

SUMMARY OF STATE-SPECIFIC GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN THE US 2020/2021

WASHINGTON

March 2023

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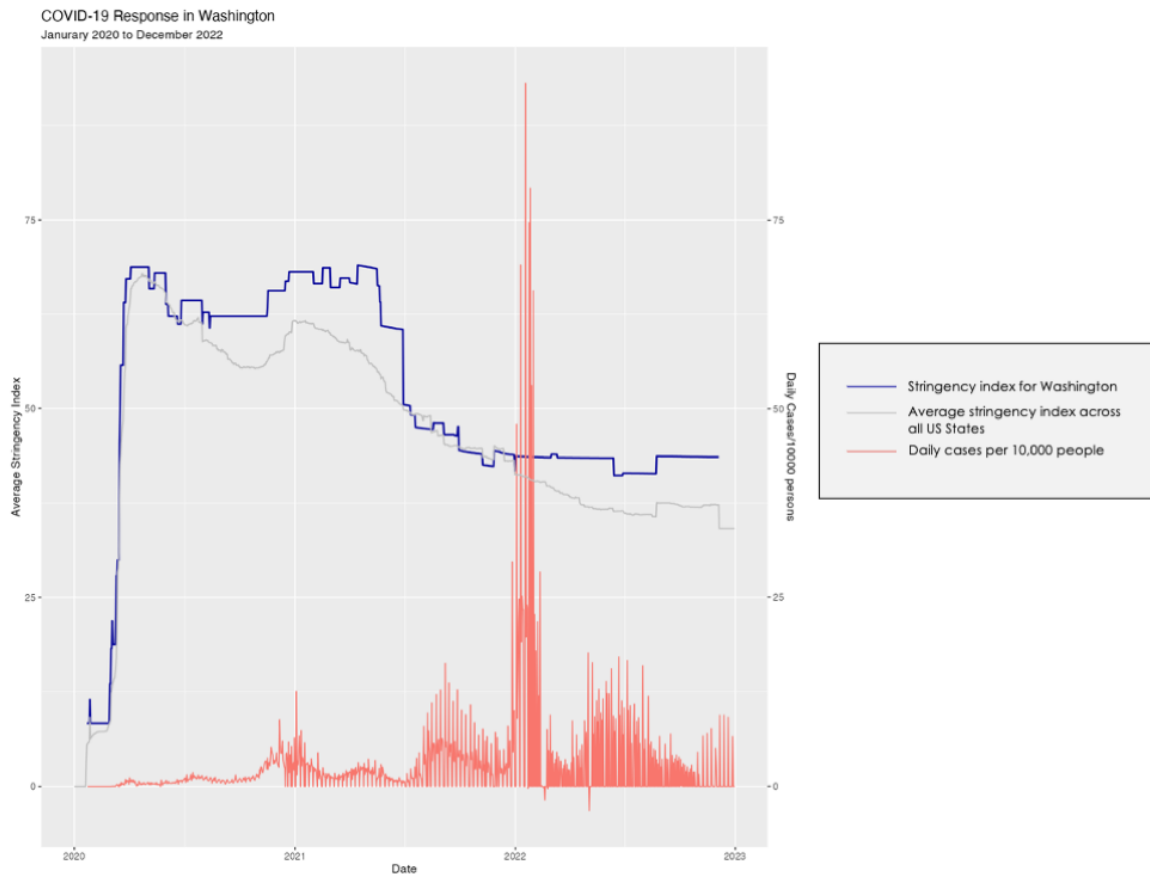
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Washington

Summary of Government Response to COVID-19



COVID-19 Response in Washington: Using the OxCGRT Stringency Index for Washington (blue) and the average OxCGRT Stringency Index across all US states, the above shows the overall government response to COVID-19 in Washington in comparison to the average US state response from January 2020 to December 2022. This also displays the number of daily cases per 10,000 people in Washington (red).

Summary

Washington Governor Jay Inslee first responded on February 29, 2020, following its first case on January 20, 2020, and death on February 29, 2020. The first policies enacted were closure of schools, businesses, and restrictions on public gatherings (represented as C1, C2 and C4 indicators in OxCGRT data).

Closure and Containment

The indicators for closure and containment are measured on an ordinal scale and encompass government responses that required or recommended temporary closures of institutions, limitations on travel, and restrictions of gatherings or events. The measurement of these indicators included a binary flag that indicated the geographic scope of the government responses coded. Differentiated policies, or policies that were specifically directed at those vaccinated or unvaccinated, are indicated when flagged as 'Vaccinated' or 'Non-Vaccinated'.

C1: School closures

C1 records closings of schools and universities and is measured as 0 (no measures), 1 (recommend closing or all schools open with alterations resulting in significant differences compared to non-Covid-19 operations), 2 (require closing only some levels or categories, e.g., just high school, or just public schools), or 3 (require closing all levels).

Announced on March 12, 2020, first school closure policies became active on March 17, 2020, with Governor Jay Inslee announcing the closure of all public and private kindergarten-12 schools in King, Snohomish and Pierce counties, prohibiting in-person classroom instruction and lectures. On March 13, the governor announced closure of all public and private universities, colleges, technical schools, apprenticeships and similar programs across the state. Originally schools were set to close until April 24, 2020, but on April 25, school closures were extended until the end of the 2019-2020 school year to expire on June 19, 2020. Coded as a 3G on the OxCGRT database throughout this period, until June 20, when summer school began. Many counties, including the Seattle School District continued with closures throughout the summer and offered remote summer school instead.

