2026

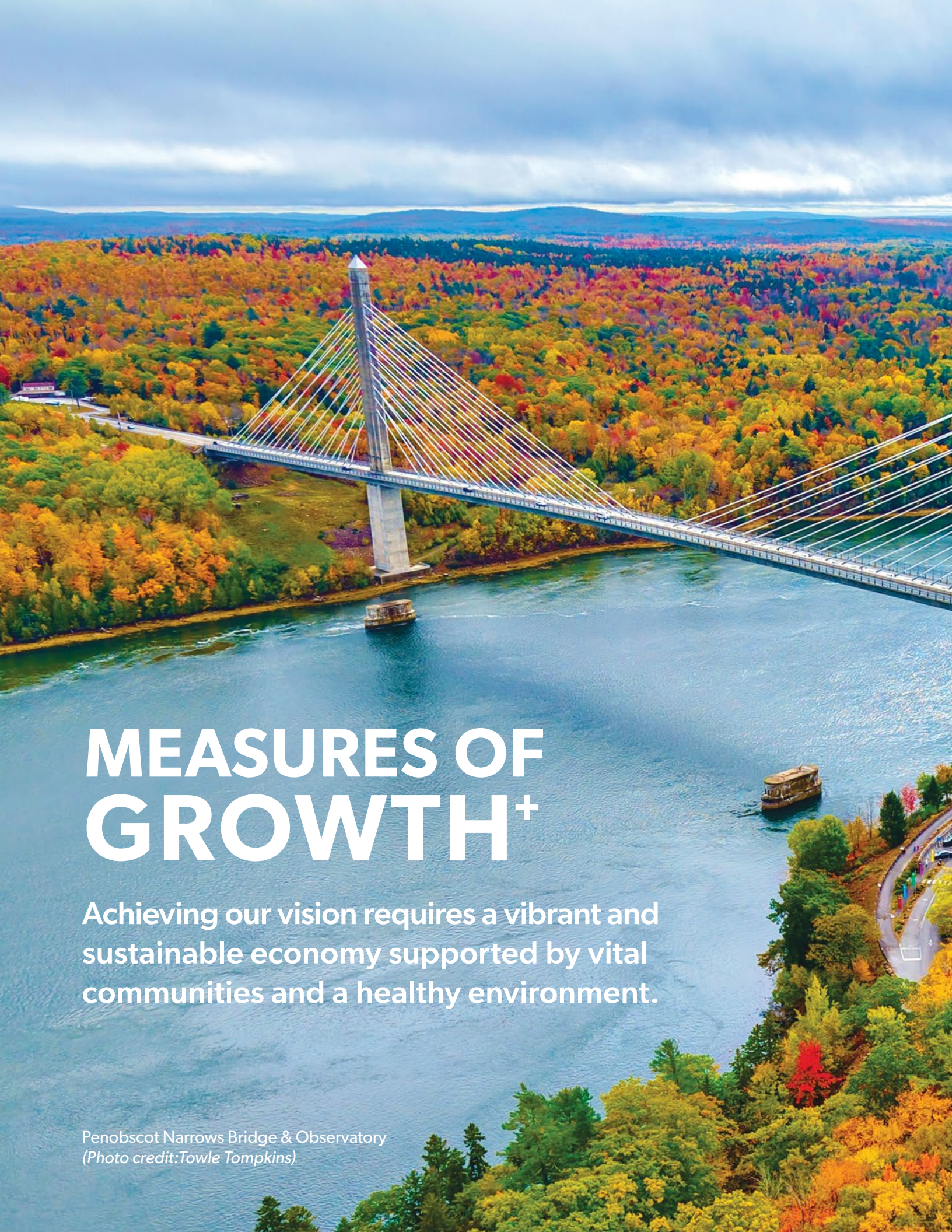
MEASURES OF GROWTH+

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

32ND REPORT OF THE MEGC

MEGC
Maine Economic Growth Council

Administered by mdf



MEASURES OF GROWTH+

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

Penobscot Narrows Bridge & Observatory
(Photo credit:Towle Tompkins)



Table of Contents

FUNDAMENTAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

PROSPERITY

+1.1% **Wages** 9
In 2025, wages remained above the EPSCoR average and rose 1.1% after adjusting for inflation.

+0.1% **Poverty** 10
In 2024, poverty remained at 10.6%.

+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.

+1% **Racial/Ethnic Income Equity** 12
In 2020-2024, the average incomes of BIPOC* and Latino or Hispanic Mainers rose but remained 21% below the state average, dramatically short of full equity.
*(*Black, Indigenous, People of Color)*

PEOPLE

+0.4% **Labor Force** 14
Maine's labor force grew 0.4% to 709,000 in 2025.

+1% **Labor Force Participation** 15
In 2025, the share of Maine adults ages 25-54 in the labor force rose to 84%.

PRODUCTIVITY

+0.6% **Gross Domestic Product** 16
In 2025, Maine's GDP rose 0.6%, but trailed the U.S. and New England growth rates.

+0.3% **Value Added** 17
In 2025, value added per worker rose 0.3% and was 22% below the U.S. average.

ECONOMY

INNOVATION

+4% **International Exports** 19
In 2023-2025, Maine exports were 4% higher than the previous three-year period.

-0.1% **Research & Development** 20
In 2023, Maine's R&D spending was 1.3% of GDP, down from 1.4% in 2022.

-12% **Entrepreneurship** 22
In 2023, the number of business starts exceeded closures by 9%, down from 21% in 2022.

TALENT

0% **Prekindergarten Education** 23
In 2025, the share of Maine four-year-olds in public pre-K remained 47%.

+4% **Fourth-Grade Reading** 24
In 2024, 33% of Maine 4th graders were proficient in reading.

+1% **Eighth-Grade Math** 25
In 2024, 25% of Maine 8th graders were proficient in mathematics.

N/A **Postsecondary Degrees & Credentials** 26
In 2024, 55.5% of Maine adults had a credential of value.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

1.5% **Cost of Doing Business** 27
In 2025, Maine's cost of doing business rose 1.5%.

+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.

Online Report available at:
www.mdf.org/economic-policy-research/measures-of-growth-report

+16% **Cost of Energy** 29
The average price of electricity rose 16% in 2025.

+0.3% **State & Local Tax Burden** 30
In 2024, Maine's tax burden rose to 11.3%.

COMMUNITY

INFRASTRUCTURE

+2% **Internet Connectivity** 32
In 2026, 94% of Maine locations have either average or broadband internet, up 2 percentage points.

-4% **Housing Affordability** 33
In 2025, 60% of households were unable to afford the median-priced home, down from 64%.

+1% **Transportation** 34
In 2025, 73% of Maine roadways were rated excellent, good, or fair.

HEALTH & SAFETY

+1% **Safety** 36
Maine's crime rate rose 1% in 2024.

-1.3% **Physical Wellness** 37
Consistently, about 2/3 of Maine adults are overweight or obese.

0% **Mental & Behavioral Health** 38
In 2023-2024, the percentage of children with a mental and/or behavioral condition was unchanged.

+0.4% **Health Insurance Coverage** 39
Maine's health insurance coverage remains above the U.S. average.

+2% **Food Security** 40
In 2022-2024, the share of Mainers experiencing food insecurity rose 2 percentage points.

ENVIRONMENT

-8 days **Air Quality** 42
In 2025, there were 19 moderately unhealthy days, 8 fewer than in 2024.

+1% **Sustainable Forestlands** 43
In 2025, the ten-year growth-to-removal ratio rose 1% to 1.61 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

The Maine Economic Growth Council is pleased to present *Measures of Growth 2026*. 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 decisionmakers at all levels, helping them to focus their efforts and understand the connections between the major issues facing Maine's businesses and citizens.

Leveraging Maine's Unique Competitive Assets

This year, the Council is highlighting how Maine leverages its unique human, natural, business, and cultural assets in innovative ways. For example, Maine's rich forest and ocean resources are iconic pillars of our economy, but it takes the ingenuity and continual innovation of entrepreneurs and stewards of these resources, and steadfast community spirit, to leverage them in ways that give Maine a competitive advantage, drive economic improvement, and improve lives.

This report highlights examples of four model initiatives. Pleasant River Lumber, owned by a multi-generation logging family, operates two of the most modern mills in North America and employs over 250 Mainers in the rural communities they're proud to call home. OystHERS oyster farm and raw bar in Bath harnesses the unique seafood ecosystem of the Kennebec River basin and the expertise of a longtime Maine fishing family. Elmet Technologies combines generations of manufacturing expertise in the Lewiston-Auburn region with remarkably high-tech applications to manufacture precision tungsten and molybdenum products for customers around the world. The University of Maine Business and Law Clinic is a first-in-the-nation program where graduate students gain real-world experience by providing legal and business advice on everything from contracts to pricing to accounting to marketing for small businesses and startups that would otherwise not be able to afford or access such services.

Trusted Data Drives Informed Decisions

The Council wishes to recognize the seven federal entities whose data appears in this report (listed below). For over thirty years, their reliable, independent work has been the cornerstone of *Measures of Growth*. This data is indispensable to decisionmakers 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, 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.

Report Highlights

Taking stock of Maine's economic progress, the Council sees reasons both for celebration and renewed resolve. For 2026, it assigns Gold Stars for progress in Air Quality, Internet Connectivity, Safety, and Sustainable Forestlands. It also recognizes the positive movement of Wages and Poverty towards their targets. However, concerns about inflation and other pressures facing Maine households led the Council to withhold Gold Stars for both metrics. The Council assigns Red Flags for needed attention to 4th and 8th Grade Test Scores, Cost of Energy, Housing Affordability, Tax Burden, Value Added, and Mental Health.

Supporting Maine's economic strategic goals

Maine has a ten-year economic development strategy to achieve sustainable, equitable growth for all residents.[1] 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 13%

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 2025, inflation-adjusted wages were $51,312, exceeding the goal. 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 16%

In 2024, value added was $119,403, above the goal and an increase of 15.5% compared to 2017. In 2025, value added was $120,091, an increase of 16% 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 about 2,500 in 2025, reaching 709,000

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 2025, we gained about 2,500 participants to hit 709,000. See the Labor Force metric on page 14 for more details.

[1] https://www.maine.gov/decd/strategic-plan

FUNDAMENTAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



(Photo Credit: Professional Logging Contractors Northeast)

Wages

+1.1%

In 2025, wages remained above the EPSCoR average and rose 1.1% after adjusting for inflation.

Benchmark: Maine's annual average wage will exceed the average of EPSCoR* states by 2030.

