

Benton-Franklin Trends eNewsletter - #3 2017:

Indicator News:

33,000 annual gun-related deaths in the U.S., but who are they?



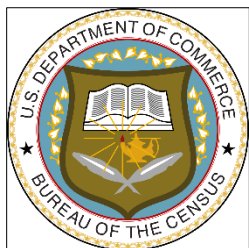
Good data can help to dispel fact from opinion, especially in the face of controversial subjects. Compelling visualization techniques can deliver insights about the data faster than lines of numbers of text.

Accessing the facts through data visualization simply helps us to better understand the world around us. We read upsetting news that might lead us to form sweeping generalizations. A sense of the data behind these reports can prevent quick, emotional reactions. Just as the Benton-Franklin Trends site proposes, it is important to let data speak for themselves without the noise of quick judgement. Of course, there is more to understanding any slice of life that is depicted by data. Data usually tell a story or narrative. But interpretation, and understanding the “why” behind the story is up to individuals and research.

[Gun Deaths in America](#) is an example of a data visualization on a highly charged, sad, and very topical subject. The interactive website, offered by FiveThirtyEight.com, provides an annual estimation of gun-related deaths by type in America. Using a variety of credible sources (such as the [CDC](#), [FBI](#), [GTD](#), [IPUMS](#) and others) the site portrays in a compelling visual manner the origins of the approximate 33,000 gun deaths that take place annually in the U.S.

As you can observe in this data visualization, about 2/3 of all U.S. gun deaths are suicides. Of these, 85% of are committed by males, and more than 50% of male suicides are committed by those 45-years of age or older.

New Tool for U.S. Census Data Users



[Article I, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution](#) requires a Census occur for the main purpose of tax apportionment based on population numbers.

The first census, taking place in 1790, had six categories. According to the [1790 Census Overview](#), the census was required to the name of the head of the family, and count the number of: free white males 16-years and older, free white males under 16-years of age, free white females, all other free persons, and slaves.

A population census takes place every ten-years, but now has a much smaller scope than in prior decennial censuses. In turn, the detailed data that were formerly found only in the decennial census are now available annually for most of the population in the U.S. through the American Community Survey (ACS). Topics beyond population counts such as housing, employment, education, insurance, race, ethnicity and many more, can be found in the ACS. This broad, very frequent coverage comes, as the

title suggests, through a survey. Depending on population size, 1-year estimates (for areas with populations greater than 65,000) and 5-year estimates (all populations) are used.

[A new census data dissemination tool](#) is now in beta version and available for previewing. To use the old (and still current) platform, the [American FactFinder](#), one needed patience to work through the typical trial and error to find the desired data. The new platform, which still offers all of the same data as the old, automatically presents a snapshot of a selected area by providing some of the more commonly accessed census information, clearer explanations on how to get to some of the lesser accessed census information, and sports an interactive county-level U.S. map for purposes of comparison.

We will update readers of this newsletter when the census beta site becomes the official data dissemination website of census information. Currently, June 2018 is the target date.

Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation - U.S. Health Map



The [U.S. Health Map](#), a tool offered by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, allows users to view and compare health data information for every county in the nation at the same time, or to look at all the counties within any particular state, or any individual county.

Each county has a particular shade of color representing a certain proportion of the population as offered in the legend for each graph. When the animation is started and continues from one year to the next, the user can literally see the U.S. map change color as health trends have changed over the years.

Included in the Healthdata.org map are: 29 different cancers, 21 causes of death, life expectancy, smoking, obesity, physical activity, alcohol consumption, hypertension, and diabetes. Additionally, gender-specific information, risk factors, and mortality risk are also offered.

Indicators in Action:

[Grape and Wine Production Trending Upward](#) by Scott Richter & Dr. Patrick Jones

There are only a few places in the world where the weather and soil produce optimum conditions to grow grapes - especially grapes grown for wine production. Washington State is one of those and provides some of the most unique American Viticulture Area (AVA) land in the world. Our wine region, stretches as far north as Chelan, Washington, south into north-central Oregon, and expands from the Western

Columbia River Gorge to south-east corner of the state. Specific AVAs, at least partly within Benton & Franklin Counties, include Columbia Valley, Horse Heaven Hills, Red Mountain, and Yakima Valley.

According to [Washington State Wine](#), having a dry growing season and quickly draining soil with low nitrogen lessens the need for pesticides and fungicides and also creates "one of the very few world class growing regions on

earth that **does not** have to graft its vines onto rootstock.”

The largest wine operation in the state, Chateau Ste. Michelle, has its production headquarters located in Patterson, Washington, and operates vineyards and a winery within the Horse Heaven Hills AVA.

