

2021 Statewide Community Needs Assessment

At A Glance



Top Statewide Needs Identified

1. Safe, Affordable Housing
2. Affordable, Quality Childcare
3. Ending the Cycle of Generational Poverty
4. Holistic Person-Centered Health Care
5. Transportation

After completing a needs prioritization process, the MeCAP Leadership Group identified the following issues to collectively focus their resources, capacity, and advocacy work to meet the needs of Maine residents. A more detailed look at the identified needs is available in the full report.

Household Income and Poverty Status

The state median household income for 2019 was \$57,918. However, the median household income varies widely from \$73,072 in Cumberland County to \$40,890 in Piscataquis County. Household income also varies based on the household's race and/or ethnicity across Maine's counties; discrimination, marginalization, and systemic racism have hindered the upward mobility for ethnic and racial minorities seeking to escape poverty. The poverty rates in Maine are much higher for all racial and ethnic groups when compared to white residents.

Household Income by Race/Ethnicity		
	United States	Maine
Total Households	\$62,843	\$57,918
White	\$68,785	\$58,459
Black or African American	\$41,935	\$42,901
American Indian and Alaska Native	\$43,825	\$33,767
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	\$63,613	ND
Other race	\$59,184	\$58,049
Two or more races	\$59,184	\$42,317
Latinx	\$51,811	\$59,925
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	\$68,785	\$58,522

Poverty by Race/Ethnicity		
	United States	Maine
White alone	11.1%	11.1%
Black or African American alone	23.0%	34.8%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	24.9%	29.1%
Asian alone	10.9%	13.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	17.5%	27.0%
Other race alone	21.0%	12.5%
Two or more races	16.7%	21.7%
Latinx	19.6%	18.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months

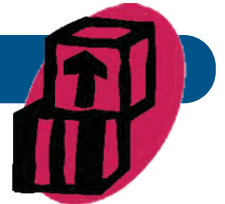


Safe, Affordable Housing

“Housing is a nightmare. It’s so expensive. Everyone is fleeing cities, so prices are skyrocketing. People with bad credit can’t buy a house, background checks mean people can’t rent, so they have to go way out then it’s hard to get places. People are desperate to find places.”

In 2019, more than 80% of renters earning less than \$25,000 were cost burdened nationwide, with a large majority severely burdened paying more than 50% of their income for housing. Affordable housing and housing related issues remain top concerns in Maine, as of the 150 individual interviewees who were asked about their top concerns, housing was mentioned as a priority community challenge.

Affordable, Quality Childcare



“A big need is childcare. You need reliable childcare if you want to be in the workforce; if not, it’s tough to improve a life. The programs have qualifiers, and they may not be eligible

Access to safe and affordable childcare is an essential building block to the overall quality of life for families in the United States. Parents and caregivers have more opportunities to pursue a career and higher education that contribute to stability and financial security.

During the pandemic, daycare facilities closed, and childcare programs were put on pause. This only worsened the already high cost of care as providers are heavily reliant on parent fees, accounting for 52% of total industry revenue. In 2020, mothers spent eight hours a day on average on direct or indirect childcare last year while simultaneously working an average of six hours on weekdays.

Ending the Cycle of Generational Poverty

“It’s hard to find a job with a living wage (\$15-\$18/hour) with benefits that provides a meaningful life occupation. (We need) possible apprenticeship programs or job opportunities for people who don’t want to go to college or need more trade training.”

Maslow’s original hierarchy of needs is still relevant today. In addition to shelter; food, clothing, and warmth remain essential for well-being. Just before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Urban Institute found that nearly 40% of American families struggled to meet at least one basic need for health care, housing, utilities, or food.

Access to healthy and affordable food is a known challenge in Maine and is more prevalent in rural communities. Maine’s population consists of approximately 545,287 people living in rural areas, lacking nutritional opportunities or food retailers creating a food desert. Food deserts are known as areas with limited supplies of fresh, affordable foods. In Maine, 1 in 8 people face food insecurity, 1 in 6 are children.

Transportation



“Why haven’t we figured this out yet? People see this (issue) as ‘really hard’ and don’t want to go there - it’s too big of a problem to try to solve.”

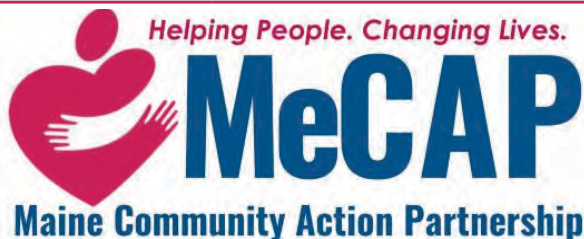


Transportation is a central beneficiary of the 2021 Federal infrastructure bill. Maine could receive \$2.0 billion for roads, bridges, public transit, electric vehicle charging and broadband internet from the bill. Yet the representative comments from across the state suggest the improvements are needed now to bring the benefits that policy makers hope to achieve such as health and health equity, employment, and social connection. A commission studying funding solutions regarding public transportation discovered that Maine faces an annual transportation funding shortfall of approximately \$232 million and Mainers are feeling the impact.

Maine's Community Action Agencies

Agency	Area Covered*	Contact
	Aroostook County Action Program P.O. Box 1116 771 Main St. Presque Isle, ME 04769-1116	(207)764-3721 (800)585-3053 acap-me.org
 <small>Fostering opportunities for thriving individuals, families & communities</small>	Community Concepts, Inc 240 Bates Street Lewiston, ME 04240	(207)795-4065 (800)866-5588 ccimaine.org
	Downeast Community Partners 248 Bucksport Rd Ellsworth, ME 04605	(207)664-2424 (800)828-7544 downeastcommunitypartners.org
	KVCAP 101 Water Street Waterville, ME 04901	Kennebec & Somerset Counties kvcap.org
	Midcoast Maine Community Action 34 Wing Farm Pkwy Bath, ME 04530	(207)442-7963 midcoastmainecommunityaction.org
	Opportunity Alliance 50 Lydia Lane South Portland, Maine 04106	207) 553-5900 (800) 698-4959 opportunityalliance.org
	Penquis P.O. Box 1162 262 Harlow Street Bangor, ME 04402	Penobscot, Piscataquis & Knox Counties penquis.org
	Waldo Community Action Partners P.O. Box 130 9 Field Street Belfast, ME 04915-0130	(207)645-3764 (800)645-9636 wmca.org
	Western Maine Community Action P.O. Box 200 20A Church St. East Wilton, ME 04234-0200	(207)645-3764 (800)645-9636 wmca.org
	York County Community Action Corp P.O. Box 72 6 Spruce Street Sanford, ME 04073	(207)324-5762 (800)965-5762 yccac.org

*Agency Services may vary by county. For more information visit agency website.



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