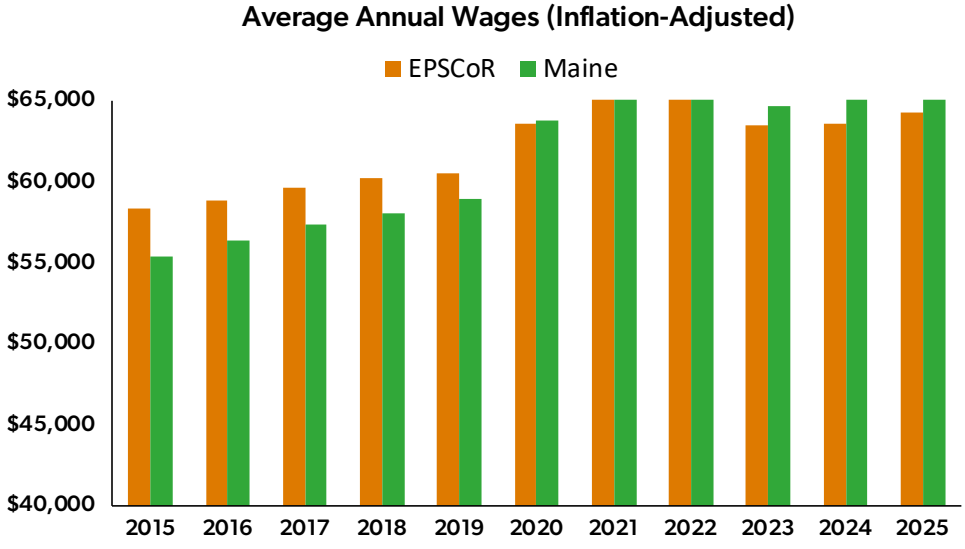
In 2025, Maine's average annual wage was $65,787—below the U.S. average of $78,720 but, for the sixth year, above the average for EPSCoR* states ($64,231). That is the benchmark for this metric. Even adjusting for inflation, wages are now 11.6% above their pre-pandemic 2019 level. Wages reflect job quality, worker productivity, and the makeup of our economy; they are a primary driver of economic prosperity and quality of life.

The adequacy of wages to cover workers' basic needs varies by household and region. In 2025, the estimated living wage for a single Mainer was $51,459 before taxes; it was $118,560 for a single person with two children; and for two working adults with two children, it was $125,466. Regionally, wages exceed the state average in Cumberland County, Maine's most populous and urban county, and trail it elsewhere, with rural Franklin and Piscataquis counties having the lowest wages.

* 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. (See the table of contents for a full list of states).

Average Annual Wages By County 2025

Coastal Counties	
Cumberland	$74,201
Sagadahoc	$67,301
York	$64,166
Knox	$57,304
Waldo	$56,626
Hancock	$56,173
Lincoln	$55,573
Central Counties	
Kennebec	$62,915
Androscoggin	$60,240
Penobscot	$57,443
Rim Counties	
Somerset	$58,195
Aroostook	$53,513
Oxford	$53,315
Washington	$52,810
Franklin	$50,187
Piscataquis	$48,774



Source
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Poverty

+0.1%

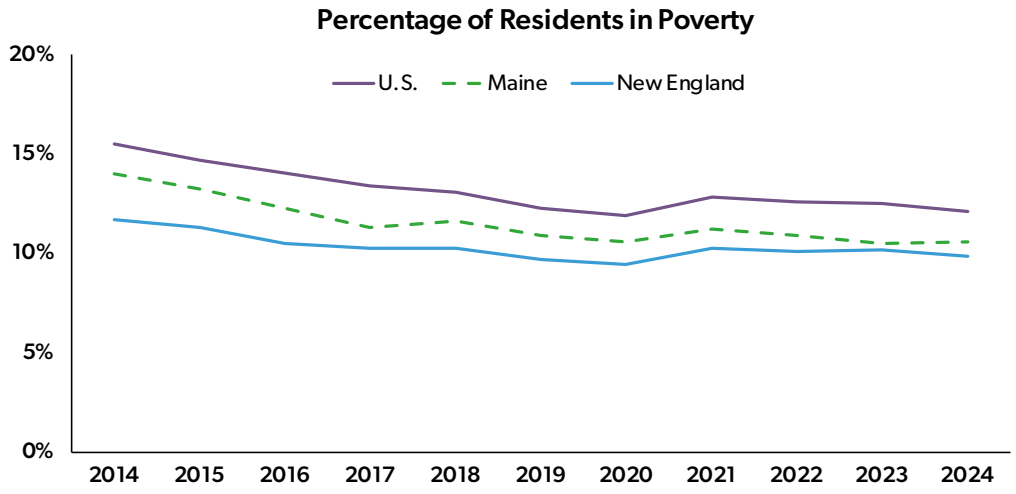
In 2024, poverty remained at 10.6%.

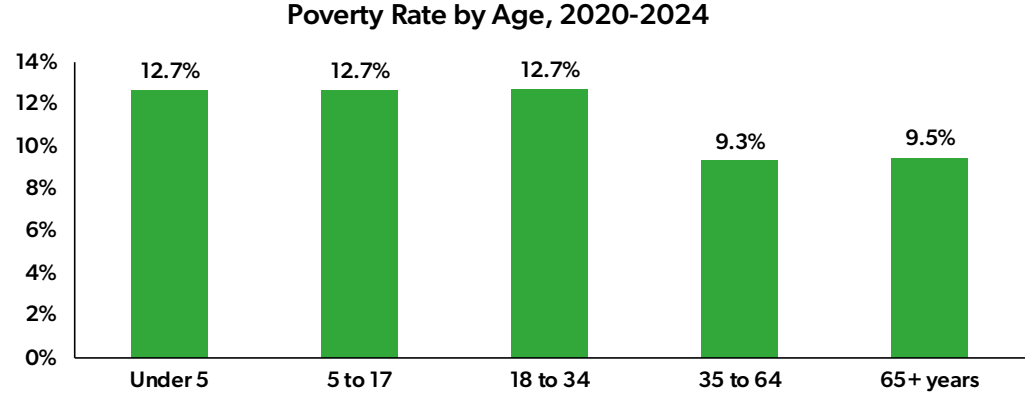
Benchmark: Maine's poverty rate will decline and remain below the U.S. rate through 2030.

In 2024, the percentage of Mainers in households with incomes below the poverty level was 10.6%, statistically unchanged from the previous year. That was less than the U.S. rate of 12.1%. Poverty varied greatly by region—from 8% or less in Cumberland, Sagadahoc, and York counties to over 14% in Aroostook, Penobscot, Somerset, and Washington counties. Maine's poverty rate reflects both the overall state of the economy and the experiences of individual residents.

State-level poverty rates mask stark differences within Maine's population. From 2020 to 2024, BIPOC* and Latino or Hispanic Mainers were 32% more likely to be living in poverty; and 12.7% of Maine children under age 5 were living in poverty, compared to 9.5% of Mainers age 65+. Many poor children are in households headed by single females. From 2020 to 2024, almost 1 in 3 single-mother households were poor (29%).

*Black, Indigenous, and People of Color





Source
U.S. Census Bureau

Gender Wage Equity

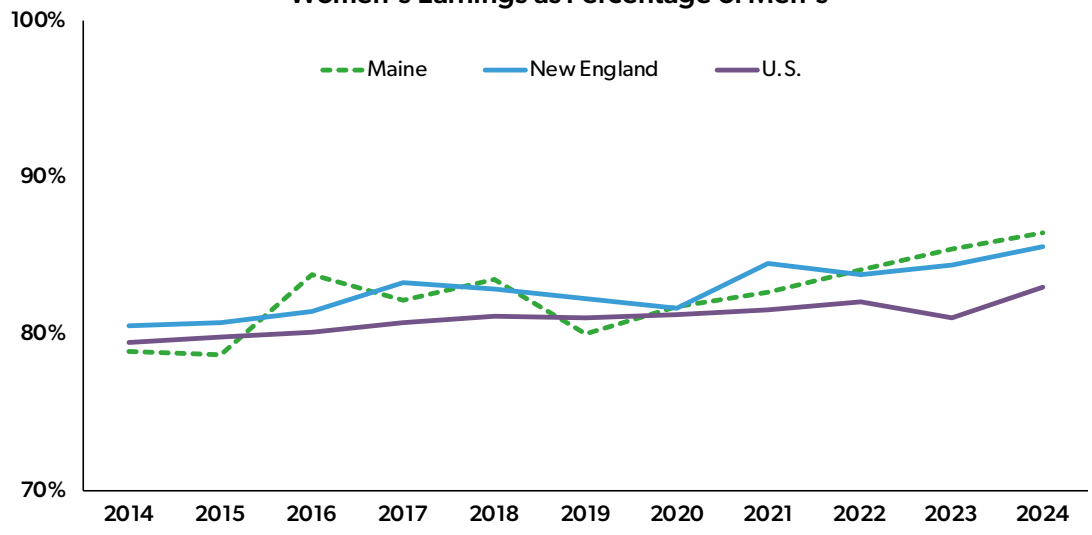
+1.2%

In 2024, women's wages rose 1.2% compared to men's but remained about 86% of men's earnings.

Benchmark: Maine's median annual earnings for women will improve to 100% of men's median annual earnings by 2030.

This measure compares the annual wages of men and women working full-time, year-round. In 2024, the median earnings of Maine females were $56,383—86% of the $65,215 median earnings of Maine males. In other words, for every $7 earned by Maine men, Maine women earned about $6, even though they were all working full-time. Some of the difference is due to the differing wages in occupations disproportionately filled by women, but this does not explain the entire gap. In recent years, women's earnings as a percentage of men's in Maine have improved, from 76% in the 2000s to 81% in the 2010s.

In 2024, Maine's gender wage gap was less than the U.S. and New England averages. No U.S. state has eliminated the gender pay gap yet, but in seven states women's earnings ratio exceeds Maine's. New York had the smallest estimated gender wage gap in 2024. There, women earned 91% as much as men.



Source
U.S. Census Bureau

Median Earnings Gap In 2024

U.S. AVERAGE

MEN	WOMEN	GAP
$67,260	$55,817	$11,443

MAINE AVERAGE

MEN	WOMEN	GAP
$65,215	$56,383	$8,832

Racial/Ethnic Income Equity

+1%

In 2020-2024, the average incomes of BIPOC* and Latino or Hispanic Mainers rose but remained 21% below the state average, dramatically short of full equity.

Benchmark: The average per capita income of BIPOC* and Latino or Hispanic Mainers will improve to the state average by 2030.

From 2020 to 2024, the average per capita income of BIPOC* and Latino or Hispanic Maine residents (about 12% of the population) was $35,567, 79% of the $46,471 statewide average. This is an increase from 78% in 2019-2023 and 60% a decade ago. Still, it means that for every $5 earned by the average Maine household, households of racial and ethnic minority groups earned less than $4.

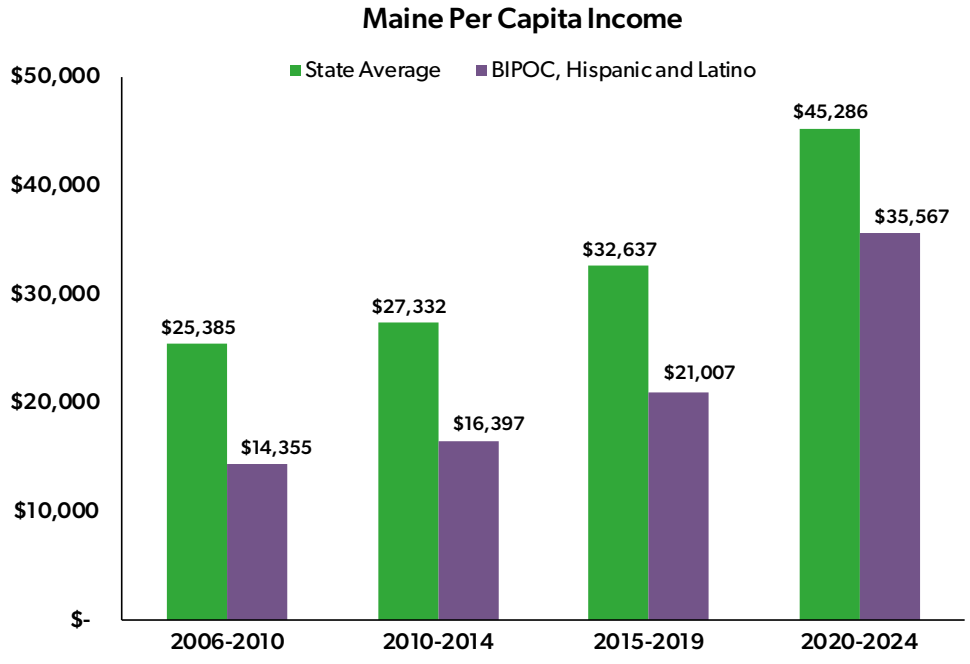
The Council strongly believes that Maine needs the contributions of every resident to achieve a vibrant, sustainable economy. Increasing prosperity is not true progress unless it is equitably shared. This will require broad, deep, and long-term systemic change.