On August 1, Governor Inslee determined that schools were permitted to re-open, if they adhered to public health safety precautions. However, some school districts, such as Seattle School District and universities such as University of Washington, opted to remain closed, offering remote learning in lieu of in person classes. Throughout the 2020 fall semester, many schools and universities opted to operate remotely. Data as of October 12, 2020, from the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Education indicated of the 295 districts, 129 districts were serving 1-10% of students in-person, 69 were serving 11-75% of their students in person, 57 districts were serving more than three-quarters of their students face-to-face, while 43 were serving no students in person. Represented as a 3T coding on the OxCGRT database to represent the strictest policies in certain counties.

The Superintendent of Seattle Public Schools announced on Oct 23, 2020, that Seattle Public Schools will remain remote with limited in-person instruction through January 28, 2021. The decision was made in consultation with the Seattle Education Association, Seattle Council PTSA, and the Principals' Association of Seattle Schools. Due to increased numbers the Seattle Public Schools indicated they may not come back to in person

learning next year at all. However, on March 12, 2021, Governor Inslee announced that all public kindergarten–12 schools in Washington must provide each student with the opportunity to learn in-person at their school, for no fewer than two days per week by April 19, 2021. Data before this announcement, from the week of March 15, demonstrated that only three districts were fully remote at the elementary school level, with most elementary schools partially in person (154 districts), and 73 districts fully in-person with health protocols in place.

By May 24, 2021, all kindergarten-12 schools offered in person learning. At this time, universities mostly remained remote. On June 30, 2020, Governor Jay Inslee updated the existing restrictions on higher education Proclamation 20-12.3. The proclamation mandated that institutions of higher education that do not have fully vaccinated campuses are prohibited from providing in-person classroom instruction, lectures and similar educational gatherings, except when they implement, follow, and enforce the requirements specified. Institutions of higher education with fully vaccinated campuses are wholly exempt from this proclamation and encouraged, but not required, to follow Department of Health’s COVID-19 recommendations for higher education. Differential coding for this update was coded a 1G for vaccinated individuals, since K-12 still does not have differences in policies and children attending these schools still had to adhere to guidelines, and coded as a 2G for unvaccinated individuals since significant differences between vaccinated campuses and unvaccinated college campuses were outlined in the proclamation, to the effect that public upper division learning institutions as a response, required proof of vaccination for in person learning.

On July 30, 2021, Governor Inslee amended Proclamation 20-09.4, requiring K-12 students to wear masks regardless of vaccination status. All students in K-12 were required to follow Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. For the fall semester of 2021, state universities required students to show proof of vaccination, including Washington State University, The Evergreen State University and Western Washington University. Community colleges across Washington also required students to provide proof of vaccination to attend in person learning. Many of these requirements for individual schools were announced earlier in the year, in May, but deadlines for proof of vaccination status for students began August 6, 2021. Coding for C1 continued as 2G/1G in the OxCGRT dataset for the remainder of the 2021 year, with k-12 requiring masking regardless of vaccination, and state colleges requiring proof of vaccination to attend in person learning. Unvaccinated campuses were permitted and require strict adherence to the state health department’s school guidelines. In practicality, unvaccinated campuses were rare as most higher division learning facilities enforced a vaccine mandate.

C2: Workplace closures

C2 records closings of workplaces and is measured as 0 (no measures), 1 (recommend closing or recommend work from home or all businesses open with alterations resulting in significant differences compared to non-Covid-19 operations), 2 (require closing or work from home for some sectors or categories of workers), or 3 (require closing or work from home for all-but-essential workplaces, e.g., grocery stores, doctors).

On March 4, 2020, King County (one of the most populous regions in Washington) recommended that workplaces enact measures to permit employees to work from home. On March 16, 2020, Governor Inslee signed a state-wide emergency proclamation to temporarily shut down restaurants, bars and entertainment and recreational facilities. The ban did not apply to grocery stores, pharmacies, or other retail outlets, which were permitted to operate at reduced occupancy. On March 23, 2020, Governor Jay Inslee announced a "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order, requiring every Washington citizen to stay home unless pursuing an essential activity. The proclamation closed all businesses except those deemed essential.

On May 4th, 2020, amendments were made to the "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order, loosening restrictions for certain activities such as pet walking, retail car washes, landscaping and lawn care, vehicle and vessel sales, real estate and mortgage, and construction. On June 1, 2020, Governor Inslee announced an updated 4-phase, county-by-county "Safe Start" reopening plan where each phase lasted for at least 3 weeks, and each county had to apply to the state government for approval to move to the next phase.

King County opened slower as compared to the more sparsely populated counties in Washington. King County's time frame was used to determine coding during the county-by-county plan since OxCGRT data codes the strictest policy in the state. King County, moving slower than other counties, had the strictest policies during the phased approach. On June 19, 2020, King County was approved to move to Phase 2 of reopening and some, but not all essential businesses, were allowed to reopen. In phase 2, only some businesses are allowed to operate with limitations.

On August 20, 2020, data suggested 17 counties were in Phase 2 of reopening, permitting museums, bowling alleys, and agritourism to reopen. On September 11, 2020, indoor fitness and training facilities were allowed to operate in counties who were in Modified Phase 1 counties under Phase 2 guidance, indicating that facilities like gyms, yoga studios, and indoor sports facilities were open for personal fitness and training, group fitness classes. On September 24, 2020, five counties remained in a modified Phase 1, 17 counties in Phase 2, and 17 counties in Phase 3.

On November 17, 2020, all Washington counties were required to adhere to heightened restrictions, including closing restaurants and bars for indoor dining, closing of museums, indoor gyms, and limited capacities on weddings and funerals. Originally these restrictions were planned to end on December 14, 2020, but the restrictions were extended several times and in effect through January 11, 2021. On January 11, 2021, Washington followed

a regional recovery approach with every region beginning in Phase 1. Phase 1, largely aligned with restrictions that had been in place for most counties, with a few key exceptions. Indoor fitness and outdoor entertainment, for example, were both previously prohibited, but were permitted with restrictions.

