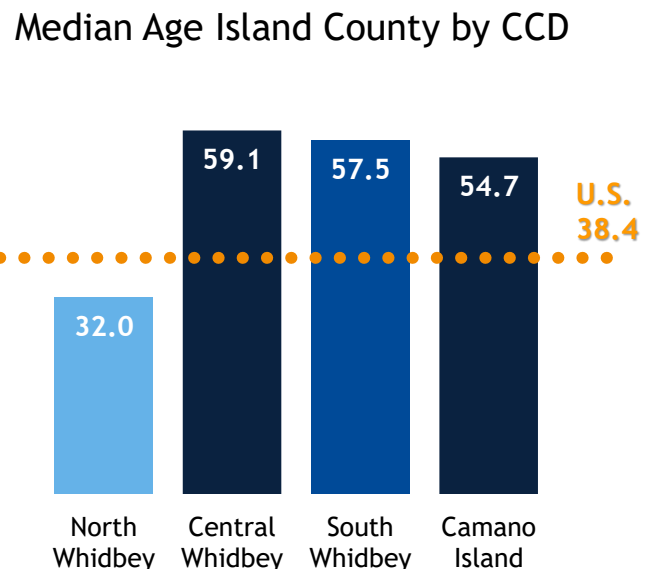
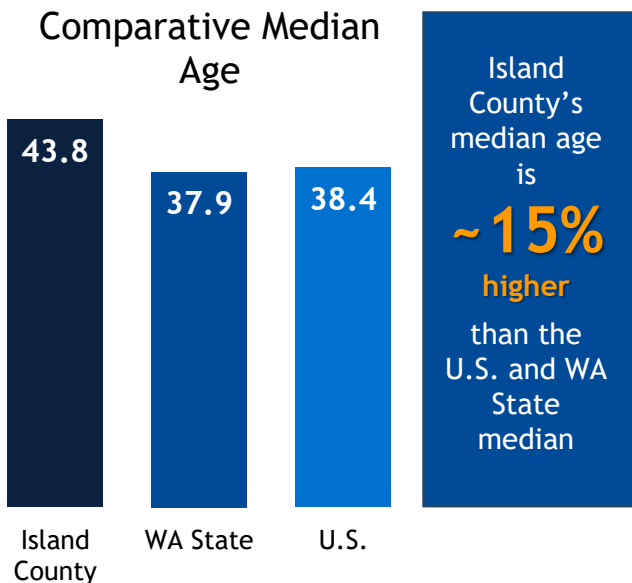
While the above comments are written regarding the U.S. population, the implications are the same for Island County, too.

Naval Air Station Whidbey Island influences the median age of North Whidbey. Of the U.S. active-duty force

**81.2%** are under **35 years**  
**66.4%** are under **30 years**

This plays a major role in keeping North Whidbey's and Island County's median age as low as it is.

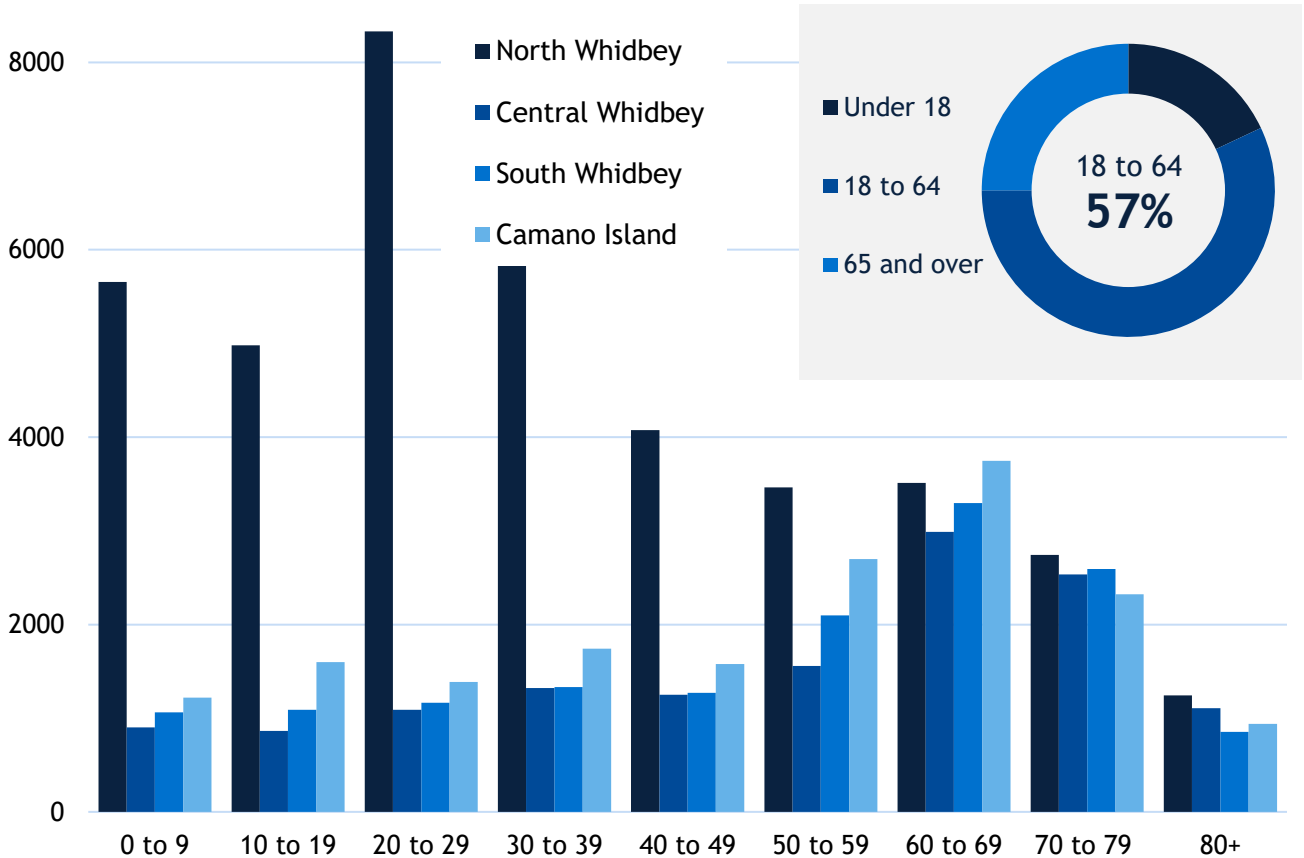
*Department of Defense 2020 Demographics Report*



Location	2020 Census	2021 Census	Change
North Whidbey	31.3	32.0	+0.7
Central Whidbey	58.6	59.1	+0.5
South Whidbey	57.5	57.5	No change
Camano Island	54.8	54.7	-0.1
U.S.	38.2	38.4	+0.2

From 2020 to 2021 North and Central Whidbey CCDs showed an **increase** higher than the national average in the **median age**, South Whidbey had **no change**, and Camano Island had a **slight drop** in median age.

Island County Population by Age Group by CCD



When looking strictly at numbers of people per age group, North Whidbey has more people in each age group except the 60-69 age range where Camano Island has slightly more. In the 0-49 age range, North Whidbey’s population significantly exceeds the other three CCDs. In the 0-39 age range, North Whidbey’s population is greater than the combined population of the other three CCDs. The result is that North Whidbey’s median age is significantly lower than Camano, Central Whidbey, and South Whidbey CCDs.

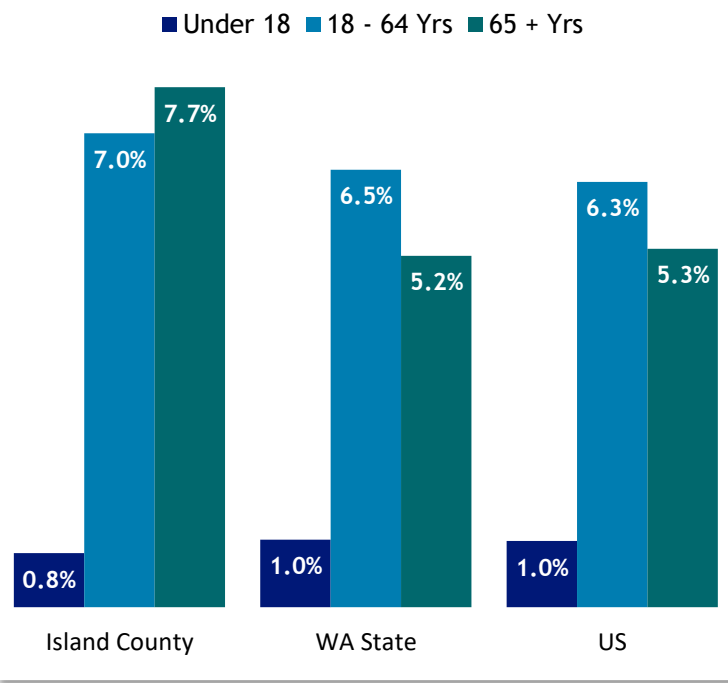
# Disabilities

Census tracks the following disability areas: people with a hearing, vision, cognitive loss and ambulatory, self-care and independent living difficulty.

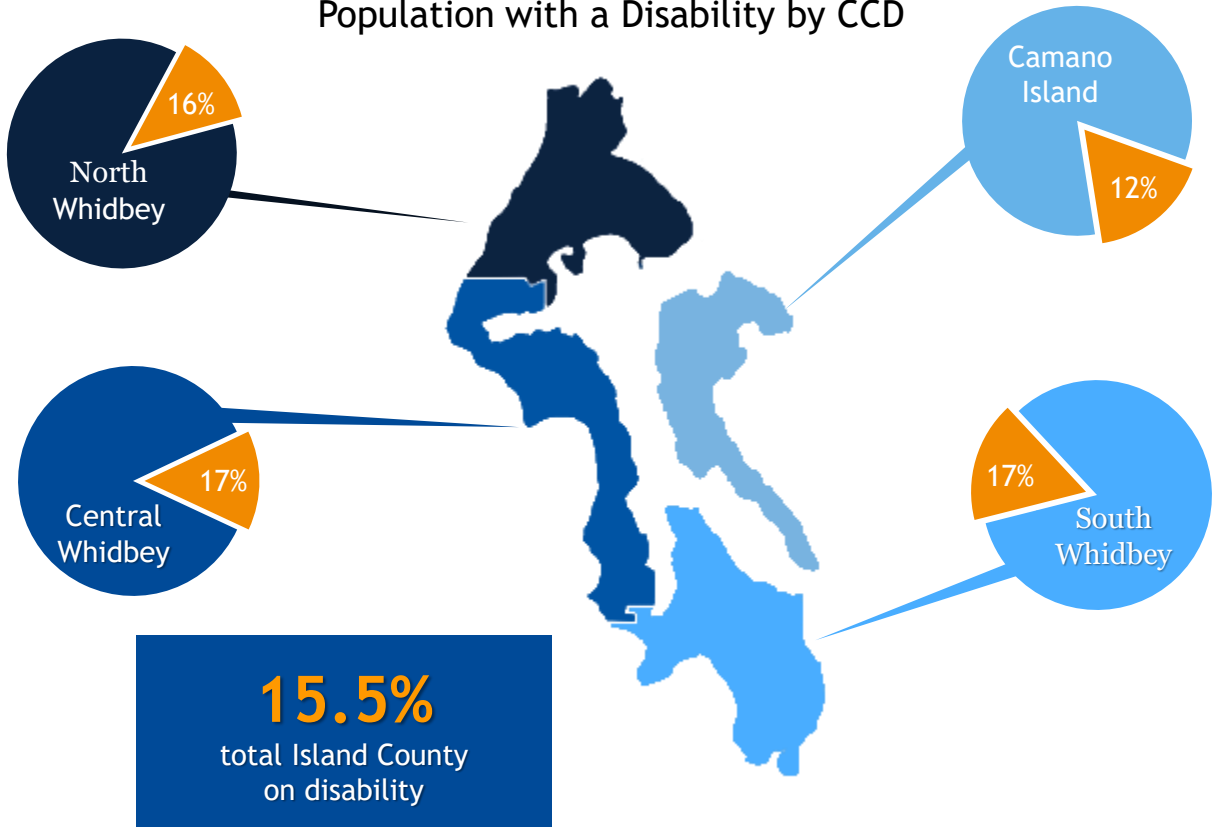
Apart from the under 18 age group, Island County has ~10% more than the average percentage of disabilities than Washington State and the U.S. in the 18-64 age group, and ~47% more than Washington State and the U.S. disabilities averages in the over 65 age group.

In the chart below, the four CCDs for Island County are close in percentage of the population with disabilities. Central Whidbey's higher median age helps drive their percentage of disabled people a bit higher than the other three CCDs.

### Percent with a Disability by Age Group



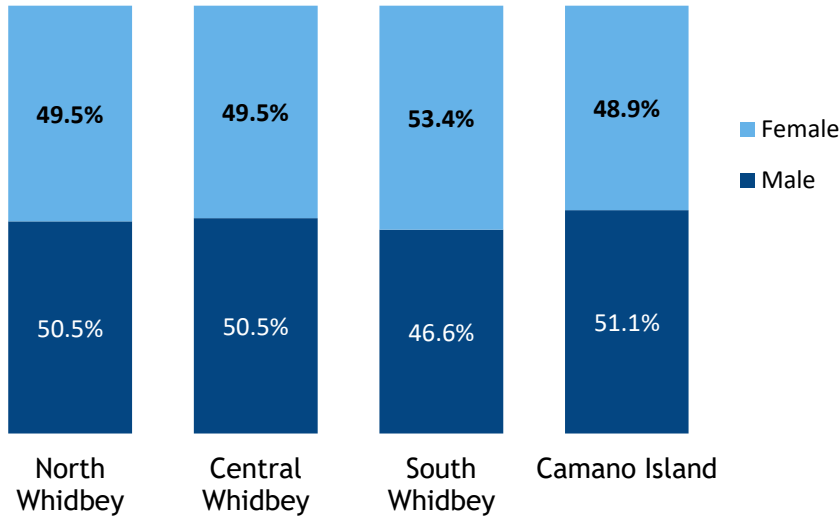
### Population with a Disability by CCD



# Sex and Fertility

Population is one of the most important factors in economic growth, and the speed of its growth determines its size.