This stark racial/ethnic income disparity is seen across New England and the United States. To counter it, Maine must improve access to training and education for residents of color, better support their communities and businesses, and address cultural biases and systemic disadvantages.

*Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

Maine Poverty Rate by Race/Ethnicity 2024

Race/Ethnicity	Population	Poverty Rate
White, not Hispanic or Latino	1,217,931	10%
Two or more races	77,101	10%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	31,187	12%
Black or African American	26,885	22%
Asian	17,974	11%
Other race	5,801	29%
American Indian & Alaska Native	9,582	10%
Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islanders	254	31.9%



Source
U.S. Census Bureau

Technology Unlocks Maine Timber's Potential

Pleasant River Lumber,
Dover-Foxcort and Enfield



Jason and Chris Brochu, brothers and Pleasant River Lumber Co-Presidents

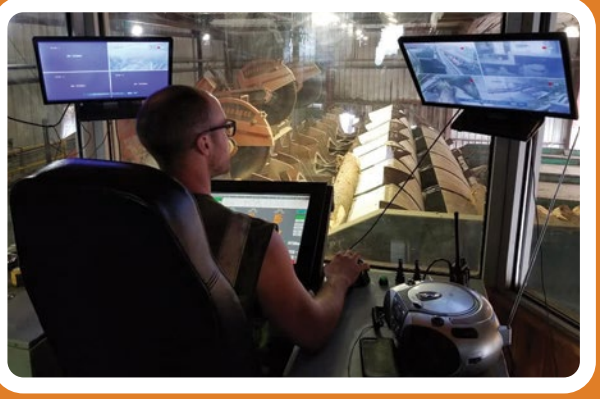
Brothers Jason and Chris Brochu grew up in a family of loggers and sawmill operators in Stratton, Maine. Today, they run two of the most modern mills in North America while creating good jobs in the rural communities they're proud to call home.

At Pleasant River Lumber's modern sawmills, cameras and lasers scan each log. Software then assesses its dimensions and the current prices of lumber such as 2x4s and 2x6s to choose the most valuable cuts. Any remaining materials are also used. Other Maine businesses buy wood chips for paper, sawdust for wood pellets, and bark for mulch.

The company's mills weren't always so advanced. The brothers invested heavily in technologies that allowed them to adapt to a changing market. When paper mill closures reduced demand for small softwood trees, the brothers adapted the Enfield mill to process logs that once would have gone to those mills. The investment preserved an important market for landowners and loggers. Pleasant River also expanded into logging, employing its own crews to help supply the mills.

Pleasant River employs about 250 people across its operations. "Anybody has the opportunity to work here," says Chris, "and anybody has the opportunity to advance." The company pays well, provides training, and promotes from within. For Jason and Chris, Pleasant River's growth shows that Maine's forest products industry offers ample opportunities to innovate—and careers that let people earn a living in the rural places they love.

> *"For people who want a good livelihood in these rural areas, the forest products industry is where it's at. There's still plenty of opportunity in it."*
>
> **Jason Brochu**
> *Co-President*



Tree length timber is slashed into shorter lengths using lasers and cameras. Decisions throughout the mill are made by specialized software designed to maximize the value and minimize or eliminate any waste from each tree purchased from Maine forests.
(Photo Credit: Pleasant River Lumber)

Labor Force

+0.4%

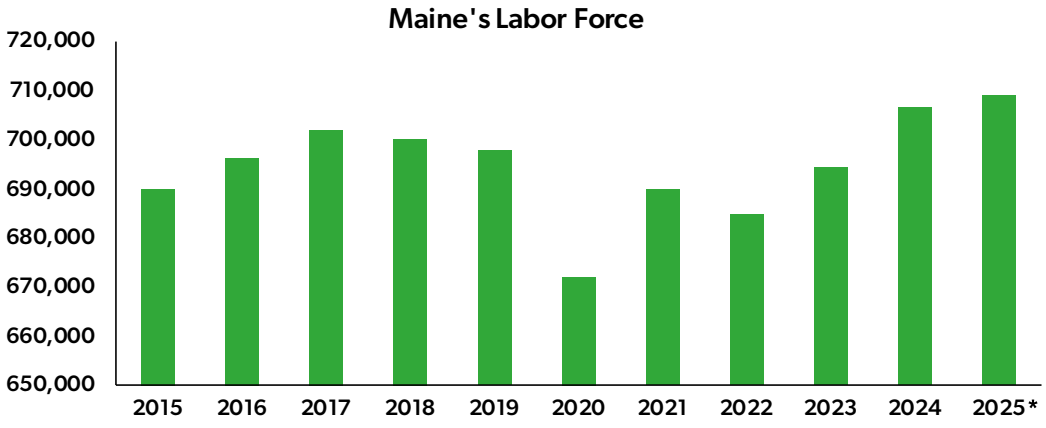
Maine's labor force grew 0.4% to 709,000 in 2025.

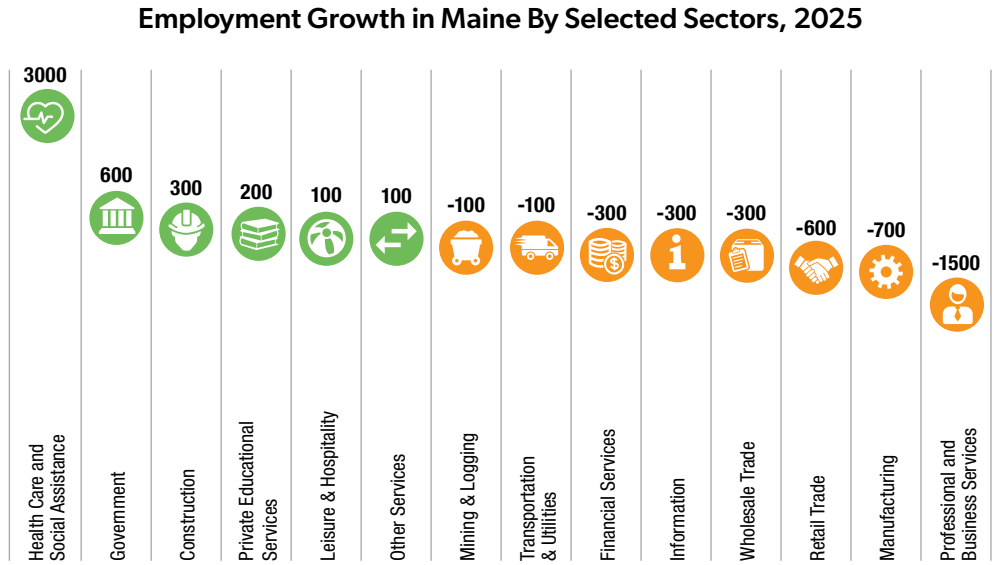
Benchmark: Maine's labor force will increase to 710,000 by 2030.

In 2025, there were approximately 709,000 people in Maine's labor force, up 0.4% from 2024 and 11,000 above pre-pandemic levels. This puts Maine on track to reach the benchmark by 2030. Estimates of Maine's labor force come from household surveys and are subject to revision, so these numbers should be interpreted with that in mind.

As baby boomers retire, the ranks of traditional working-age Mainers are shrinking. Before the pandemic, this was contributing to a slow decline in Maine's labor force. Recent gains suggest that Maine is attracting more working-age people from other states and countries, retaining more of the young people born here, and/or having more individuals participate in the workforce.

The number of jobs in Maine also grew by about 700 in 2025. Health care and social assistance led the way by adding 3,000 jobs, with government (+600) and construction (+300) also contributing. These gains were offset by losses in professional and business services (-1,500 jobs), manufacturing (-700), and retail trade (-600).





Source
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**No data was collected in October 2025 due to the federal shutdown. Therefore, labor force estimates for 2025 are an 11-month average.*

Labor Force Participation

+1%

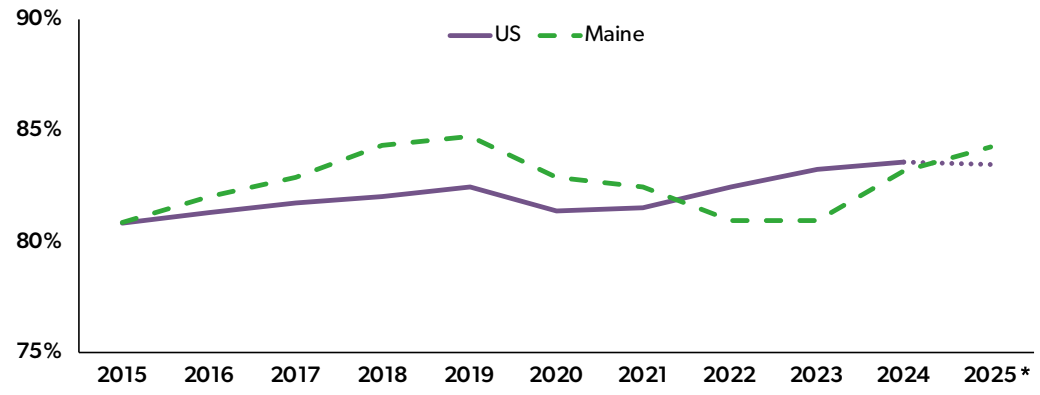
In 2025, the share of Maine adults ages 25-54 in the labor force rose to 84%.

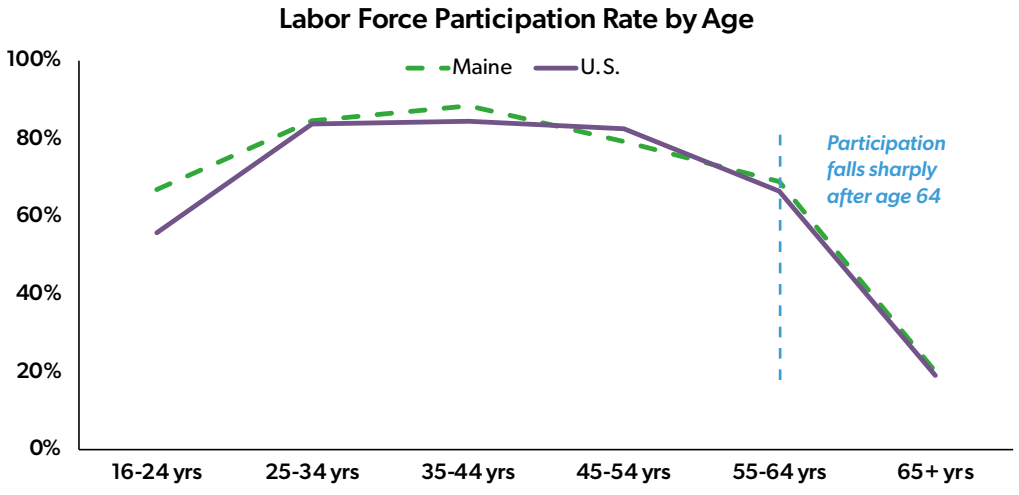
Benchmark: Maine's labor force participation rate for prime-working-age adults will match or exceed the national average.

