

Demographics
North and Central Whidbey Island
Oak Harbor and Coupeville
August, 2016 and projected to 2021

This is a selection of data provided by MissionInsite, based on information provided by the US Census Bureau, Synergos Technologies Inc., Washington State Employment Security Department, Redfin Real Estate, and Experian. Specific organizational websites were also accessed directly for data. The following website has excellent and specific data: <http://www.towncharts.com/Washington/Demographics/North-Whidbey-Island-CCD-WA-Demographics-data.html>

Regional context

Island County is situated in the Salish Sea in Northwest Washington. As its name suggests, it is made up of several islands. The two largest are Whidbey and Camano with seven small, additional islands. Island County is the second smallest county in Washington by landmass, just larger than neighboring San Juan County. Island County is bounded to the north by Deception Pass and by Puget Sound to the south. Skagit Bay and Saratoga Passage are located to the east and Admiralty Inlet and the Strait of Juan de Fuca are west of Island County. Skagit and Snohomish Counties lie to the east of Island County and the Olympic Peninsula lies across the water to the west.

The largest employer is the U.S. Naval Air Station in Oak Harbor (Naval Air Station Whidbey Island or NASWI). Oak Harbor is the largest city in the county with a population of 22,544. Coupeville, to the south of Oak Harbor, is the seat of county government, and has a population of 2,104.

Oak Harbor is Whidbey Island's largest incorporated city. Named for the Garry Oak trees which grace its skyline. The city's growth coincided with two major events: the building of Deception Pass Bridge on July 31, 1935, and the completion of Naval Air Station Whidbey Island on September 21, 1942. Oak Harbor's history goes back to the early 1850s.

Coupeville was laid out in the 1850s by Captain Thomas Coupe, and named for him. Coupeville was officially incorporated on April 20, 1910.

Coupeville is a historic district within the federal Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve. Congress established the reserve in 1978, as the first and now one of the largest National Historical Reserves in the nation. Its 22 square miles (57 km²) also encompass farmlands, Fort Ebey State Park, Fort Casey State Park, shorelines and beaches, parks, trails, and 91 buildings and structures on the National Register of Historic Places.

Local economy

For thousands of years, Island County was inhabited by several groups of Coast Salish Indians. In the late 1700s and early 1800s, the population was decimated by disease transmitted through contact with European and American explorers.

Settlement by non-indigenous people began in the 1850s. Early industries included logging, fishing and farming, as well as some related manufacturing industries.

Whidbey Island is divided economically into two different regions: the northern end of the island (encompassing Oak Harbor and Whidbey Island Naval Air Station), and the remainder of the island (encompassing Coupeville, Greenbank, Freeland, Langley, Clinton and the smaller communities in-between).

The economy of the northern end of Whidbey Island is strongly influenced by the presence of Whidbey Island Naval Air Station near Oak Harbor (N.A.S. Whidbey). N.A.S. Whidbey is Oak Harbor's largest employer; thus, Oak Harbor has a predominantly service-based economy and several national chain stores

have been attracted to the Oak Harbor area. The economy of Whidbey Island south of Oak Harbor relies heavily on tourism, small-scale agriculture, and the arts.

In 1941, the U.S. Navy started construction on an airbase (NASWI), which transformed Oak Harbor into a booming community due to the creation of construction jobs and influx of Navy personnel. NASWI remains a strong economic stabilizing force in Whidbey Island. NASWI has also brought many highly skilled workers to Whidbey Island. There is not a strong economic base to provide sufficient employment for the spouses and dependents of those workers; consequently, commuting to nearby counties provides a relief valve for residents seeking jobs.

Nonfarm and covered employment estimates do not include military employment figures. However, given that Island County's largest employer is the military, the success of other industries is highly dependent on the employment situation at the naval air base.

Total nonfarm employment averaged 15,520 in 2014. Nearly 29 percent of all jobs in Island County were government jobs—especially local government. Typically, the largest volume of local government jobs is related to K-12 education. Private education and health services made up nearly 15 percent of total nonfarm employment and leisure and hospitality made up slightly more than 14 percent. Goods producing industries, which are predominantly represented by construction and manufacturing, made up 9 percent of the non-military jobs in Island County.

Population Context:

While St. Stephen's is located in Oak Harbor and largely draws members from this town, it is worth noting the broader context in which the study focuses.

- Island County is the fourth largest out of ten counties in the area. The county population has grown 2% since 2010. Whidbey Naval Station skews the number at 27.8% change between 2010 and 2016.
- Island County's population was 80,113 in 2017.
- The state is projected to grow by 5.4%.
- Northern Whidbey Island's total population was 37,471 at the end of 2017. Oak Harbor is the largest town on the island and had a population of 22,544. Coupeville's population was 2,014.

