

## Getting Started with Statistics: Basic Statistics for the Generalist

**Activity:** Explore The Different Types of Statistical Reference Sources to Answer Typical Reference Questions. **Note the answer and SOURCE you used.**

1. How many troops are currently serving in Iraq?
2. How many African-Americans died in the Vietnam War?
3. How many Native Americans live in X city in 2000?
4. How many Native Americans lived in Seattle in 1950?
5. I want to market my incredible product. I have a list of addresses sorted by zip code. How can I find out how much money people make who live in various zip code areas in Seattle (or Spokane, or Ellensburg, etc.)? And while I'm at it, knowing something about the age of these folks would also be useful.
6. How many businesses are there which make bicycles in Washington State?

**HINT:** Data for products, commodities, sectors of the economy, etc. are often collected using a coding scheme to ensure that information about drug and pharmaceutical manufacturers are grouped together. North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) was developed jointly by the U.S., Canada, and Mexico to provide new comparability in statistics about business activity across North America.

- 7A. What is the cost of living in X city? How does that compare to Y city?

**HINT:** A "Cost of Living" indicator is not calculated by any federal agency. "Cost of Living" statistics are available, however they are NOT FREE. One of

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the Federal indicators which can help you with these questions, and which IS FREE, is the ***Consumer Price Index***.

- 7B. I work as a legal assistant (truck driver, teacher, whatever) in Seattle and am interviewing for a job in Y city. How can I know what is a reasonable salary to negotiate for during my interview?

**HINT:** 7B is related to 7A but asks about earnings (wages) rather than expenses (costs) and can will be answered using very different sources. Patron 7B would be well served to have information on both wages and living costs when planning to relocate.

8. How many people in Africa died of AIDS last year? Or for the most recent year you can find?
9. How many apples were grown in Washington State last year? Or for the most recent year you can find?
10. How much funding each year goes to the National Endowment for the Arts? Has that changed much?
11. How many people are without health insurance in the United States? In Washington state?
12. What statistical questions have you had difficulty with? Make a note of them here and we'll look for resources to solve them.