

Human Services

Needs Update 2009-2010

Data Updates
September 2010

City of Bellevue
Parks and Community Services Department
www.bellevuewa.gov



The City of Bellevue publishes the Human Services Needs Update at the beginning of each two-year human services funding cycle. Since 1989, this report has offered a summary of trends within Bellevue, East King County, the Puget Sound region, Washington State and the nation. Through this report, we hope to provide a broad vision and context for understanding human services needs, and for inspiring actions that will ameliorate barriers to achieving a high quality of life for all Bellevue residents, especially during the current economic downturn.

One strength of the Needs Update report is that it contains a stable set of indicators that can show trends over time. Generally, a two-year cycle for updating the report has been an efficient approach to making information available for planning, decision-making and guiding action/advocacy. However, the current economic recession, which began in December 2007, has continued to impact the indicators measured and reported on in the 2009-2010 Needs Update. Even as it went to print, conditions in our communities were changing.

In response to the many requests we have received for more timely information and new information related to the economic downturn, we have chosen to update a few key indicators as new data becomes available. The complete 2009-2010 Needs Update is available online at http://www.ci.bellevue.wa.us/humanservices_needs_update.htm.

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Goal 1: Food to Eat and Roof Overhead

Having each person's basic needs met for food, shelter and clothing is critical for people to thrive and grow, and vital for a healthy community. This is particularly true for children, as studies have shown a correlation between poor academic performance and a child's food and/or housing insecurity. Adults, too, are better able to achieve wage progression and self-sufficiency when basic needs are provided.

- **SNAP Enrollment**

In October 2008, the Food Stamp Program was renamed the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP provides free food vouchers to low-income people and is a critical support to combat hunger. DSHS data indicates that 787,639 WA State individuals participated in SNAP in 2007. Countywide, 157,485 individuals participated. According to the King Eastside Community Service Office of DSHS, 14,392 households participated in SNAP in September 2009, a 81% increase from the previous year.

Source: Kiest, Alan. State of WA Dept of Social and Health Services. East King CSO. (2010).

- **City of Bellevue Utility Discount Program**

In 2009, the City of Bellevue Utility Discount Program provided utility discount and rebates for 1,144 low-income seniors and disabled residents who receive water, sewer and drainage services from the City of Bellevue. The Utility Tax Rebate Program provides refunds of utility taxes to low-income Bellevue residents. In 2009, tax relief was provided to 1,169 residents.

Source: Cline, Cathy. (2010). City of Bellevue. Utilities Department.

- **2010 One Night Count**

Each year, the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness conducts a one night count of the homeless to provide a snapshot of the problem and to track trends over time. This annual effort, which began more than 25 years ago with a street count of unsheltered people in parts of Seattle, has now grown to include parts of North, South and East King County. The count found a total of 2,759 individuals sleeping unsheltered and outside on January 30, 2010. Of the total number of households which reported a last address in the survey, 230, or 7%, listed East King County as their last permanent address prior to becoming homeless.

2010 One Night Count	
Street Count	2,759
Emergency Shelter	2,485
Transitional Housing	3,693
King County Total	8,937

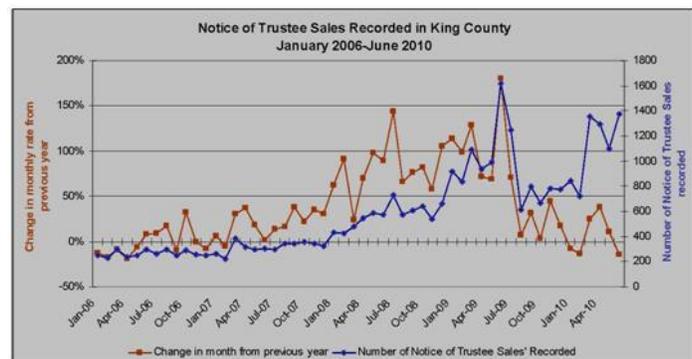
Source: Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness. (2010). 2009 Annual One Night Count of People who are Homeless in King County, WA. Available at: http://www.kingcounty.gov/socialservices/Housing/Plansandreports/HCD_Reports.aspx

- **Foreclosure: Notice of Trustee Sales**

A Notice of Trustee Sale (NTS) means a property will be lost to foreclosure in 120 days without substantial intervention, and thus serves as an indicator of serious foreclosure risk. The NTS is filed at least 30 days after the notice of default, and these records are then used to estimate trends in home foreclosures.

