

# MEASURES OF GROWTH

Performance Measures and Benchmarks to Achieve  
a Vibrant and Sustainable Economy for Maine

2023



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**29<sup>TH</sup>**  
REPORT OF  
THE MEGC



**MEGC**  
Maine Economic  
Growth Council

Administered by  
**mdf**

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 Maine's labor force shrank 1.5% to 675,000 in 2022.

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 In 2022, value added per worker fell 0.6%, and was 22% below the U.S. average.

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 In 2022, Maine's GDP rose nearly 2%, on pace with other New England states.

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 Proportional health care expenditures fell 0.7% in 2022 but remain an ongoing challenge.


\* EPSCoR is the National Science Foundation's Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, a program to assist places with historically low levels of funding for research and development. There are 25 states in the program: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming.







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The price of industrial electricity rose 17% in 2022, mirroring nationwide increases.

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In 2021, Maine's tax burden remained unchanged at 11.7%.


## COMMUNITY



**INFRASTRUCTURE**  
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In 2022, 67% of Maine roadways were rated good or fair.


 **21. Internet Connectivity** pg 28  
 +8% In 2023, 86% of Maine locations have either average or broadband internet, up 8%.


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 TBD Housing affordability appears to have dropped in 2022, but complete data are not currently available.

**HEALTH & SAFETY**  
 -2% **23. Safety** pg 31  
Maine's crime rate fell 2% in 2021.



 +0.4% **24. Physical Wellness** pg 32  
Consistently, about 2/3 of Maine adults are overweight or obese.



 **25. Mental & Behavioral Health** pg 33  
 +0.4% In 2020-2021, the percentage of children with a mental and/or behavioral condition rose 0.4%.


 +1.2% **26. Health Insurance Coverage** pg 34  
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 -2% **27. Food Security** pg 35  
In 2019-2021, the share of Mainers experiencing food insecurity fell about 2 percentage points.

## ENVIRONMENT


 **28. Air Quality** pg 36  
 -4 DAYS In 2022, there were 24 moderately unhealthy days, four fewer than last year.


 **29. Water Quality** pg 37  
 0% In 2022, Maine maintained its excellent water quality rating.

 -2% **30. Greenhouse Gas Emissions** pg 38  
From 2018 to 2019, GHG emissions fell 2%.




 **31. Sustainable Forestlands** pg 40  
 +8% In 2021, the growth-to-removal ratio rose 8% to 1.43 and remained above the sustainability goal.

Gold Stars and Red Flags are determined by consensus of the Growth Council based on consideration of the data and the experienced perspective of Council members. The general criteria are:

 **Exceptional Performance**  
Very high national standing and/or established trend toward significant improvement.

 **Needs Attention**  
Very low national standing and/or established trend toward significant decline. The indicator may show improvement but is still viewed as needing attention.

Colored Progress Symbols reflect movement from year to year and/or recent trends toward or away from the benchmarks established by the Council. The general criteria are:

-  Movement toward the benchmark since the last available data.
-  No significant movement relative to the benchmark since the last available data, or no new data.
-  Movement away from the benchmark since the last available data.



# AT THE HEART OF IT ALL, IT'S ABOUT OUR PEOPLE.

## VISION: A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL MAINE PEOPLE

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The Maine Economic Growth Council is pleased to present Measures of Growth 2023. This nonpartisan, data-driven report shows where Maine sits relative to other states and the U.S. as a whole. It tracks 31 indicators that capture the health of our economy and our communities, revealing both challenges and enduring assets. It is a resource for policy and decision makers at all levels, helping them to focus their efforts and understand the connections between the major issues facing Maine's businesses and citizens.

### **Maine's Workforce Challenge—Focus on Solutions**

Last year, the Council highlighted Maine's "mission critical" workforce challenge. One year later, the urgency remains. Employers are still scrambling to find and keep the talented people they need to succeed and grow. The shortage has a complex mix of causes including the aging of Maine's population, childcare and affordable housing shortages, and a skills gap. Solutions are equally complex.

This year, we offer four stories of creative initiatives that are helping address some of these longstanding challenges. Look for our "Indicator in Action" articles about Nonantum Resort, Telstar Academy, Downeast Broadband Utility, and Nyle Systems.