## Population of Men and Women

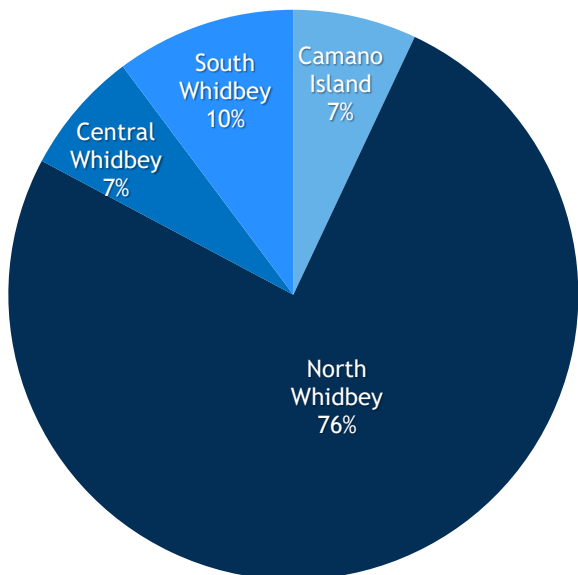


Island County has a roughly **equal** ratio of male-to-female residents

**50%** men  
**50%** women

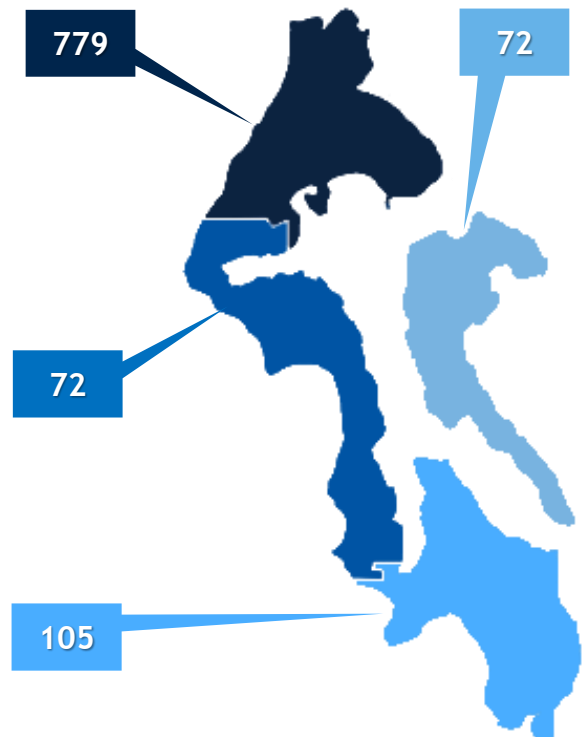
South Whidbey is the anomaly with **10% more** women than men

## Births in the Past 12 Months by Percent



**~76%** births occur in North Whidbey due to lower median age higher population in 0-49 age range

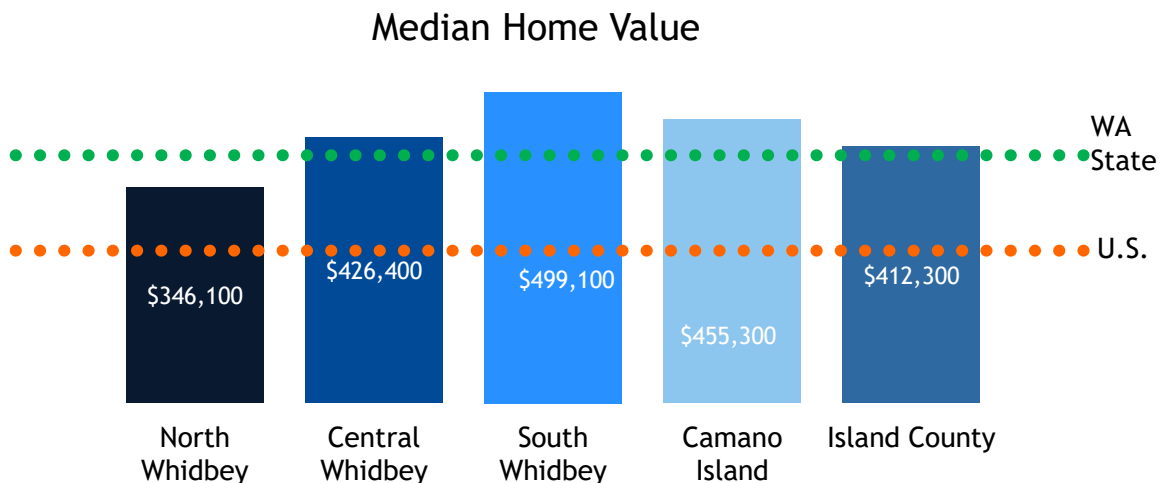
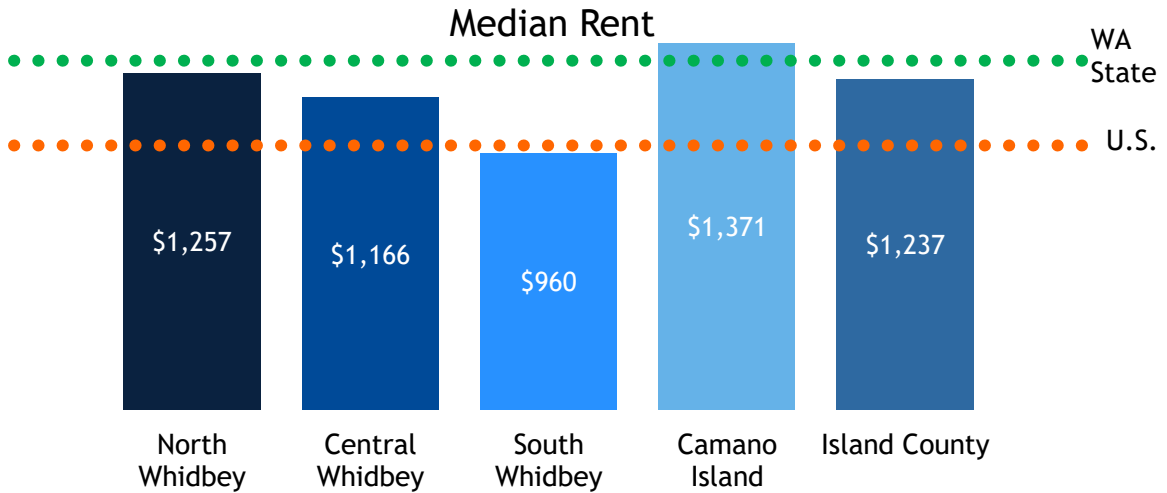
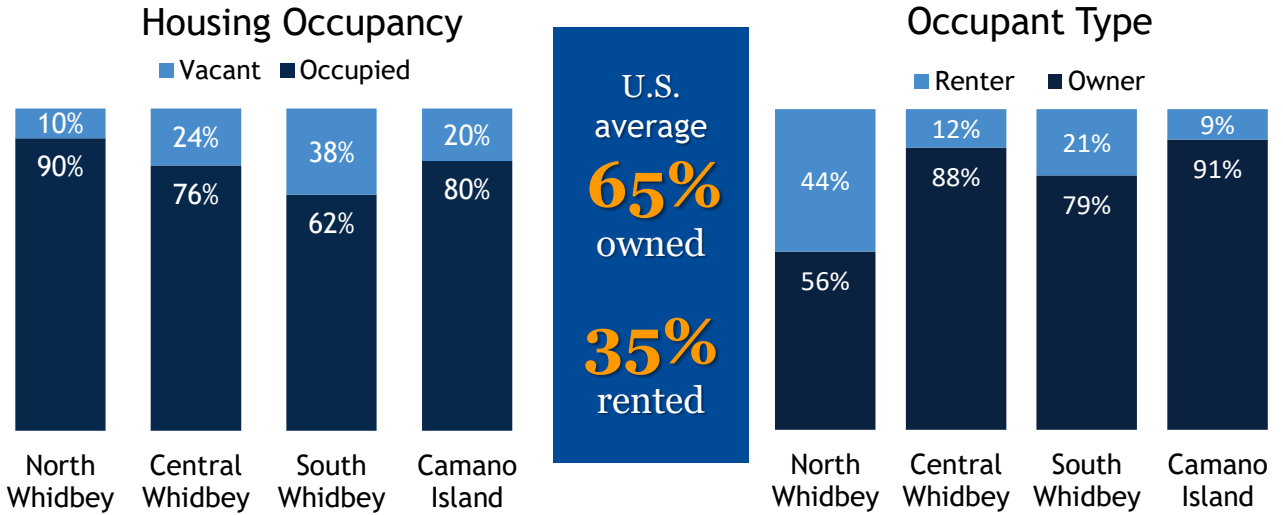
## Births in the Past 12 Months by numbers





# Housing

Census defines a housing unit as “a house, an apartment, a mobile home or trailer, a group of rooms, or a single room occupied as separate living quarters, or if vacant, intended for occupancy as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants live separately from any other individuals in the building and which have direct access from outside the building or through a common hall.”

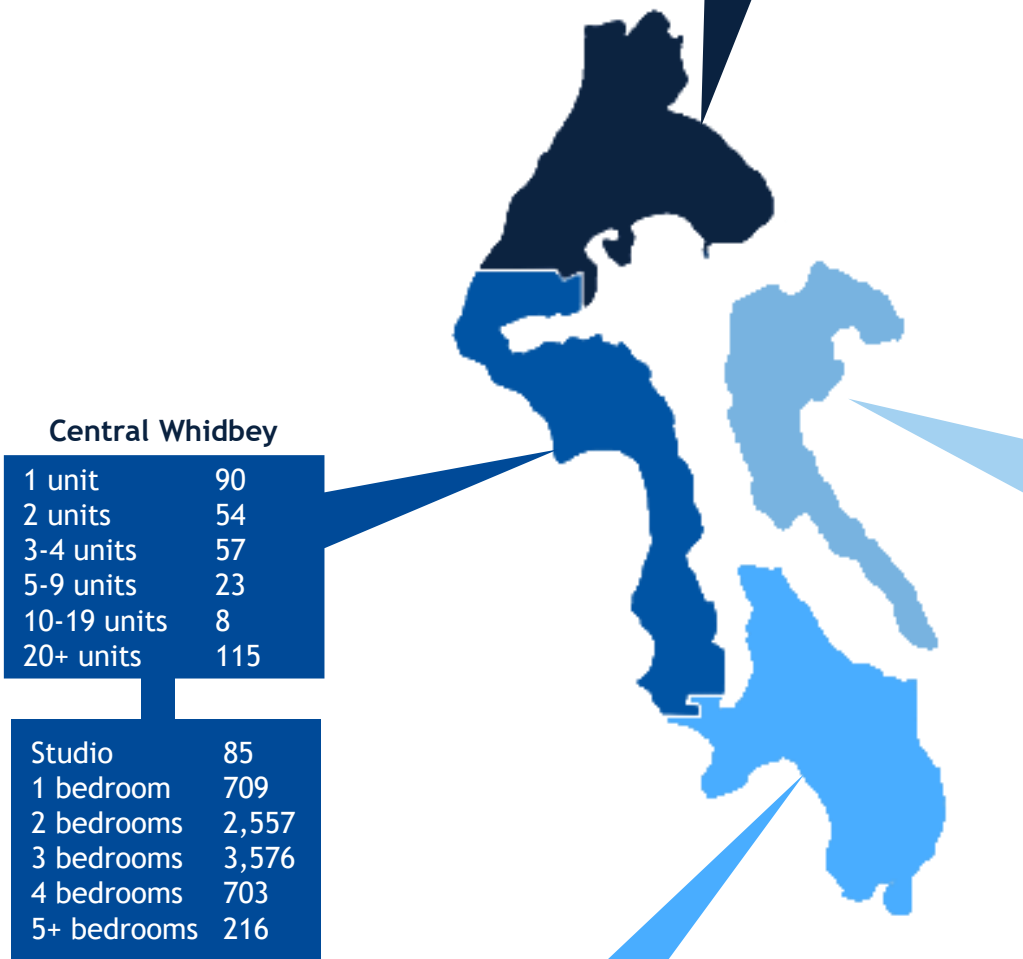


# Housing

1 unit	860	Studio	431
2 units	936	1 bedroom	1,060
3-4 units	1,023	2 bedrooms	4,542
5-9 units	773	3 bedrooms	7,577
10-19 units	798	4 bedrooms	2,566
20+ units	487	5+ bedrooms	275

North Whidbey has  
**1.9x more** housing than South Whidbey  
**2.1x more** housing than Central Whidbey  
**1.9x more** housing than Camano Island

North Whidbey



Central Whidbey

1 unit	90
2 units	54
3-4 units	57
5-9 units	23
10-19 units	8
20+ units	115

Studio	85
1 bedroom	709
2 bedrooms	2,557
3 bedrooms	3,576
4 bedrooms	703
5+ bedrooms	216

Camano Island

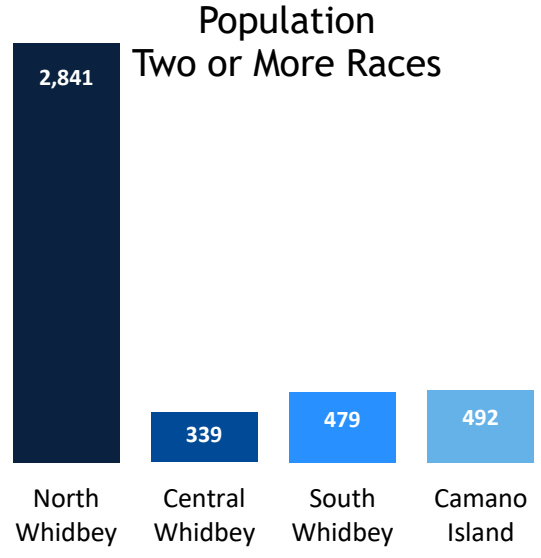
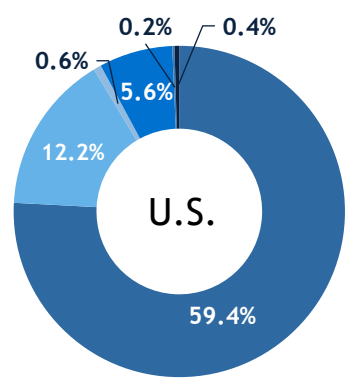
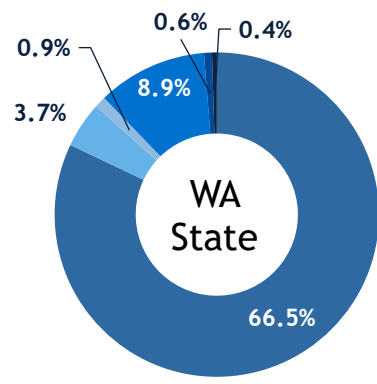
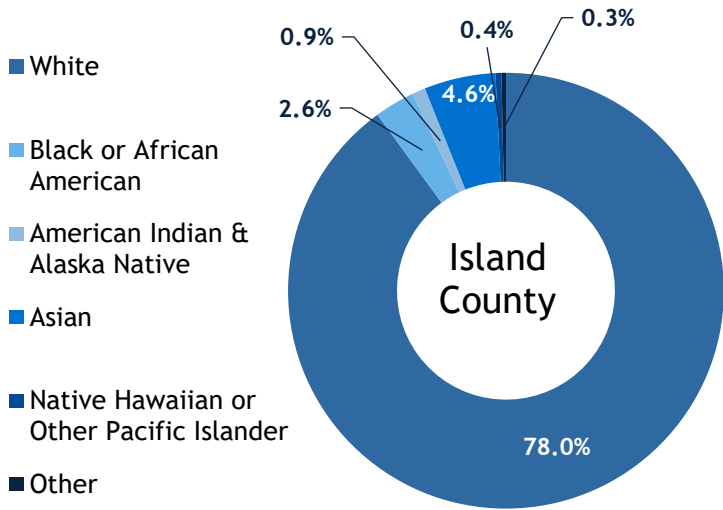
1 unit	49
2 units	41
3-4 units	23
5-9 units	7
10-19 units	46
20+ units	33

Studio	78
1 bedroom	526
2 bedrooms	2,487
3 bedrooms	4,444
4 bedrooms	975
5+ bedrooms	198

1 unit	134	Studio	217
2 units	150	1 bedroom	732
3-4 units	160	2 bedrooms	3,434
5-9 units	43	3 bedrooms	3,224
10-19 units	0	4 bedrooms	896
20+ units	116	5+ bedrooms	275

South Whidbey

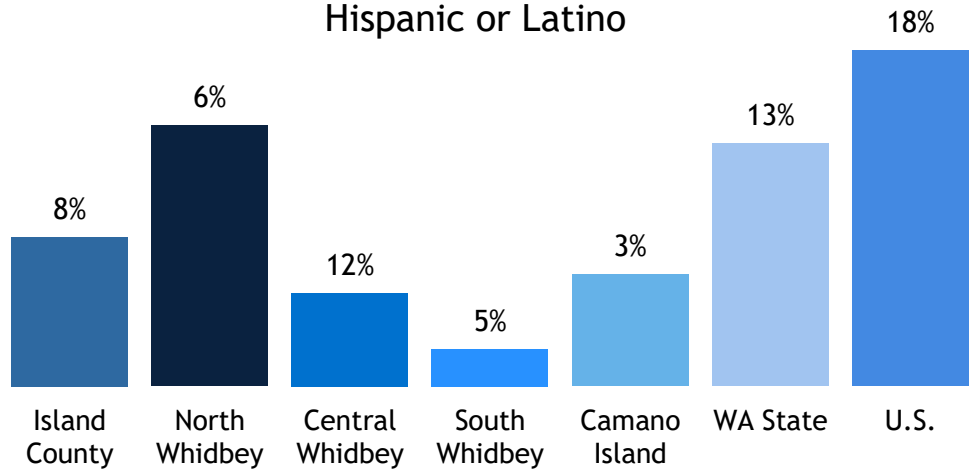
# Race



The U.S. Census Bureau collects race data based on self-identification. Respondents may report more than one race.