Population of Survey Area:

The estimated 2016 population within the study area is 27, 079. The 2021 projection would see the area grow by 420 (1.6%) to a total population of 27,499.

Households:

The average population per household in 2010 was 2.54 and by 2021 it is not projected to change. The statewide average is estimated to be 2.56 persons.

However, family households are expected to grow by 1.6%, a general indication that families are adding more children.

Racial-Ethnic Trends

Oak Harbor

2016 Racial-Ethnic mix:

Asian (non-Hisp) 2,407
Black (Afr Amer) 1,179
White - 18,933
Hispanic/Latino 2,464
Pac Is/Am Ind 2,096

2021 Racial-Ethnic mix:

Asian (non-Hisp) 2,464
Black (Afr Amer) 1,190
White - 19,160
Hispanic/Latino 2,555
Pac Is/Am Ind 2,130

Coupeville

Coupeville's population is predominantly White (92.2%), and Hispanic (17.4%).

Overall, all groups are expected to remain about the same over the next five years.

Age Trends:

The median age in Oak Harbor: 30.1 years

The number of Navy personnel whose average age is 23 years probably skews this average. The general population turnover rate in the area is low (0.3%), compared to WA state's turnover rate of 5.2%. The Navy personnel turnover rate was 27.8%.

The median age in Coupeville: 54 years

Coupeville's turnover rate was 14.9%, largely due to the high turnover of medical staff at the Whidbey Health Medical Center (the island's only hospital).

Age cohorts:

0-20 = 21.1% (large, young families)

20's = 13.9%

30's = 10.6%

40's = 10.6%

50's = 13.5%

60's = 16%

70+ = 14.4% (Baby Boomer retirees)

Between 2010 and 2016, the Phase of Life analysis shows that the largest decline in population was in the age 25-34 (singles and young families), and the largest increase in population was in the 35-54 (families and empty nesters) range, followed by the 65+ (retirees) range, and the 18-24 (career starters) range.

Education Trends

In 2017, some 25% of North Whidbey Island people aged 25 or older, held a bachelors degree or higher. By comparison, 43% of residents in Central Whidbey Island hold undergraduate degrees.

North Whidbey Island high schools graduate 94% of their students, making this the fourth highest level of the surrounding 10 counties.

Approximately 6% of the population aged 25 years or older either have no schooling or dropped out of school before completing high school.

The trend between 2010 and 2016 is towards a drop in the number of elementary school children, and an increase in the number of middle and high school students.

Public Schools in the Oak Harbor area:

Oak Harbor High

Oak Harbor Intermediate

Oak Harbor Elementary

North Whidbey Middle

Broad View Elementary

Hillcrest Elementary

Olympic View Elementary

Home Connection is a home-school partnership with Oak Harbor Public Schools. Its Mission is to build partnerships with families to enrich each child's learning experience.

Hand-in-Hand Early Learning Center is a partnership school coordinated by Oak Harbor Public Schools and Oak Harbor Head Start. The staff provides a learning environment where young students, with the support of their families, can thrive.

Oak Harbor Public Schools encourages volunteerism and attracts support from many parents, military personnel, senior citizens, businesses, and community members.

In addition to public schools, families in Oak Harbor may choose to send their children to Christian schools. Oak Harbor Christian School serves families and students in Preschool through 6th grade. North Whidbey Christian High School serves students from 7th grade through 12th grade. Several hundred students attend these private schools.

Household and Family Income Trends

The average household income trend between 2010 and 2016 was approximately \$63,184. This average is expected to grow by 9.7% to \$69,329 by 2021. Approximately 29% of North Whidbey Island residents have retirement income.

Income cohorts for 2016:

- \$10,000 =	835
\$10-\$15,000 =	411
\$15-\$25,000 =	996
\$25-\$35,000 =	1,081
\$35-\$50,000 =	1,868
\$50-\$75,000 =	2,253
\$75-\$100,000 =	1,530
\$100-\$150,000 =	1,234
\$150-\$200,000 =	266
\$200,000+ =	194

Household Income by ethnicity in 2016:

Asian	= \$39,043
Black/African American	= \$53,582
Hispanic/Latino	= \$42,968
White/Anglo	= \$53,880
Pacific Islander/American Indian	= \$52,887

Wealthiest areas of Whidbey Island by median income:

- Useless Bay/Bush Point
- Strawberry Point/Dugualla Heights
- North and east of Oak Harbor
- Langley
- Coupeville
- Camano Island

Perhaps not surprisingly, North Whidbey Island residents spend most of their income on housing, healthcare, and transport. Housing and healthcare costs run higher than national U.S. averages for both. Utilities, in 2016, were just below the national average, but with the construction of a new water treatment plant in Oak Harbor, 2018 costs for city services will rise considerably. Construction costs on the treatment plant have run grossly over budget and are the subject of an inquiry by the Mayor's office (2018).