As we look to the future, envisioning a high quality of life for all Maine people, we know progress will require collaboration, disciplined adherence to a long-term strategy, and a renewed commitment to the systemic change necessary for equitable, sustainable, shared prosperity.

### **Strength in Community**

The Council steadfastly believes that Maine has the potential to build a stronger, better connected, more resilient, and more equitable economy than ever before. We look forward to joining all Mainers to realize this vision.

### **Report Highlights**

Taking stock of Maine's economic progress, the Council sees reasons both for celebration and renewed resolve. For 2023, it assigns Gold Stars for progress in Wages, Post-Secondary Degrees and Credentials, Internet Connectivity, Air and Water Quality, and Sustainable Forestlands, and it assigns Red Flags for needed attention to Labor Force, Research and Development, 4th Grade Reading and 8th Grade Math scores, Cost of Energy, State and Local Tax Burden, Housing Affordability, and Mental Health.

Achieving our vision requires a vibrant and sustainable economy supported by vital communities and a healthy environment.



## SUPPORTING MAINE'S ECONOMIC STRATEGIC GOALS

Maine has a ten-year economic development strategy to achieve sustainable, equitable growth for all residents.<sup>1</sup> It promotes talent and innovation as drivers of economic opportunity across the state.

**The strategy has three goals:**

### **GOAL 1: Increase wages by 10%**

**STATUS: Wages are up 10%.**

This goal seeks to increase the value of Maine's annual average wage, adjusted for inflation, from \$45,370 in 2018 to \$49,907 by 2030. In 2022, wages were nearly there (\$49,870) and would have exceeded the goal if not for high inflation. The Wages metric on page 4 shows how this growth compares to other states.

### **GOAL 2: Increase the value of what we sell per worker by 10%**

**STATUS: Value added is up 12%.**

Goal 2 seeks to increase value added per Maine worker from \$88,519 in 2017 to \$97,371 by 2030 (adjusted for inflation). In 2022, value added was \$99,365, an increase of 12% compared to 2017. For more information, see the Value Added metric on page 11.

### **GOAL 3: Attract 75,000 people to Maine's talent pool**

**STATUS: Maine gained 39,400 working-age residents but 26,000 people left the workforce, mainly to retire.**

In 2019, Maine's labor force was projected to shrink by 65,000 through 2030, mainly due to the aging of the population. This goal aims to attract 75,000 people to Maine's workforce, replacing the 65,000 and adding another 10,000. Since 2018, Maine has gained nearly 39,400 new working-age residents, according to the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, but about 26,000 people have left Maine's workforce, mainly to retire. See the Labor Force metric on page 8 for more details.

<sup>1</sup> [MaineStrategicPlan.com](https://www.maine.gov/economic-development/strategic-plan).

## BACKGROUND

The Maine Economic Growth Council was established by statute in 1993 to develop, maintain, and evaluate a long-term economic plan for Maine. Its members represent a broad cross-section of Maine's key constituencies. Members are jointly appointed by the Governor, Senate President, and Speaker of the House. The Council is co-chaired by Steve Von Vogt, President and CEO of Maine Marine Composites and State Representative James Dill (D-Old Town). The annual *Measures of Growth* report is a widely used and respected report on Maine's economy. The report is revised from time to time to provide the most current and meaningful assessment of Maine's progress toward long-term economic growth and a high quality of life for all Maine people.

The Council is administered by Maine Development Foundation (MDF), a public-private, non-partisan membership organization created in statute in 1978 that drives sustainable, long-term economic growth for Maine. The work of the Growth Council is financed by a state appropriation through the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, with additional support provided by the membership of MDF.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## THE NATURE OF DATA

The Growth Council strives to provide the most accurate, timely, and consistent data available. Some source data are regularly revised as methodologies improve and more information becomes available. As a result, the data presented here may differ slightly from that of past reports. The Council accounts for these limitations in identifying overall trends and policy implications.

## MAINE ECONOMIC GROWTH COUNCIL MEMBERS 2023

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Maine Marine Composites

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# VISION

A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE  
FOR ALL MAINE PEOPLE