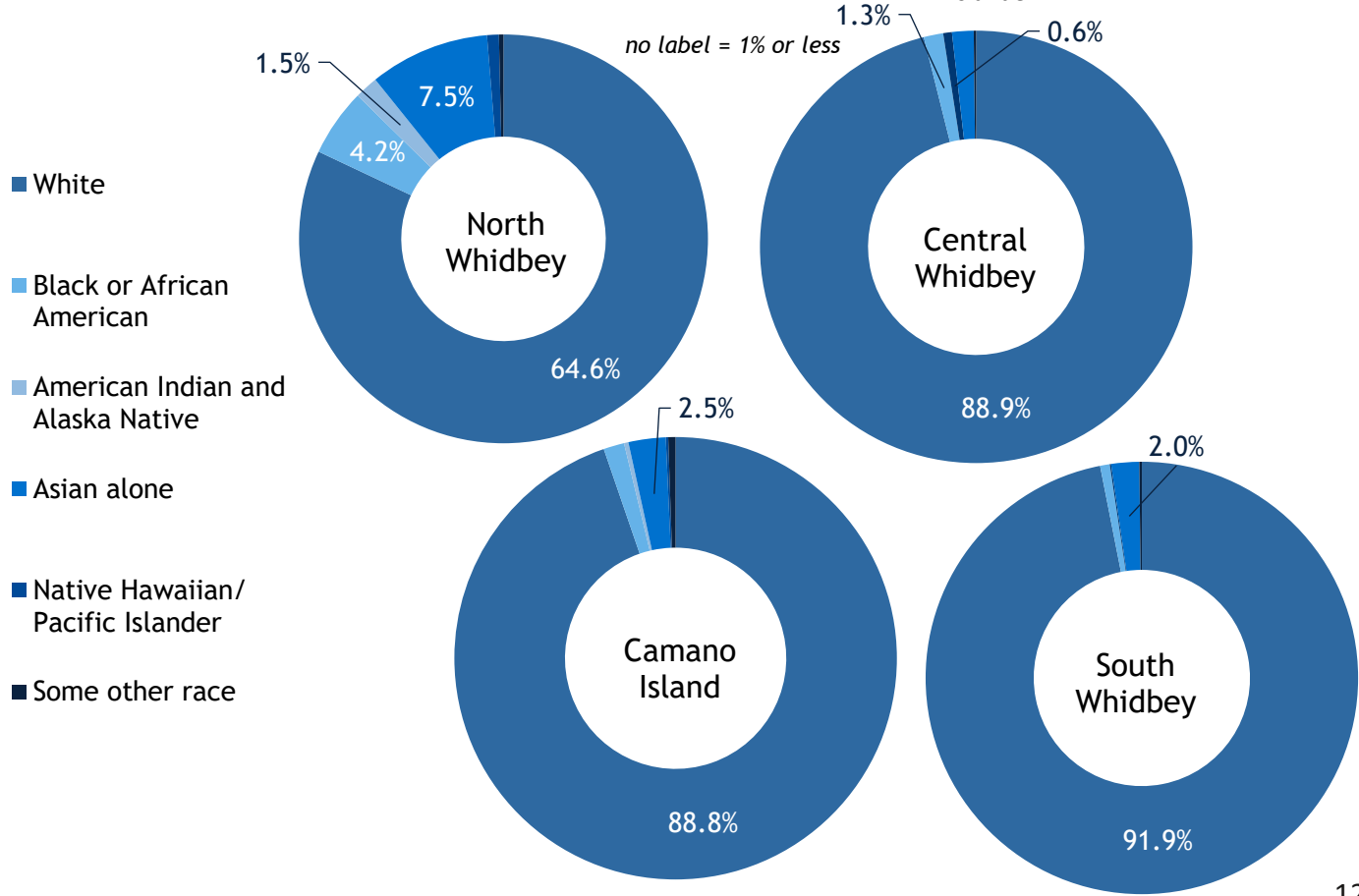
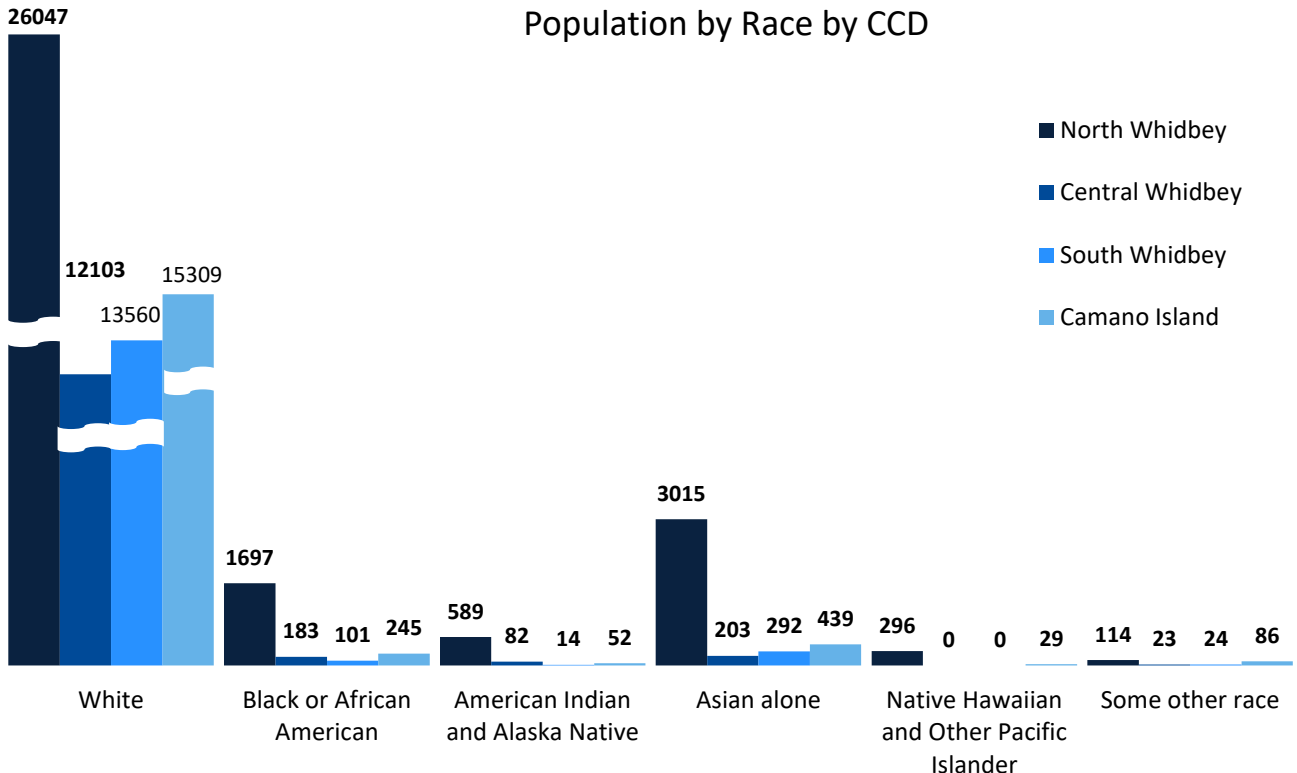
**Hispanic or Latino** refers to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.

## Hispanic or Latino

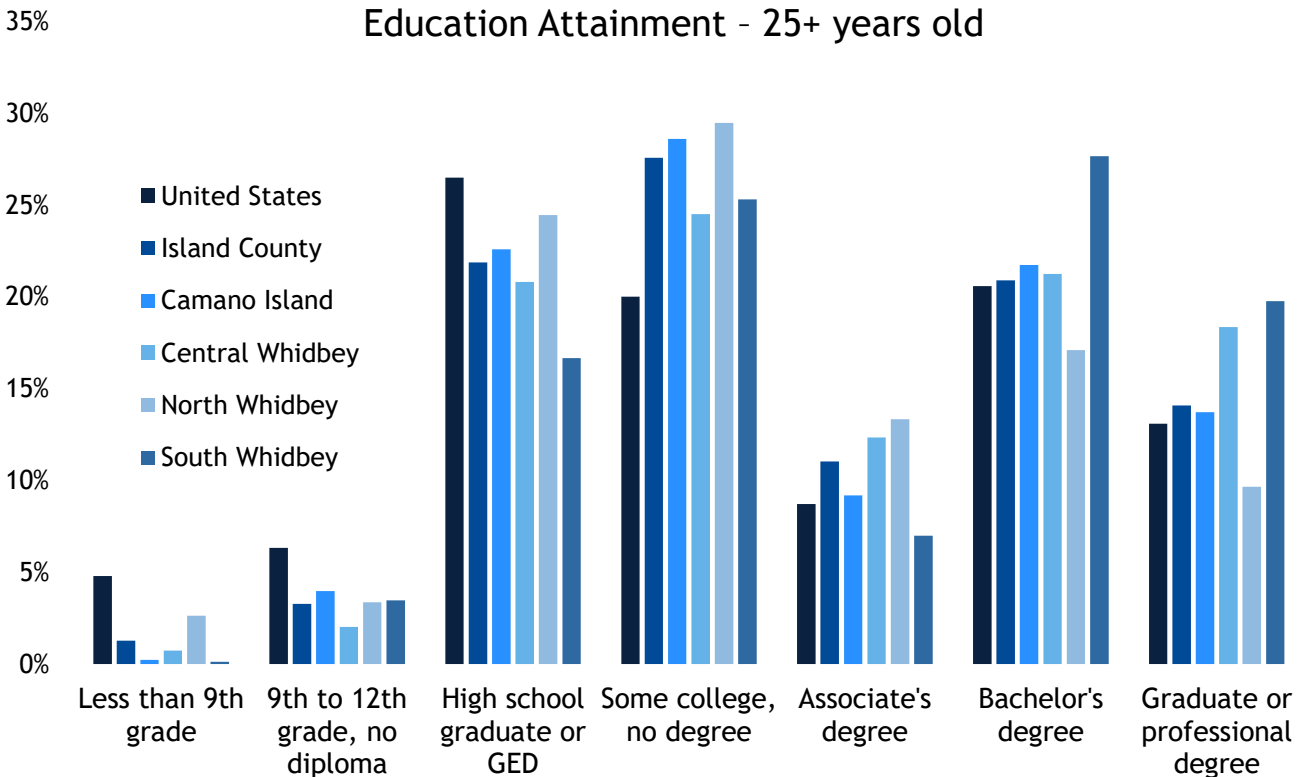
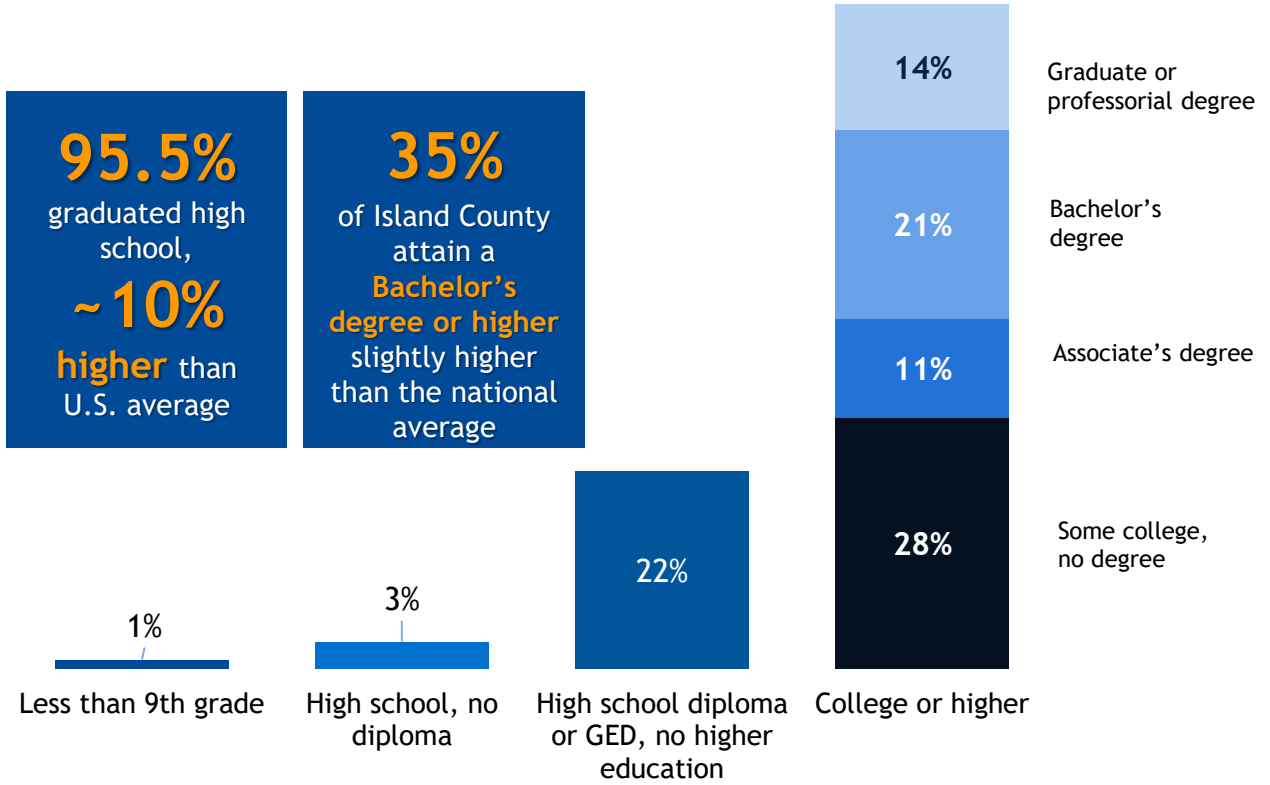


