

## **User Notes and Errata, Small Area Estimates Program, Fall 2024**

### **Washington State Office of Financial Management, Forecasting and Research Division**

Small Area Estimate Program (SAEP) data for 2010-2024 are currently available. This release uses 2020 Census geographies unless otherwise stated.

The current SAEP release includes two sets of 2020 data values; one set starting with the label '2020 Census (P.L. 94-171 ) <variable>' and one set starting with 'OFM Adjusted <variable>.' The '2020 Census (P.L. 94-171)' values come from the 2020 Census Public Law 94-171 redistricting data as released by the Census Bureau. The 'OFM Adjusted' values are the basis for the SAEP estimates and include corrections and adjustments for a variety of reasons. OFM adjusted the 2020 decennial census data more than prior decennial data because new privacy protection measures infused more noise into the census block data than in prior censuses. That noise infusion caused some statistical anomalies that needed to be accounted for in the SAEP model, see the [SAEP User Guide](#) for more information. It is our hope that by providing both versions' of 2020 values users will be able to better understand the adjustments OFM has made to the data and make more informed decisions.

In cases where OFM uses spatial weighting to develop custom geography estimates the spatial weighting is applied to the '2020 Census (P.L. 94-171 )' and the 'OFM Adjusted' variables the same way.

OFM recommends that end users limit their analysis to a specific SAEP data release (e.g., Fall 2024) because the historical estimate series may change: 1) if new or more accurate information becomes available after the release date and 2) if changes occur in the underlying spatial data. Please see the [SAEP User Guide](#) for additional information about the data and the methods behind the estimates as well as limitations in their use.

The SAEP Fall 2024 data release includes some important changes from the prior release, outlined below:

1. OFM updated the intercensal estimates procedure. In our prior release, we allocated 2010 block data to 2020 census blocks by the share of parcel points that each area contained. We now are using share of address points, where each address represents a single unit. This update resulted in a more accurate allocation of 2010 data to 2020 blocks. This change resulted in some noticeable differences from our prior 2010-2020 intercensal data release. We recommend that users use the current SAEP data release for all years from 2010 to 2024.
2. OFM updated the housing allocation process, to include the annual change in the [census block address count file](#) as the second tier indicator for new housing after geocoded permit and assessor data. The census address count data is preferred to postal delivery statistics as an indicator of change because the data are more geographically precise. Postal delivery statistics data are now our third allocation option. This update caused changes in the distribution of 2021-2023 data that are used when geocoded permits or new units from assessors data are not available.
3. There was a large update to the housing change indicator data we use in the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) area; King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties. Our partners at PSRC updated their housing unit estimation process so it is now based on assessor's records rather than geocoded building permits data. This is the first SAEP release to use the updated PSRC data and users should expect to see more change from the prior SAEP release than usual for 2021-2023 in

PSRC counties. This change improves the distribution of housing units and population over the prior SAEP release as we were relying on less precise postal delivery statistics data while PSRC's new method was under development.

4. The distribution of estimated housing and population were improved in the city of Yakima by the inclusion of geocoded building permit data for the city for years 2021-2023. Users will see more change than usual in the area because of the new data source.
5. OFM updated the files in December 2024 to fix an issue where negative occupied housing units appeared in the data. Population and total housing numbers are not impacted.
6. The State legislative districts [2024] files are made from TIGER 2024 which includes a boundary correction at Snoqualmie Pass on the King-Kittitas border. As such, 25 Housing units were transferred from Legislative District 5 (King) to Legislative District 13 (Kittitas). This change only occurs in the State legislative districts [2024] files. All other files are still based on TIGER 2020.

We would like to thank all our partners who graciously provide data and support for the SAEP. We could not provide this information without your hard work.

Sincerely,

Mike Mohrman, State Demographer