Poverty on North Whidbey Island

While there is a small, visible population of homeless individuals in Oak Harbor, there is another sizeable population of impoverished people, mainly women, who are largely invisible. They are often women who are single heads of households as a result of divorce or separation from Navy spouses. They cannot afford to move, good-paying work is difficult to find, and they need to stay close to the Navy base to use the medical facilities or shop at the commissary. Due to the increasing numbers of people seeking affordable housing in Oak Harbor, rapidly rising rents and decreasing availability of home units are squeezing low income renters. Some lower-ranked military families resort to living in camper vehicles.

The homeless on Whidbey were counted in January, 2018's *Point In Time* survey. In 2017, county officials and volunteers counted 127 individuals at events on the north and south ends of the island and at places homeless individuals were known to occupy. Over 30 of those counted were minors. This number is low because some hide from the surveyors and others choose not to participate.

There are currently some 200 homeless youth being assisted through Ryan's House near Coupeville. These teens left home for various reasons, including parental substance abuse, mistreatment, failed foster care, financial difficulties, and military parents who relocate and leave their teens behind to live with others (who subsequently ask the kids to leave).

The Whidbey Homeless Coalition is a non-profit (501c3) started by neighbors including those who are or have experienced homelessness, local activists and advocates, community-based and faith-based organizations, and others committed to preventing and abating homelessness on Whidbey Island, while protecting each individual's civil rights and filling their immediate needs. The WHC manages two shelters, *The Haven* in Oak Harbor and *House of Hope* in Langley.

In April, 2017, *The Haven* was opened at the Christian Reformed Church in Oak Harbor. Spin Cafe, a downtown drop-in center that provides free dinners three nights a week, serves as *The Haven's* check-in center. People are shuttled by vans to the church starting at 6:30 p.m., and then returned to downtown in the morning after 7 a.m.

Marital Status Trends

Population by marital status in 2016: Age 15+

Never married	= 4,860 (22.9%)
Married	= 12,681 (59.7%)
Divorced	= 2,210 (10.4%)
Separated	= 224 (1.1%)
Widowed	= 1,278 (6.0%)

The percentage of married adults in the Oak Harbor community is higher than the state average and lower than the statistic for Central Whidbey Island. In Coupeville, 81% of adults are married, living in a husband/wife household.

Population by Employment

Military workforce – Oak Harbor:

The U.S. Navy has had a strong presence on North Whidbey Island since 1942 with the Naval Air Station occupying two areas of the island and an outlying airfield near Coupeville.

In all, there are 17 active duty squadrons and 3 Ready Reserve squadrons based at NAS Whidbey Island. The air station also maintains a Search and Rescue Unit. Navy Search and Rescue provides 24-hour day and night maritime, inland and mountainous rescue support for Department of Defense personnel and the greater Pacific Northwest community. This team primarily serves military aircrews, but missions to help civilians in distress are often approved and executed.

Over 50 tenant commands are at NAS Whidbey Island to provide training, medical and dental, and other support services, including a Marine Aviation Training Support Group for Whidbey's staff and student Marine Corps personnel. The base also continues its longstanding role as a center of activity for Naval Air Reserve operations and training in the region.

There are 7,660 active military personnel and some 1,200 civilians and 1,200 contract personnel working at NAS Whidbey Island. The number of active duty personnel is expected to grow to 8,200 in 2018. If the Navy adds 36 more aircraft (not certain), it would add another 600 personnel and over 900 dependents. In 2016 there were approximately 14,000 family members. The Navy provides 1,500 housing units for families in the Maylor Point, Forbes Point and Coral Sea areas and some 1,200 rooms in barracks on the base. There is no plan to build more military housing, adding to the dilemma of the shortage of affordable housing in North Whidbey Island. It is estimated that there are 14,000 military retirees in the area, many of whom are people who served on Whidbey and came back to retire.

Civilian Workforce – Age 16+:

Professional Specialty	= 17.8%
Administrative	= 14.6%
Production Transportation	= 12.9%
Construction	= 12.3%
Sales	= 8.1%
Food Prep & Serving	= 6.8%
Building Maintenance	= 6.1%
Personal Care	= 6.0%
Healthcare support	= 3.1%
Protective	= 2.1%

Considering Whidbey's broader context within Island County, the three most male-dominated industries in Island County included construction (83.2 percent), transportation and warehousing (78.0 percent), mining (75.9 percent) and information (66.0 percent).

Female-dominated industries included management of companies and enterprises (81.5 percent), health care and social assistance (80.1 percent) finance and insurance (74.6 percent) and educational services (70.9 percent).