# Race

## Population by Race by CCD

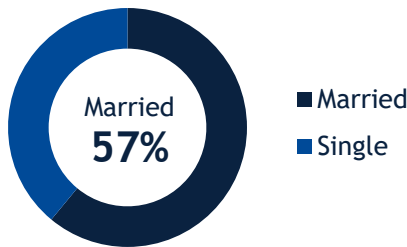
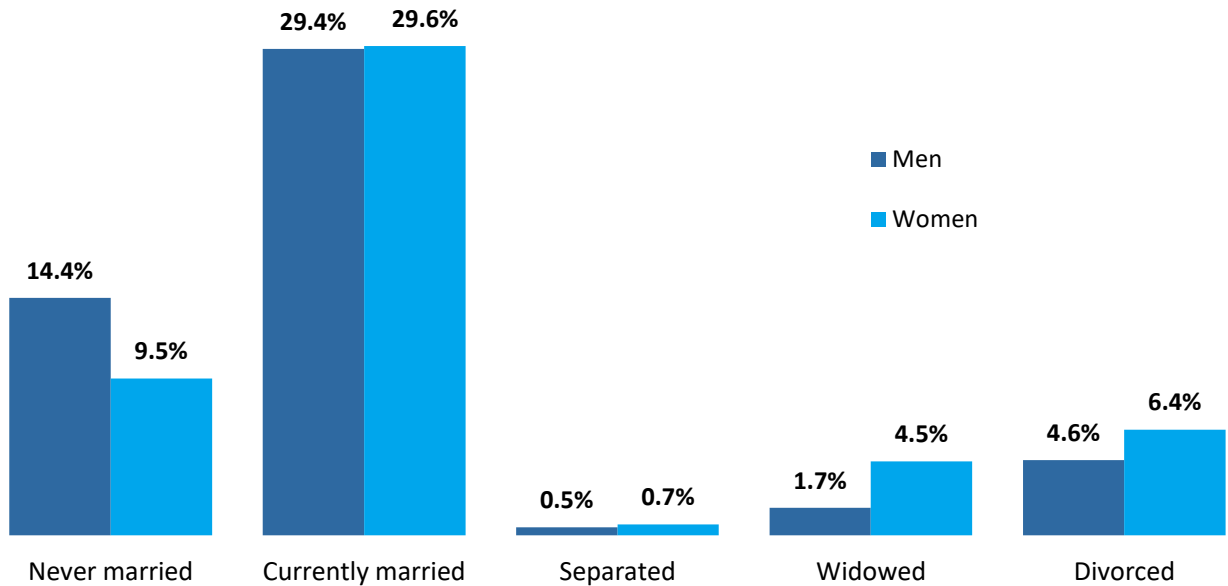


## Highest Level or Education Attainment - 25+ years old

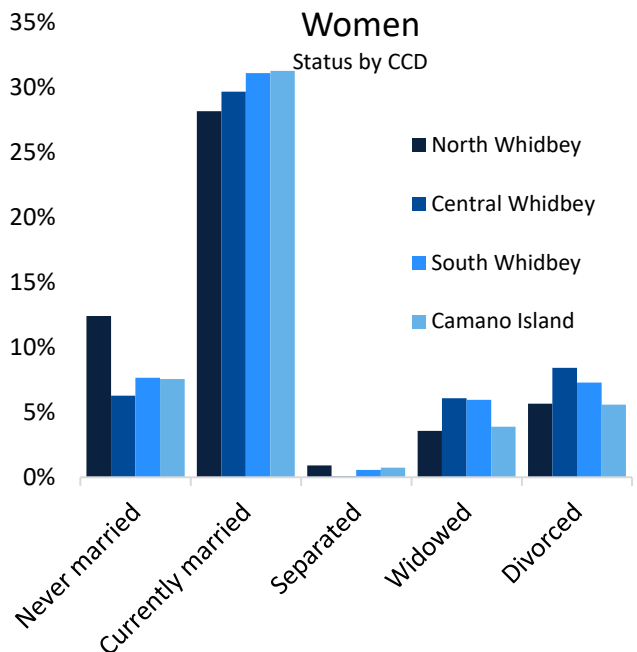
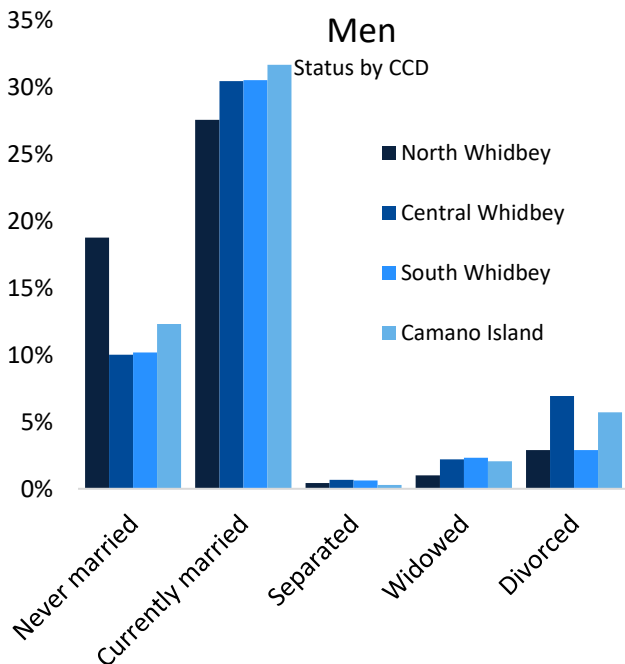


# Marital Status

### Island County Marital Status

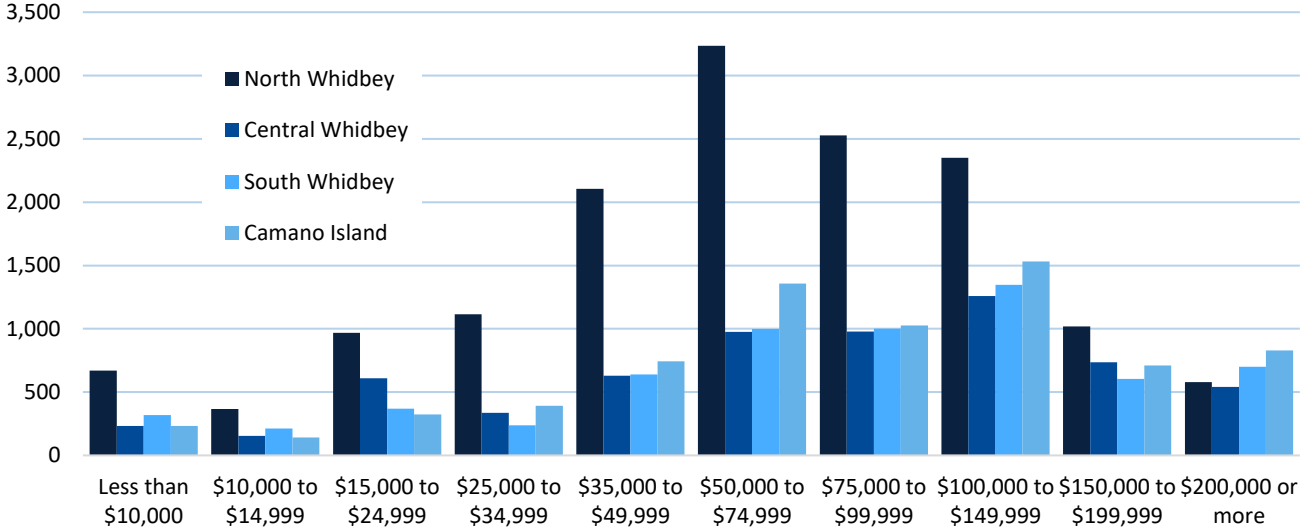


Marriage applies to the population over age 15.  
 Island County exceeds the national average of married couples (50%) by **14%**

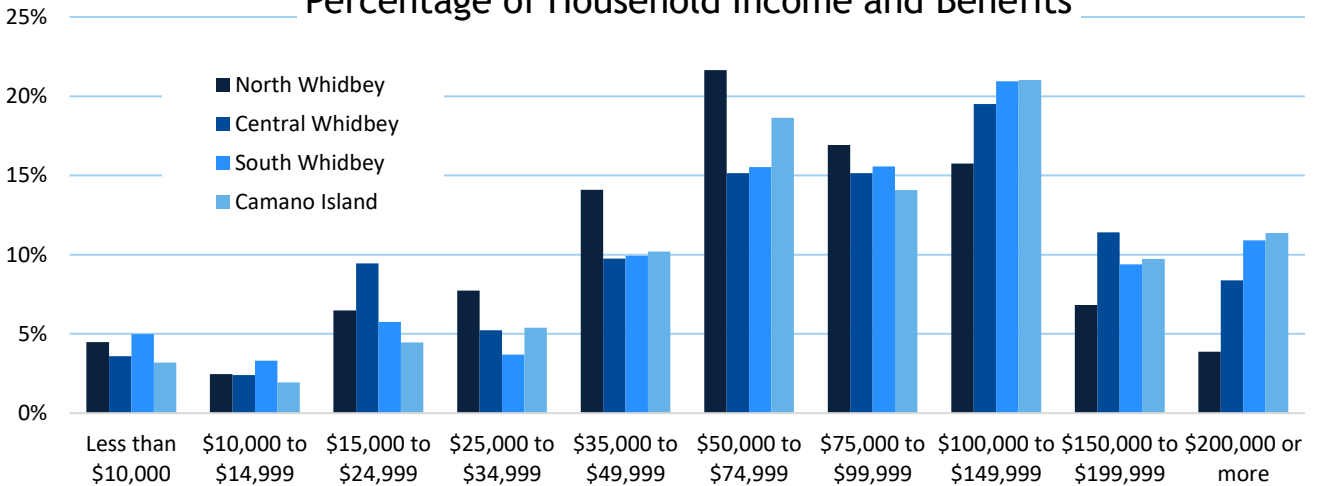


# Income and Social Security

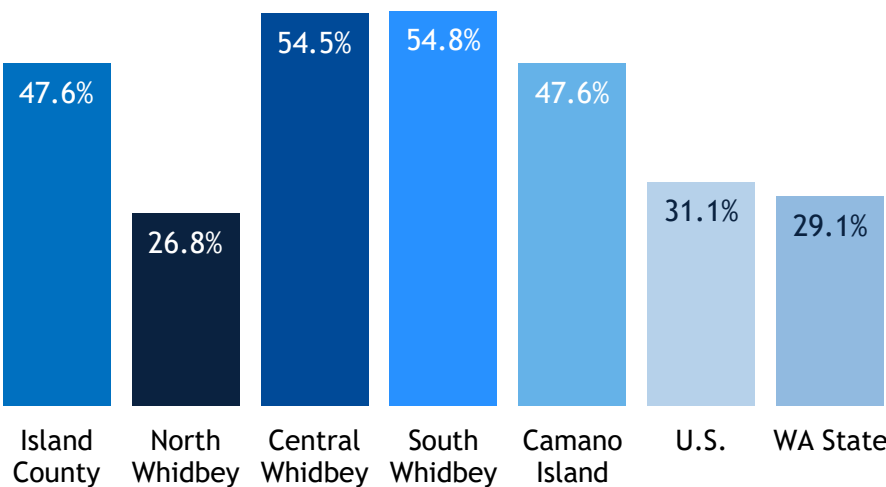
## Number of Household Income and Benefits



## Percentage of Household Income and Benefits



## Social Security Recipients



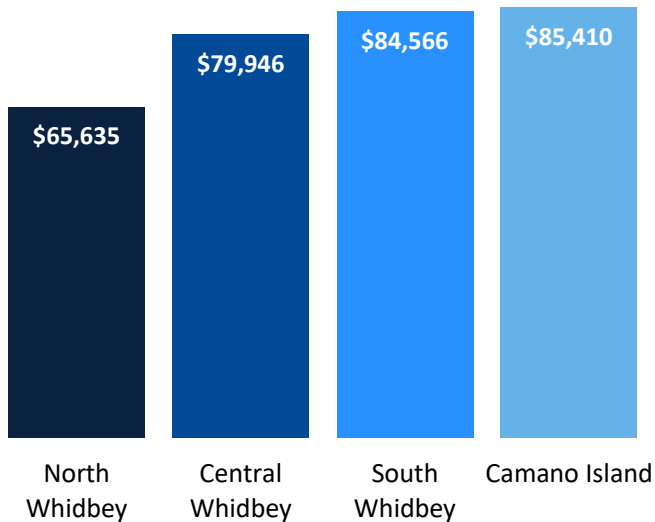
South Whidbey has the highest percentage, **76% higher** than the national average

North Whidbey is **14% less** than the national average, and **8% less** than the Washington state average

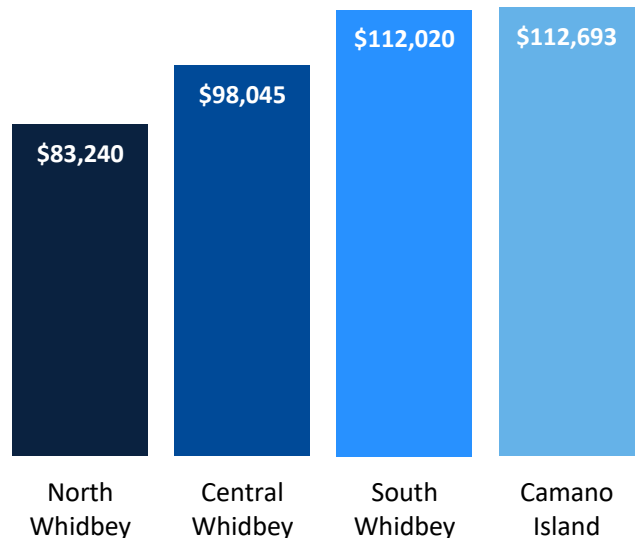
# Income and Social Security

Mean is calculated by the average, while median is determined by selecting the middle-most occurring number in a data set. A higher mean than median in every CCD means there are more incomes occurring on the higher level of the spectrum than those on the lower level.

### Median Household Income

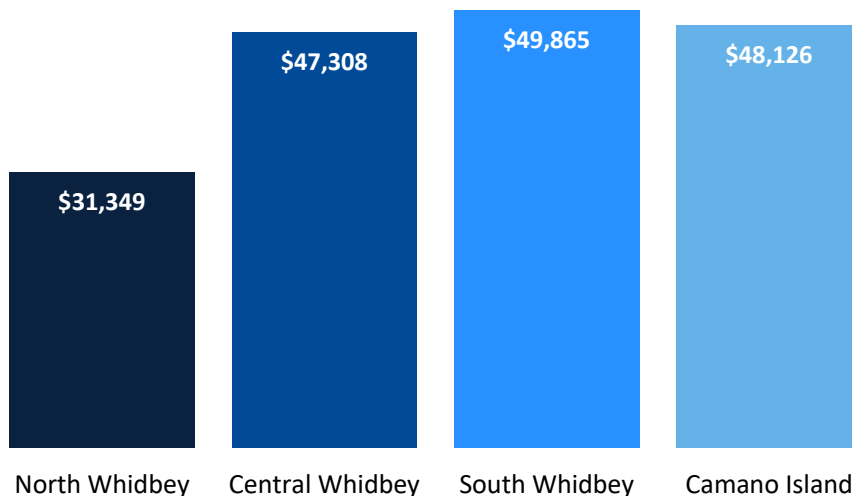


### Mean Household Income



Per capita income represents the average income received by an individual in the CCD. It's important to note that one individual with extremely high income can skew the average upward.