In 2025, 84.3% of Maine "prime working age" adults (ages 25-54) were either working or looking for work. This estimate comes from household surveys and is subject to revision, so these numbers should be interpreted with that in mind. People of all ages are invaluable to Maine's workforce; this age range is presented here to compare Maine workers with their peers in other states.

Maine adults at every age are about as likely to be in the labor force as people in other states. The chart below shows that Maine adults of all ages work at about the same rates as their peers nationwide. However, we have a higher share of residents age 65 or older, who work at lower rates. In 2024, 23% of Maine's population was 65+ compared to just 18% of the U.S. population.

Potential measures to increase Maine's labor force participation rate include higher wages, increased childcare access, reduced or flexible schedules, and outreach to new Mainers and people with disabilities, veterans, disengaged youth, and others.





Source
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Maine Department of Labor Center for Workforce Research and Information; U.S. Census Bureau.

**No data is available for the 4th quarter of 2025 due to the federal government shutdown. Therefore, participation rates for 2025 are a three-quarter average.*

Gross Domestic Product

+0.6%

In 2025, Maine's GDP rose 0.6%, but trailed the U.S. and New England growth rates.

Benchmark: The growth of Maine's GDP will outpace that of New England and the U.S.

In 2025, Maine's gross domestic product (GDP) rose 0.6% adjusted for inflation. This was below the U.S. and New England growth rates of 2.1% and 2.2%, respectively. By this measure, Maine ranked 47th of the 50 states. Growth since 2015 (shown in the chart) still exceeds other regions, mainly because Maine's GDP did not decline as sharply during the 2020 recession as it did in many other states.

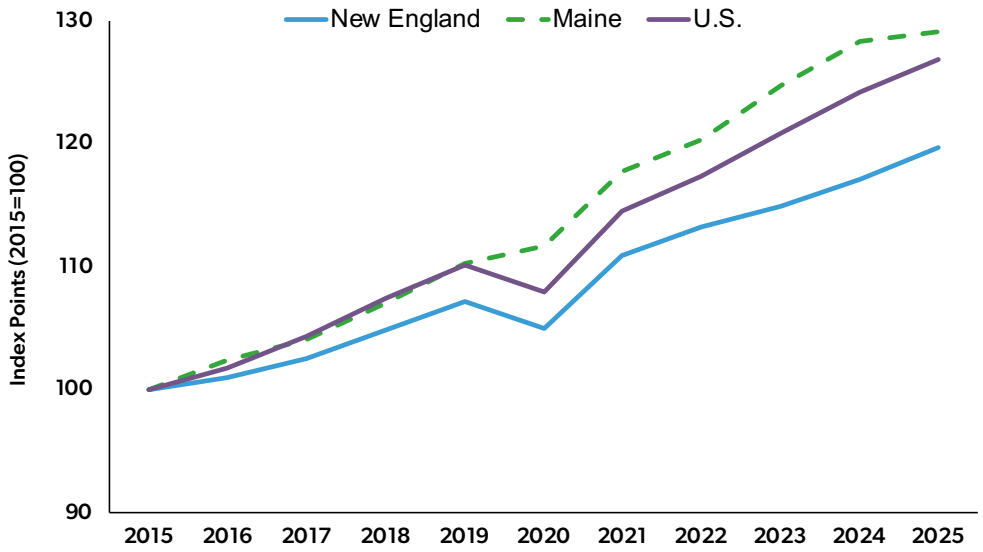
Some industries saw strong growth in 2025. Durable goods manufacturing, professional, scientific, and technical services, real estate, and health care and social assistance all grew 3% or more. Other sectors experienced headwinds. Nondurable goods manufacturing, retail trade, finance and insurance, administrative and support services, and accommodation and food services all fell.

GDP reflects the market value of all goods and services produced in the state and some nonmarket goods and services provided by government agencies and nonprofit institutions. Real estate, professional and business services, government, and health care and social assistance together made up over one-half of Maine's GDP in 2025.

Maine's Real Gross Domestic Product by Major Industry Sector (Top 10) 2025

Industry Sector	GDP Millions of Dollars	% of Total	% Change 2024 - 2025
Real Estate	$12,885	16%	3%
Professional & Business Services	$10,918	14%	1%
Health Care & Social Assistance	$9,258	12%	4%
Government	$8,866	11%	-1%
Retail Trade	$7,009	9%	-1%
Manufacturing	$6,882	9%	1%
Finance & Insurance	$4,835	6%	-2%
Accommodation & Food Services	$3,207	4%	-5%
Wholesale Trade	$3,154	4%	1%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	$2,859	4%	2%

Real Gross Domestic Product Growth Rate



Source
U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Value Added

+0.3%

In 2025, value added per worker rose 0.3% and was 22% below the U.S. average.

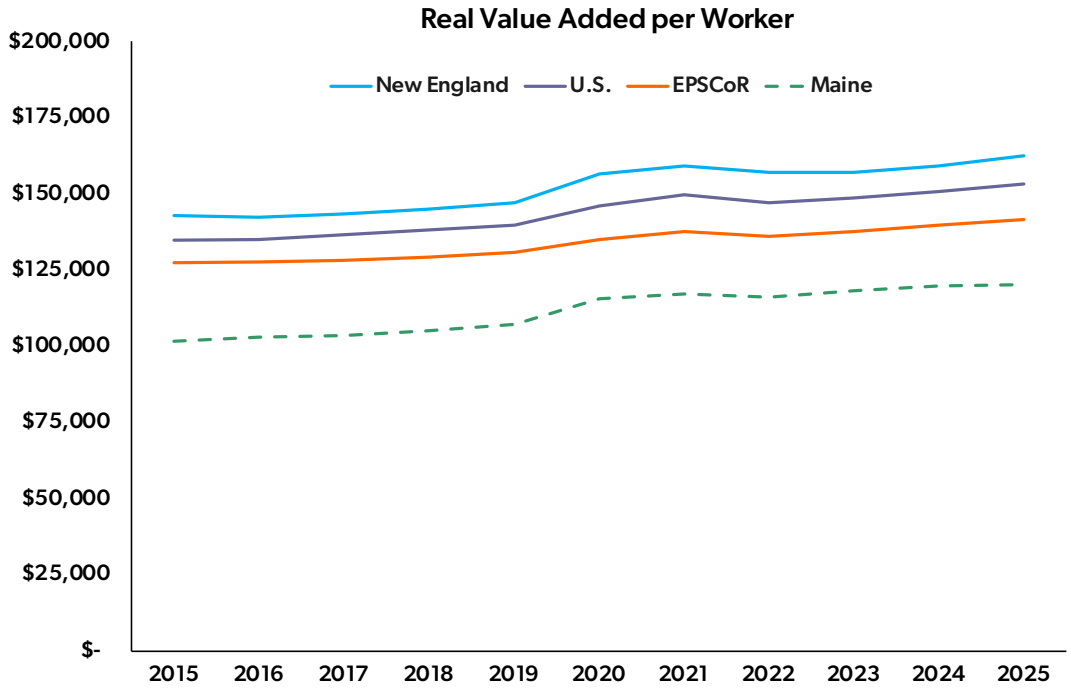
Benchmark: Maine's value added per worker will improve to within 15% of the U.S. average by 2030.

Adjusted for inflation, value added rose 0.3% to $120,198 per worker in 2025. This was below the growth rates for the U.S., New England, and EPSCoR states: 1.7%, 2.2%, and 1.3%, respectively. Worker productivity in Maine is lower than in most other states, but it has been increasing. It ranked 43rd in 2025, up from 48th in 2016. Last year, Maine was 22% behind the nation, a slight improvement from 2010-2019, when Maine trailed the U.S. by 24% on average.

Value added measures the productivity of workers by dividing gross domestic product by the total number of part- and full-time jobs. Maine has a relatively high share of part-time jobs, which lowers our value added per worker. Productivity also reflects skill levels, business costs, and a region's mix of industries.

Both the Council and the State's 10-Year Economic Strategy draw attention to the importance of increasing value added to grow Maine's economy and boost wages. The Council seeks for Maine to be within 15% of the U.S. average by 2030, while the State strives for 10% growth from 2017 levels.

* 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. (See the table of contents for a full list of states)



Source
U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

ECONOMY

In keeping with the entrepreneurial spirit



Casco Gas & Convenience
(*Photo Credit: Shawn Patrick Ouellette/Kennebec Journal)*

International Exports

+4%

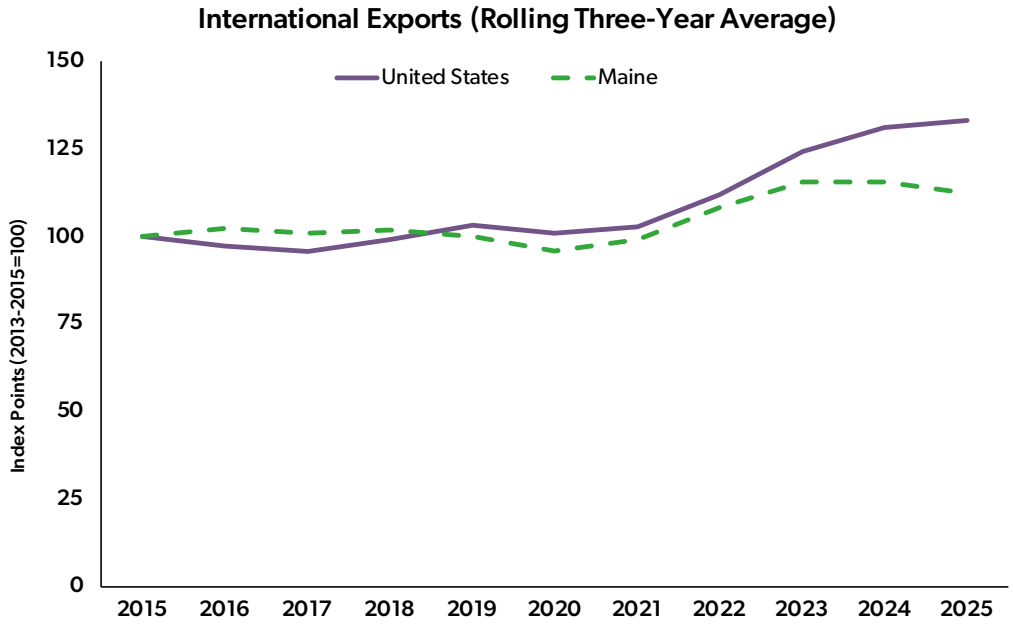
In 2023-2025, Maine exports were 4% higher than the previous three-year period.

Benchmark: Maine's international exports will grow at a pace faster than U.S. international exports.

Maine businesses exported $3.2 billion worth of goods in 2025, up 2% from the previous year. This metric looks at exports over three years because in Maine's small economy, exports in any given year can fluctuate sharply based on the sales of a few companies. From 2020-2022 to 2023-2025, Maine exports rose 4%. That was positive growth, but less than the 19% national growth rate.