- **King County Data**

There is a concentration of higher numbers of foreclosures in the south/central, southwest and southeast parts of King County. Home foreclosures remain below the high in June 2009. The year-over-year change in June was -14.7%.



Source: Communities Count. (2010). Data Updates. Available at: <http://www.communitiescount.org/>

Goal 1: Food to Eat and Roof Overhead (cont.)

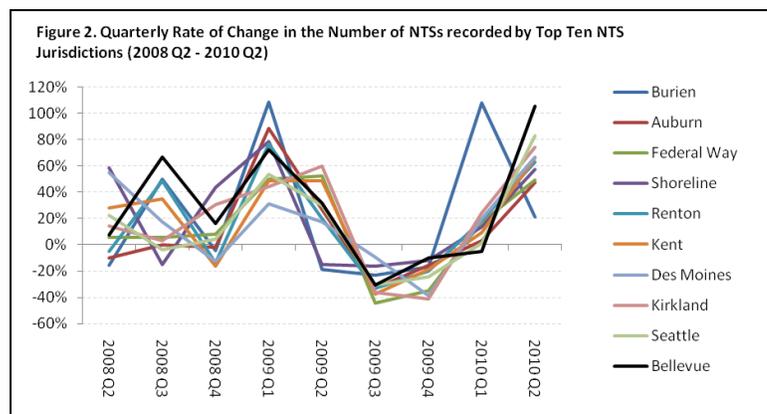
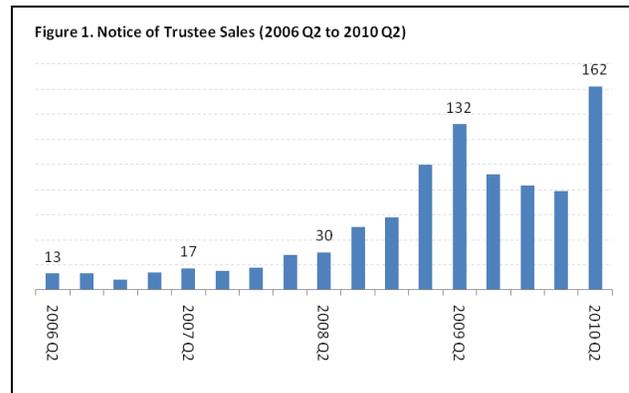
- **Bellevue Specific Data**

NTS continue to be an issue in Bellevue and the county. 162 properties in Bellevue were issued an NTS in the second quarter of 2010. This was more than double the number of issued during the first quarter of 2010 and up 23% from the same period last year.

Furthermore, out of the top ten King County cities with the largest number of NTSs, Bellevue had the highest quarterly growth rate from the first quarter of 2010 to the second quarter, and the second highest annual growth rate from 2009 to 2010.

Data has been collected to show the distribution and growth of NTSs recorded in Bellevue since 2006. In previous years, distressed properties have been distributed throughout the community. However, in 2010 geographical clusters of foreclosed homes are beginning to emerge. These are primarily in east

Bellevue, especially the Lake Hills and Glendale neighborhoods. Additional clusters can also be found further northeast, as well as in the Northtowne neighborhood in northwest Bellevue.



Source: Source: Rousseau, Gwen. (2010). City of Bellevue. Department of Planning and Community Development.

- **Community-Wide Implications**

Ultimately, high foreclosure rates not only affect homeowners, but also put many renters at risk. A study released on June 2009 by the National Alliance to End Homelessness found that 5% of shelter and transitional housing clients were homeless as a result of foreclosures; most of these people had been renters rather than property owners. Here in King County, the number of requests to 211 for rent assistance reached an all-time high in the second quarter of 2010. The largest number of calls came from South King County, one of the areas with the highest concentration of home foreclosures.

