

# Olympic Area Agency on Aging

## Section B – Planning and Service Area Profile

### B – 1 Population Profile:

O3A's service area is home to approximately 185,500 people widely dispersed over the rugged mountainous terrain of the Olympic peninsula. The entire service region is considered to be rural<sup>1</sup>, with an average of 32 people per square mile.

The Olympic peninsula has become a significant retirement destination, owing to a natural environment which offers recreational and lifestyle choices that are attracting increasingly large numbers of baby boomers heading into their retirement years. Life expectancy for these elders has increased dramatically, thanks to the remarkable improvements in education, medicine, nutrition and general living standards of the last century. Individuals who reach the age of 60 today can expect to live almost 25 more years.

As life expectancy rises, the number of "older old" and "oldest old" adults also increases. For this reason, programs and policies directed to the 60 and over population must take into account the needs of up to three generations of older adults.

In addition to generational differences, the older population is extremely diverse in health, social and economic statuses. While most of the older adults between the ages of 65 and 74 are active, healthy and independent, those who are 85 years and older are more likely to face problems of ill health and loss of independence,<sup>2</sup> further straining already overburdened rural health and long-term care systems. For these elders, as well as for people with disabilities, residence in a rural setting such as the Olympic peninsula can contribute to social isolation and increased risk to well being. Health and income disparities across ethnic groups, which are already pronounced particularly amongst native and minority elders, will have a greater impact on their quality of life as these elders age.

The aging trend in the O3A service area will continue for the next several decades, according to population growth projections from Washington State's Office of Financial Management. The age distribution places significant stress on the local long-term care systems. As the younger adult population continues to leave the area for better economic opportunities, there is growing concern about who will provide the care needed by older adults and adults with disabilities in the coming years.

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<sup>1</sup> For the sake of consistency and reporting, the Administration on Aging's definition for rural is used: Any area that is not defined as urban. Urban areas comprise (1) urbanized areas (a central place and its adjacent densely settled territories with a combined minimum population of 50,000) and (2) an incorporated place or a census designated place with 20,000 or more inhabitants.

Within O3A's four county service region, there is no incorporated area or census designation (smaller than county) with a population over 20,000. The population of each of the two largest towns in the service region, Aberdeen and Port Angeles, is less than 19,000.

<sup>2</sup> Area plan on aging update 2006 – 2007. Aging and Disability Services, Seattle, pg 10.

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## DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

Demographic	Total
<b>60+</b>	<b>44,754</b>
<b>60+ Below poverty level</b>	<b>3476</b>
<b>60+ Minority</b>	<b>1924</b>
<b>60+ Minority below poverty level</b>	<b>328</b>
<b>60+ Rural Areas</b>	<b>44,754</b>
<b>Adults with Disabilities (21-65+)</b>	<b>27243</b>
<b>60+ Limited English Proficiency</b>	<b>178</b>
<b>Tribal Elders (estimated)</b>	<b>1,124</b>
<b>Number of Tribes</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Tribal Nations</b>	<b>Chehalis, Chinook, Hoh, Jamestown S’Klallam, Lower Elwha Klallam, Quileute, Makah, Quinault, and Shoalwater Bay</b>
<b>Tribes with Title VI (OAA) programs</b>	<b>7</b>

### 65 and older

According to Washington State’s Office of Financial Management, “Washington’s population age 65 and over is on the verge of exploding. In 2006, persons age 65 and over represent 11.5% of the state’s population. Persons age 65 and over comprise one-fifth or more of the population in seven counties; of these, the three highest ranking are within O3A’s service region: Pacific (23.7%), Jefferson (22.8%), and Clallam (22.7%).<sup>3</sup>

While Grays Harbor’s 65+ population represents only 20.4% of its total population, this percentage still exceeds the state average by 4% and the nation by 6%. By 2025, persons age 65 and over in Washington state will be 16.3% of the population. In fact, Washington’s growing elderly population is having a noticeable impact on the population growth in several counties.<sup>4</sup>

With a median age nearly 6 years higher than the state average within two of the four counties, the Olympic Area Agency on Aging is already experiencing the challenges facing the state, as well as the nation, within the next 20 years.

