



July 2017

# Issues Brief

City of Yakima e-Newsletter

## ▼ **Yakima's Population Estimate Nearing 94,000**

After breaking the 93,000 barrier three years ago, an estimate from a State of Washington agency shows Yakima now has just under 94,000 people living within its city limits.

The most recent estimate from the Washington State Office of Financial Management ("OFM") puts the current population of Yakima at 93,900. That represents an increase of 490 people from the 2016 OFM estimate of 93,410 and an increase of 2,704 residents above the 2010 U.S. Census count.



***The latest estimate from the Washington State Office of Financial Management puts Yakima's current population at 93,900. Since the 2010 U.S. Census count, Yakima's population has grown by more than 2,700 people.***

In between each U.S. Census count, which occur every 10 years, the OFM produces population estimates annually. The estimates are critical because the allocation of state and federal financial support for local governments is based in large part on the OFM numbers. Population estimates from the OFM also affect business recruitment and economic development because the numbers are used to establish potential market size.

Based on the 2017 OFM estimate, Yakima retained its 2016 ranking as the 11<sup>th</sup> largest city (by population) in Washington State.

Seattle (713,700) remains the largest city in the state by population followed by Spokane (217,300), Tacoma (208,100), Vancouver (176,400), Bellevue (140,700), Kent (127,100), Everett (109,800), Renton (102,700), Federal Way (96,350), and Spokane Valley (94,890). In 2016 Spokane Valley was the 9<sup>th</sup> largest city in the state and Federal Way was the 10<sup>th</sup> largest city in the state.

According to the 2017 OFM estimates, Yakima County also increased its population slightly since last year from 250,900 to 253,000.

Yakima remains the largest of the 14 cities and towns in the county by far. Sunnyside (16,640) is next on the list followed by Grandview (11,170), Toppenish (9,085), Selah (7,630), Union Gap (6,220), Wapato (5,040), Moxee (4,010), Granger (3,905), Zillah (3,150), Mabton (2,315), Tieton (1,300), Naches (860), and Harrah (660).

## ✦ **Assistant Mayor Méndez Says Sense of Calm and Safety Critical**

*\* Editor's Note: This is the next in a series of articles written by Yakima City Council members that are being published each month in the City of Yakima Issues Brief e-Newsletter.*

I was seated on the Yakima City Council in January 2016. I was elected by voters in District #3 as their representative on the Council.

Over the last year, I have learned so much more about city government and the interest people here in Yakima have in what the City Council does than I knew when I started my tenure on the Council. It's been a fascinating process to go through and I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to experience it.

Public Safety is the Yakima City Council's highest priority. I am the chair of the Council's Public Safety Committee. The incidents of violence our community has experienced over the last year-and-a-half dealt a serious blow to the sense of safety and security people in Yakima deserve.

Through the combined efforts of the Yakima Police Department and its local, state, and federal law enforcement partners, several targeted enforcement efforts have been conducted over the last few months. As a result of those efforts, multiple arrests have been made, dozens of guns have been confiscated, and incidents of violence have noticeably decreased.

It is absolutely critical that a sense of calm and safety in our community be restored and preserved. In order to do that, the special emphasis patrols that have proven effective recently must continue. Those kinds of targeted enforcement efforts, though, come with significant cost. The City is constantly exploring all available funding resources to help bolster its law enforcement efforts.

Of course, suppression alone isn't enough to cure the crisis of violence that has affected our community. In addition to ramping up special emphasis patrols, the City is proactively engaging faith-based, non-profit, and educational organizations to expand prevention and intervention activities.

Together we can restore and preserve the sense of safety and security that is so precious to everyone who calls Yakima home, and I am committed to playing a leadership role in achieving that goal.

Yakima is not alone in facing public safety challenges. Communities across Washington State are dealing with many common issues including public safety, economic development, equity, infrastructure, etc. I am privileged to have been elected in June of this year to serve as a member of the Association of Washington Cities ("AWC") board of directors. As a member of the AWC board, I am firmly committed to advancing the best interests of all 281 cities and towns in Washington State and ensuring the issues common among them are successfully addressed.

I am thankful to have been given the opportunity to serve my community as a member of the City Council and look forward to continuing to move Yakima forward toward a brighter future.



***Carmen Méndez was elected in November 2015 from District #3 to serve on the Yakima City Council.***

## ✦ Yakima Municipal Court Offering Citations Amnesty

The City of Yakima's Municipal Court, along with other courts, is offering amnesty for delinquent traffic tickets, misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor citations that have been referred to collections. The program began July 10<sup>th</sup> and expires September 10<sup>th</sup>.



**City of Yakima Municipal Court Cashier Kevin Barron assists a customer. People with unpaid traffic tickets may be eligible for a collections amnesty program that runs through September.**

While the tickets themselves must still be paid in full, the Yakima Municipal Court and its collection agency, Yakima County Credit Service, will waive all interest and may significantly reduce collection fees on tickets currently in collection. The program will not be available to people with garnishment (civil judgements) or bankruptcy cases.

"This is the second time we've allowed an amnesty," Municipal Court Services Manager Linda Hagert said. "A lot of people who have a ticket issued by the City can really benefit from this program. It could assist in restoring their driving privileges."

Details of the program include:

- If a ticket was assigned to the collection agency, it will remove all interest and lower the collection fee if the defendant pays in full.
- Defendants unable to pay in full can sign a contract with the collection agency. No interest will be waived and there will be no reduction in collection fees.
- If the ticket is still with the City's Municipal Court and in pre-collect status, the court will remove the \$52 Failure to Appear ("FTA") late fee only if the defendant is paying in full and if the FTA late fee was issued for failure to respond or failure to keep time payments.

The City is partnering with Yakima County District Court and the municipal courts of Selah, Zillah and Sunnyside in offering the amnesty on interest and a portion of collection costs.

"We can partner with the various courts as a group, it's more beneficial," Hagert said. "We're all trying to pull together. It gives folks an additional chance."

City of Yakima Municipal Court defendants can call Yakima County Credit Service at 509-248-1610 for more information about participating in the program if their fines or citations have been referred to collections.

Those who are still in pre-collect status with the Court should call the City's Municipal Court at 575-3050.



**The free, family-friendly Downtown Summer Nights Concert Series is back for its fifth year. Shows take place every Thursday night through August 17<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm in the Historic North Front Street District. To see a complete list of performers, go to [www.downtownsummernights.com](http://www.downtownsummernights.com).**