Source: United Way of King County. (2010). Basic Needs indicators. Available at: <http://www.uwkc.org/kcca/BasicNeeds/BasicNeeds.asp>

- **Bellevue's Response**

Through Mini-City Hall and the City's and ARCH's websites, the City of Bellevue provides information regarding the foreclosure process and where homeowners can turn for aid. Last March, the City co-sponsored a free workshop where borrowers met face-to-face with housing counselors and representatives of banks and lenders to get a clear view of their options. The City also alerts housing counselors of grant opportunities to ensure they have the funding needed to help families avoid foreclosure. The City will continue to monitor trends in NTSs, with the potential for special attention being given to areas where concentrations of distressed properties exist.

Source: Source: Rousseau, Gwen. (2010). City of Bellevue. Department of Planning and Community Development.

Goal 2: Supportive Relationships within Families, Neighborhoods, and Communities

Social support helps to give people the emotional and practical resources they need to feel cared for, valued and secure. Especially in hard economic times, these human connections often are looked to when formal support agencies cannot assist. Studies have shown that social support is one of the important factors in predicting health, including mental health and wellbeing, from young children to older adults. Service areas in this support network include social support for individuals, families and adults raising children, legal assistance, and information and referral.

- Finding Help: Information and Referral**

During the 2003 Washington State legislative session, lawmakers passed a bill making the three digit dialing code “2-1-1 the official state number for information about health and human services, including access after a natural or other disaster. Washington Information Network (WIN 2-1-1) is a one-stop approach that prevents people from having to call numerous agencies that may or may not be able to help them.

Crisis Clinic is the designated agency in King County for 2-1-1. It provides services five days/week during business hours, and half day on Saturdays. Staff noted in the provider survey that, as a result of the recession, callers have multiple needs for assistance, not just a single need. More are recently “laid off” and have not ever used a social service and have no idea where to find help, even if any assistance is available. In 2009, 95% of Bellevue 2-1-1 callers who disclosed their incomes lived below the poverty level. Of the Bellevue callers to the Crisis Line, 81% lived below the poverty level.

Year	Number of Calls Received for Basic Needs	Total Calls Received for All Services	Percentage of Total Calls for Basic Needs	Number of Requests for Emergency Shelter
1996	642	2390	26.8%	274
1997	613	2333	26.2%	285
1998	629	1998	31.4%	298
1999	581	2018	29.4%	250
2000	414	1899	24.04%	168
2001	308	2265	13.6%	103
2002	394	2119	18%	122
2003	511	2102	30%	159
2004	555	2587	21%	158
2005	543	2428	23%	161
2006	552	3156	18%	191
2007	956	3306	29%	359
2008	954	3390	28%	388
2009	857	3,470	25%	333

Source: Crisis Clinic, Community Information Line 2-1-1, December 2009

Source: Crisis Clinic. (2009, April). Provider Survey

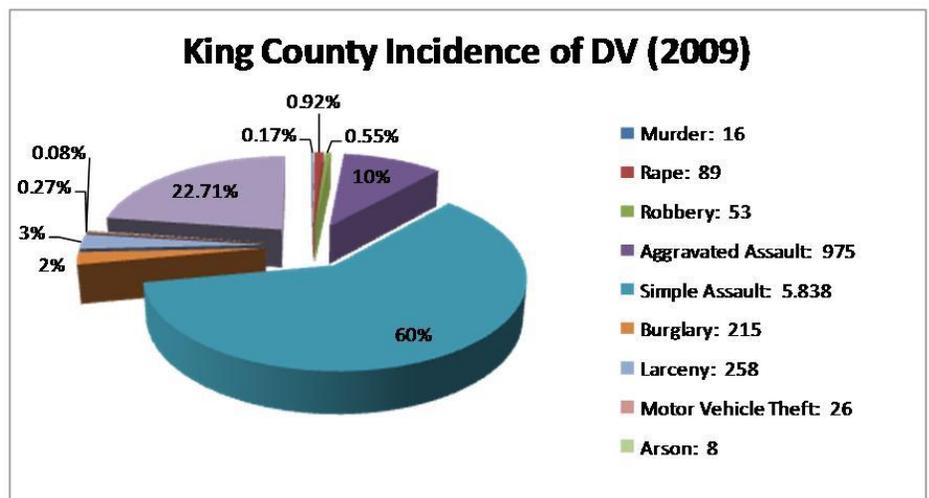
Goal 3: A Safe Haven from All Forms of Violence and Abuse

