



| COVID-19 POLICY BRIEF SERIES

Vaccination Rates Among Washington State Latinos Remain Low as Delta Variant Emerges in the U.S.

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BACKGROUND

Latinos have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 infection and deaths nationally and locally. In Washington State, as of July 1, 2021, nearly one-third (29%) of all COVID-19 cases were among Latinos even though Latinos account for only 13% of the state's population.¹ Although overall vaccination efforts in Washington have been highly successful, resulting in vaccination of over 68% of the state's population 16 years and older, state health department data reveal that vaccination efforts have not accrued equally to all communities in the state with many rural and communities of color clearly lagging behind.

The emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 Delta variant (B.1.617.2) in our region poses a growing threat to all who remain unvaccinated. This includes children younger than 12 years of age who account for approximately one-quarter of all Latinos in the state and who have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 infection and multisystem inflammatory syndrome.^{2,3} For these reasons, it is especially important that we vaccinate all eligible Latinos in our state as soon as possible and children under 12 when appropriate.

This Policy Brief shares estimates of the proportion of the state's Latino population that remains unvaccinated. The purpose of this report is to call attention to the important vaccination work ahead and guide allocation of the state's vaccination resources based on vaccination rates of Latinos by county.

DATA SOURCES

Data for this Policy Brief were from the 2019 US Census population data⁴ and the Washington State Department of Health COVID-19 Data Dashboard vaccination counts.¹ Total state population count and county population counts were from the 2019 US Census QuickFacts website.⁴ Counts of vaccinated Latinos and individuals without a race/ethnicity identification were from the Washington State Department of Health COVID-19 Data Dashboard.¹

METHODS

We provide two estimated vaccination rates for Latinos for each county. First, we estimated the number of fully and partially vaccinated and unvaccinated Latinos based on counts of individuals with known Latino ethnicity. These unadjusted counts were taken directly from the dashboard. Second, to account for possible

Latino Center for Health – University of Washington

The Latino Center for Health is a state-funded interdisciplinary research center at the University of Washington. Housed administratively at the School of Social Work, the center conducts community-engaged research through capacity building and authentic partnerships with community stakeholders to promote the health and well-being of Latino communities in Washington state (<https://latinocenterforhealth.org/>).

1 Source: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/DataDashboard>; accessed 7/1/2021.

2 Source: [Fauci Warns Dangerous Delta Variant Is The Greatest Threat To U.S. COVID Efforts \(https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/06/22/1008859705/delta-variant-coronavirus-unvaccinated-u-s-covid-surge\)](https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/06/22/1008859705/delta-variant-coronavirus-unvaccinated-u-s-covid-surge); accessed 6/28/2021.

3 Source: [Cases of COVID-19 and New Syndrome on the Rise Among Kids, Especially Latinos \(https://www.kqed.org/news/11856370/cases-of-covid-19-and-new-syndrome-on-the-rise-among-kids-especially-latinos\)](https://www.kqed.org/news/11856370/cases-of-covid-19-and-new-syndrome-on-the-rise-among-kids-especially-latinos); accessed 6/28/2021.

4 Source: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/WA>; accessed 6/17/2021.



undercounting of vaccinated Latinos among individuals missing ethnicity data, we used adjusted counts to estimate the number of fully and partially vaccinated Latinos as follows: $Y = a + (b * c)$, where: Y = adjusted number of vaccinated Latinos; a = count of vaccinated individuals identified as Latino race/ethnicity; b = count of vaccinated individuals without race/ethnicity data; and c = proportion of the county population that is Latino.

This adjusted estimate provides a conservative estimate of the number of unvaccinated Latinos since the proportion of the county population that is Latino includes children under 12 who are ineligible for vaccination. Fully vaccinated refers to individuals who have received two doses of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Partially vaccinated refers to individuals who received only one dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.

FINDINGS

In Washington State overall, 35% percent of Latinos are fully vaccinated, 6% are partially vaccinated, and 60% remain unvaccinated.

Figure 1 is a map of adjusted vaccination rates by county. Counties with the lowest proportion of unvaccinated Latinos include San Juan (42%), King (53%), Okanogan (54%), Douglas (56%), and Chelan (59%) counties (see Table 1). Counties with the highest proportion of unvaccinated Latinos included Stevens (88%), Ferry (87%), Asotin (87%), Pend Oreille (84%), and Benton, Cowlitz, Lewis and Pacific (77%). Several counties with the highest proportions of unvaccinated Latinos have smaller Latino communities and as a result smaller numbers of unvaccinated Latinos. One exception is Benton County, which has approximately 36,339 unvaccinated Latinos. Some counties with smaller proportions of unvaccinated Latinos, however, have larger Latino populations. As a result, large numbers of unvaccinated Latinos

remain in King (120,226), Yakima (82,916), Pierce (71,379), Snohomish (58,440), and Franklin (40,084) counties.