In 2025, Maine's gains and losses occurred across a range of industries. Sales of mineral fuels and air- and spacecraft parts grew, while sales of lobster, electric machinery, and paper fell. Seafood exports were 42% below their 2021 peak, likely due in part to China's tariff on U.S. lobster. Canada remains Maine's leading trade partner with $1.3 billion in exports in 2025, followed by Malaysia, the Netherlands, Japan, the United Arab Emirates, and China. Sales to all of Maine's top ten 2024 trading partners fell in 2025, from a 2% decline with Canada to 59% with Germany. Increased sales to other countries, such as the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, and Switzerland made up the difference.

Sales to customers in other states and countries provide valuable opportunities for Maine businesses. According to one estimate, foreign and domestic customers beyond Maine account for 56% of Maine businesses' total sales (of which about 3% are international exports). Sales made within Maine to international customers, such as those to foreign tourists and students, also provide injections into the state's economy, but are not tracked.



Source
Maine International Trade Center; Camoin Associates

Research & Development

-0.1%

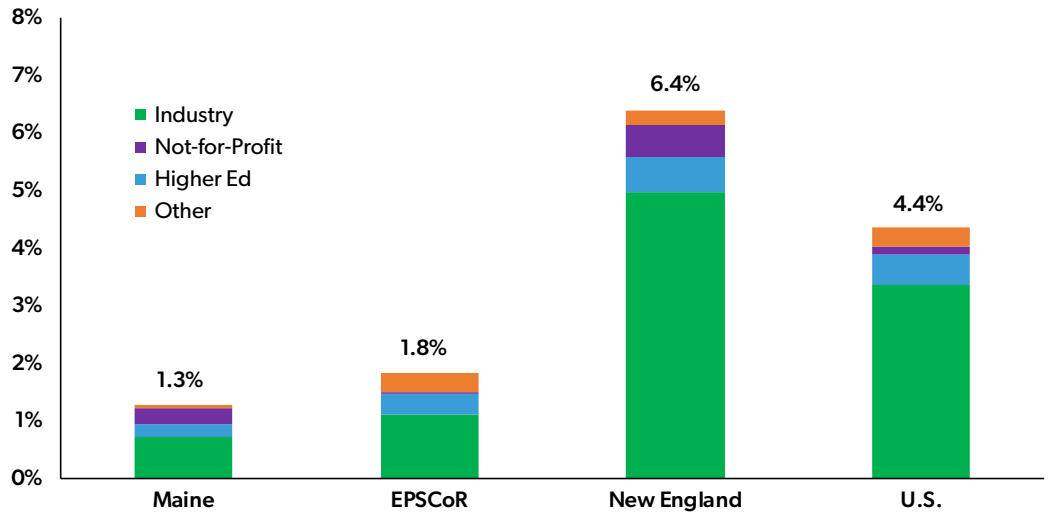
In 2023, Maine's R&D spending was 1.3% of GDP, down from 1.4% in 2022.

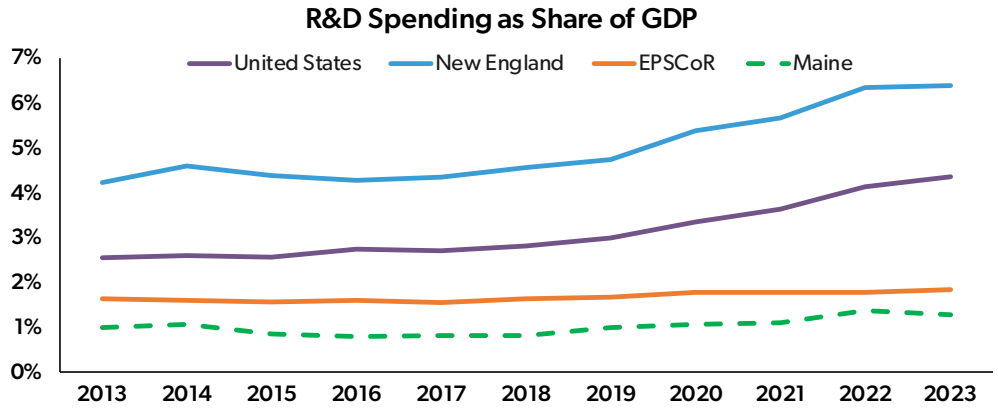
Benchmark: Maine's research and development spending as a proportion of the economy will reach the U.S. average by 2030.

In 2023, Maine's total R&D spending was $1.2 billion, up 2% from the previous year. This reflected 10% growth at higher education institutions, 2% growth within industry, and an 11% drop in nonprofit R&D. In all, Maine's R&D spending equaled 1.3% of total gross domestic product (GDP), compared to 4.4% nationwide. This ranks Maine 43rd of the 50 states and is about two-thirds of the 1.8% average among EPSCoR states.

Maine lags other states in private sector and university R&D investments relative to GDP, while our nonprofit sector contributes a relatively high proportion of spending. However, the University of Maine System Board of Trustees has prioritized the expansion of R&D across the system. In 2022 the University of Maine earned an R1* top-tier research designation, and in 2025, its R&D expenditures reached $298 million, a record high. R&D spending is an indicator of the level of innovation in an economy, an important driver of economic growth.

*"R1" refers to doctoral universities with "very high research activity," as defined by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.





Source
Camoin Associates and National Science Foundation; University of Maine

Maine Craftsmanship Reaches New Heights

Elmet Technologies, Lewiston

Maine's precision manufacturers combine generations of manufacturing expertise with remarkably high-tech applications. One example is Elmet Technologies, a Lewiston-based precision manufacturer whose highly specialized products travel from Maine to customers around the world.

Elmet works primarily with tungsten and molybdenum—metals valued for their ability to withstand extremely high temperatures, resist wear, and provide unusual density and strength. The company transforms these difficult-to-work metals into precisely manufactured components used in aerospace and defense systems, medical equipment, electronics, and a wide range of industrial applications. Some wire made in Lewiston is used inside medical devices, while other components were part of the Artemis II space mission.

The Lewiston operation grew out of a plant that once manufactured light bulb filaments. Although its products have changed dramatically, expertise in specialized metalworking has endured.

Today, the Lewiston plant is Elmet Technologies' manufacturing headquarters and employs about 150 people. Jobs range from positions offering on-the-job training to highly skilled machinists and engineers. Working unusual metals to exact specifications requires specialized knowledge, careful engineering, and considerable skill.

Elmet is one of the hidden treasures of Maine's precision manufacturing sector: providing good jobs in Lewiston while selling Maine-made expertise across the country and around the world.



An Elmet employee operates a rotary forge, which transforms materials into high-quality long and round metal products like bar and rod.

"Elmet is a great place to work. Our materials and processes really set us apart within manufacturing, and we have a ton of pride in the industries we support. We all take pride in knowing that our products make a difference throughout the world."

Finnian Donovan
Director of Operations



Elmet's process works material at temperatures where most metals can't survive. The result is components built for some of the most extreme environments on land, at altitude, and beneath the surface of the ocean. ***(Photo Credit: Elmet Technologies)***

Entrepreneurship

-12%

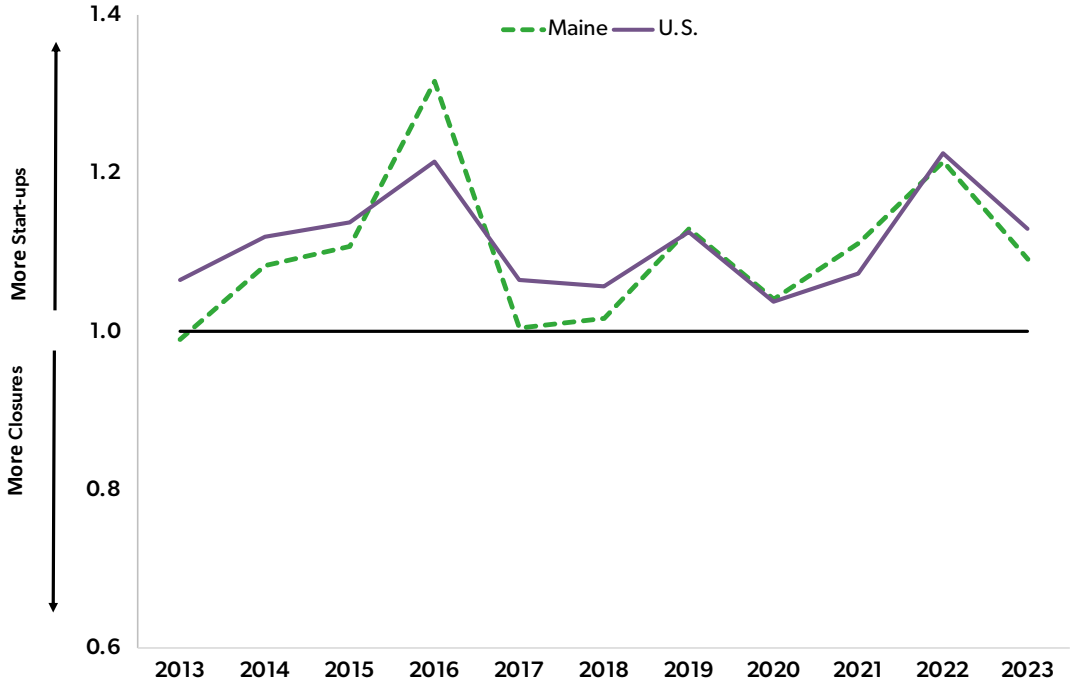
In 2023, the number of business starts exceeded closures by 9%, down from 21% in 2022.

Benchmark: Maine's ratio of business start-ups to closures will be positive and equal to or above the national average.

This entrepreneurship metric compares the number of business establishments that are started in Maine each year with the number that close. A start-up-to-closure ratio greater than 1 means more businesses are being created than closed each year.

In 2023, Maine's ratio of start-ups to closures was 1.09, meaning 9% more businesses were created (3,591) than closed (3,289). This was down from 21% in 2022 and just below the U.S. ratio of 1.12 but it was the tenth year during which Maine's ratio was positive. The creation of new businesses is a vital economic activity. Entrepreneurship contributes to innovation, creates jobs, and builds wealth. In a vibrant economy, people have the skills to identify and respond to business opportunities, access to capital, supports for starting and scaling businesses, and connections to human capital.

Note: This metric has been updated with a new data source (the U.S. Census Bureau's Business Dynamics Statistics) that captures openings and closures of traditional business establishments. The previous data source captured these plus relocations of remote workers, which made it a less useful measure of entrepreneurship.



Source
U.S. Census Bureau

Prekindergarten Education

0%

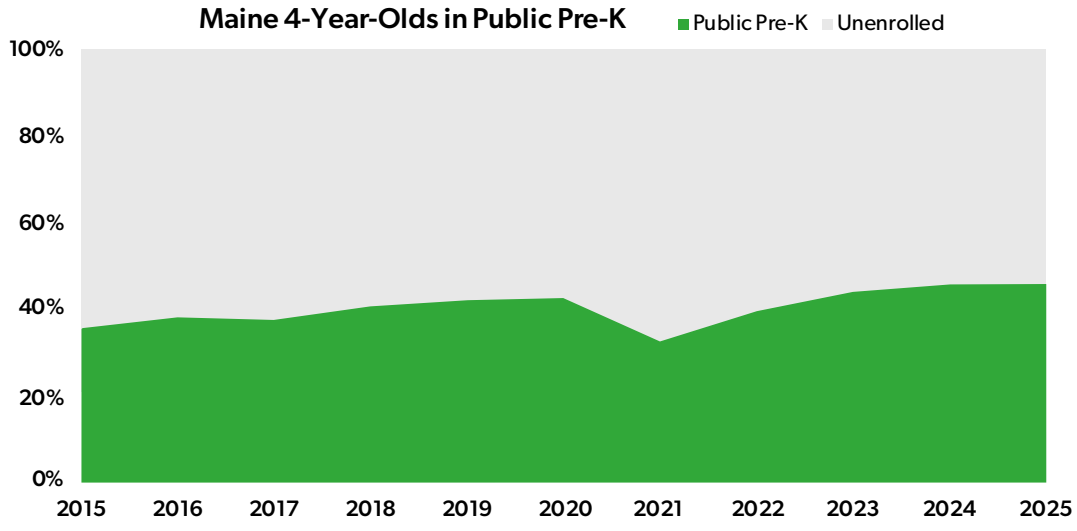
In 2025, the share of Maine four-year-olds in public pre-K remained 47%.