All forms of personal violence, including domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse and neglect, are unacceptable in any of our communities. During times of stress, people can be more vulnerable, and may need more support to handle situations without violence. Early intervention with individuals and families is critical to prevent additional physical and mental health issues. Counseling, legal assistance, and financial assistance are just a few of the supports needed to help survivors of abuse to heal. But equally important are efforts to educate the community on what strategies are effective to prevent violence from occurring.

- Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence (DV), sometimes called family violence, profoundly affects the lives of survivors as well as the entire community. Domestic violence incidents involve family or household members; traditionally the term has referred to altercations between spouses and former spouses, but legally it includes roommates with or without a romantic relationship, and parents or children. Individuals may be of the same sex and/or gender. The financial and human costs of domestic violence are staggering, and will negatively impact generations to come.

According to the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, the number of reported domestic violence offenses statewide increased by 13.4% between 2008 and 2009, reversing a four-year trend of reductions nearing 21%. Statewide, there were 48,186 domestic violence offenses in 2009, 9.5% of which were murders, rapes or aggravated assaults.



It is extremely difficult to determine how many people in King County are victims of domestic violence annually. The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs reported 9,675 domestic violence offenses in 2009, an 18.3% increase from 2008. The Bellevue Police Department reported 385 domestic violence offenses, Issaquah 78, Kirkland 151, and Redmond 228.

Source: Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs. Crime in Washington 2009. Available at: <http://www.waspc.org/index.php?c=Crime%20Statistics>

- Vulnerable Adult Abuse**

In Washington State, a vulnerable adult is primarily defined as a person 60 years of age or older who lacks the functional, physical, or mental ability to care for him or herself, or an adult with a developmental disability.

In King County, there were 3,076 reports of all types of vulnerable adult abuse and neglect to APS in 2009, resulting in 2,909 investigations. At the state level, 14,577 reports were made, resulting in 12,655 cases. Although these numbers include vulnerable adults of all ages, 75% of these victims are 60 and older.

Source: State of Washington Department of Social and Health Service. Adult Protective Services Reports of Abuse, Neglect, 1/1-12/31/2009. Available at: <http://www.aasa.dshs.wa.gov/APS/documents/2009.doc>

Goal 3 (cont.)

- **Child Abuse and Neglect**

Child abuse is the physical, psychological or sexual mistreatment, or physical neglect of children by their parents or guardians. Neglect is the most common form of child abuse, but rates are hard to establish because much neglect goes unreported.

Nationally, an estimated 772,000 children were determined to be victims of child abuse or neglect in 2008, 2.8% fewer than 2007. According to the National Abuse and Neglect Database, an estimated 1,740 children died due to child abuse or neglect in 2008, a less than 1% decrease from 2007. In 2008, there were 74,427 reports of abuse or neglect in Washington State; of these 35,698 (48%) were accepted for investigation.

Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (2009). Administration for Children & Families. Child Maltreatment 2008. Available at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm08/cm08.pdf>

In calendar year 2008, there were 289 accepted referrals for suspected child abuse (including sexual abuse) and neglect. In 2009, that figure increased to 337, a nearly 17% jump. For all East King County zip codes, there were 2,267 accepted referrals of suspected abuse; this represents a 28% increase from 2008.

Source: Adams, Dave. State of WA Dept of Social and Health Services. East King CSO. (2010).