SUMMARY

Although Washington State has made significant progress in vaccinating its population against COVID-19, urban and rural Latino communities throughout Washington lag behind the state as a whole and remain at significant risk of infection. With the emergence of the Delta variant, a more infectious and likely more virulent strain of the COVID-19 virus, it is imperative that the state increase its efforts to vaccinate vulnerable Latinos, including all those who are unvaccinated and those who are only partially vaccinated, before the fall season. In the fall, cooler temperatures, in-person school, and the growing presence of the Delta variant in our region are likely to drive COVID-19 infection rates much higher among the unvaccinated.

As discussed in [our recent policy brief](#)⁵ on vaccine hesitancy among Latinos, addressing barriers and expanding access to vaccines by working with grassroots, community-based organizations is an important strategy for vaccinating Latinos. Bilingual and bicultural community-based organizations and trusted community leaders must continue to engage in this work. Federal, state, and county health agencies must support them in these efforts.

We urge our state's elected leadership to increase its funding and support of community-based organizations and trusted community leaders who are working to improve access and overcome hesitancy to COVID-19 vaccines among urban and rural Latinos in Washington.

Other recommendations for increasing vaccine uptake among Latinos can be found in [our recent policy brief](#).⁵

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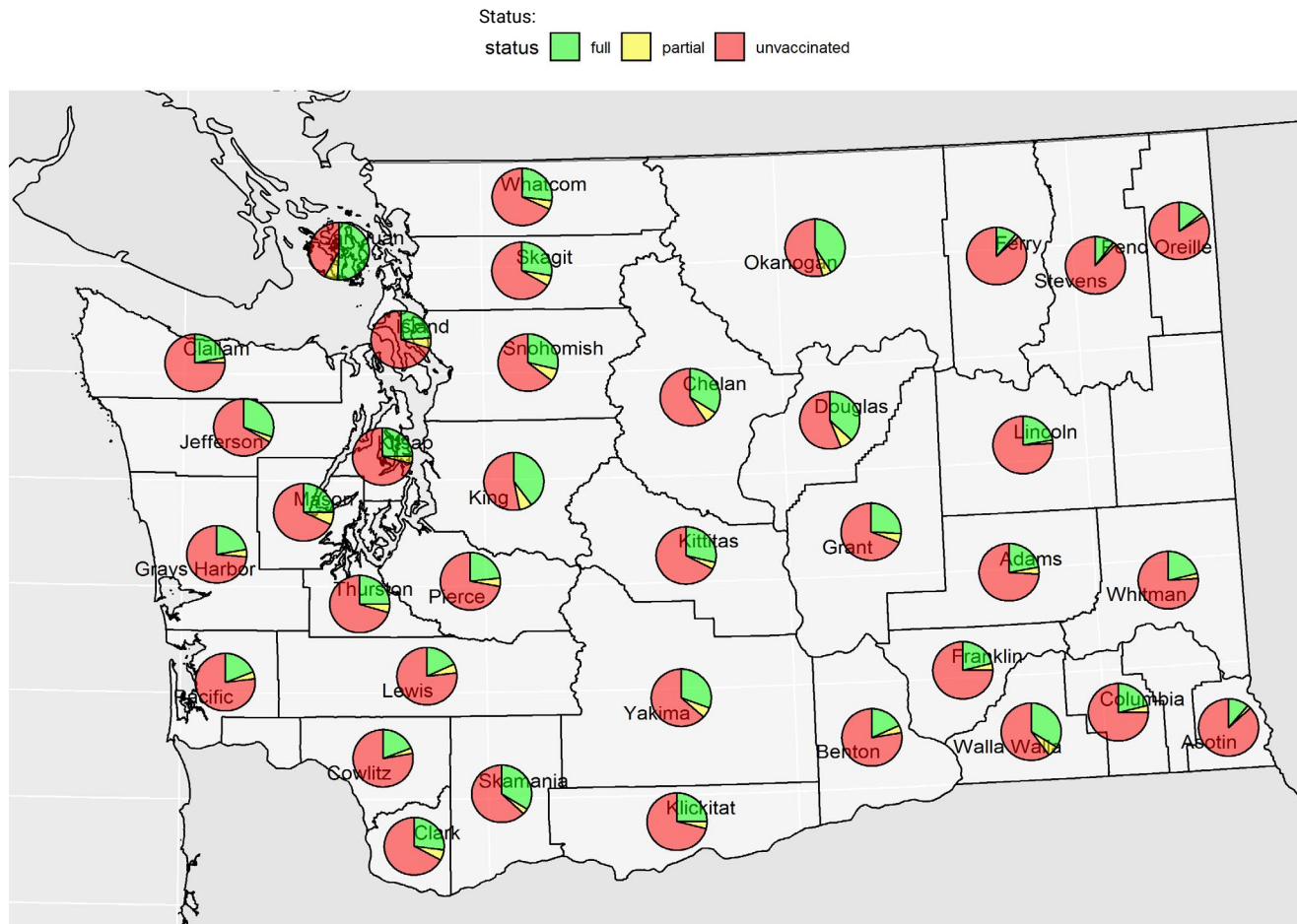
For questions about this brief, contact Amber Tafoya, LCH Communications Specialist, altafoya@uw.edu

5 Source: Latino Center for Health, University of Washington. (2021). *Latino Views on COVID-19 Vaccinations: Understanding Hesitancy*. https://latinocenterforhealth.org/wordpress_latcntr/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/LCH_VaccineHesitancyPolicyBrief_4.28.21.Authors.pdf; accessed 6/17/2021.



