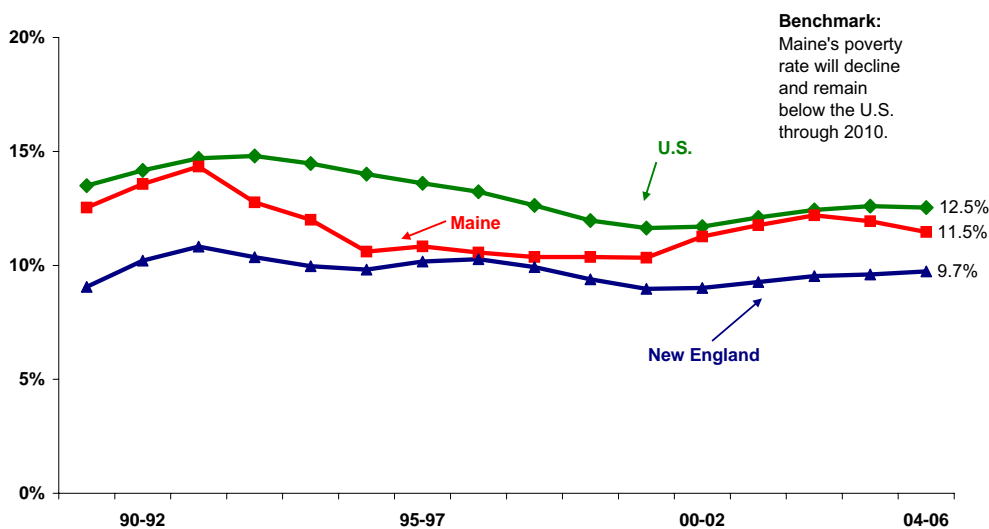


18. Poverty



Benchmark: Maine's poverty rate will decline and remain below the U.S. through 2010.

**Annual Poverty Rates
3-Year Moving Average**



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey and Maine Children's Alliance

Maine's Poverty Rate Remains Below the National Rate - Rising Child Poverty a Concern

The poverty rate in Maine declined somewhat in 2006. From the early 1990s to 2006, this rate has fluctuated between 10.3% and 14.3% in Maine and has remained below the national rate and above the New England rate. This indicator continues to meet the benchmark.

Although the state-level data shows continued progress on this indicator, by county the story varies considerably. Maine's rural counties to the west, north and east have had and continue to have higher poverty rates than Maine's southern and service center counties. Efforts to alleviate poverty must consider the distinctions between the different regions of Maine.

A trend of great concern within these figures has to do with children. As can be seen by the table on the next page, according to the Maine Children's Alliance, the poverty rate for children ages 0 to 5 in Maine has increased in recent years. In 2000, the poverty rate for children ages 0 to 5 was 13.9%. By 2006 it was over 23%.

County	Poverty Rate
Androscoggin	12.0%
Aroostook	16.6%
Cumberland	10.0%
Franklin	16.9%
Hancock	10.4%
Kennebec	13.0%
Knox	11.9%
Lincoln	11.0%
Oxford	14.6%
Penobscot	12.8%
Piscataquis	16.3%
Sagadahoc	9.0%
Somerset	16.9%
Waldo	16.6%
Washington	19.1%
York	9.9%

(continued on next page)

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates

18. Poverty (continued)

Poverty Rate Children Ages 0-5		
	Maine	U.S.
2000	13.9%	19.3%
2001	14.5%	18.6%
2002	22.4%	19.7%
2003	16.1%	20.2%
2004	25.5%	20.8%
2005	20.7%	21.0%
2006	23.6%	20.7%

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey and Maine Children's Alliance.

Children growing up in poverty are more likely to experience lags in physical and mental development, which diminishes their chances for educational success and future contributions to the workforce and community. This is a particular concern in the early developmental years ages 0 to 5. Additional aspects of poverty can include substance abuse and crime later in a child's life. Such negative spin-offs create increased dependency on public resources to cover costs such as health care and criminal justice.

The Growth Council believes that investments in early childhood development are critical to the future prosperity of Maine. Therefore, the rising poverty rate for these young children is troubling and policy makers must keep this in mind with all investment decisions moving forward.