### Per Capita Income

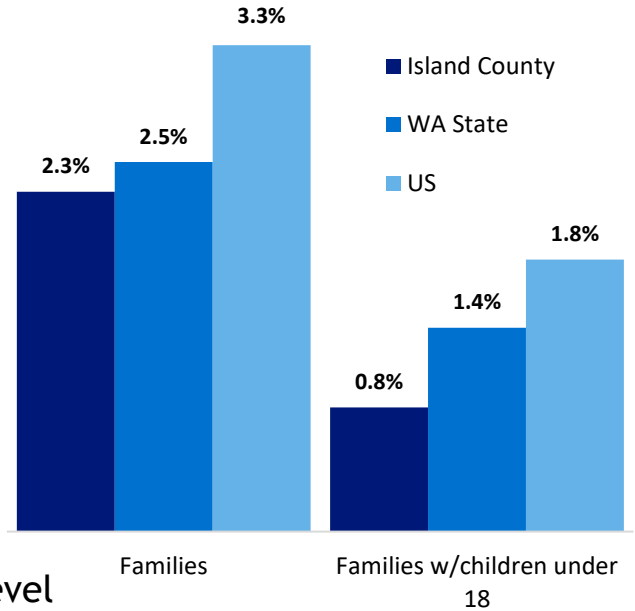




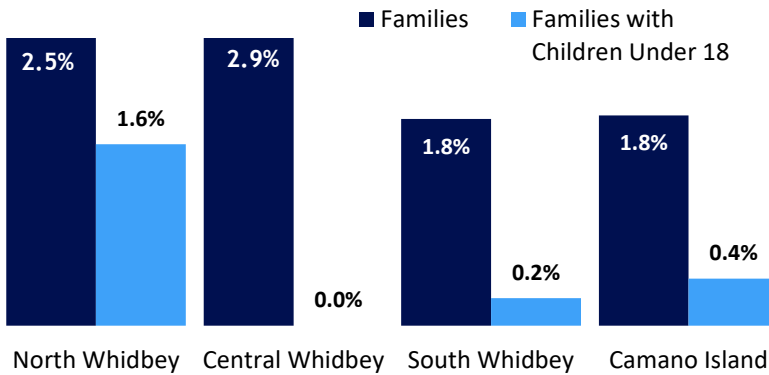
Poverty affects an economy in several ways. Those living in poverty, by definition, are that portion of a population living below the designated poverty line. These people have little money to spend, which creates less demand for many goods than might otherwise be the case. This has an adverse effect on the supply-side of the economic equation, which means less money paid to others to produce, distribute, and sell.

Poverty also adversely affects a nation's economy by diverting government revenue to programs oriented toward the poorer and less-advantaged segments of the population, such as welfare and unemployment payments, government-provided healthcare assistance, and so on.

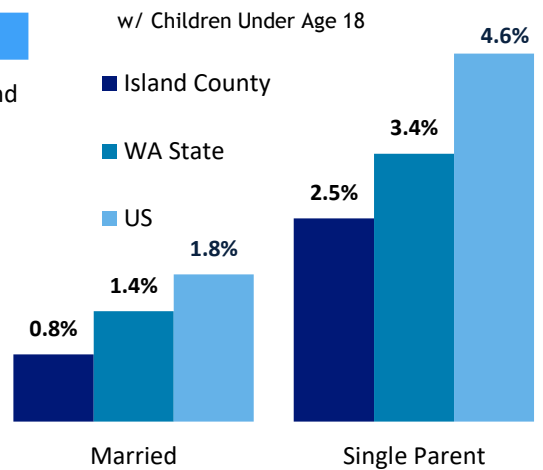
## Families Below Poverty Level



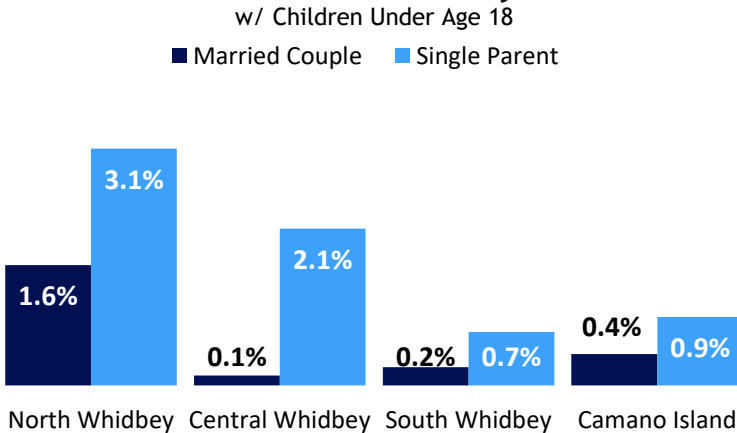
## Married Couples Below Poverty Level



## Families Below Poverty Level w/ Children Under Age 18

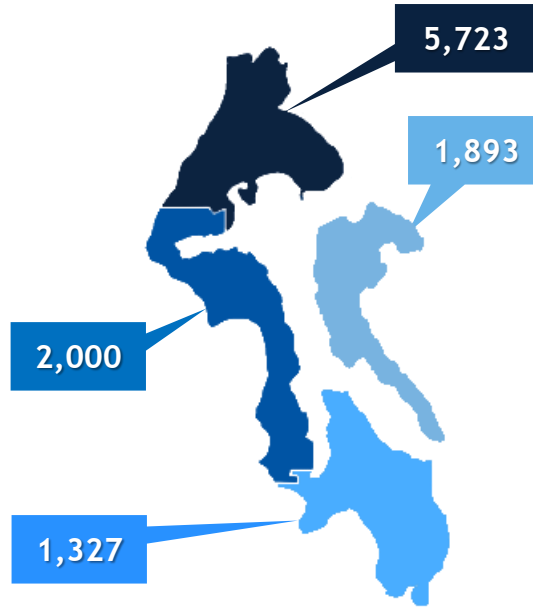


## Families Below Poverty Level w/ Children Under Age 18



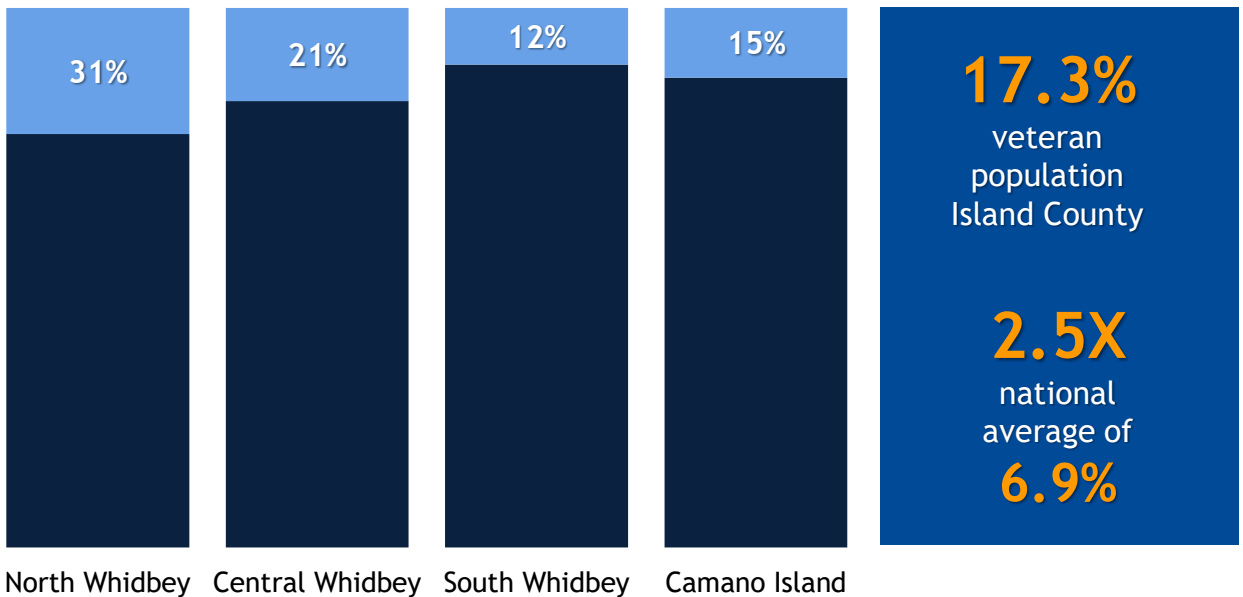
All areas in the county have a higher number of veterans than the U.S. average, with **North Whidbey** having a concentration **3.4 times higher** than the U.S. average of **6.9%**. This includes veterans who served at NAS Whidbey and those who served in other locations but are now retired and living in Island County.

## Veteran Population by CCD



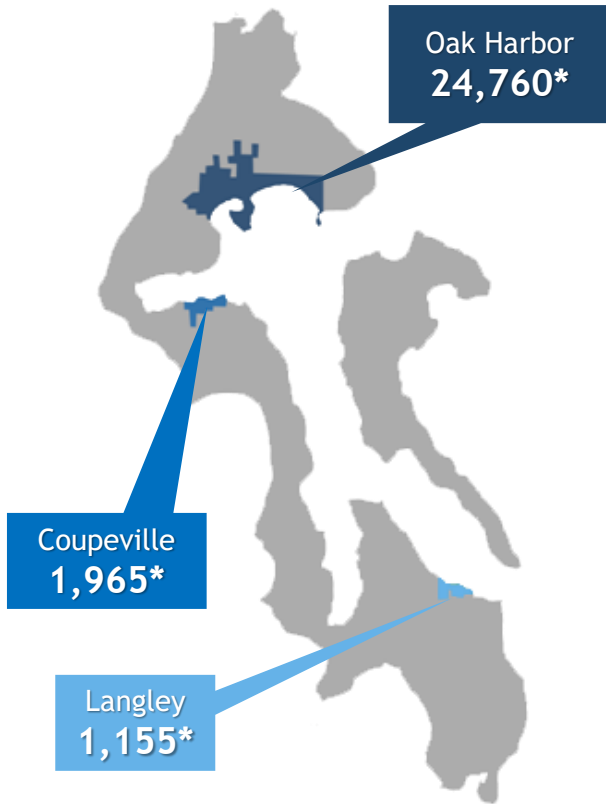
Total veteran population  
**10,943**

## Veterans by Percentage of CCD Population

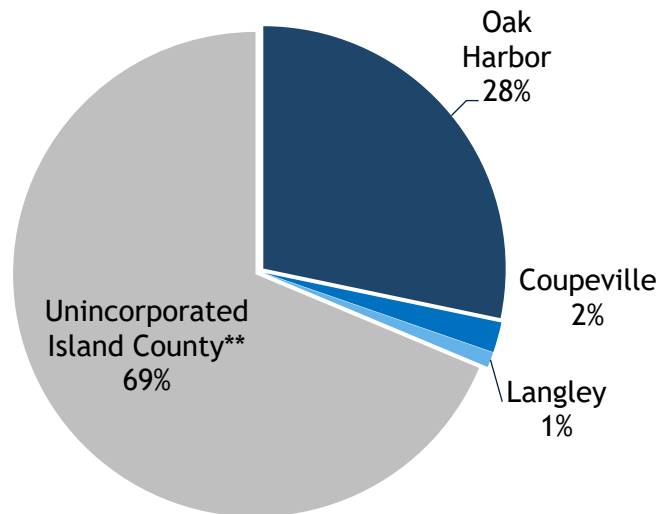


## Population

The three municipalities in Island County are the **City of Oak Harbor**, the **Town of Coupeville**, and the **City of Langley**. The NAS Whidbey base is located near the City of Oak Harbor, which influences the city's higher population count and lower median age.



## Population of Municipalities



*\*Washington State Office of Financial Management, June 29, 2022, official population estimates.*

*\*\*Unincorporated Island County includes Camano Island.*



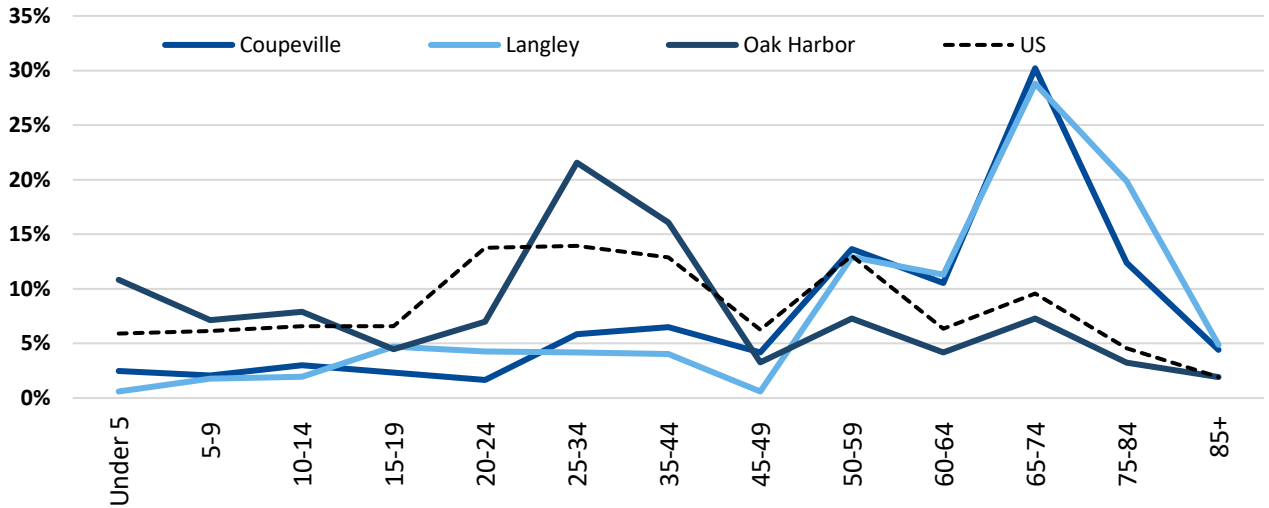
Downtown Coupeville



Downtown Langley

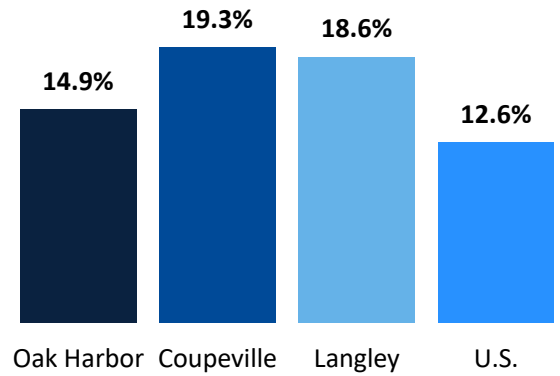
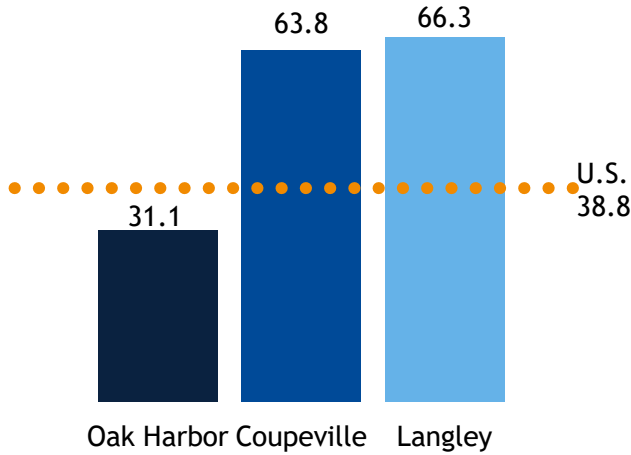
# Age and Disabilities