Lara Hastings, the new Executive Director for the Red Mountain AVA Alliance, points out that of the approximately 4,000 acres making up Red Mountain, there are over 1,600 acres with grapes currently growing.

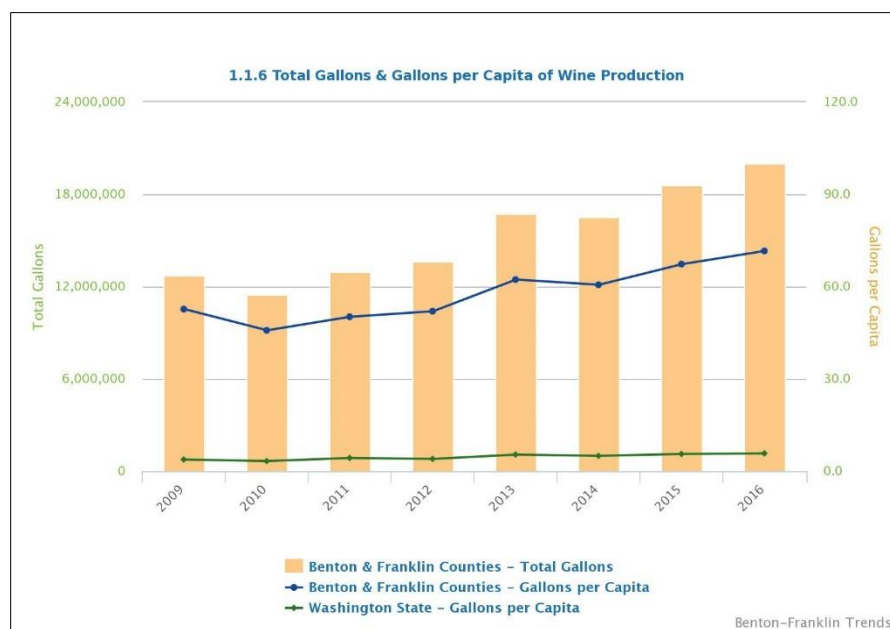
Grape production is [one of the top-5 high-value crops for the number of acres of planted crops](#) in Benton and Franklin Counties combined.

The source for this indicator, the U.S. Census of Agriculture, only occurs once every 5-years, but the three latest census counts include the total acres of planted grapes in 2002, 2007, and 2012. Specifically for Benton and Franklin Counties combined, during 2002 there were 22,496 acres with grapes planted; 2007 there were 23,322 (+3.7% since 2002); and in 2012 there were 28,636 acres (+27.3% since 2002).

The share of acres planted in grapes in the combined counties out of the total acres of the top-5 crops planted during 2012 was 17.6% (31,738 acres of grapes planted divided by the

180,009 total acres planted in the top-5 high value crops).

The next step for many of the grapes grown in Benton and Franklin Counties combined is a local winery. But to be as clear as a glass of white wine, not all grapes grown in Benton & Franklin Counties stay in the area. Grapes grown in this part of the state are also sold outside of the combined counties for a variety of purposes. Looking at the graph for the [Total Gallons and Gallons per Capita of Wine Production](#) indicator as it has increased from



12.7 million gallons in 2009, to 20.0 million gallons in 2016 - an increase of 57.5% in just a few years. The gallons of wine produced on a per capita basis in the combined

counties was 71.6, increasing from 52.7 in 2009, with both of these standing far above the state (5.8 and 3.8 respectively).

With the increases in both acres planted in grapes and the production of wine by the gallon, it shouldn't come as a surprise the [Total Number of Wineries](#) in the combined counties has also increased over the time series. During 2016, there were a total of 143 wineries in the combined counties, increasing from 78, or by 83.3%, since 2009.

Hastings notes that there are 15 wineries are within Red Mountain AVA alone, and some of the grapes grown in the AVA are also sold to

wineries outside of Red Mountain. The most common varieties of grapes grown within Red Mountain are Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Merlot, Petit Verdot, Sangiovese, and Syrah.

With the popularity of local wines increasing and other premier grape growing regions in the U.S. [suffering catastrophic losses to both crops and wineries](#), these unfortunate circumstances in other parts of the country might help boost local wine production and sales even more.

[Population in Poverty Decreasing Over Last Few Years](#) by Scott Richter & Dr. Patrick Jones

As of January 1, 2017, the hourly minimum wage in Washington State was \$11.00, behind only the District of Columbia (\$11.50), but tied for the second highest hourly minimum wage in the country with Massachusetts. Therefore, someone working a 40-hour work week at \$11.00 an hour would gross \$1,760 a month. With [monthly fair market rent](#) in the combined counties for a one-bedroom apartment during 2016 at \$687 and \$850 for a two-bedroom apartment, this person can expect to spend roughly half, or more, of their net income on rent.

[Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#) (MIT) estimates through their Living Wage Calculator that monthly food costs for a single adult in Benton County are just under \$300 and about \$210 in taxes, leaving just over \$560 for everything else for Benton County minimum wage workers. Add just one child to the single person scenario and the living wage in Benton County jumps from \$10.01 an hour to \$22.53, \$27.62 for a single parent with 2 kids, and \$34.29 for a single parent with 3 kids.

The Living Wage Calculator provides itemized estimations of what different family compositions need to survive but doesn't measure poverty itself. The Federal Poverty Level (FPL), on the other hand, was originally developed in the 1960s as a quick test of need

for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and is the standard poverty measure for many federal programs. The FPL varies by household size and composition but not by geography and is increased every year by an inflation estimator.

Looking at specifically at Benton & Franklin Counties, the [Total and Share of the Population Living in Poverty](#) indicator, we see that there were an estimated total of 32,891 persons living below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) in the combined counties during 2016, representing 11.8% of the population. This is an increase of 14% from 28,950 since the beginning of the series in 2005, but a decrease of 26% from the high point in the series of 44,148 people just two-years previous in 2014, which was statistically significant.

Judith Gidley, Executive Director of the Benton-Franklin Community Action Committee, says that the majority of families (about 97%) receiving benefits from her organization were below 125% of the FPL, and about one-third (34.5%) were 50% below the FPL.

The share of the total population in the combined counties during 2016 was the lowest in series at 11.8% with the high mark of 20.3% occurring in 2011. Every year in the series, the share was above the state benchmark with two of the last three years also above the U.S. benchmark.

As one can observe, poverty strikes the two counties differently. During 2016, Benton County had an estimated 18,867 total persons living below the FPL, representing 9.8% of its population. 2016 represented a decrease of 35% from the high mark in the series, 28,942, during 2015. For every year in the series, Benton County's rate was below the combined counties' benchmark, with 2016 representing the lowest share in the series.

In contrast, during 2016, Franklin County had an estimated 14,024 total persons living below the FPL, representing 16.0% of the population. 2016 represented a decrease of 43% from the high mark in the series 24,557, during 2011. Additionally, every year in the series for Franklin County, its share of the population living at or below the FPL was above the combined counties benchmark.

Drilling down even further to the three cities, we observe for 2016 that:

- The City of Kennewick had the second lowest share in the series, at an estimated 9,948 living at or below the FPL, or 12.6% of the population. For all years in the series,

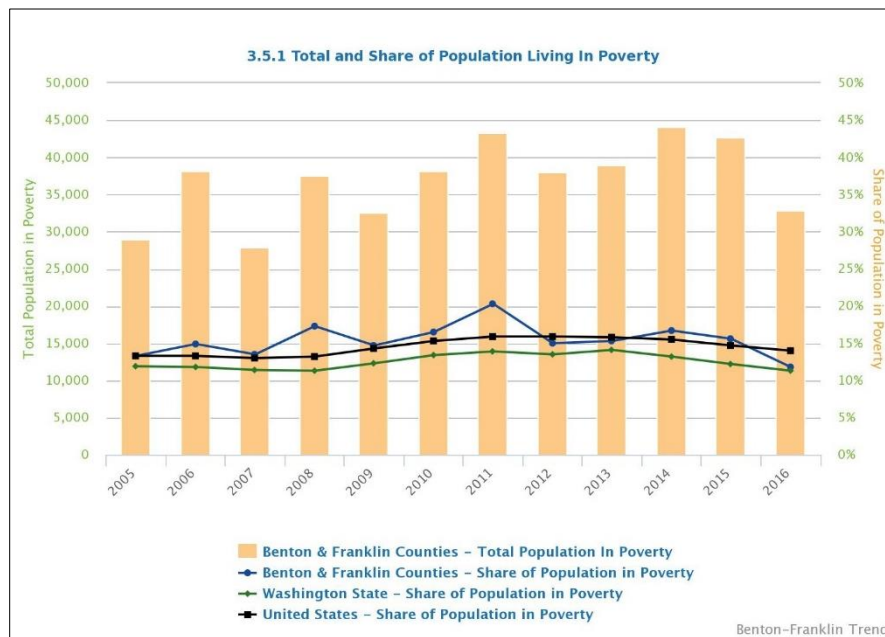
the Kennewick share of the population living below the FPL was higher than the combined counties share except for 2009 and 2011.

