

2025

# MEASURES OF GROWTH<sup>+</sup>

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

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**31<sup>ST</sup> REPORT OF  
THE MEGC**



Administered by  
**mdf**

# MEASURES OF GROWTH<sup>+</sup>

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

Rainbow over Scarborough Marsh  
(Photo credit: Towle Tompkins)



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## FUNDAMENTAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

## ECONOMY

### PROSPERITY

**+1.8%** **Wages** 9  
In 2024, wages remained above the EPSCoR average and rose 1.8% after adjusting for inflation.

**-0.4%** **Poverty** 10  
In 2023, poverty fell 0.4 percentage points to 10.5%.

**+1.2%** **Gender Wage Equity** 11  
In 2024, women's wages rose 1.2% compared to men's but remained about 86% of men's earnings, significantly short of full equity.

**+3%** **Racial/Ethnic Income Equity** 12  
In 2019-2023, the average incomes of BIPOC\* and Latino or Hispanic Mainers rose 3 percentage points compared to the statewide average but remained 22% below the state average, dramatically short of full equity.  
*(\*Black, Indigenous, People of Color)*

### PEOPLE

**★** **Labor Force** 13  
**+1.8%** Maine's labor force grew 1.8% to 705,000 in 2024.

**+2%** **Labor Force Participation** 14  
In 2024, 83% of Maine adults ages 25-54 were in the labor force, up 2 percentage points from 2023.

### PRODUCTIVITY

**+3%** **Gross Domestic Product** 15  
In 2024, Maine's GDP rose 3%, slightly above other New England states.

**+1.7%** **Value Added** 17  
In 2024, value added per worker rose 1.7% but remained 21% below the U.S. average.

### INNOVATION

**+16%** **International Exports** 19  
In 2022-2024, Maine exports were 16% higher than the previous three-year period.

**🚩** **Research & Development** 20  
**+24%** In 2022, R&D spending as a share of GDP rose 24% but remained far below national levels.

**★** **Entrepreneurship** 22  
**-12%** In 2023, the ratio of business starts to closures fell 12 percentage points but remained positive for a tenth year.

### TALENT

**+1%** **Prekindergarten Education** 23  
In 2024, the share of Maine four-year-olds in public pre-K rose 1 percentage point to 49%.

**🚩** **Fourth-Grade Reading** 24  
**+4%** In 2024, the percentage of Maine 4th graders who were proficient in reading rose 4 percentage points to 33% but were below national standards.

**🚩** **Eighth-Grade Math** 25  
**+1%** In 2024, the share of Maine 8th graders who were proficient in mathematics rose 1 percentage point to 25% but remained below national standards.

**+1.5%** **Postsecondary Degrees & Credentials** 26  
In 2023, 56.6% of Maine adults had a degree or credential of value, up 1.5 percentage points.

### BUSINESS CLIMATE

**0%** **Cost of Doing Business** 27  
In 2022, Maine's cost of doing business was unchanged.

**+0.5%** **Cost of Health Care** 28  
Proportional health care expenditures rose 0.5 percentage points in 2024.

\* 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.



**-6%** **Cost of Energy** **29**  
The average price of electricity fell 6% in 2024, although commercial and industrial rates rose slightly.

**+0.2%** **State & Local Tax Burden** **30**  
In 2022, Maine's tax burden rose 0.2 percentage points to 11.7%.

**COMMUNITY**

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

**★** **Internet Connectivity** **32**  
**+3%** In 2025, 92% of Maine locations have average or broadband internet, up 3 percentage points.

**🚩** **Housing Affordability** **33**  
**+1%** In 2024, the share of households unable to afford the median-priced home worsened 1 percentage point to 64%.

**0%** **Transportation** **34**  
In 2024, 72% of Maine roadways were rated good or fair, unchanged from 2023.

**HEALTH & SAFETY**

**★** **Safety** **36**  
**-8%** Maine's crime rate fell 8% in 2023.

**-0.6%** **Physical Wellness** **37**  
In 2024, 67% of adult Mainers were overweight or obese, down 0.6 percentage points. This rate has been consistent for over a decade.

**+2%** **Mental & Behavioral Health** **38**  
In 2022-2023, the percentage of children with a mental and/or behavioral condition rose 2 percentage points.

**+0.7%** **Health Insurance Coverage** **39**  
In 2023, the percentage of Mainers with health insurance coverage rose 0.7 percentage points and remains above the U.S. average.

**+1%** **Food Security** **40**  
In 2021-2023, the share of Mainers experiencing food insecurity rose almost 1 percentage point to 10.9%.