On February 1, 2021, several regions were approved to move to Phase 2 such as West (Grays Harbor, Pacific, Thurston, and Lewis counties) and Puget Sound (Snohomish, King, Pierce counties). All other regions were still in Phase 1. On February 14, 2021, all regions of Washington state were moved to Phase 2. Under Phase 2, worship services, retail stores, indoor entertainments establishments, restaurants, professional services, and personal services were allowed to open at 25% capacity. For professional work, remote work remained strongly encouraged. Restaurants had additional limits on capacity and service. Coding changed to 1G to represent the reopening of non-essential businesses state-wide.

As of May 11, 2021, all counties remained in Phase 3 except Cowlitz, Pierce, Whitman and Ferry that remained in Phase 2. Under Phase 3, retail stores continued to operate at 50% maximum capacity with encouraged curbside pickup, professional services were encouraged to stay remote and personal services were to continue with an indoor maximum 50% capacity. On May 18, 2021, all counties entered Phase 3. On June 30, 2021, Washington state fully reopened, and all industry sectors previously covered by the Roadmap to Recovery Phased Reopening (with limited exceptions for large indoor events) returned to usual capacity and operations. Coding changed to a 0 at this date and continued with no further restrictions on businesses until the end of 2021.

C3: Cancel public events

C3 records cancelling public events and is measured as 0 (no measures), 1 (recommend cancelling), or 2 (require cancelling).

On March 4, 2020, King County Health advised its residents to avoid bringing large groups of people together and consider postponing events and gatherings. On March 11, 2020, Governor Jay Inslee echoed these sentiments, prohibiting gatherings of more than 250 people in King County and other western Washington counties on March 11. On March 16, 2020, the Governor ordered a state-wide proclamation prohibiting all gatherings with over 50 participants and gatherings under 50 participants had to adhere to public health and social distancing guidelines.

Gatherings remained strict until June 5, 2020, when Stevens, Ferry and Pend Oreille counties were approved for Phase 3 re-opening. In Phase 3, gatherings of up to 50 people were allowed. At this time, all other counties were in a Phase 1 or Phase 2, with stricter policies prohibiting large gatherings.

On November 17, 2020, a proclamation by Governor Inslee regarding gatherings was issued applying to the entire state. Starting on November 17, indoor social gatherings with people from outside your household were prohibited unless they (a) quarantine for fourteen days prior to the social gathering; or (b) quarantine for seven days prior to the social gathering and receive a negative COVID-19 test result no more than 48-hours prior to the gathering. Even with these restrictions, gatherings were limited to five people outside a household. On December 2, Governor Inslee updated restrictions for religious and faith-based organisations. The update clarified that religious and faith-based organisations could hold outdoor services with up to 200 individuals, regardless of location, so long as physical distancing was followed, and face coverings were worn.

On March 1, 2021, all counties were moved to Phase 2 of the Governor's reopening plan, permitting outdoor entertainment establishments to open for groups of 15 people, with a maximum of 200 individuals including spectators (this included event spaces, arenas, and concert venues). Indoor entertainment establishments such as theatres, concert halls, and event spaces were also permitted to open at 25% capacity. On May 18, 2021, the entire state entered Phase 3 of Washington's Recovery Plan, which allowed for up to 50% occupancy or 400 people maximum, whichever was lower, for all indoor spaces. Public events such as worship services, sporting events and live music were allowed with occupancy limits.

On June 30, 2021, new guidelines were released including a differential policy for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals. Under new guidelines, large indoor events with more than 10,000 people were restricted to 75% capacity, unless vaccination verification was occurring. If vaccination verification was occurring prior to entry, and the venue required all attendees be vaccinated, there were no capacity restrictions and no requirement to follow social distancing. On September 28, 2021, unvaccinated individuals were further required to obtain a negative PCR COVID-19 test within 72 hours of an event, in order to attend. This policy continued until the end of December 2021 with no further changes.

C4: Restrictions on gatherings

C4 records limits on gathering and is measured as 0 (no restrictions), 1 (restrictions on very large gatherings where the limit is above 1000 people), 2 (restrictions on gatherings between 101-1000 people), 3 (restrictions on gatherings between 11-100 people), or 4 (restrictions on gatherings of 10 people or less).

First restrictions on gatherings were active on March 11, 2020, with Governor Jay Inslee prohibiting gatherings of more than 250 people in King County and other western Washington counties. Dr. Jeff Duchin, Health Officer for Public Health for Seattle and King County, issued a parallel local Health Officer Order for King County to prohibit gatherings of more than 250 people unless measures were taken by event organisers to minimise risk.

On March 16, 2020, a state-wide order by Governor Jay Inslee prohibited gatherings with over 50 participants and all gatherings under 50 participants were required to adhere to social distancing and health guidelines. On March 23, 2020, the governor announced and ordered a "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order, requiring every Washington citizen to stay home unless pursuing an essential activity. The proclamation bans all gatherings for social, spiritual, and recreational purposes.

On May 4, 2020, Governor Jay Inslee signed a new COVID-19 order known as the "Safe Start" plan involving a phased approach to re-opening Washington's economy with each county in a different phase. On May 29, 2020, Governor Inslee announced an updated 4-phase, county-by-county "Safe Start" reopening plan. Each phase lasted for at least 3 weeks, and each county had to apply to the Washington state government to receive approval to move to the next phase. This order went into effect starting on June 1, 2020.