- The City of Pasco share was estimated at 11,636 people, representing 16.3% of the population. For all years in the series except for 2015, the share of the population living at or below the FPL in Pasco was higher than the combined counties.

Due to the City of Richland receiving 5-year estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 data will not become available until December 7th. Additionally, due to a small number of survey responses,

the Census did not report data for this survey question in 2010 and 2011 for Richland. What is clear, though, is the share of the population of Richland living below the FPL is well below the combined counties benchmark.

Although it is difficult to know what these data will look like for the current Gidley does not predict "based on the flow of traffic through our office seeking assistance" these numbers will be decreasing very much.



[Domestic Violence Offenses: Increasing or Increasing Awareness?](#)

By Scott Richter and Dr. Patrick Jones

News through the mainstream media is as important as it's always been. With trend data, newspaper stories can be better understood with "population" measures on many different aspects of society. For example, the mainstream media informs us each time there is another tragic school shooting, but trend data offers insight for [Weapons Incidents in Schools](#) spanning 12-years, broken down by weapon type and with a benchmark to the state, can be

much more valuable to collectively strategizing a community response than a tragic news story.

In another area of public safety, domestic violence

and intimate partner violence are defined the same way. According to [WomensHealth.gov](#), "Domestic violence is also called intimate partner violence because it often is caused by a husband, ex-husband, boyfriend, or ex-boyfriend." And the post lists:

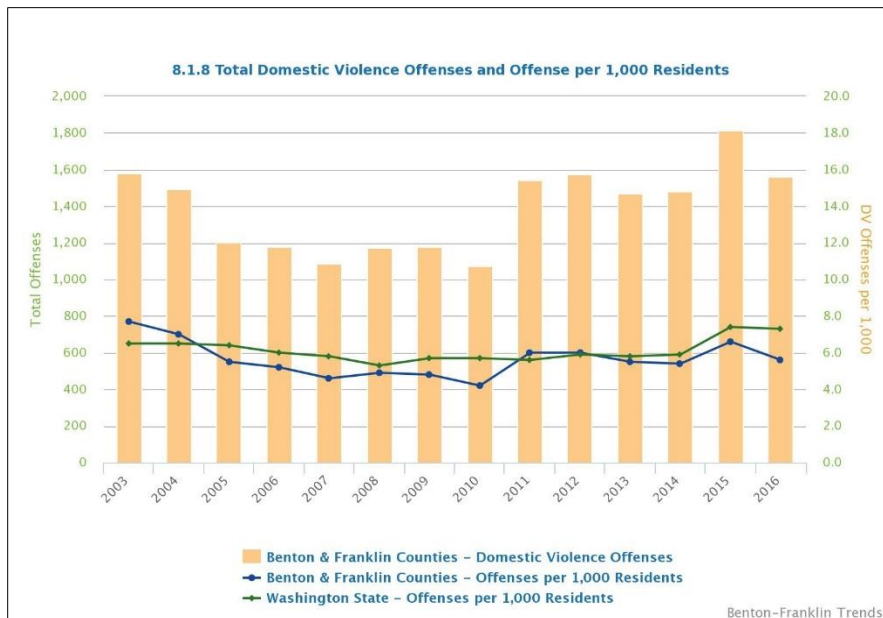
- *Physical abuse*: hitting, shoving, kicking, biting, or throwing things
- *Emotional abuse*: yelling, controlling what you do, or threatening to cause serious problems for you
- *Sexual abuse*: forcing or coercing any undesired sexual behavior

Although domestic violence is not isolated or caused by socioeconomic factors, poverty and homelessness can factor as correlates to domestic violence.

According to the [National Coalition for the Homeless](#), referencing data from the U.S. Conference of Mayors, "a majority of homeless women are victims of domestic violence", "28% of families were homeless because of domestic violence", and "39% of cities cited domestic violence as the primary cause of family homelessness".

Poverty is also a multiplier for being at risk of

domestic violence. According to a report by the [American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\)](#) Women's Rights Project entitled "Domestic Violence and



Homelessness". The report states "... poor women experience domestic violence at higher rates than women with higher household incomes. Women with household incomes of less than \$75,000 are 7 times as likely as women with household incomes over \$75,000 to experience domestic violence."

A quick glance at the [Total Domestic Violence Offenses and Offense per 1,000 Residents](#) indicator, we see in the combined counties an increase in the number of domestic violence (DV) offenses over the second half of the series (2011-2016). In fact, four of the five highest

years for the number of domestic violence offenses occurred between 2011 and 2016, with 2015 coming in with the highest annual number of DV offenses, 1,812, in the series.