Goal 4: Health Care to Be as Physically and Mentally Fit as Possible

The economic health and wellbeing of Bellevue depends on the physical and mental health of its residents. There have been improvements in several key indicators of physical health over the last decade. However, there are many indicators that put the future health of Bellevue residents in jeopardy. The rising cost of health care, language barriers, transportation issues, and cultural competency are obstacles for some residents to obtain the quality of health care they need. In the current economic crisis, more people are losing their jobs and their employer-sponsored health insurance. The problem is further exacerbated with declining enrollment cap on the Washington Basic Health Plan, reduced county funding, and diminishing private philanthropy to community health organizations. It is important for Bellevue residents to be healthy to have a strong, growing and vibrant community.

- **Health Insurance of Adults**

Data from King County Public Health showed that 15.5% of working age adults (19-64) in Washington were uninsured. Though this is a low rate compared to the national average (20% in 2008), it is still a concern given the impact lack of insurance has on one's quality of life. From 2004-2008, more than 13% of King County adults and nearly 10% of Bellevue adults in that age range did not have health insurance.

Source: Public Health – Seattle & King County. (2010). Core Indicator: Adults (18-64) with no Health Insurance, King County. Available at: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/data/chi2009/AccessInsuranceAdults/HPA.aspx>

Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2010). Health Insurance Coverage. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/hinsure.htm>

- **Infant Mortality Rate**

Infant mortality is used as an indicator of community health because it is a proxy for the health of mothers and infants and for the ability of health services to provide for a community. The infant mortality rate is measured for a given year as the number of infants who died in the first year of life per 1,000 live births. Infant mortality rates in King County have declined steadily since 1981. The infant mortality rate for King County was 4.5 per 1,000 live births averaging over 2003-2007, and the Bellevue health planning area rate is even lower: 2.7 per 1,000 live births, one of the lowest rates in the country. By contrast, the Washington State infant mortality rate for that same period was 4.8 per 1,000 live births.

Source: Public Health – Seattle & King County. (2010). Core Indicator: Infant Mortality, King County. Available at: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/data/chi2009/HealthOutcomesInfantMortality/HPA.aspx>

- **Obesity**

Over the past decade, Americans nationwide have become more overweight and obese. Obesity is a risk factor for many serious illnesses and disease including coronary heart disease, hypertension and diabetes. Higher incidence rates are also a cause of higher medical insurance rates. Residents of Bellevue are less likely to be overweight or obese compared to King County or Washington residents. Between 2004-2008, 49.5% of Bellevue adults were overweight, 18% of whom were obese. For the same period, 54.5% of King County adults were overweight, 19.8% of those obese. Both Bellevue and King County are below the Washington State rates, 61.9% and 25.7%, respectively.

Source: Public Health – Seattle & King County. (2010). Core Indicator: Adult Obesity, King County. Available at: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/data/chi2009/RiskAdultObese.aspx>

Goal 5: Education and Job Skills to Lead an Independent Life

Education, job skills and childcare, in addition to the economic climate, contribute to a person's ability to find employment. Despite Washington having the highest minimum wage in the country, Bellevue residents require strong earnings in order to be self-sufficient. In order to get living wage jobs, laborers must possess significant education or job skills. The current economic crisis has highlighted the need for an advanced education as well as the limited number of positions available in King County that offer living wages. Affordable, quality childcare is also an important component for families so they can work and provide for their families.

- **Unemployment Rates**

Based on the Puget Sound's Economic Forecaster forecast for King County, and considering previous differences between Bellevue's and King County's rates of unemployment, Bellevue's unemployment rate during 2011 is estimated to fall between 6.1% and 7.45%, and between 5.7% and 6.6% in 2012.

The Economic Forecaster forecasts unemployment in King County to decline from 7.9 in 2010 to 7.5 in 2011 to 7.1 in 2012. Over the past ten years, Bellevue's rate of unemployment has been approximately 0.5% lower than King County's average rate. However, over the past five years, Bellevue's unemployment rate has been averaging 0.8% lower than King County's, and just last year it was 1.4% lower than King County's. In June 2010, Bellevue's unemployment rate was 6.7%.

Source: Rousseau, Gwen. (2009). City of Bellevue. Department of Planning and Community Development.