Figure 1. Washington State Map of Adjusted Vaccination Rates Among Latinos, by County.

Although vaccination rates in each county can vary, the unvaccinated rate for Latinos is more than 50% for all counties.



¡ADIÓS COVID! – A Tool for the Community

Adiós COVID is an all-volunteer project focused on helping Washington Latinos get the COVID-19 vaccine. It is led by individuals from the Latino Center and iSchool. Adiós COVID involves partnering with community-based organizations to support COVID-19 vaccine pop-up clinics throughout Washington State, as well as other resources to help vaccinate Latinos.

Website: <https://adios covid.org/en> (English)
<https://adios covid.org> (Spanish)

Contact: help@adios covid.org



Table 1. Vaccination Rates Among Latinos by County in Washington State

	Latino Population	Fully Vaccinated		Partially Vaccinated		Unvaccinated		Number Unvaccinated (Adjusted)
		Adjusted	Unadjusted	Adjusted	Unadjusted	Adjusted	Unadjusted	
State	989,936	35%	31%	6%	5%	60%	63%	589,386
Adams	13,788	22%	18%	4%	4%	74%	77%	10,174
Asotin	903	11%	10%	2%	2%	87%	88%	786
Benton	47,010	18%	18%	4%	4%	77%	76%	36,339
Chelan	23,932	34%	32%	7%	7%	59%	58%	14,113
Clallam	5,413	22%	17%	3%	2%	75%	79%	4,045
Clark	48,824	27%	25%	6%	6%	67%	65%	32,781
Columbia	279	21%	20%	4%	4%	75%	75%	209
Cowlitz	11,059	19%	18%	3%	3%	77%	76%	8,529
Douglas	14,766	37%	36%	7%	7%	56%	55%	8,314
Ferry	303	11%	10%	2%	2%	87%	88%	265
Franklin	53,324	21%	19%	4%	4%	75%	76%	40,084
Garfield	67							
Grant	43,003	26%	25%	5%	4%	69%	68%	29,870
Grays Harbor	8,257	22%	19%	4%	4%	73%	75%	6,069
Island	5,960	24%	22%	6%	6%	70%	71%	4,147
Jefferson	1,251	30%	27%	3%	3%	66%	69%	830
King	225,278	40%	37%	7%	6%	53%	53%	120,226
Kitsap	21,718	25%	21%	4%	4%	71%	72%	15,435
Kittitas	4,314	29%	19%	4%	3%	68%	76%	2,929
Klickitat	2,824	25%	20%	4%	3%	71%	76%	2,006
Lewis	8,878	18%	15%	5%	4%	77%	78%	6,839
Lincoln	317	22%	20%	2%	2%	76%	75%	241
Mason	6,677	25%	21%	7%	6%	68%	69%	4,548
Okanogan	9,205	41%	39%	5%	4%	54%	53%	5,001
Pacific	2,169	19%	13%	4%	3%	77%	81%	1,659
Pend Oreille	535	14%	11%	2%	1%	84%	87%	447
Pierce	99,548	23%	21%	5%	5%	72%	71%	71,379
San Juan	1,231	51%	45%	7%	7%	42%	39%	518
Skagit	25,841	28%	25%	6%	5%	67%	67%	17,232
Skamania	725	34%	31%	3%	3%	63%	66%	456
Snohomish	90,429	29%	26%	7%	6%	65%	64%	58,440
Spokane	31,368	23%	20%	5%	4%	72%	73%	22,539
Stevens	1,829	10%	8%	2%	2%	88%	89%	1,602
Thurston	26,148	25%	22%	5%	4%	71%	70%	18,468
Wahkiakum	171							
Walla Walla	13,975	34%	31%	6%	5%	60%	60%	8,387
Whatcom	22,925	27%	24%	5%	5%	68%	68%	15,523
Whitman	3,006	21%	17%	3%	3%	76%	78%	2,284
Yakima	130,454	31%	28%	6%	5%	64%	64%	82,916

Note: Vaccination data for Wahkiakum and Garfield counties was not available. Adjusted estimates include vaccinated individuals without race/ethnicity data, adjusted for proportion of the county population that is Latino, including children under 12 who are currently ineligible for vaccination.