Counties across Washington were in various stages, but King County lagged behind, remaining in modified Phase 1 until June 19, 2020. The Governor's order written July 28, 2020, placed limitations on wedding and religious gatherings across the state limiting occupancy to 20 percent or 30 people, whichever was less. On September 11, 2020, indoor fitness and training facilities were allowed to operate in counties in a modified Phase 1. Facilities like gyms, yoga studios, and indoor sports facilities were open for personal fitness and training, group fitness classes.

On November 17, 2020, the governor ordered a state-wide ban on indoor gatherings with people from outside your household unless they 1) quarantined for fourteen days prior to the social gathering, 2) quarantined for seven days prior to the social gathering and 3) receive a negative COVID-19 test result no more than 48-hours prior to the gathering. Outdoor gatherings were limited to five people from outside your household. These state-wide restrictions expired January 11, 2021, when every county in Washington was placed in Phase 1 of Washington's new "Healthy Washington- Roadmap to Recovery" plan. Under the new Phase 1, indoor gatherings were prohibited, and outdoor gatherings of 10 people were allowed, with a limit of two households. On February 14, 2021, all counties were moved to Phase 2. Under Phase 2, indoor social gatherings with people outside of the household were limited to five people and outdoor social gatherings of fifteen people allowed, with a limit of two households.

On March 1, 2021, all counties were moved to Phase 2 of the Governor's reopening plan, permitting outdoor entertainment establishments to open for groups of 15 people, with a maximum of 200 individuals including spectators (this included event spaces, arenas, and concert venues). Indoor entertainment establishments such as theatres, concert halls, and event spaces were also permitted to open at 25% capacity. On May 18, 2021, the entire state entered Phase 3 of Washington's Recovery Plan, which allowed for up to 50% occupancy or 400 people maximum, whichever was lower, for all indoor spaces. Public events such as worship services, sporting events and

live music were allowed with occupancy limits. However, social at-home indoor gatherings were still restricted to five people from outside the house and social at-home outdoor gatherings were restricted to 15 people.

On May 18, 2021, all Washington counties moved to Phase 3, where at-home social indoor gatherings were limited to 10 people from outside the host house and at-home social outdoor gatherings were limited to 50 people. On June 30, 2021, restrictions on outdoor events were removed across the state with restrictions with only restrictions on large indoor events still in place. Large indoor events were restricted to 75% capacity, unless vaccination verification was occurring. If vaccination verification was occurring prior to entry, and the venue required all attendees be vaccinated, there were no capacity restrictions. Differential coding was used to reflect different requirements for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals. For vaccinated individuals, no physical distancing requirements were required.

C5: Public transport closures

C5 records the closing of public transport and is measured as 0 (no measures), 1 (recommend closing or significantly reduce volume/route/means of transport available), or 2 (require closing or prohibit most citizens from using it).

First public transport closure policies were active on March 23, 2020, with King County Metro enacting its first reduced schedule in response to decreased ridership and to preserve workforce. The Washington State Department of Transportation released statements indicating most of Washington's transit providers were still operating, with many at reduced levels of scheduled service.

According to the Washington Department of Transportation on January 11, 2021, using data from the 10 largest transit agencies, ridership was down 60% from the previous year. Ferries, trains, and toll facilities indicated drastic decreased travel within the state. Reduced transportation state-wide continued until June 3, 2021 when Washington state fully reopened and no public transportation restrictions were in place. On June 3, coding changed to a 0 to represent no restrictions and remained this way until the end of 2021.

C6: Stay-at-home requirements

C6 records orders to "shelter-in-place" and otherwise confine to the home and is measured as 0 (no measures), 1 (recommend not leaving house), 2 (require not leaving house with exceptions for daily exercise, grocery shopping, and 'essential' trips), or 3 (require not leaving house with minimal exceptions, e.g., allowed to leave once a week, or only one person can leave at a time, etc).

The first state-wide stay-at-home order was active on March 23, 2020, and required that all Washington residents stay-at-home unless they were pursuing essential activity. This continued until May 4, 2020. Prior to this, the King County Health Department recommended vulnerable populations to stay-at-home and for the citizens of King County to work from home whenever feasible.

On March 4, 2020, state-wide recommendations to stay home and restrict movement locally can be seen on government websites from March 1, until late May, 2021. After this date, no further mentions of staying home are found for the remainder of 2021.

C7: Restrictions on internal movement

C7 records restrictions on internal movement between states and is measured as 0 (no measures), 1 (recommend not to travel between states), or 2 (internal movement restrictions in place).

On November 13, 2020, Governor Inslee issued a travel advisory for Washington, recommending a 14-day quarantine for interstate and international travel, advising residents to stay close to home. Inslee joined California Governor Gavin Newsom and Oregon Governor Kate Brown in urging visitors entering their states or returning home from travel outside these states to self-quarantine to slow the spread of the virus.

On March 1, 2021, Governor Inslee applied CDC's recommendations regarding travel, where any individual travelling into Washington should self-quarantine for 14 days upon arrival. This was followed on March 19, 2021, with an amendment to Proclamation 20-83.1, requiring residents of Washington state to comply with the travel advisory from CDC, encouraging residents to stay home and avoid domestic travel. The CDC guidelines changed on April 2, 2021, with different guidelines for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals regarding domestic travel. Under these new guidelines, the CDC indicated that those who were fully vaccinated with an FDA-authorized vaccine could travel safely within the United States. Vaccinated individuals were not required to provide testing before or after domestic travel, nor did they have to self-quarantine upon arrival. Conversely, under these new guidelines, unvaccinated individuals were recommended to delay travelling until they are vaccinated. If unvaccinated individuals did travel, they were required to provide a negative PCR test prior to and after travelling, as well as self-isolate for 7 days upon arrival. These guidelines were automatically applied to Washington based on Proclamation 20-83-1.