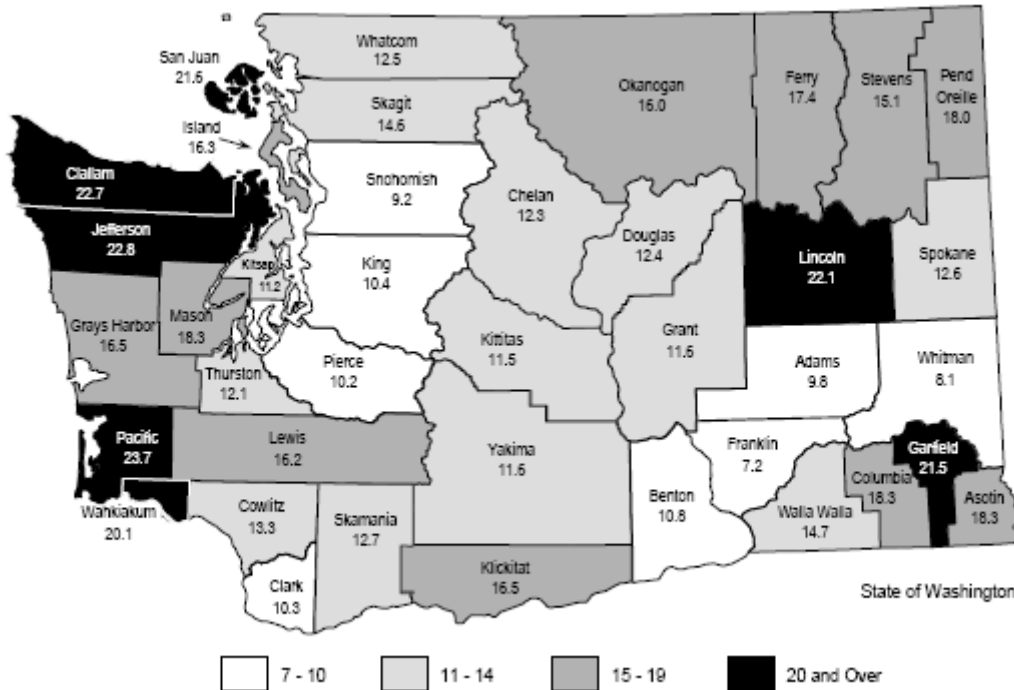
### 60 and older

There is also a significantly higher proportion of older adults who are 60 years or older: In Pacific County, 32.4% of residents are 60+, with Jefferson at 28.0% Clallam at 32.6% and Grays Harbor at 22.0%. In Washington State, 16.8% of the population is 60 years or older, while 15.8 % of the United State’s American population is 60+. That means that the 60+ age group already represents over a quarter of the population in three of the four counties with O3A’s service region. As baby boomers continue to retire to the peninsula, growth in the number of 60+ residents will continue to out pace that of the rest of the state and nation.

<sup>3</sup> 2006 Washington Population Trends, Office of Financial Management, pg. 47.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

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## **Elders living alone**

36.8% percent of total households in the region include individuals who are 65 or older, compared to the state at 18.6%. Over 32% of those 65 or older in the region are living alone.

## **Mature work force**

The O3A region also has a higher percentage of 45-59 year olds than the state. This population represents the ‘mature work force’ and the bulk of the baby boomers nearing retirement age. With the exception of Grays Harbor, the service area has a lower percentage of the major working age group (16%-44%) than the state.

## **Minority Populations**

Within the O3A service region, nearly 93% of the entire population is white. American Indian/Alaskan Natives comprise the largest ‘minority’ population at 5% of total population. Minority populations other than American Indian/Alaskan Native comprise about 6% of the total population, with Hispanic of any race (including white) at 3.4%; Asians at 1.9%; and Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders and African Americans at about 1%. These ‘other than native American’ communities are increasing a relatively rapid pace, and as such, are more difficult to reach with services and assistance because they do not yet have well known geographical and/or traditional “bases”, such as Tribal affiliations. Accordingly, such “other than native American” populations may not be as well represented in survey data, needs assessment or service delivery efforts, and more culturally specific outreach is indicated.

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## **Native Populations**

The United States Census Bureau has historically under-counted native people throughout the U.S. This seems to hold true with the 2000 Census, on which the following 2006 projections<sup>5</sup> are based; therefore, the following data should not be considered accurate. Rather, the table reflects the general distribution of Tribal Elders living in the service area.

Ages	Clallam	Grays Harbor	Jefferson	Pacific	Total
55 to 59	189	231	51	38	509
60 to 64	142	165	29	39	374
65 to 69	73	88	28	18	207
70 to 74	43	41	11	22	117
75 to 84	47	56	12	13	128
85 +	17	11	1	3	32
<b>Total 55+</b>	511	592	132	132	1,367
<b><u>Total 60+</u></b>	322	361	81	94	858

## **Young Adults with Disabilities**

The percent of adults age 21-64 with disabilities (22.6%) exceeds the state percentage of 4.6%. The percentages are particularly high in Pacific County (26.3%) and Grays Harbor County (24%). Only 45% of the 21-64 year old populations with disabilities in the area are employed, compared to the Washington State average of 57.6%.

## **Seniors with Disabilities**

The percent of the 65+ population with disabilities is higher in Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties than the state percentage (42.3%), at 48.6% and 47.8%, respectively. Both Clallam and Jefferson County are below the state average, at 38.4% and 33.9%, respectively.