



Spokane, Washington

The largest city in eastern Washington, Spokane (215,000) is the "Capital of the Inland Empire" - a semi-arid region with an important agricultural economy. It is the home of the Jesuits' Gonzaga University and a major locus of Northwest Jesuits since Pierre-Jean De Smet, SJ founded his nearby northern Idaho missions in 1843. Outdoor recreation is abundant outside city limits and JVs enjoy a strong local support network. Despite the wealth of the university and the South Hill, homelessness and poverty are key issues in Spokane. The federal poverty rate in Spokane County is approximately 15%, and Spokane has a large number of people who are struggling with low wages and an extremely tight housing market (rental vacancy rate is less than 1%). One in eight people and one out of five children in the Inland Northwest are at risk of hunger, according to Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap, an annual analysis of food insecurity trends nationwide. The Feeding America findings indicate that many food insecure households have incomes that make them ineligible for most federal nutrition assistance. For example, this includes 23 percent of food insecure people in Spokane County in Eastern Washington and 32 percent in North Idaho's Kootenai County. JVs have served here since 1970.

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