The economy of Whidbey Island south of Oak Harbor relies heavily on tourism, small-scale agriculture, and the arts. Tourism is especially important for both Whidbey and Camano Islands. On Whidbey, tourists find a wide range of amenities in the towns of Oak Harbor, Coupeville, Freeland and Langley.

Coupeville Workforce:

Coupeville is the seat of Island County government. Services provided to some 80,000 citizens of Whidbey, Camano, and seven other small islands include: Community and Business Services, Administration, Government, Finance, Judicial Services, Law Enforcement, Public Health Services, Public Safety, and Public Works.

Coupeville's main employers are Island County Administration and WhidbeyHealth Medical Center. The medical center is a 25-bed hospital, under construction to add 39 more beds in 2018. In the private sector, Coupeville's Penn Cove Mussel Farm exports large quantities of its highly renowned Penn Cove Mussels. This aquaculture facility, along with a number of small farms, reflects the rural agricultural nature of most of central Whidbey Island. Many of these small farms host farm stands onsite, where customers may buy produce, flowers, meat, eggs and other locally raised products directly from the farmers.

Property Values

Housing construction declined from the recession of 2008 with the deepest job losses coming from the construction industry; about 60 percent of all construction jobs in Island County were lost during the recession and subsequent downturn. There is strong demand for affordable housing in the Oak Harbor area for the growing number of military families who otherwise have to find housing in nearby Mt. Vernon or Burlington.

In 2016, the Seattle Times reported that Washington State home prices were rising faster than the national average. Island County prices escalated some 15.6% between 2015 and 2016.

Median home prices:

Whidbey Island	= \$330,000
Camano Island	= \$408,800
USA	= \$189,000
Washington State	= \$307,800
Island County	= \$296,100

Residents who own their homes:

Whidbey Island	= 52%
Washington State	= 62%
USA	= 64%

Charitable Giving Practices

The statistics indicate that charitable giving in the area is somewhat above the state average. Twenty percent of households who contribute, give to religious entities.

Whidbey Islanders not only contribute to charities generously, but there is a remarkable culture of volunteerism on the island - Whidbey Island runs on volunteerism. There are dozens of local non-profit organizations as well as the national or internationally known ones (Kiwanis, Soroptimists, Lions Club, Toastmasters, Audubon, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and more) where locals find ways to help others. The spectrum of opportunities is wide, including animal rescue, beach cleanup, youth programs, environmental conservation, thrift shops, and senior centers, to name a few. It has been said of Whidbey residents that if you are bored, you haven't looked for a volunteer opportunity yet!

Charitable Donations over \$200 in 2015:

Public Radio	192 households (well above state average)
Political Organizations	269 households (well above state average)
Public Television	58 households (well above state average)
Religious	2,134 households (somewhat below state average)
Social Services/Welfare	589 households (somewhat below state average)
Other	467 households
Health	253 households
Private Foundations	290 households
Education	300 households
Environmental	46 households

Churches in North and Central Whidbey Island

For the size of the population, there are many churches on the island. Between Oak Harbor and Coupeville alone, there are almost 50 faith communities, which illustrates the generally conservative nature of Whidbey's northern half. They represent a diverse community of believers, from mainline and traditional to small, ethnically based congregations. The congregation of St. Stephen's prays for these communities in rotation throughout the year. Members of many of these congregations participate in the Whidbey Island Theological Society's quarterly presentations in Coupeville.

Oak Harbor Congregations

Assembly of God
Bible Baptist Church
Calvary Apostolic Tabernacle
Calvary Chapel of Oak Harbor
Christian Reformed Church
Christ the King Community Church
Church of Christ
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
Church of the Nazarene
Church on the Rock
City of Refuge Christian Church
Concordia Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod)
Cross Point Community Church
Family Bible Church
First Church of Christ Scientist
First Reformed Church
First United Methodist Church
Grace By the Sea (Church of England)
Grace Community Church
Grace Evangelical
House of Prayer/Faith Tabernacle of Praise
Island Vineyard Community Church
Jehovah's Witnesses
Korean Presbyterian Church
Life Church
Living Faith Christian Center
Living Word Oak Harbor
Mission Ministry Outreach
Oak Harbor Christian Fellowship
Oak Harbor Lutheran Church
Oak Harbor Southern Baptist Church
Oak Harbor United Pentecostal Church
Restoration (Messianic) Fellowship
St. Augustine's Catholic Church
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Seventh Day Adventists
Sovereign Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church
The Bride Christian Fellowship
Whidbey Presbyterian Church
World of Everlasting Life/Faith

Coupeville Congregations

Coupeville United Methodist Church
Living Hope Foursquare Church
Centerpoint Christian Fellowship
St Mary's Catholic Church
Coupeville Community Bible Church
San De Fuca Community Chapel
Jehovah's Witnesses