C8: International travel controls

C8 records restrictions on international travel for foreign travellers (not citizens) and is measured as 0 (no restrictions), 1 (screening arrivals), 2 (quarantine arrivals from some or all regions), 3 (ban arrivals from some regions), or 4 (ban on all regions or total border closure).

Washington provided no further restrictions than those implemented by the CDC and federal agencies. On March 1, 2021, Washington adopted CDC guidelines as state policies.

Federal regulations dictated that starting on February 2, 2020, travellers from Hubei province in China were required to quarantine after arrival in the United States. This was quickly replaced with bans on individuals entering from multiple countries beginning on March 2, 2020. Policies changed in November 2021, where vaccinated non-citizens were permitted to enter the United States. Unvaccinated individuals were not permitted to enter. However, on November 27, 2021, the United States began banning travellers from certain countries regardless of vaccination status. President Biden and his administration lifted these bans on December 31st, 2021, implementing a differential policy for vaccinated and unvaccinated persons entering the country internationally.

Economic Response

The indicators for economic policies measured the policies that provided economic support from the state government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The economic indicators recorded at the subnational level in the US were E1 and E2, which are measured on an ordinal scale without a flag indicating the geographic scope.

E1: Income support

E1 records if the government is providing direct cash payments to people who lose their jobs or cannot work and is measured as 0 (no income support), 1 (government is replacing less than 50% of lost salary or if a flat sum, that is less than 50% median salary), or 2 (government is replacing 50% or more of lost salary or if a flat sum, that is greater than 50% median salary).

Expansion of unemployment benefits in response to COVID-19 was first announced March 10, 2020, by Governor Inslee. Workers were able to receive unemployment benefits if a worker had to isolate or quarantine because of COVID-19, or if a worker fell seriously ill and was forced to quit. Benefits applied to those working part time. State employees impacted by COVID-19 had additional leave available related to COVID-19 absences. C

On August 13, 2020, Governor Inslee expanded unemployment benefits to include agricultural workers who may have lost their employment but did not qualify for benefits due to immigration status. Governor Inslee announced on October 21, 2020, that the Washington COVID-19 Immigrant Relief Fund was open for applications from October 21 through December 6. The relief fund provided \$40 million in federal funds allocated by the state to assist Washington workers who missed work due to COVID-19 but were unable to access federal stimulus programs and other social supports due to their immigration status. While the fund was operational, eligible recipients received \$1,000, with a limit of \$3,000 per household.

On February 8, 2021, Governor Inslee signed legislation SB 5061 to increase minimum unemployment benefits for workers and provide significant tax relief for businesses over the next five years. SB 5061 relieved employers of individual benefit charges for claims that occurred between March 22 and May 30, 2020, the period of the Governor's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order, and capped certain tax rates through until 2025.

On February 19, 2021, Governor Inslee allocated federal funds with \$26 million towards food banks and other food programs, \$91 million for income assistance, including \$65 million for relief for the state's immigrant population.

On April 15, Governor Jay Inslee issued a proclamation allowing for the expansion of the Family Emergency Assistance Program (FEAP) to assist families both with and without children. This proclamation was issued under the authority granted to the Governor by SHB 1151, which passed the legislature earlier this session. On July 20, Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) continued as an extension of regular unemployment benefits.

On July 20, 2021, Governor Inslee rescinded EO 20-76 (along with EO 20-67.1). According to the Washington State Employment Security Department, the CARES Act and other federal programs expanded and extended unemployment benefits for many claimants. Those programs expired the week ending September 4, 2021. The week ending September 4 was the last payable week for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC).

E2: Debt/contract relief

E2 records if the government is freezing financial obligations for households (e.g., stopping loan repayments, preventing services like water from stopping, or banning evictions) and is measured as 0 (no debt/contract relief), 1 (narrow relief, specific to one kind of contract), or 2 (broad debt/contract relief).

Most resources made available to Washington residents were referrals to federal support systems. However, there were a few state-specific resources that constituted as debt/contract relief for households. On March 18, 2020,

Governor Inslee declared Proclamation 20-19.2, preventing landlords from evicting renters due to inability to pay during the pandemic as well as Proclamation 20-23, which waived certain statutes regarding the payment of utilities. Since more than one type of coverage is in place,

On July 31, 2020, the governor of Washington prohibited shut-offs for essential services due to non-payment. On November 9, 2020, Governor Inslee announced the extension of ratepayer assistance and continuation of essential services. The governor prohibited all energy, telecommunications, and water providers in Washington state from conducting the following activities: (1) disconnecting any residential customers from energy, telecommunications, or water service due to non-payment on an active account, except at the request of the customer; (2) refusing to reconnect any residential customer who had been disconnected due to non-payment; (3) charging fees for late payment or reconnection of energy, telecommunications, or water service; and (4) disconnecting service to any residential customer who had contacted the utility to request assistance from the utility's COVID-19 Customer Support Program. The moratorium on utility debt collection ended on September 30, 2021, at which point coding changed to a 1. Even at this time, over a year later the state estimated more than half a million people had overdue utility bills.

Washington implemented an Eviction Resolution Pilot Program (ERP) aimed at assisting landlords and tenants through mediation to avoid evictions on December 22, 2020. Six counties with the highest populations in the state were chosen to participate in the program: Pierce, King, Snohomish, Thurston, Spokane, and Clark Counties. Each ERP will operate in accordance with the enabling order from the Washington State Supreme Court, and a standing order of the local superior court. The eviction moratorium continued to be in effect until the end of December 2021.