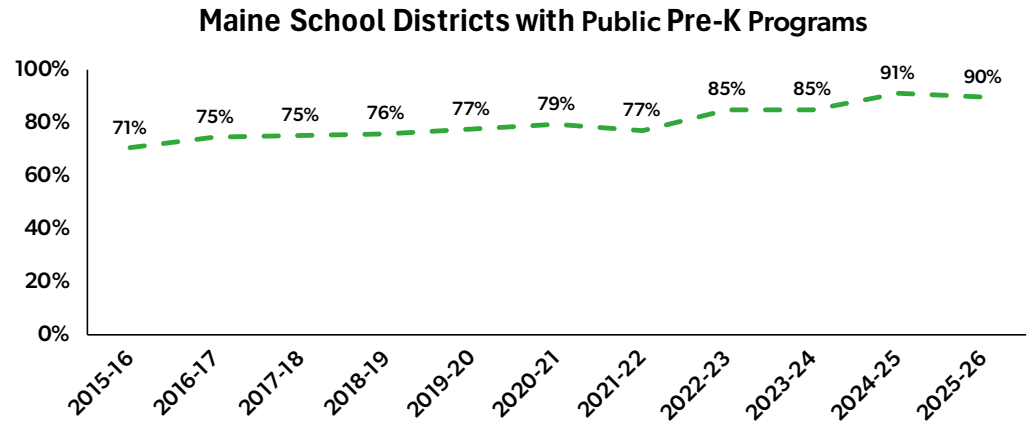
Benchmark: There will be universal preschool access in Maine by the 2026-2027 school year.

The National Institute for Early Education Research estimates that 47% of Maine four-year-olds were enrolled in public pre-K in 2024-2025, surpassing pre-COVID levels and exceeding the U.S. average of 37%. The remaining 53% of Maine children were not enrolled. The extent to which this was due to lack of access or family choice is unknown. A significant number of unenrolled children may be part of the 7% of Maine four-year-olds in Head Start programs. They may also be receiving special education services.

The percentage of Maine school districts with at least one public pre-K classroom has increased dramatically, from 24% in the late 2000s to 90% last year. According to the Maine Department of Education, many districts that do not yet offer public pre-K are either very small and lack enough four-year-olds to justify a program, or are larger and may lack the space, capacity, and/or financial means to open and sustain a program.

In 2023, a new state law established the goal of "universal access" to public preschool for all Maine four-year-olds by the 2026-2027 school year. High-quality, affordable early care and education is critical to Maine's economic development. It prepares young Mainers for success in school and supports their parents' full participation in the workforce, a fact highlighted during the COVID pandemic.





Source
Maine Department of Education; National Institute for Early Education Research

Fourth-Grade Reading

+4%

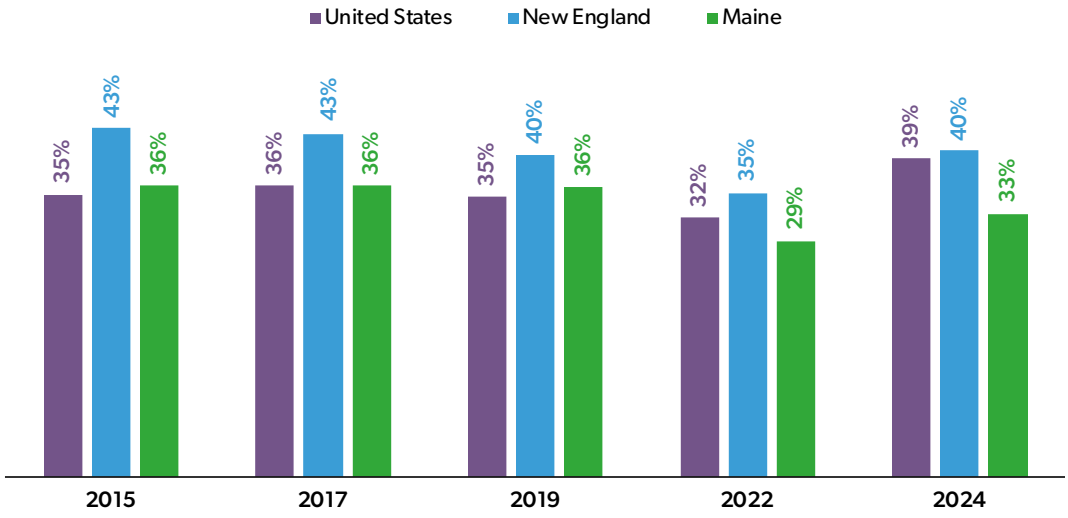
In 2024, 33% of Maine 4th graders were proficient in reading.

Benchmark: The percentage of Maine students scoring proficient or above on NAEP will reach 50% by 2030.

In 2024, 33% of Maine 4th graders met the reading proficiency benchmark of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). This was an improvement from 29% in 2022 but below the national average of 39% and the benchmark target of 50%. By this measure, Maine ranked 44th of the 50 states. Before COVID, Maine ranked at or above the national average. A sample of 1,900 Maine 4th graders took the assessment.

Fourth-grade reading scores are an indicator of future outcomes like educational attainment, employment, and earnings. Fourth-grade reading proficiency is defined as solid academic performance and competency over challenging subject matter, application to real-world problems, and appropriate analytical skills. The NAEP tests representative samples of fourth and eighth graders every other year to allow national and state comparisons.

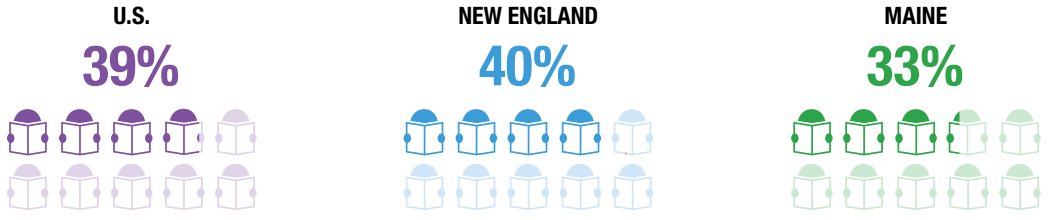
Percentage of 4th Graders Scoring Proficent or Above in Reading



Source
National Center for Education Statistics; National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

New England average is unweighted.

4th Graders Scoring Proficient or Above in 2024



Eighth-Grade Math

+1%

In 2024, 25% of Maine 8th graders were proficient in mathematics.

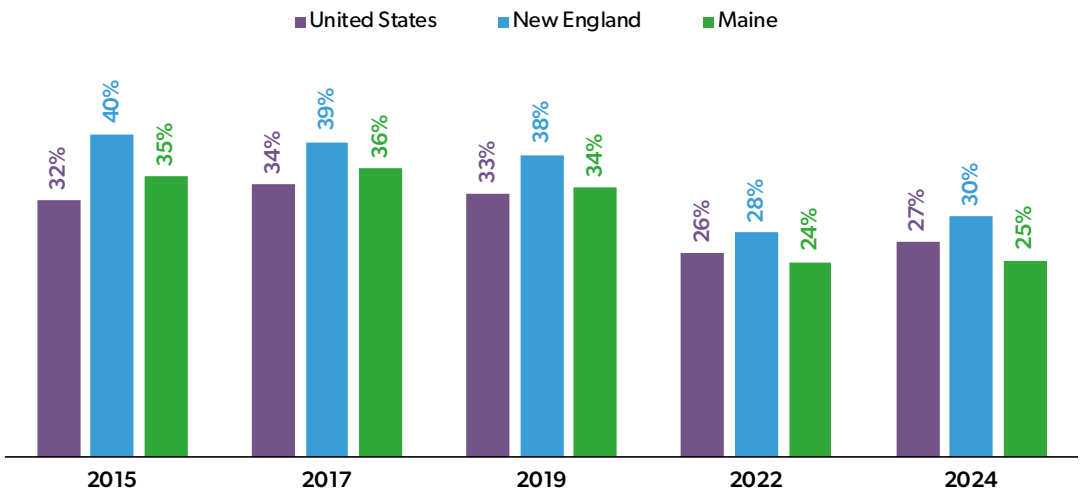
Benchmark: The percentage of Maine students scoring proficient or above on NAEP will reach 50% by 2030.

In 2024, 1 in 4 Maine 8th graders (25%) met the math proficiency benchmark of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). This was an increase from 24% in 2022, but below the national average of 27% and the benchmark target of 50%. By this measure, Maine ranked 31st of the 50 states. Before COVID, Maine ranked at or above the national average. In 2024, 1,900 Maine 8th graders took the NAEP assessment.

Eighth-grade math scores reflect foundational skills and indicate whether students are on track for college and career readiness. Math is a cornerstone of the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) disciplines, which can lead to in-demand job skills and well-paid careers in growing fields. Math addresses knowledge and skills to solve problems, make sense of information, and accurately gather and evaluate evidence to make decisions.

Eighth-grade math proficiency is defined as solid academic performance and competency over challenging subject matter, application to real-world problems, and appropriate analytical skills. The NAEP tests representative samples of fourth and eighth graders every other year to allow national and state comparisons.

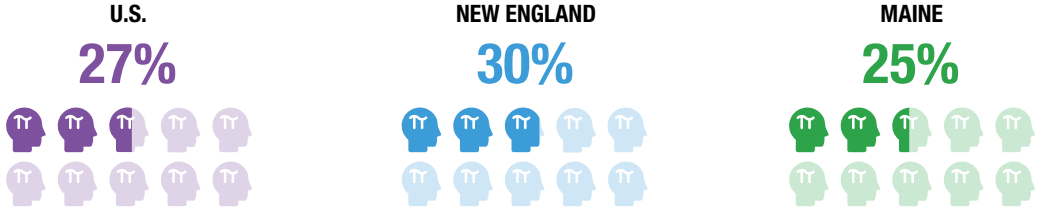
Percentage of 8th Graders Scoring Proficient or Above in Math



Source
National Center for Education Statistics; National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

New England average is unweighted.

8th Graders Scoring Proficient or Above in 2024



Postsecondary Degrees & Credentials

N/A

In 2024, 55.5% of Maine adults had a credential of value.