- **Unemployment Insurance Claims**

Unemployment insurance is calculated based on a percentage of an individual's past year's earnings rather than financial need. Therefore, individuals who were working low-paying jobs before unemployment often fall deeper into financial hardship while unemployed. In the Employment Security Department's most recent Claimant Expenditure Report (2007), for 56% of claimants unemployment insurance makes up the majority or entirety of their income, down 14% from 2005.

At the end of July 2010, the statewide 4-week average for initial unemployment insurance claims was 10,601. For that same period in 2009, the 4-week average was 12,555, representing a 15.6% decrease in claims.

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department. (2008, January). Claimant Expenditure Survey Fiscal Year 2007. Available at: <http://www.esd.wa.gov/newsandinformation/media/uidata/uiublishedreports/ui-published-reports.php>

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department. (2010, August). Initial Claim Activity Washington State: Weekly Report. Available at: <http://www.esd.wa.gov/newsandinformation/media/uidata/currentuistatisticalinformation/current-ui-statistical-information.php>

- **WorkFirst**

WorkFirst is Washington State's welfare to work program. It is a partnership between state agencies and communities to work together to provide the services and resources that families need to be successful. The program provides training and education for low-income parents working at least 20 hours per week or actively seeking a job. Assistance is limited to 60 months in a person's lifetime.

As of March 2010, 10,678 King County parents were enrolled in the WorkFirst program, an increase of 16% from the previous year. For this same month, 5,127 people statewide were in a job skill enhancement training program, while 1,712 were enrolled in a GED program. For East King County participants, the median placement wage post program completion was \$11.41 per hour, compared to the statewide rate of \$9.72.

Goal 5 (cont.)

- **Living wage**

Washington State's minimum wage in 2010 is \$8.55, the highest in the country. However, an adult making the minimum wage and supporting two children is under the federal poverty level, \$18,310.

A living wage is often defined as the minimum income that is needed to purchase the basic necessities without assistance from public programs. Living wage calculations often include the cost of housing, food, transportation, health care, taxes, childcare and household, clothing and personal items. The Northwest Federation of Community Organizations (NWFCO) has developed a living wage calculation for each county in the state. While their methodology for calculating the cost for a family to live in King County is similar to other estimates, NWFCO also includes a savings figure of 10% of the income after childcare and taxes. The savings consider funds needed to survive an emergency.

2009 King County Living Wage by Family Type				
Single Adult	Single Adult with a school-aged child (6-8 years)	Single Adult with a school-aged child and a toddler (12-24 months)	Two Adults (both working) with a school-aged child and a toddler	Two Adults (one working) with a school-aged child and a toddler
\$14.71/hr or \$30,579	\$23.41/hr or \$48,693	\$32.33/hr or \$67,246	\$39.67/hr or \$82,514	\$28.45/hr or \$59,176

Source: Northwest Federation of Community Organizations. (December, 2009). The 2009 Jobs Gap: Searching for Work that Pays. Available at: http://nwfco.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/2009-1203_2009-Job-Gap.pdf

- **Childcare Availability and Affordability**

Over the past five years, the overall number of licensed facilities has declined by 7%. In Bellevue, there are currently 5,880 licensed slots in both family childcare and centers, but this does not meet the demand. Furthermore, childcare for an East King County family with an infant and pre-schooler in full-time care can cost between \$21,788 and \$28,080/year.

WorkFirst's Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program provides subsidized child care to TANF and low-income parents so that they are able to continue working. WCCC currently serves parents who earn up to 200% of the federal poverty level, including participants in WorkFirst. In December 2009, there were approximately 36,112 WCCC cases statewide, a 3.7% increase from the same month in 2008. King County accounted for 8,476 of those cases, the most for any region in the state and a 9.2% increase from the year before.

As of February 2010, only 36% of the 278 child care centers and family child care homes in Bellevue reported accepting subsidies, a significant decline from previous years. Comparatively, the total of all East King County centers have a subsidy acceptance rate of 34%, South King County 45%, and North King County 43%.