While not strictly debt relief, Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler issued an emergency order on March 5, 2020 requiring health insurers to waive co-pays and deductibles for any consumer requiring testing for COVID-19. He later issued a second emergency order protecting consumers from receiving surprise bills for lab fees related to medically necessary diagnostic testing for COVID-19.

Public Health Responses

The public health response indicators recorded health system responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. The indicators recorded at the subnational level in the US were H1, H2, H3, H6, H7, and H8. The geographic scope of these policies was marked by an ordinal flag for indicators H1, H6, and H8. Differentiated policies, or policies that were specifically directed at those vaccinated or unvaccinated, are indicated when flagged as 'Vaccinated' or 'Non-Vaccinated' for indicators H6 and H8.

H1: Public information campaigns

H1 records the presence of public info campaigns and is measured as 0 (no Covid-19 public information campaign), 1 (public officials urging caution about Covid-19), or 2 (coordinated public information campaign, e.g., across traditional and social media).

The first public information came on February 29, 2020, when Washington state governor, Jay Inslee, issued a COVID-19 Emergency Proclamation that also urged caution to the public. Inslee indicated that healthcare professionals advised to the public good hygiene practises such as handwashing, sanitising frequently touched surfaces and staying home when sick to prevent future cases.

On March 23, 2020, Governor Inslee launched the state's COVID-19 website. During announcements, the governor often directed the public to visit the state coronavirus website for up to date information. Washington state continued an organised information campaign until the end of 2021, utilising their coronavirus response website, complete with "health tool kits" available for the public, fact sheets and several complementary websites and twitter accounts.

H2: Testing policy

H2 records government policy on who has access to testing and is measured as 0 (no testing policy), 1 (only those who both have symptoms AND meet specific criteria, e.g., key workers, admitted to hospital, encountered a known case, returned from overseas), 2 (testing of anyone showing Covid-19 symptoms), or 3 (open public testing, e.g., "drive through" testing available to asymptomatic people).

The first COVID-19 case in Washington was identified on January 20, 2020. At this time, testing policies indicating individuals that were symptomatic and seen in a healthcare facility with local, state and CDC approval were able to be tested. In May, the Washington Department of Health websites indicated testing was still only available for those who are symptomatic, however, widespread testing for those who were eligible in long term care facilities and agriculture were being performed regardless of symptoms at this time. Throughout August, testing remained only available for those with symptoms or those who had contact with an infected person.

Efforts to expand access to testing were made by the state with mobilised testing units and labs. According to the Department of Health FAQ page accessed on October 1, 2020, more than 120 labs in the state were able to process COVID-19 testing. On February 16, 2020, the Department of Health of Washington announced increased testing efforts in order to expedite a return to in-person teaching. Under this policy, anyone concerned about their health was able to be tested. During this period, there were several ways to obtain testing including community-based testing sites, local clinics, and drive-thru sites offering accessible testing. Access to all

of these depended on location, but communities across the state often had more than one testing option. Testing sites were able to be found online for each county and access remained widely available through the end of December 2021.

H3: Contact tracing

H3 records government policy on contact tracing after a positive diagnosis and is measured as 0 (no contact tracing), 1 (limited contact tracing; not done for all cases), or 2 (comprehensive contact tracing; done for all identified cases).

The first COVID case in Washington was identified on January 20, 2020, providing the presumed start date for contact tracing. Initially with intentions of contact tracing all cases, by March 5, 2020, the state was conducting approximately only half the contact tracing investigations in the highly populated King County and Duchin County. Due to the number of cases becoming overwhelming, contact tracing was unsustainable. At that time, only high priority cases were contact traced. The CDC collaborated with the Washington Government as early as February 28, 2020, providing help for contact tracing for long term care facilities. The state had hopes of handling all new cases by the end of June 2020 but failed to ever meet their goal.

On June 15, 2020, King County's application to move from Phase 1 to Phase 2 indicated comprehensive contact tracing had started again in this area and according to "King County Safe Start Application" report, 90% of cases were contacted within 24 hours with adequate staff to perform comprehensive contact tracing. Coding in the OxCGRT remains at 1 since evidence in the news regarding contact tracing efforts during this time indicated that Washington state struggled to perform contact tracing.

On August 27, 2020, the Department of Health of Washington announced they would be using a private firm to help boost contact tracing efforts as only 30% - 60% of cases were traced at this time. On September 16, 2020, members of the Western States Pact, participated with California in piloting a project on exposure notification technology. These states joined other members of the Western States Pact including Colorado and Nevada, along with states and universities across the country, in piloting this technology. The project involved an app which confidentially notified individuals who may have been exposed to someone who tested positive for the virus.

Data as of October 20, 2020, reported that Seattle and King County were handling about 500 cases per week and were reaching many people who have COVID-19. All other counties in Washington were struggling, relying on the Washington Department of Health and the Washington National Guard to bolster their efforts. On November 12, 2020, the Department of Health (DOH) published a report on metrics for case investigations and contact

tracing. Their target was to reach 90% of cases within 1 day of DOH receiving a positive lab result and 80% of contacts reached within 2 days of DOH receiving a positive lab result for the case. Case investigations in late October, 2020, show that 76% of total cases were interviewed in total and 76% of contacts were interviewed.

Washington never reached its contact tracing goals. The percentage of total contacts with a first-call attempt within two days declined from 90 percent the week of October 18 with 540 cases assigned to 22 percent the week of November 8 with 2,719 cases assigned. The percentage of total contacts reached within two days in the same time frame dropped from 73 percent to 19 percent; and percent of total contacts interviewed within two days dropped from 67 percent to 17 percent. Washington state struggled with caseloads over the winter of 2020, and at no time during the pandemic met the contact tracing goals set. Coding on the OxCGRT dataset remained a 1 for the duration of 2021 to reflect the limited contact tracing occurring.