### Age Groups

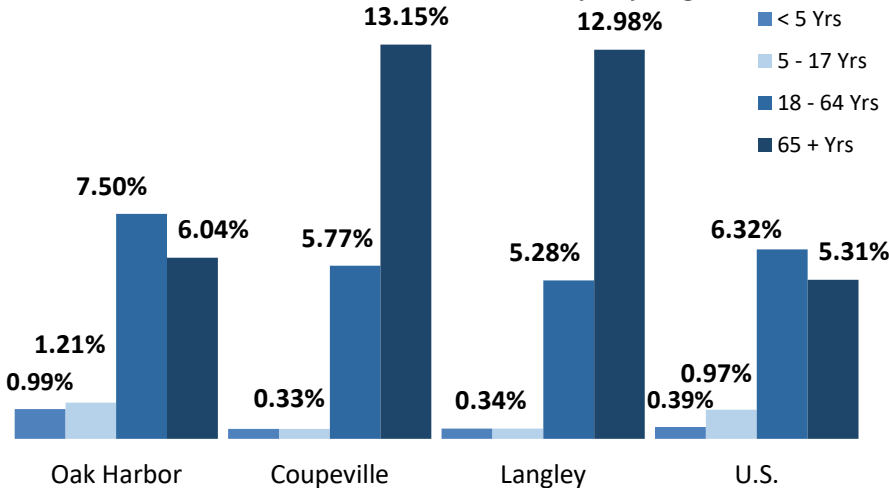


### Median Age

### Percent of Population with a Disability



### Percent With a Disability by Age

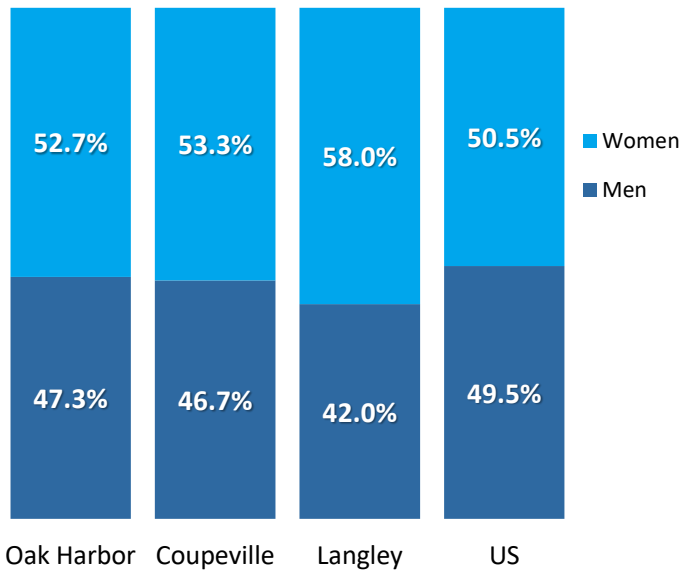


Coupeville has the highest percentage of population with a disability at 19.3%, which is 53% higher than the national percentage. Oak Harbor, on the other hand, has the lowest percentage of population with a disability at 14.9%, which is only 18% higher than the national percentage.

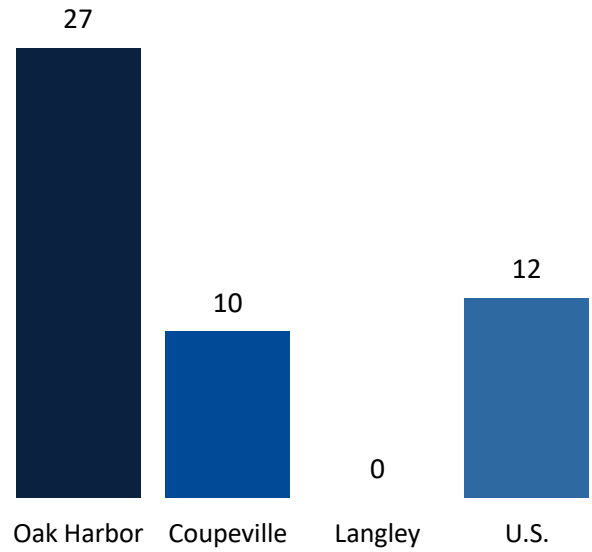
# Sex and Fertility

Percentage-wise, Oak Harbor and Coupeville ratios of men to women more closely match the U.S. average, while Langley has about 38% more women than men.

Percentage of Men and Women



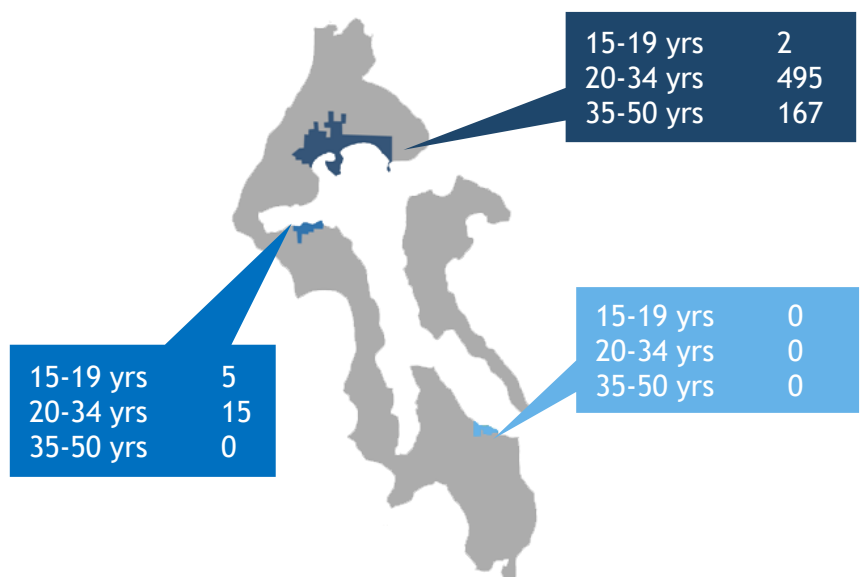
Births Per 1,000  
Women aged 15 - 50



Birth by Age Group by Municipality

Oak Harbor's birthrate is **~2.3x higher** than the national average

Coupeville's birthrate is **~17% lower** than the national average



## Total Housing Units

10,317



Oak Harbor

1,034



Coupeville

779



Langley

### Oak Harbor

Studio	395
1 bedroom	887
2 bedrooms	3,286
3 bedrooms	4,015
4 bedrooms	1,582
5+ bedrooms	152

1 unit, attach	749
1 unit, detach	5,347
2 units	782
3-4 units	943
5-9 units	699
10-19 units	798
20+ units	407

Oak Harbor has

**~10x**

**more** housing than Coupeville and

**~13x**

**more** than Langley

### Coupeville

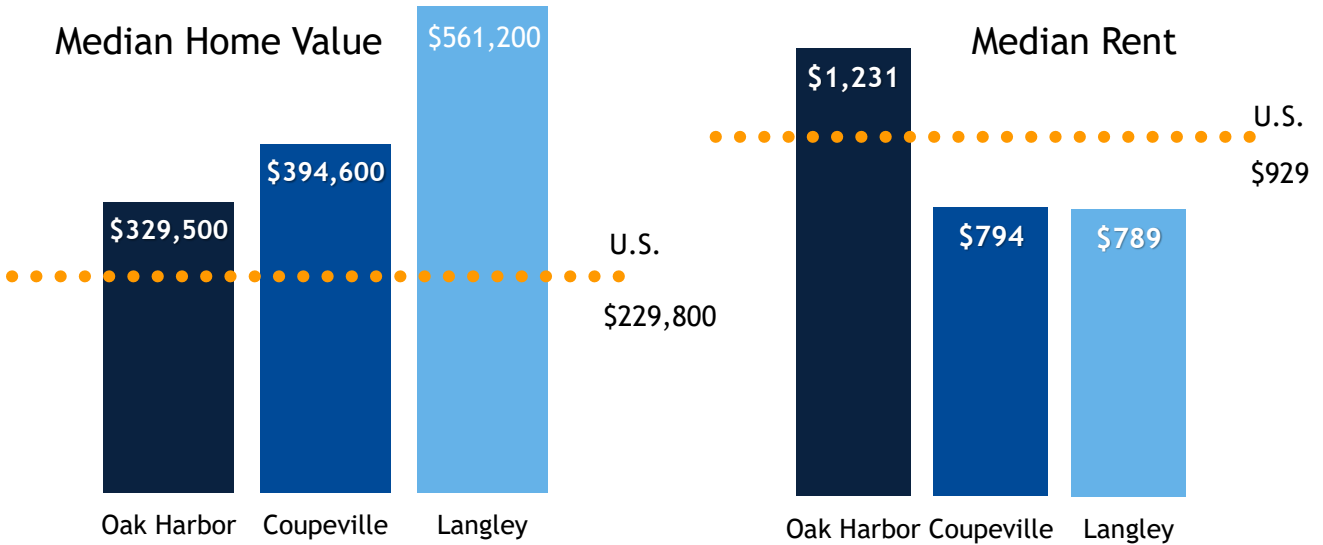
Studio	27
1 bedroom	152
2 bedrooms	293
3 bedrooms	392
4 bedrooms	64
5+ bedrooms	106

1 unit, attach	689
1 unit, detach	35
2 units	37
3-4 units	47
5-9 units	23
10-19 units	8
20+ units	115

### Langley

Studio	14
1 bedroom	106
2 bedrooms	354
3 bedrooms	221
4 bedrooms	63
5+ bedrooms	10

1 unit, attach	521
1 unit, detach	44
2 units	56
3-4 units	90
5-9 units	16
20+ units	30



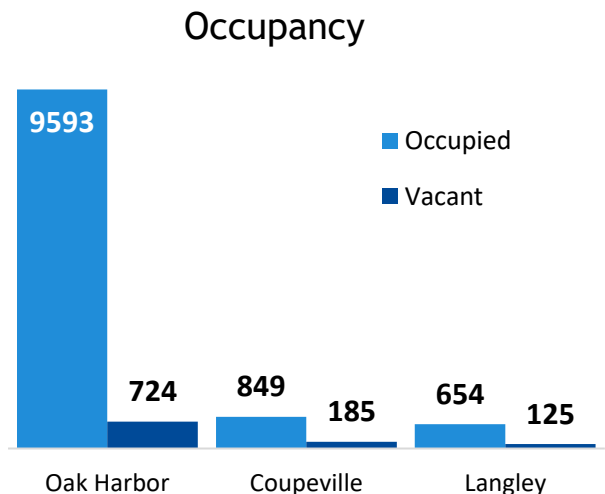
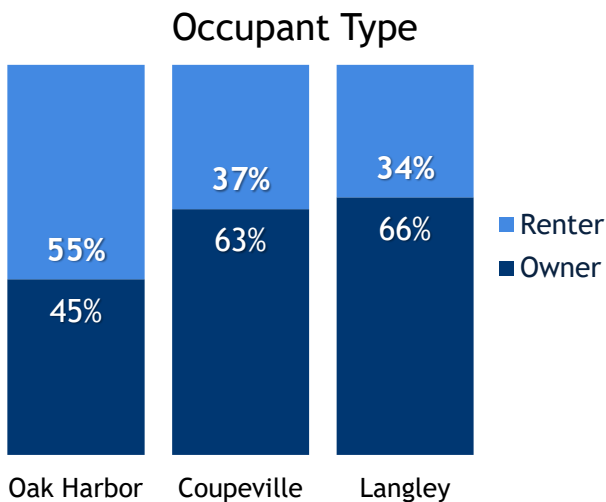
Median home value in Langley is **2.4x** higher than the U.S. average

Rental rates in Oak Harbor are **32.5%** higher than U.S. average

Oak Harbor has the highest rental rates at about \$236 or 24% higher than the U.S. median. Frequently, the presence of a military base can lead to inflated rental prices as landlords attempt to match their rates to the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH)\* rates of the installation’s highest population. 53%\*\* of the Navy’s ranks concentrate in the E-4 to E-6 pay grades. In 2023, for NAS Whidbey Island, WA, the BAH rates are \$1,692 per month for an E-4 with dependents, \$1,779 per month for an E-5 with dependents, and \$2,262 per month for an E-6 with dependents.

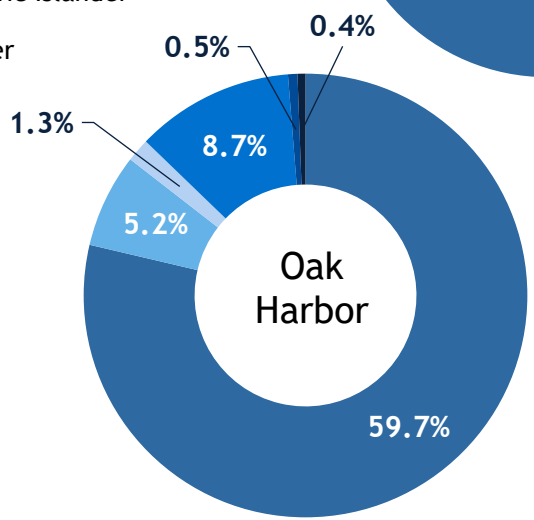
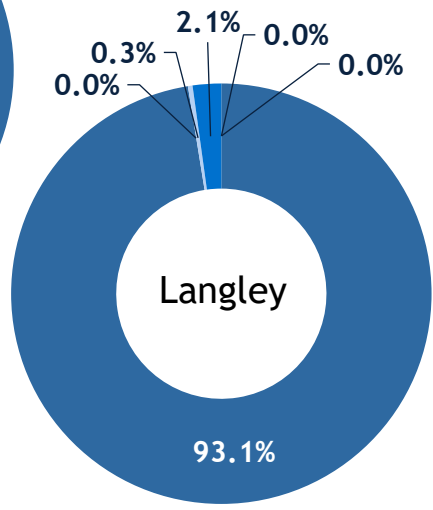
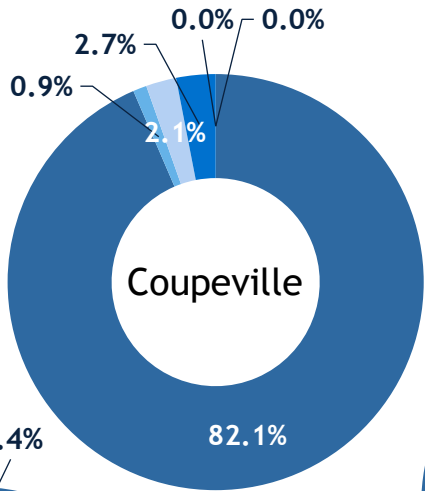
\*BAH Calculator - Defense Travel Management Office.