Source: Child Care Resources. (2010, February). Child Care Facilities and Rates in King County. Available at: http://www.childcare.org/community/article_stats-facilities-rates-kc.asp

Source: Washington State WorkFirst. (2010, April). WorkFirst Performance Chartbook: May 2010. Available at: <http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/performance/measures.asp>

Specific Populations: Refugees and Immigrants

Between 1990 and 2000, the ethnic and racial diversity of Bellevue increased substantially, and still continues to change. While we cannot expect data from the most recent U.S. Census for some time, the data from the 2000 Census demonstrated the increasing levels of diversity in King County. More recently, estimates from the 2006-2008 American Community Survey show even more dramatically the growth in Bellevue's diverse population, many of whom are refugees and immigrants.

- **Immigrants**

Immigrants are people who have petitioned to enter the United States to become lawful permanent residents from countries that have not been designated by the U.S. as having refugee eligibility. Immigrants have chosen for a variety of reasons to leave their homes to go to another country. Immigrants are not entitled to medical and cash benefits for as long as eight months after their arrival in the United States.

In 2009, the U.S. admitted 1,130,818 immigrants obtaining legal permanent resident status, a 2.1% increase from 2008. Of those, 27,562 settled in Washington State, a 19% increase from 2008.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Office of Immigration Statistics. Available at: <http://www.dhs.gov/files/statistics/publications/LPR09.shtm>

- **Refugees**

Refugees are people who, based on a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group, leave their native country and apply to another country for residency. A refugee is granted legal status and protection before entry into the U.S.

Country	2009		2008		2007		2006	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	74,602	100.0	60,108	100.0	48,218	100.0	41,150	100.0
Burma	18,202	24.3	18,139	30.2	13,896	28.8	1,612	3.9
Iraq	18,838	25.2	13,823	23.0	1,608	3.3	202	0.5
Bhutan	13,452	18.0	5,320	8.9	--	--	3	--
Iran	5,381	7.2	5,270	8.8	5,481	11.4	2,792	6.8
Cuba	4,800	6.4	4,177	6.9	2,922	6.1	3,143	7.6
Eritrea	1,571	2.1	251	.4	963	2.0	538	1.3
Somalia	4,189	5.6	2,523	4.2	6,969	14.5	10,357	25.2
Vietnam	1,486	2.0	1,112	1.9	1,500	3.1	3,039	7.4
Congo, Democ. Republic	1,135	1.5	727	1.2	848	1.8	405	1.0
Sudan	683	.9	375	.6	705	1.5	1,848	4.5
Other	1,748	2.3	4,903	8.2	7,756	16.1	5,295	12.9

-- Represents zero or rounds to zero.
Source: U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing Center (WRAPS).

- **Washington State Resettlements**

Washington ranks ninth in the U.S., resettling 2,584 refugees in 2009. This represents 3.5% of the total new refugee arrivals to the U.S. for the same year, and a 14.6% statewide increase from 2008. Approximately 85% of refugees that resettle in Washington State come from five countries: Burma (25.3%), Bhutan (22.9%), the former U.S.S.R. (19%), Iraq (12.0%) and Somalia (6.5%).

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Office of Refugee Resettlement. Available at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/data/fy2009RA.htm>

Specific Populations: Refugees and Immigrants (cont.)

- **King County Resettlements**

In 2009, King County resettled 1,526 new refugees into our community, a 27.8% increase from 2008. Although refugees came from more than 15 different countries, a significant proportion came from Burma (358 individuals) and Bhutan (446 individuals).

Source: Holland, Annette. (2010) . King County Public Health. Refugee Health Screening Report.

- **Resettlements in Bellevue and on the Eastside**

Between October 2009 and June 2010, Bellevue has resettled 14 refugees, from both Iran (13 individuals) and Iraq (1 individual). In each of the other four Eastside cities the report includes, nearly all resettled refugees were Iranian. During this period of time, Issaquah, Kirkland and Sammamish resettled a total of 17 refugees, all from Iran. Redmond resettled an additional 5 Iranian refugees, as well as two from Moldova.