H6: Facial Coverings

H6 records policies on the use of facial coverings outside the home and is measured as 0 (no policy), 1 (recommended mask wearing), 2 (required in some specified shared/public spaces outside the home with other people present, or some situations when social distancing not possible), 3 (required in all shared/public spaces outside the home with other people present or all situations when social distancing not possible), or 4 (required outside the home at all times regardless of location or presence of other people).

On June 26, 2020, Governor Jay Inslee ordered Proclamation 20-60, a state-wide mask mandate as a response to the number of COVID-19 cases overwhelming Washington's healthcare system. On July 2, 2020, Governor Inslee amended Proclamation 20-60 to prohibit businesses from serving customers who were not abiding by the mask mandate. The mask mandate remained in effect, coded as a 3G on the dataset until May 18, 2021, when guidelines were updated with a differentiated policy for fully vaccinated individuals. The new CDC guidance was adopted requiring unvaccinated individuals to wear masks in public spaces, while allowing vaccinated individuals to doff them, except in specific situations, such as health care settings (including long-term care, doctor's offices, hospitals), correctional facilities, homeless shelters, K-12 Schools, childcare facilities, and day camps in locations where children and/or adolescents are present, and public transportation (aircraft, train, buses). In these settings, all individuals were required to wear a mask, regardless of vaccination status.

On August 19, 2021, Order of the Secretary of Health 20-3.4 was issued reinstating the mask mandate, regardless of their vaccination status, with limited exceptions. Coding reflects the masking requirement across the state at this time represented by 3G. The mask mandate remained in place for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals until the end of 2021.

H7: Vaccination policy

H7 records policies for vaccine delivery for different groups 0 (no availability), 1 (availability for ONE of following: key workers/clinically vulnerable groups that are non elderly/ elderly groups), 2 (availability for TWO of following: key workers/clinically vulnerable groups that are non elderly/elderly groups), 3 (availability for ALL of following: key workers/clinically vulnerable groups that are non-elderly/elderly groups), 4 (availability for all three plus partial additional availability for select broad groups/ages), or 5 (universal availability).

On December 16, 2020, approximately 1,100 of Pfizer vaccines were administered to high-risk healthcare workers. Washington followed a tiered framework for vaccine distribution prioritising specific groups based on vaccine availability. Through December 2020, Washington vaccinations were limited to Phase 1a which included the following populations: high-risk workers in health care settings, high-risk first responders and residents and staff of nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and other community-based, congregate living settings. On December 18, Moderna vaccines were approved for use in the United States by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA). On the morning of December 21, 2020, Washington placed an order for 128,000 doses of the Moderna vaccine, while expecting 44,300 doses the following week.

On January 27, 2021, Washington entered Phase 1B tier 1 of vaccine distribution, where vaccines were available to anyone 65 and older, and all people 50 and older who also live in a multigenerational household. On March 3, 2021, Governor Inslee announced educators (PreK-12, school staff, and licensed childcare workers) to be immediately put under the Phase 1B-1 vaccination directive under President Biden's orders. On March 17, 2021, Washington State moved into Phase 1B- 2 of vaccine distribution. This phase included high-risk critical workers in the following industries: agriculture, fishing vessel crews, food processing, grocery store/food bank, corrections (prisons, jails, detention centres), court of law, public transit, and remaining first responders. People who were 16 years or older who were pregnant or with a disability were also added to the eligibility list.

On April 15, 2021, the tier approach was removed and all individuals 16 and older were eligible for vaccination. Vaccines remained widely available to all citizens of Washington until the end of 2021. Johnson & Johnson vaccines were reinstated for distribution on April 24, after a nationwide pause on April 13. On May 12, 2021, vaccination eligibility extended to individuals aged 12 and older. By November of 2021, children 5 years and older were also eligible for the vaccine.

H8: Protection of elderly people

H8 records policies for protecting elderly people (as defined locally) in Long Term Care Facilities and/or the community and home setting. This is measured as 0 (no measures), 1 (recommended isolation, hygiene, and visitor restriction measures in LTCFs and/or elderly people to stay-at-home), 2 (narrow restrictions for isolation, hygiene in LTCFs, some limitations on external visitors and/or restrictions protecting elderly people at home), or 3 (extensive restrictions for isolation and hygiene in LTCFs, all non-essential external visitors prohibited, and/or all elderly people required to stay-at-home and not leave the home with minimal exceptions, and receive no external visitors).

On February 29, 2020, Governor Inslee signed Proclamation 20-05, establishing a "State of Emergency" in the state of Washington in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. On this date, the Washington State Department of Health recommended elderly populations and those with underlying conditions to take precautions. On March 10, 2020, Governor Inslee signed Proclamation 20-06, which detailed restrictions for long term care facilities. Under this proclamation, residents were limited to one adult visitor per day, with this visitor requiring screened prior to entry. Proclamation 20-06 was amended on March 16, 2020, prohibiting visitors to long term care facilities and other care facilities, except in very specific circumstances. This remained in effect until August 12, 2020, when a phased reopening policy was placed. The phases were as follows: 1) Phase one included compassionate care visits, window visits, remote visits, and outdoor visits, limited to two a day; 2) Phase two included indoor visits in limited circumstances, with only one individual allowed per resident and requirements for all visitors to wear facial coverings and screened for symptoms before entering; 3) Phase 3 permitting residents to leave the facility as long as they practise social distancing, wear a mask, and are screened for symptoms when they return; and 4) Phase 4 representing a return to pre-pandemic rules. All facilities were required to continue to follow other guidelines such as COVID-19 testing for staff and residents, as well as screening visitors. On August 13, 2020, all long-term care facilities in Washington were in phase 1.

