

User Notes and Errata, Small Area Estimates Program, Fall 2023
Washington State Office of Financial Management, Forecasting and Research Division

Small Area Estimate Program (SAEP) data for 2010-2023 are currently available. This release uses 2020 Census geographies.

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 2020) 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 2023 data release includes some important changes from the prior release, outlined below:

1. OFM is now using geocoded building permits received directly from the city of Seattle for areas within Seattle city limits. Prior estimates used housing start data from the Puget Sound Regional Council. This data source change resulted in large changes to the distribution of population and housing within Seattle when compared to data from the prior SAEP releases.
2. OFM made a correction for a census block in South Prairie to account for an RV Park with permanent residents that the Census Bureau did not enumerate. This population and housing are adjusted for 2022 onwards, to match OFM's April 1 Estimates.
3. OFM changed several historically uninhabited islands to 0 population when the P.L. 94-171 data showed residents. These are all small areas (less than 5 housing units), and our analysis of these locations led us to conclude that these areas very likely do not have full time residents. One island had P.L. 94-171 data that showed 3 occupied homes and only 1 resident.

OFM would like to thank all of the people who graciously provide support and data for the SAEP. We could not provide this information without their hard work.

Sincerely,

Mike Mohrman, State Demographer