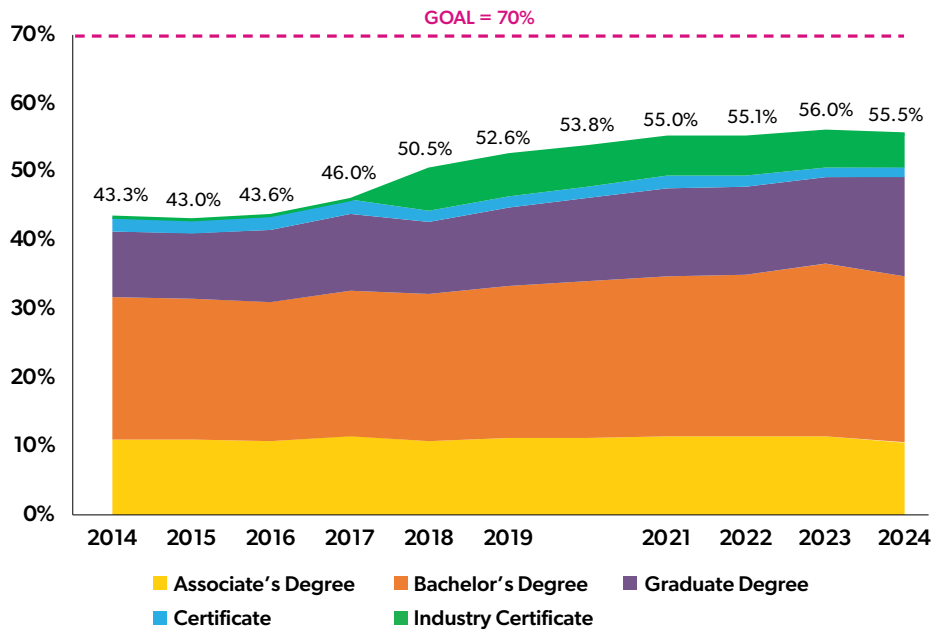
Benchmark: By 2035, 70% of Maine adults will have a degree or non-degree credential of value.

In 2024, an estimated 55.5% of Maine adults ages 25-64 held an associate's, bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree, or a non-degree credential of value. This reflects an increase in the wage premium needed for "credentials of value," so comparisons to previous years should be interpreted with caution.

Maine has made significant progress in postsecondary attainment, with the share of adults holding a credential of value rising by 19% since 2014 (from 43.3% to 55.5%). The Council supports the goal of 70% of adults holding a degree or a non-degree credential by 2035—a goal promoted by MaineSpark, a coalition of education institutions, nonprofits, foundations, government agencies, and businesses.

This metric recognizes the growing importance of non-degree career paths, including professional certifications, licenses, digital badges, and military service. The Lumina Foundation reports that in 2024, 6.2% of Maine adults ages 25-64 who lacked postsecondary degrees held one of these occupational credentials. That is above the New England average of 5.2% and below the national average of 7.0%.

Postsecondary Attainment of Maine Adults



Source
Lumina Foundation

Adult Ages 25-64 Degree Attainment Rates, 2024

	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree	Credential or Certificate	Total
Maine	10.6%	24.3%	14.4%	6.2%	55.5%
New England	7.8%	26.6%	20.2%	5.9%	**59.9%**
United States	9.1%	23.7%	14.9%	7.0%	54.7%

Cost of Doing Business

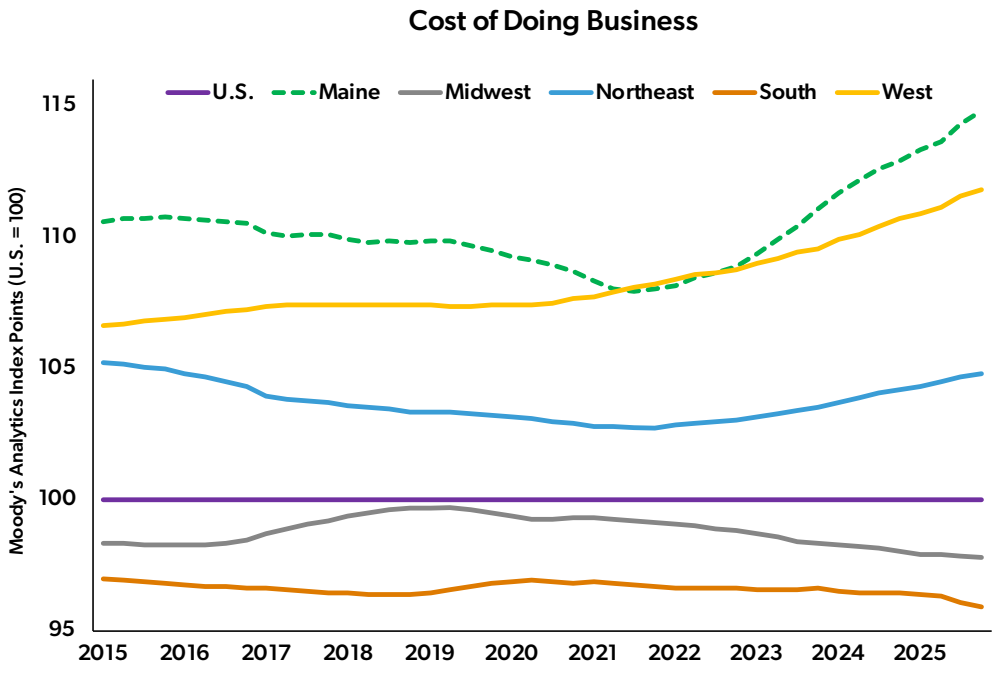
1.5% **In 2025, Maine's cost-of-doing-business rose 1.5%.**

Benchmark: The cost of doing business in Maine will decline to the U.S. average by 2030.

In 2025, Maine's cost-of-doing-business rating was above the U.S. average and third highest in New England, behind Massachusetts and Vermont. Maine's average fell for several years before beginning to climb in 2021, driven by rising energy costs. From 2021 to 2025, the growth of commercial and industrial energy prices in Maine outpaced the U.S. average by 19%, compared to taxes and labor, which rose 1% and 2% above average, respectively. See the Cost of Energy metric on page 29 for a more detailed discussion of energy trends.

The broader Northeast region consistently has higher business costs than other areas of the country, and Maine's costs exceed the Northeast average.* Moody's Analytics' cost-of-doing-business index is a weighted scale of labor costs (wages, benefits, and productivity), commercial and industrial electricity costs, and state and local tax burden. A value of 100 equals the U.S. average.

*Readers of prior reports will note a shift in the relative competitiveness of U.S. regions because the current data weights each state within the region according to the size of its labor force. Prior years were unweighted.



Source
Moody's Analytics

Cost of Health Care

+0.5%

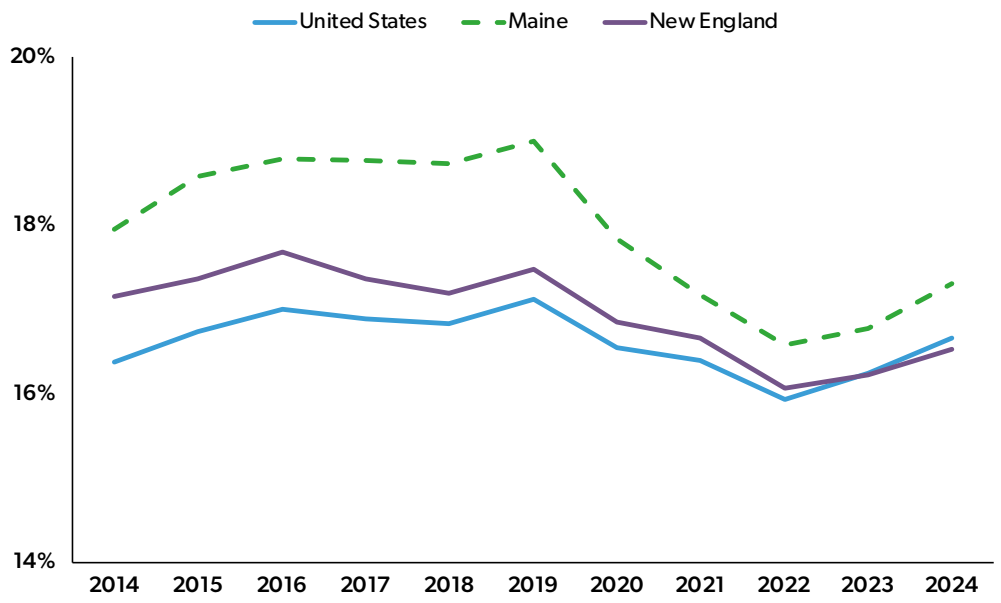
Proportional health care expenditures rose 0.5 percentage points in 2024.

Benchmark: Maine's health care spending as a percentage of total personal expenditures will decline to the New England average by 2030.

In 2024, health care spending in Maine stood at 17.3% of all personal expenditures, down from its peak of 19.0% in 2019. While health care expenditures in Maine are higher than the U.S. and New England rates, the gap has narrowed. They fell sharply in 2020, largely due to the decline of noncritical services during COVID. Still, in Maine and across the nation, about one in every six dollars generated in the economy goes to medical expenses.

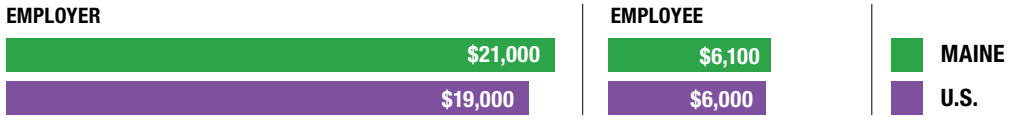
In 2025, the median contribution for family health insurance coverage of a Maine employee was $6,100. By this measure, Maine was in roughly the middle 20% of states. For employers, the median contribution was $21,000 — in the top 20%. These estimates come from a relatively small survey and should be interpreted with caution.

Health Care Expenditures as Percentage of Total Personal Expenditures



Source
U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Median Contribution for Family Coverage, 2025



Cost of Energy

+16% **The average price of electricity rose 16% in 2025.**

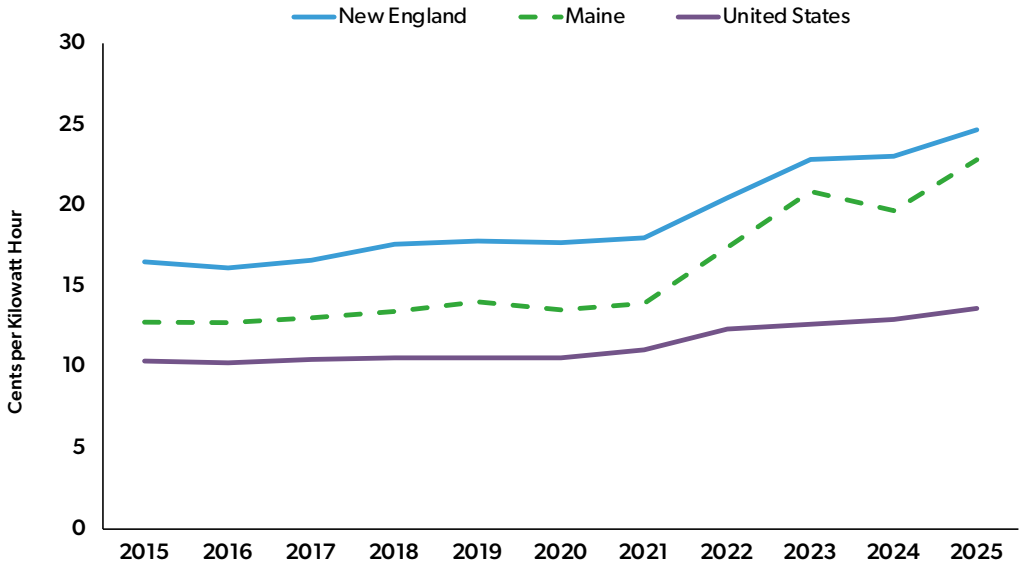
Benchmark: The cost of electricity in Maine will be the lowest in New England by 2030.