Source: Medina, Tom. (2010). Department of State Worldwide Refugee Processing System. Department of Social and Health Services, Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance.

Legislative Update

Although each state legislative and federal congressional session bring new updates to human services, we have specifically chosen to include these legislative changes because of their direct impact on Washington State's social services, both currently and in the future.

- **State Legislation**

General Assistance for the Unemployable becomes the Disability Lifeline Program

General Assistance for the Unemployable (GA-U) was a state-funded program that provided cash grants and medical benefits to adults with temporary incapacities that prevented them from working. During Washington State's 2010 legislative session, House Bill 2782: Concerning the Security Lifeline Act, was passed, effectively ending GA-U and instituting its replacement, the Disability Lifeline Program.

The Disability Lifeline Program is similar to GA-U in most eligibility rules and benefits, although new participation requirements and time limitations have been imposed. Disability Lifeline participants, if determined in need of such services, are now required to participate in drug treatment, job services, or housing programs. Additionally, Disability Lifeline includes new time limits; under GA-U, temporarily unemployable adults could receive benefits as long as they met the eligibility criteria. Under Disability Lifeline, however, individuals can only receive benefits for up to 24 months in a five-year period, after which they are removed from the program.

One of the most controversial aspects of Disability Lifeline's new stipulations is that they are retroactive, meaning that approximately 5,000 people statewide will have reached or exceeded the new term limits by September. In an effort to prevent these individuals from completely losing all support, DSHS has been reviewing individual files to sort out clients who now qualify for Social Security Insurance. However, even after sorting was completed, 1,769 people will be left without any benefits at all, 612 of whom are King County residents.

Source: The News Tribune. Life's About to Get Much More Difficult for 1,769 on Disability. (August 25, 2010). Available at: <http://www.thenewstribune.com/2010/08/21/1309065/lifes-about-to-get-much-more-difficult.html>

Source: Washington State Institute for Public Policy. Washington's General Assistance-Unemployable Program: Caseload Trends. (2010). Available at: <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/rptfiles/10-05-4101.pdf>

- **Federal Legislation**

Passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

On March 23, 2010, President Obama signed into law the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, commonly referred to as the Health Care Reform Bill. The law includes the following provisions:

- Expanding Medicaid eligibility
- Subsidizing insurance premiums
- Providing incentives for businesses to provide health care benefits
- Prohibiting denial of coverage/claims based on pre-existing conditions
- Establishing health insurance exchanges

The costs of these provisions are offset by a variety of taxes, fees, and cost-saving measures, such as new Medicare taxes for high-income brackets, taxes on indoor tanning, and fees on medical devices and pharmaceutical companies.

One of the most controversial aspects of the act is its compulsory nature; citizens who do not obtain health insurance (unless exempted due to insufficient income) will be assessed a tax penalty. Washington State Attorney General Rob McKenna joined 19 other state's attorney generals in filing a lawsuit to challenge the constitutionality of this provision.

Legislative Update (cont.)

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act has several implications for Washington State, both immediately and in the future. Washington State has been granted a waiver that allows Medicaid matching funds to cover half of the state's health support programs - including Basic Health and Disability Lifeline – worth almost \$600 million. Without funding, both programs were in danger of being discontinued, although Disability Lifeline still enacted some cuts. These programs are intended to serve as “bridge” programs during the transition to health care reform's full implementation in 2014.

In 2014, the federal government will begin providing health insurance to all individuals at or below 133% of the federal poverty level, many of whom are currently eligible for coverage or are already covered by Washington's health support programs. Full federal funding for the program dissipates in 2018.

Source: Olympia Newswire. (2010). Un-Busting the Budget: The Impact Health Care Reform Will Have on Washington State. Available at: <http://www.olympianews.org/2010/03/24/keiser-health-care-reform-washington-state/>

Source: Understanding the Affordable Health Care Act. (2010). Available at: <http://www.healthcare.gov>

Source: Washington State Office of the Attorney General. 2010 Multi-State Health Care Lawsuit. Available at: <http://www.atg.wa.gov/page.aspx?id=25410>