\*\*Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, “Profile of the Military Community,” 2020

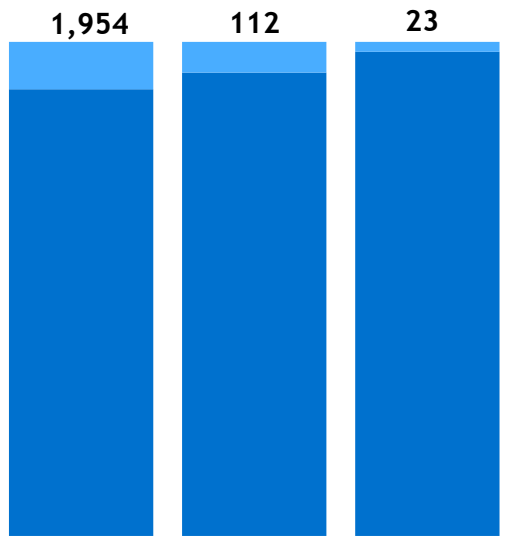


# Race

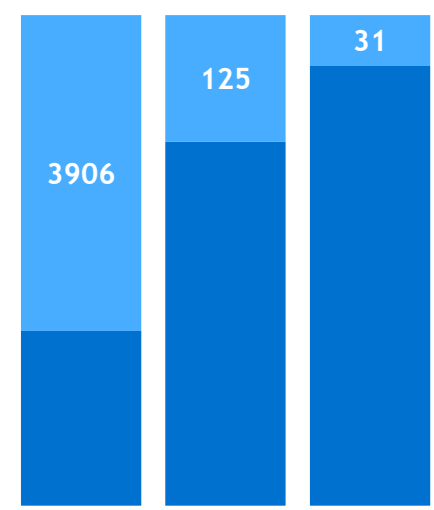
- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian & Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Other



Population Two or More Races



Population Hispanic or Latino



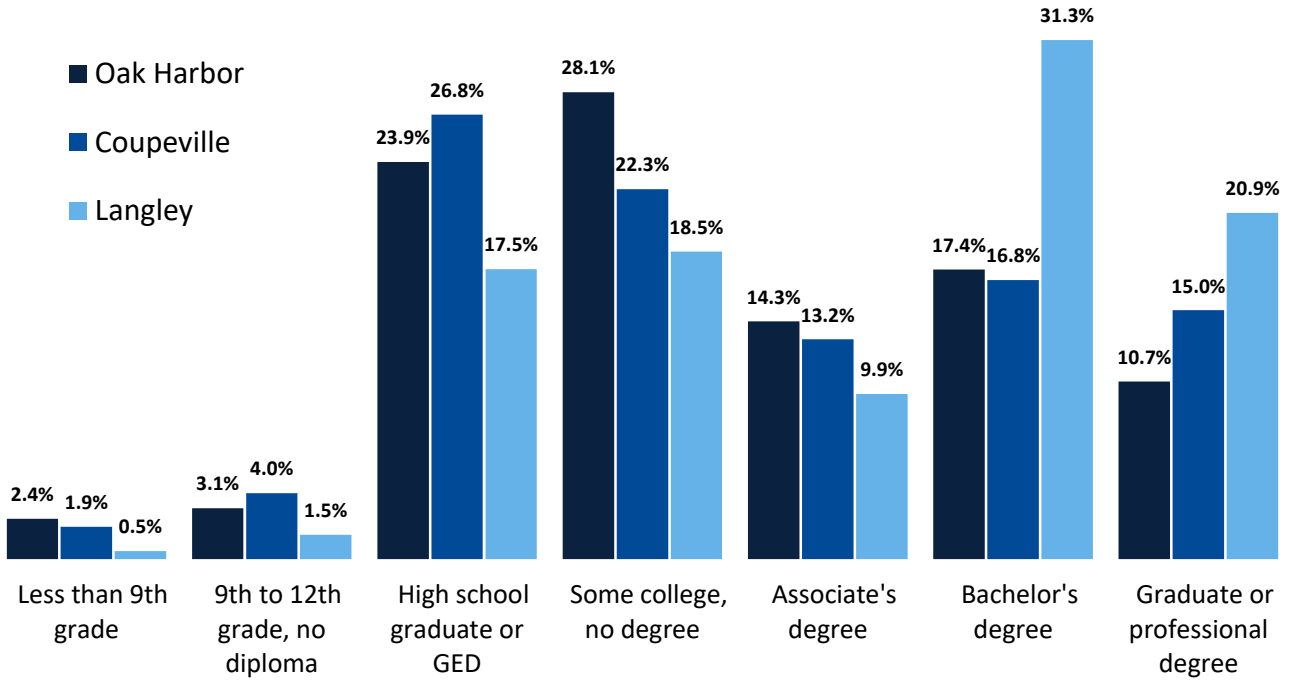
Oak Harbor has the highest Hispanic or Latino population by count at **3,906** and the highest population as a percentage at **16.1%**

Oak Harbor    Coupeville    Langley    Oak Harbor    Coupeville    Langley

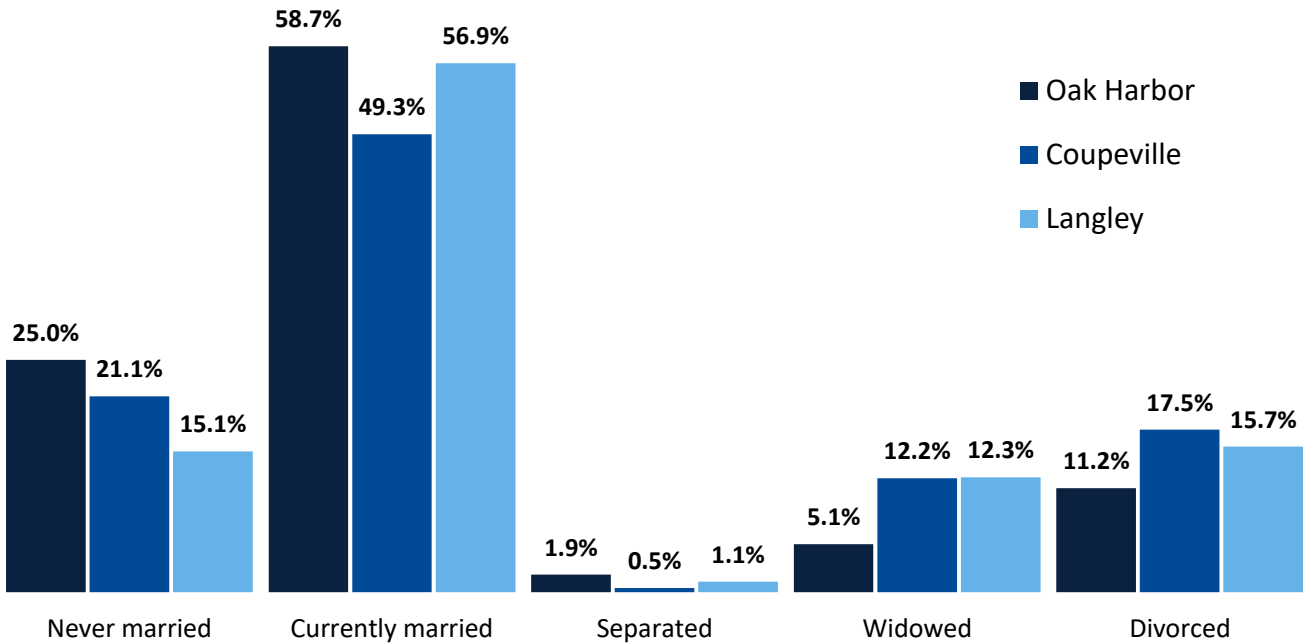


# Education and Marital Status

## Education Attainment - 25+ yrs Old

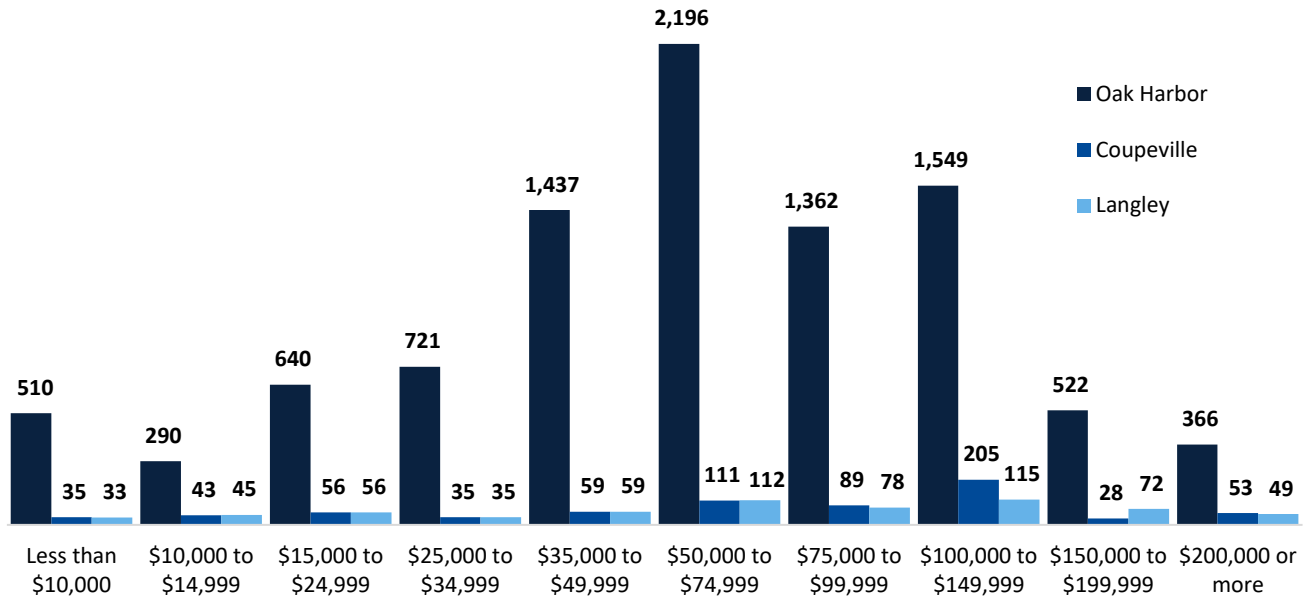


## Marital Status

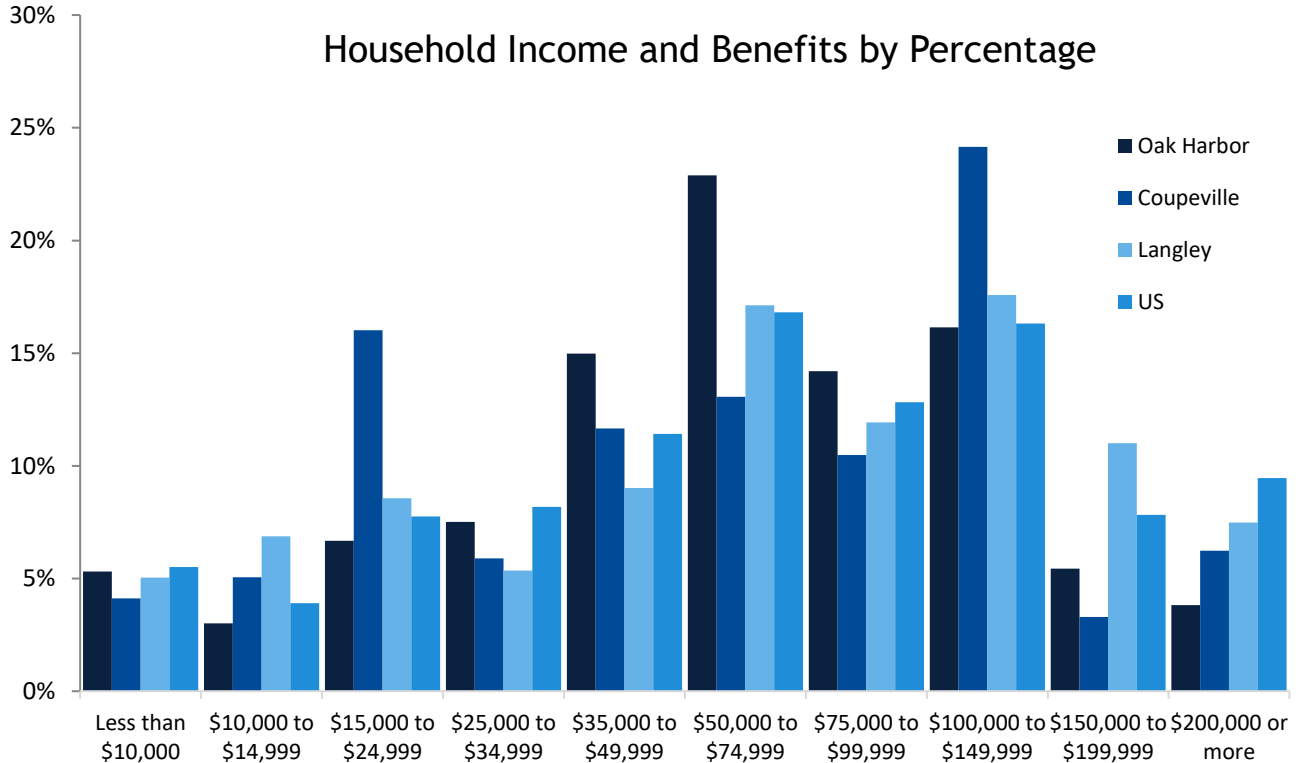


# Income and Social Security

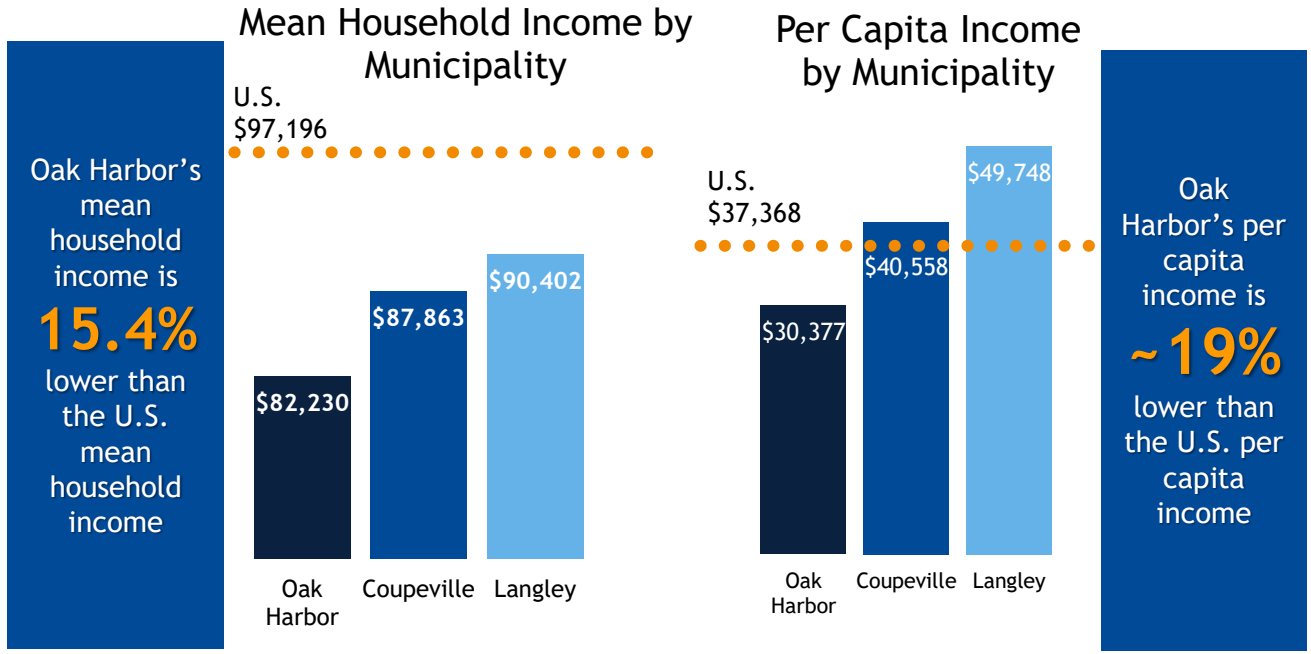
## Household Income and Benefits by Population