On December 30, 2020, Governor Inslee announced a one-week extension of the "Stay Safe–Stay Healthy" proclamation, along with state-wide restrictions imposed. The proclamation included protection of elderly people in long-term care facilities, indicating that indoor visits in long-term care facilities were prohibited except in cases of an essential support person or end-of-life care. Outdoor visits were still permitted. These restrictions ended January 12, 2021, when the phased reopening policies resumed.

The phased approach to visitation expired on March 18, 2021, where it was announced that visitation at long-term care and nursing home facilities may resume, in accordance with guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the CDC. Guidance was updated on April 30, to permit visitation for vaccinated residents with other vaccinated individuals indoors and without wearing any protection.

Vaccine Policies

The vaccine indicators record vaccination policies regarding the distribution of vaccines and vaccine mandates. This is recorded as V1-V4 and includes a state's prioritisation list, eligible groups, cost of vaccination to the individual, and the presence of a vaccine mandate. These indicators do not include a flag for geographic scope.

V1: Vaccine Prioritisation

V1 records the ranked position for different groups within a state's prioritisation plan when vaccines resources were too scarce for universal availability. Groups are ranked on an ordinal scale, the number represents the rank of prioritisation, and equal-ranked categories share the same number.

On November 25, 2020, a press release was published by Washington State Department of Health regarding Phase 1A of COVID-19 vaccination distribution in Washington state. The press release indicated the first groups eligible to receive vaccines were high-risk workers in health care settings.

On December 3, 2020, a vaccine prioritisation list for Phase 1A was published further specifying group 1A will focus on workers in healthcare settings serving patients who either have confirmed or suspected COVID-19, along with staff and residents of long-term care facilities. On January 6, 2021, the Washington Department of Health released updated guidance for vaccine prioritisation, setting four tiers within Phase 1B of its vaccine prioritisation: Tier 1: persons 70 years or older and people 50 years or older living in multigenerational households; Tier 2: high risk critical workers 50 years or older working in agriculture, food processing, grocery stores, schools, childcare, corrections or detention facilities, public transit, and first responders; Tier 3: people 16 years or older with two or more comorbidities or underlying conditions; Tier 4: critical workers in certain settings under 50 years of age and people, staff, and volunteers in congregate living settings, including correctional facilities, group homes for people with disabilities, and people experiencing homelessness.

On March 4, 2021, amendments were announced to the vaccination prioritisation to begin on March 22, when the state will include individuals in Phase 1B-2. 1B-2 included all high-risk critical workers in certain congregate settings, of any age. The state opened eligibility to individuals 16 years and older who were pregnant or had certain disabilities that greatly increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

On March 31, 2021, the vaccination prioritisation list was expanded to include anyone with two or more comorbidities, anyone between the ages of 60 and 64, anyone living in congregate settings (correctional facilities, group homes for those with disabilities, those experiencing homelessness, etc.), and additional workers in congregate settings (restaurants,

manufacturing, construction). Vaccine availability shifted from prioritised to universal on April 15, 2021.

V2: Vaccine Availability

V2 records when categories of people – regardless of their position in a prioritised rollout plan – receive vaccines. This is measured as 0 (vaccines are not being made available to this category) or 1 (vaccines are being made available to this category).

Vaccine administration began on December 16, 2020 for health care workers and long term care facility residents and staff, signifying the beginning of Phase 1A. On January 18, 2021, vaccine distribution expanded to include the first tier of Phase 1B including individuals who are aged 65 or older. On March 2, pre-kindergarten through 12th grade educators and staff, in addition to childcare staff were eligible for vaccination.

On March 17, 2021, vaccines were available for high-risk critical workers in certain congregate settings, individuals aged 16 or older who are pregnant or who have a disability that places them at higher risk of severe COVID-19. March 31, 2021, the vaccine administration expanded even further to include anyone with two or more comorbidities, anyone between the ages of 60-64, anyone living in congregate settings (correctional facilities, group homes for those with disabilities, those experiencing homelessness), and additional workers in congregate settings such as restaurants, manufacturing and construction. Universal eligibility to all citizens aged 16+ became available on April 15, 2021. On May 12, 2021, individuals aged 12+ were eligible for vaccination in Washington state.

V3: Vaccine Financial Support

All vaccines were government-funded at the federal-level across the US.

V4: Mandatory Vaccination

V4 measures the existence of a requirement to be vaccinated and is measured as 0 (no requirement to be vaccinated) or 1 (requirement to be vaccinated).

The first vaccine mandate for Washington was active on June 30, 2021, when Governor Jay Inslee updated the existing restrictions on Proclamation 20-12.3 regarding restrictions for institutions of higher learning Institutions that were not vaccinated. Institutions of Higher Education, such as colleges and universities, that did not have fully vaccinated campuses were prohibited from providing in-person classroom instruction, lectures and similar educational gatherings, except when they implement, follow, and enforce the requirements specified. Institutions with fully vaccinated campuses were



wholly exempt from this proclamation and were allowed to open back fully while maintaining precautions of hand washing, maintain hand sanitizer protocols as specified by the CDC. As a response to this proclamation, state schools implemented vaccine mandates for students and staff.

On August 9, 2021, Governor Inslee announced intent for a vaccine requirement for most state employees, healthcare workers and long-term care workers giving individuals notice that a vaccine mandate for these groups will be in place later in the year. On October 18, 2021, Governor Jay Inslee issued an emergency mandate following the warnings from months prior. The vaccine mandate applied to most state executive branch employees and on-site contractors and volunteers, along with public and private health care and long-term care workers. The vaccine mandate applied to all healthcare workers and professionals that were licensed in the state of Washington, regardless of contact with patients, including educators, as well as police officers and state military.