Both Benton and Franklin Counties individually saw the highest number of domestic violence offenses occurring in the series during 2015 coming in at 1,126 and 686, respectively, with each area decreasing in 2016 by 14.7% and 12.4%, respectively.

Dan Aspiri, Executive Director of Domestic Violence Services of Benton & Franklin Counties, says “There is never a solid answer as to why these statistics go up and down, but it likely due to a variety of reasons.”

Aspiri also says high profile domestic violence deaths in the news have had a “ripple effect”, as well as “a lot more sensitivity from friends, family, and law enforcement because people are more in tune with the signs of domestic violence, asking more questions, and catching more subtleties.”

Similar to many public safety indicators, an underlying challenge measuring DV lies in the desire of perpetrators trying to hide it. Often, domestic violence victims do the same thing - call in sick or wear makeup to hide bruises and

other signs of violence, and tell absolutely no one else. This is why crime data usually involves a caveat. For example, total [property](#) and [violent](#) crime are described as crimes “known to law enforcement”. Domestic Violence is no different; these are the number of occurrences known to law enforcement, and are not estimated or speculative in any way. Law enforcement can learn of crimes from someone reporting them, or by discovering it on their own, such as responding to a call of people arguing but finding out someone was assaulted.

For many similar reasons that sexual assaults go unreported (fear and embarrassment, and even guilt and shame even though they are the victims), an estimated [half of all domestic violence occurrences go unreported](#).

Aspiri explains that more awareness, education, and resources in the community for victims of domestic violence has helped to start changing the culture. This can directly result in a greater number in the statistics, if more domestic violence occurrences are reported to authorities.

As a result, growth in this indicator doesn't mean things are necessarily getting worse. Perhaps they might even be getting a little better.



5-Questions with: Sara Schwan Executive Director, The Children's Reading Foundation of the Mid-Columbia

Q1) The Children's Reading Foundation has now been in existence for over 20 years. Has its mission and scope of work changed since its inception? What are your goals for this year and next?

A1) In 1996, five citizen founders and eight Washington school districts came together to start the foundation with the belief that the entire community is

responsible and part of the solution to reading proficiency. An awareness campaign for our message “Read with a Child 20 Minutes Every Day” was implemented and continues today.

In the early 2000s, both the Team Read tutoring program and the READY! for Kindergarten parent workshop program were created. Today, we provide these two programs as well as others in order to ensure that all young readers in our community are successful in school and life. Looking forward, we will target next year’s summer program to additional populations of our target audience.

Q2) What are the most important metrics that help the Foundation keep score in the Mid-Columbia region?

A2) Parents are their child’s first and most influential teacher. As parents, we have a very important role in raising a reader who is ready and prepared to start their school journey. The WA Kids data is an important metric that we utilize in our organization to understand the preparedness of our area’s young students.

We also look at the population trends of our community. Every parent wants the best for their children regardless of your background. Our READY! for Kindergarten program empowers all parents with age appropriate targets and tools to help them prepare for school success. As our community characteristics change and evolve, we adapt our efforts and programming. For example, our READY! workshops are currently offered to parents in English, Spanish, Arabic, Burmese, Karen and other languages.

Q3) Benton Franklin Trends tracks 25 education indicators as well as numerous others in the demographics and economic vitality categories. Which of these are the most relevant to the Children’s Reading Foundation?

A3) The Early Learning Indicators of ECEAP Enrollment and Kindergarten Readiness are very relevant to our mission. Additionally, as a small organization we strive to meet people where they are, serve those who will benefit the most from our information and services, and support schools and other organizations in their efforts. In turn, the Free and Reduced Lunch data is very helpful as is the Migration/Immigration data in determining where are the needs, what do they look like and how we need to adapt our efforts to ensure we are helpful and relevant.

Q4) Outside of the specific indicators you might follow for the Foundation, are there any on the Trends site that have grabbed your attention?

A4) In our fast-growing area, I personally find most of the data intriguing. Each time I drive west out of town, I am amazed at the amount of new vines as well as other crops growing along the highways. Having the ability to go to BF Trends and learn the number of wineries, the amount of fruit trees and wine and food production data is something I enjoy.

Q5) You have come to this position from your work in public policy. How do you see the kind of information offered on Benton Franklin Trends assisting those in the public arena?

A5) In order for public policy to be effective, it needs to be based on relevant, current and dynamic information. The needs, concerns and issues affecting the public are multi-faceted and complex. I imagine the vast information on Benton Franklin Trends is a tremendous resource to those in public policy and decision making positions.