## Household Income and Benefits by Percentage

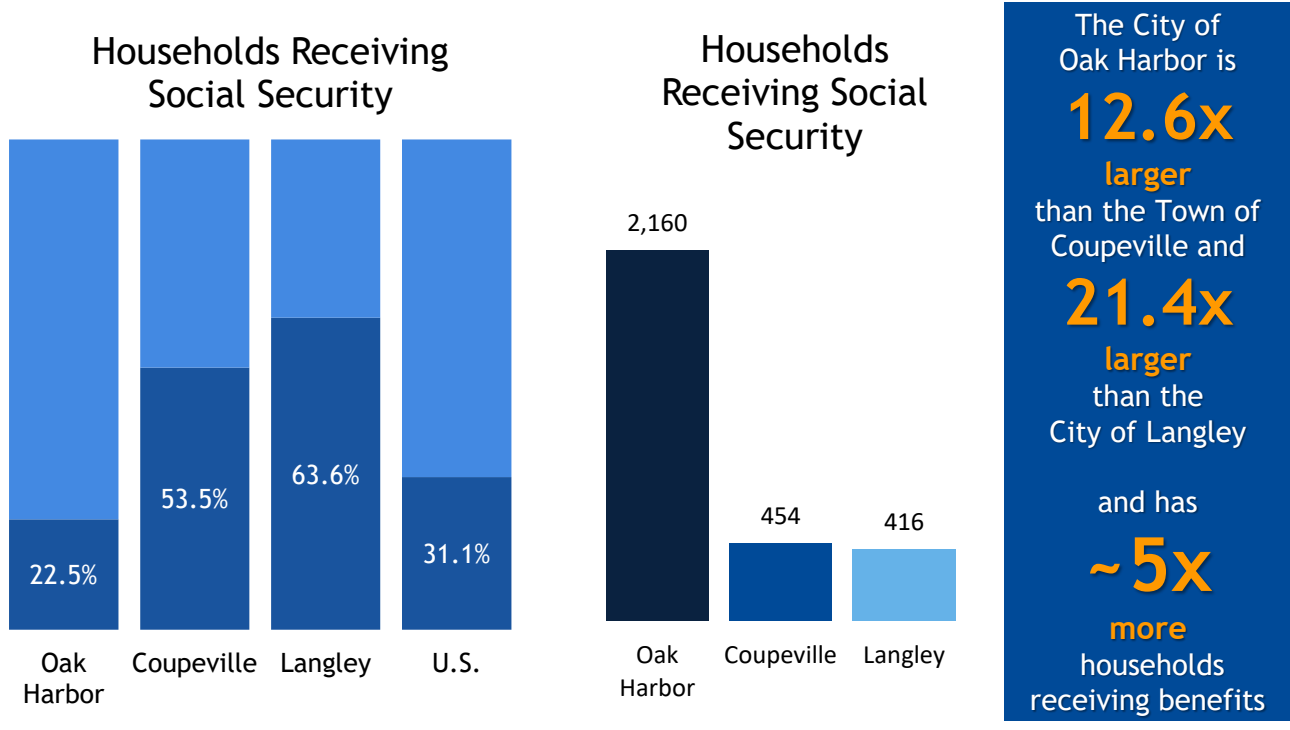


# Income and Social Security



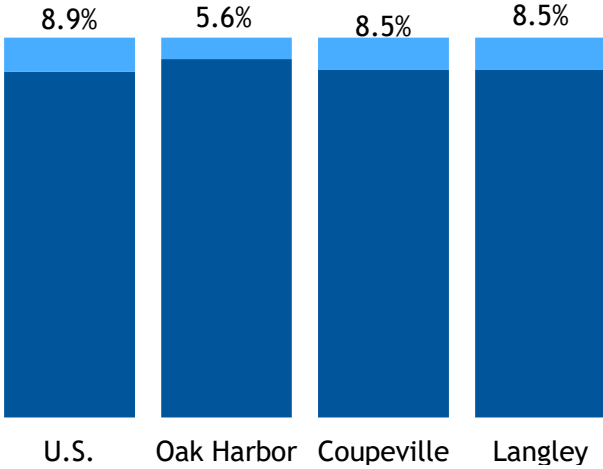
## Social Security and Retirement Income

As a percentage of the total population, Coupeville's and Langley's households receiving Social Security are significantly higher than Oak Harbor and the national number.

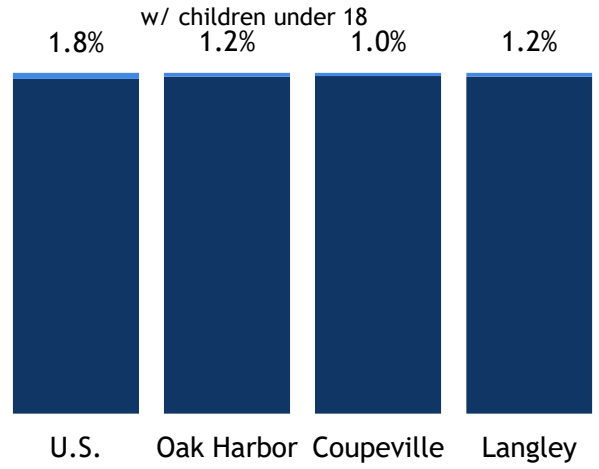


# Poverty

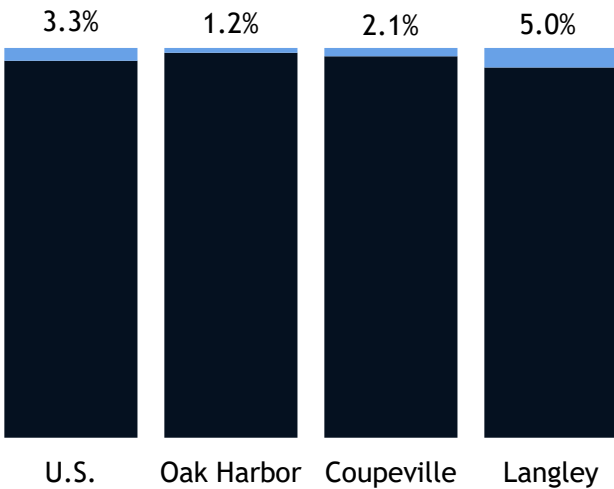
### Families Below Poverty Level



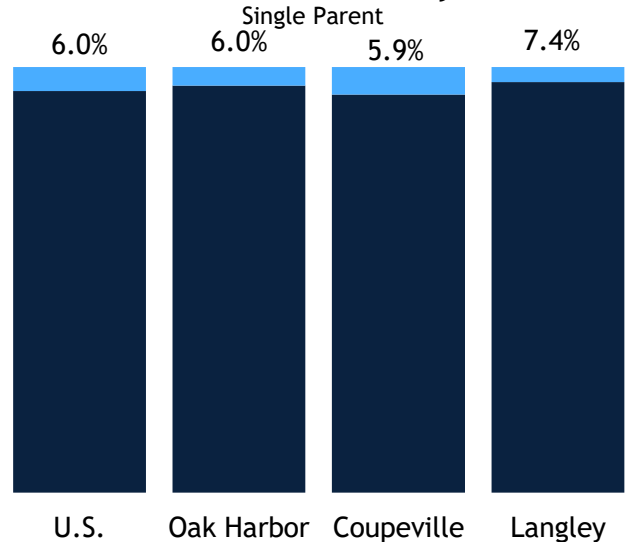
### Families Below Poverty Level w/ children under 18



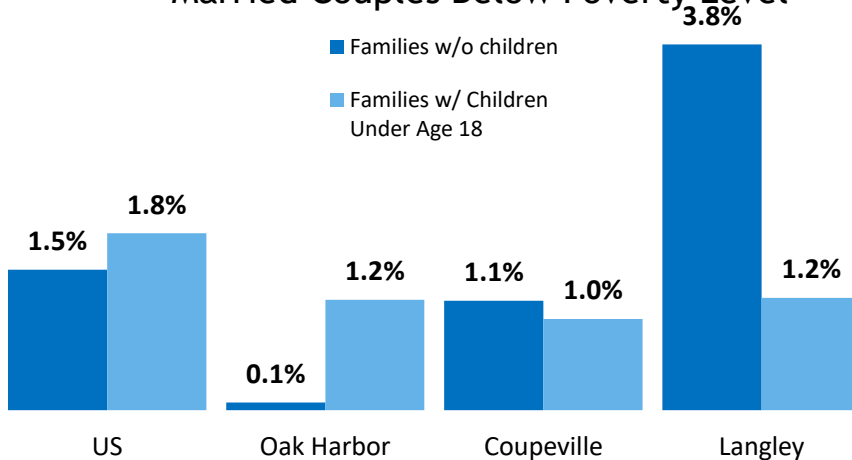
### Families Below Poverty Level Married



### Families Below Poverty Level Single Parent



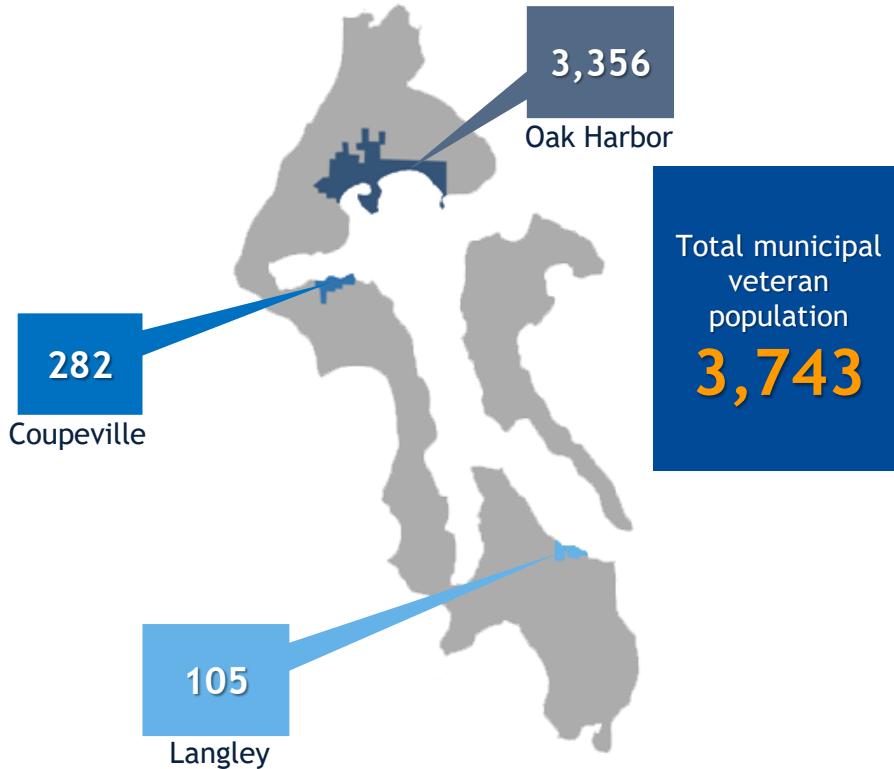
### Married Couples Below Poverty Level



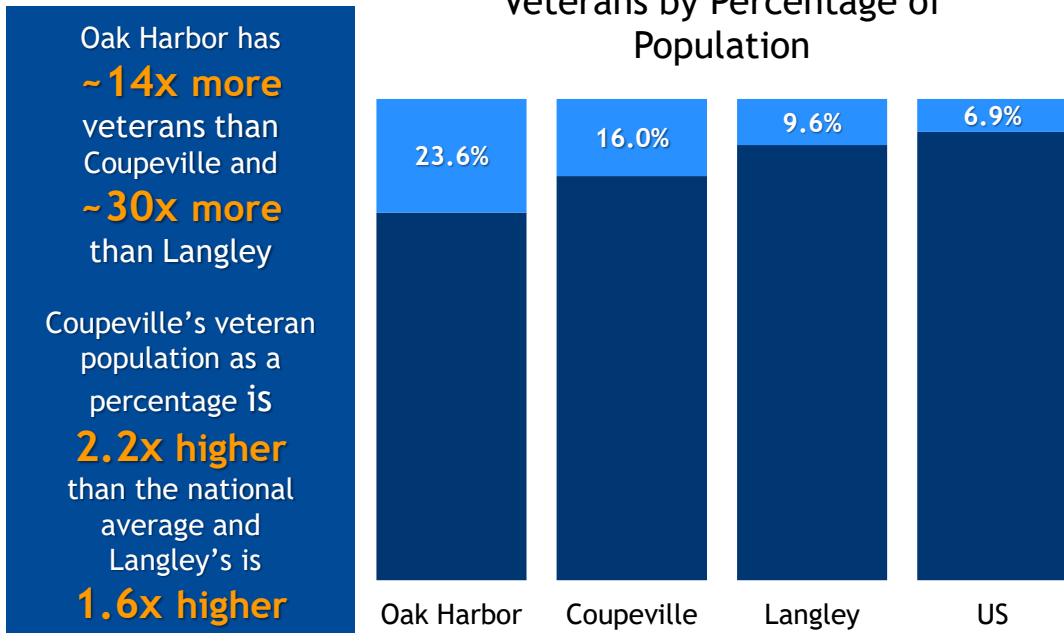
Keep in mind that both Coupeville and Langley have very small populations, so a minor increase can inflate the percentage significantly.

By total count, the City of Oak Harbor has the highest number of veterans. The closer proximity to the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island contributes significantly to this stark difference.

## Veterans by Population



## Veterans by Percentage of Population



International Finance Corporation. *2020 Demographics - Profile of the Military Community*. Washington DC: Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Military Community and Family Policy), 2020.

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Maestas, Nicole, Kathleen J. Mullen, and David Powell, *The Effect of Population Aging on Economic Growth, the Labor Force and Productivity*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, WR-1063-1, 2016. [Cited: 12 22, 2022.]

[https://www.rand.org/pubs/working\\_papers/WR1063-1.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/working_papers/WR1063-1.html)

Ozturk, Ilhan, *The Role of Education in Economic Development: A Theoretical Perspective*. 05 28, 2008. [Cited 12 22, 2022.] <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1137541>

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The Economic Development Council for Island County (EDC) is an independent nonprofit that works to create a thriving economic environment where business can grow and create jobs while preserving our unique quality of life.

- Providing one-on-one business advising, connecting owners to state and local resources, nurturing startup entrepreneurs, and sharing economic data and information.
- Giving members a voice in the economic development of their community.
- We are the County's designated partner with the WA State Department of Commerce and a channel for information and assistance between the State, County, and businesses.

Join us! By becoming a member or sponsor of the EDC you will help support economic vitality in Island County.