**ENVIRONMENT**

**-12 days** **Air Quality** **42**  
In 2024, there were 27 moderately unhealthy days, 12 fewer than in 2023.

**+3%** **Sustainable Forestlands** **43**  
In 2023, the ten-year growth-to-removal ratio rose 3% to 1.55 and remained above the sustainability goal.

**0%** **Water Quality** **45**  
In 2024, Maine maintained its excellent water quality rating.

**+1.4%** **Greenhouse Gas Emissions** **46**  
From 2020 to 2021, GHG emissions rose 1.4%.

**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.

**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 2025*. 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.

### **Making Maine a Magnet for Workers and Their Families**

In recent years, the Council has highlighted a welcome trend: working-age people and their families moving to Maine. While some have roots here, others are coming for the first time. In a recent survey of 2,500 arrivals, top reasons for choosing Maine included access to outdoor recreation, strong social connections, and a sense of community that includes safety, a culture of acceptance, and a commitment to environmental stewardship.\* Respondents also identified challenges: a scarcity of affordable housing, high living costs, lack of jobs that match their skills, and low wages.

This report highlights examples of four local initiatives helping Maine communities be vibrant, supportive places for workers and their families. They build on our natural and cultural resources while addressing potential barriers that may prevent people from thriving here. Skowhegan is turning its historic riverfront into a destination for residents and visitors alike. In Aroostook County, a workforce transportation program is connecting more people to work and careers. The blueberry industry is partnering with researchers at the University of Maine to increase crop yield

and the sustainability of that heritage industry. And the owners of Glidden Point Oyster Farm are helping to chart a new course for Maine's working waterfront.

### **Trusted Data Drives Informed Decisions**

The Council wishes to recognize the seven federal entities whose data appears in this report (listed below). For over 30 years, their reliable, independent work has been the cornerstone of *Measures of Growth*. This data is indispensable to decision makers across all sectors—public, private, and nonprofit. It sparks new understanding and rigorous debates. It plays a vital role in helping businesses analyze labor markets, local governments plan for growth, state agencies forecast revenues, nonprofits develop effective programs, and much more. Consistent, uninterrupted access to this long-term data creates a framework for communities and policymakers to make informed decisions that have real-world consequences. These seven entities are: U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

### **Safeguarding Data Integrity**

The Maine Economic Growth Council is, by state statute, independent and nonpartisan. Our integrity is interconnected with the integrity of the data we use and being able to clearly track methodologies used by the agencies upon which we rely. The Council takes this responsibility seriously and will continue to diligently monitor any changes to availability, methodology, and access to data.

\*Wallace Economic Advisors, Maine Migration Project, 2025: [www.wallaceea.com/memigration](http://www.wallaceea.com/memigration)

## Report Highlights

Taking stock of Maine's economic progress, the Council sees reasons for both celebration and renewed resolve. For 2025, it assigns Gold Stars for progress in Entrepreneurship, Internet Connectivity, Labor Force, and Safety. It also recognizes Poverty and Gross Domestic Product as two areas where Maine has reached the benchmarks set years ago. The Council assigns Red Flags for needed attention to 4th Grade Reading and 8th Grade Math scores, Housing Affordability, and Research & Development.

This report presents the latest data for all 31 metrics. For two metrics (Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Cost of Doing Business), the latest data is that which appeared in last year's report because no new data was released in 2025. The data used in two other metrics (Entrepreneurship and Cost of Energy) has been updated as part of the Council's ongoing practice of reviewing and improving its methodologies to present the most accurate and timely data possible. See the notes on these metric pages for further details.

## 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 11.5%**

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 2024, inflation-adjusted wages were \$50,607, exceeding the goal.<sup>2</sup> The Wages metric on page 9 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 15.5%**

Goal 2 seeks to increase value added per Maine worker from \$103,403 in 2017 to \$113,744 by 2030 (adjusted for inflation). In 2024, value-added was \$119,403, an increase of 15.5% compared to 2017. For more information, see the Value-Added metric on page 17.

#### **GOAL 3: Attract 75,000 people to Maine's talent pool, to reach 710,000**

##### **Status: Maine's labor force grew by almost 13,000 in 2024, reaching 705,000**

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 reverse that by attracting 75,000 people to Maine's workforce, replacing the 65,000 and adding another 10,000 to reach 710,000. Maine's labor force fell to 672,000 following COVID, but it has grown steadily since then. In 2024, we gained 13,000 participants to hit 705,000. See the Labor Force metric on page 13 for more details.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.maine.gov/decd/strategic-plan>

<sup>2</sup> When tracking progress on this goal, wages are inflation-adjusted to 2018 dollars to measure them against wages in the year the goal was set. For this reason, the number is different from the one reported on the Wages page, which is 2024 dollars.

# VISION

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for all Maine people

