

SBHC Needs Assessment

Understanding and being able to communicate community need is key to making the case for a school-based health center (SBHC) to key stakeholders and funders. Existing data can be gathered and complemented with active listening and thoughtful community engagement to understand a community's unique needs and aspirations.

Gathering Existing Data

Data about the community, school district, and school can speak volumes about the barriers students face in 1) accessing health care in the community and 2) succeeding academically. Data can paint a picture of the issues facing a community—as a snapshot, relative to surrounding communities or the state as a whole, and in trends over time. Data broken down by race and ethnicity will provide important information about equity challenges facing the community. Below are some data resources available online.

Community Census Data

The US Census Bureau's [American Community Survey](#) and [QuickFacts](#) provide census data at various geographic levels, including zip code, town, city, county or state.

[QuickFacts](#) can provide side-by-side comparison of your community with other communities or with Washington as a whole, including data on population size, race/ethnicity, language spoken at home, educational attainment, poverty, and those without insurance coverage.

[Washington KIDS COUNT](#) provides a variety of data tracking the demographics and well-being of children in Washington.

School and School District Data

The following demographic and education data can be found by school or school district on Washington's [Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction](#) (OSPI)'s website:

- Low-income (proxy for % of students who are Medicaid-eligible)
- Homeless
- Race/ethnicity
- English language learners
- Migrant
- Students with disabilities
- Attendance
- Graduation rates

It may be helpful to compare data across the school district to determine the relative need in a particular school and to justify the selection of one school over another for a SBHC site. The school's improvement plan may inform how a SBHC might help support students and school staff. The school

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may also be able to provide the results of any schoolwide universal screening completed in recent years, which may reveal specific needs among its student population.

Health Data

The Washington [Healthy Youth Survey](#) (HYS) provides important survey results about the health of adolescents in Washington state, including safety and violence behaviors, risk and protective factors, health and health-related behaviors, and substance use. The general public can access HYS data at the state, Educational Service District (ESD) or county level. School district and school-level data is accessible by school staff or to the general public with [permission by district administrators](#).

The [COVID-19 Student Survey](#) was an online survey administered to students at participating Washington schools in 6th through 12th grades in March of 2021 to help school leaders in their planning and student support programming.

King County provides the [Communities Count](#) data portal where you can access both education and health data for King County.

Immunization rates by school, district, and county are available from the [WA state Department of Health](#).

Contact your [local public health department](#) for **adolescent birth rates** and other community-level public health data.

Health Care Access

While it can be difficult to quantify health care access for school-age youth, you might identify:

- [Health Professional Shortage Area](#) (HPSA) scores by county or service area on the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) website.
- Medical, behavioral health and dental providers in the community that serve children and adolescents, especially the uninsured and those on Medicaid (and are accepting NEW patients)
- Availability of public transportation in the community and the time it takes to reach the nearest health care provider, hospital, etc.

Ask the School Community

In addition to gathering existing data, engage with and listen to the school community to assess their health care needs and priorities. To hear directly from the school community, you might conduct:

- Surveys of students, families and school staff
- Key informant interviews or focus groups

Surveys might be distributed and collected at school meetings or events, through the school's website or other electronic means of school communication. Key school staff might be engaged to help survey

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harder-to-reach students and families. Key informant interviews and focus groups could be led by steering committee members, school staff, or community volunteers.

A summary of findings from surveys, interviews and focus groups can be powerful in highlighting specific student and community needs for stakeholders, decision-makers and funders.

Contact the Washington School-Based Health Alliance directly at info@wasbha.org for examples of surveys used for SBHC needs assessment and planning by other communities in Washington.