The average retail price of electricity paid by customers across all sectors (residential, industrial, and commercial) rose 16% in 2025, from 19.66 to 22.81 cents per kilowatt hour. Nationwide, prices increased 5%. Maine now exceeds the national average by 67%. Within New England, Maine's rates are third lowest and 8% below the regional average. This is a change from 2021 and earlier, when they were over 20% below average.

The New England electricity grid relies heavily on natural gas for generation and lacks pipeline capacity, making it vulnerable to rising gas prices. Increased capacity could lower costs for consumers and free resources for renewable energy investments. The cost of transmission and distribution has also risen due to aging infrastructure, rising equipment and construction costs, and storm repairs.

Some renewable energy initiatives have increased bills through subsidy design, but in the long-term these sources should help reduce costs. Maine has significant renewable opportunities that could reduce future costs if carefully managed for the benefit of Maine consumers and businesses. This will require increased investment in Maine's strained transmission system. A coordinated transmission anticipation process, which Maine and the other New England states are pursuing through a long-term planning and deployment initiative coordinated by ISO-New England, could help address this issue.

Average Retail Electricity Price



Source
U.S. Energy Information Administration

Maine Electricity Sectors, 2025

	Number of Accounts	Total Electricity Use (million KWh)	Average Retail Price 2025 (cents)	Change (2024-2025)
Residential	749,228	4,781	27.78	14%
Commercial	112,227	4,028	20.96	15%
Industrial	1,826	2,228	15.50	24%
	863,281	11,037	22.81	16%

State & Local Tax Burden

+0.3% **In 2024, Maine's tax burden rose to 11.3%.**

Benchmark: Maine's tax burden will decline and move toward the New England average each year through 2030.

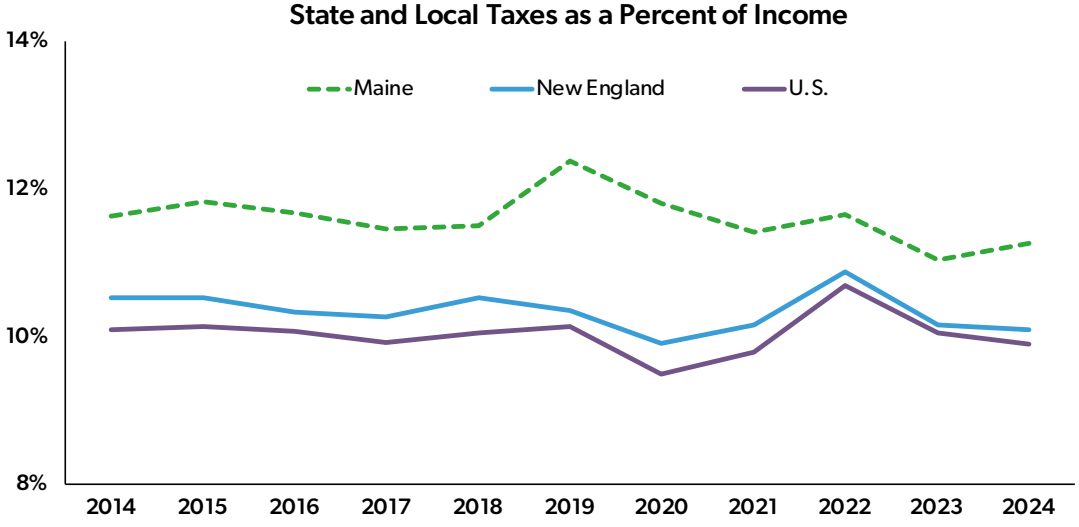
In 2024, Maine's tax burden was 11.3%, a slight increase from 11.0% in 2023. The New England and U.S. average tax burdens fell slightly to 10.1% and 9.9%, respectively. Maine ranks 8th highest of the 50 states in state and local taxes as a percentage of income and 13th highest in tax collections per capita. This measure does not account for the portion of sales and property taxes paid by out-of-state visitors and second-home owners.

Tax burden reflects the percentage of total personal income paid in state and local taxes (property, sales, income, corporate, motor vehicle, and other taxes). This measure can be reduced by lowering taxes, increasing incomes, or both. While taxes impose costs on individuals and businesses, they generate revenue for public services and investments.

State and Local Tax Burden Rank 2024
(1 is highest)

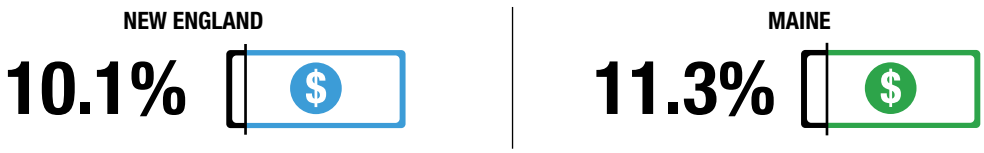
State	% of Income	Rank	Per Capita	Rank
U.S.	9.9%	-	$7,246	-
NE	10.1%	-	$10,724	-
VT	12.2%	5	$8,698	10
ME	**11.3%**	**8**	**$7,741**	**13**
RI	10.4%	13	$7,367	16
CT	10.3%	14	$9,797	4
MA	10.1%	17	$9,421	6
NH	7.6%	46	$6,322	26

State and Local Taxes as a Percent of Income



Source
U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

State and Local Taxes as a Percent of Income in 2024



COMMUNITY

Living, working, and moving forward together



Mariel Geiger/Surfrider Foundation
(David Bugenske/Town Square Media Maine)

Internet Connectivity

+2%

In 2026, 94% of Maine locations have either average or broadband internet, up 2 percentage points.

Benchmark: Anyone in Maine who wants a high-speed internet connection can have one by 2025.

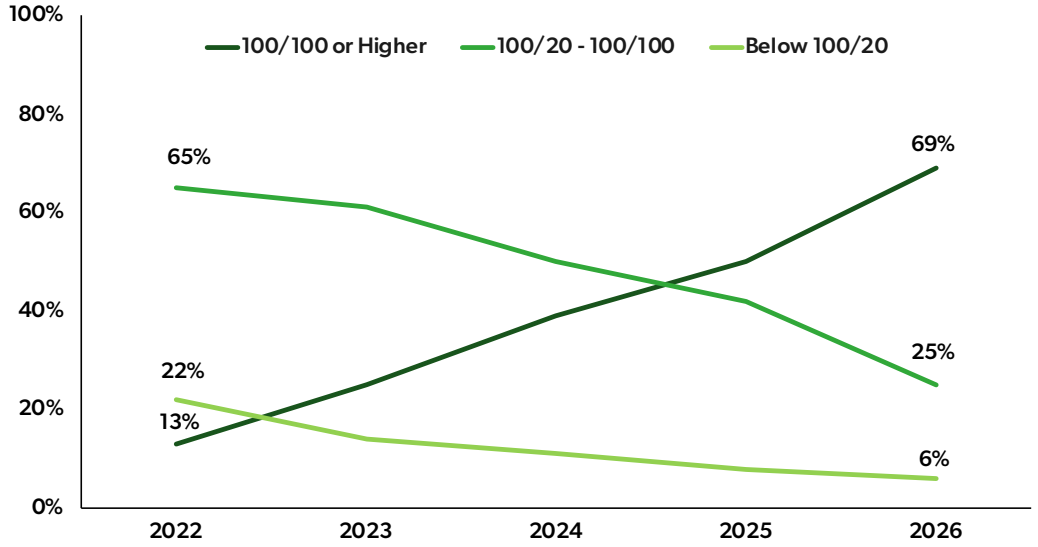
Sixty-nine percent of Maine locations currently have internet that provides 100 Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload ("100/100" or "broadband internet") or higher, 25% have access to speeds between 100/20 and 100/100 ("average service"), and 6% have speeds below 100/20 ("unserved"). High-speed internet is vital to participation in modern society and critical for communities to attract and retain businesses and residents. The Maine Connectivity Authority (MCA) is committed to expanding access to reliable, high-speed, affordable internet service statewide.

Since 2022, MCA has facilitated over $435M of public and private investment to enable connectivity for more than 120,000 locations unserved by modern high-speed internet. At this time, all locations in Maine have an option for working internet (the benchmark for this metric). Those in unserved areas have the option for subsidized satellite-based service, ahead of planned wired and wireless solutions that will be deployed in the next few years. With more access to infrastructure, the challenges of how people can afford to use the internet meaningfully and safely remains a priority.

Locations with Broadband Service 2026
(100 Mbps download/100 Mbps upload)

Coastal Counties	
Sagadahoc	86%
Lincoln	80%
Cumberland	69%
Hancock	69%
Waldo	67%
York	66%
Knox	64%
Central Counties	
Penobscot	75%
Kennebec	70%
Anrdoscoggin	69%
Rim Counties	
Somerset	90%
Franklin	75%
Piscataquis	75%
Aroostook	54%
Washington	47%
Oxford	44%

Percentage of Maine Locations with Internet Access by Service Level



Source
Maine Connectivity Authority

Housing Affordability

-4%

In 2025, 60% of households were unable to afford the median-priced home, down from 64%.

Benchmark: The percentage of households unable to afford the median-priced home will remain below 50%.

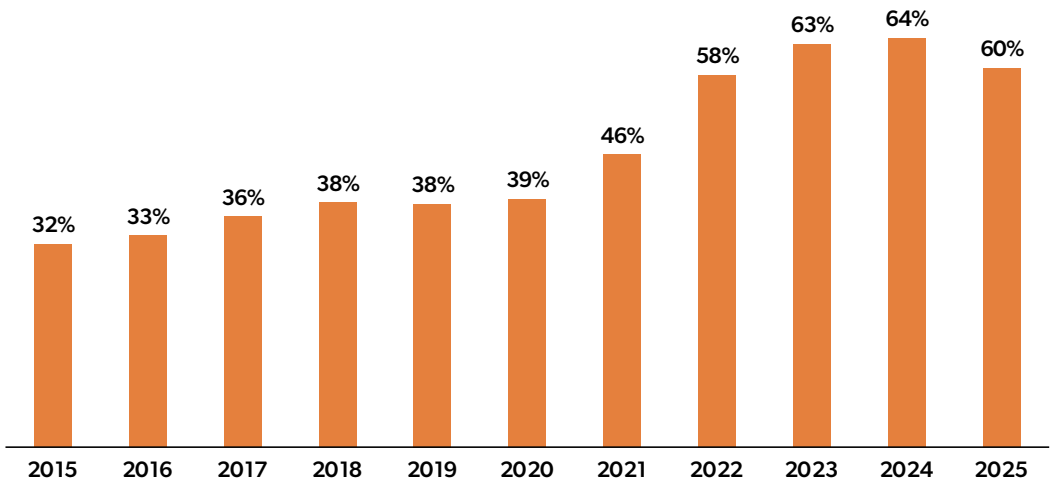
In 2025, an estimated 60% of Maine households could not afford a median-priced home. This is above the 50% benchmark and means the cost of the home's mortgage, taxes, and insurance would exceed 30% of household income. While concerning, this is a decline from the previous two years. The COVID-19 pandemic sparked a surge in homebuying that pushed up sale prices in Maine and nationwide.

Housing is a significant portion of household budgets, and housing costs reflect everything from the supply of housing stock, to public policies regarding planning and new construction, to lending practices and interest rates. Regions with affordable housing are better able to attract and retain workers. Affordable housing also has broad positive impacts on health and childhood development, which benefit individuals and communities alike.

Households Unable to Afford Median-Priced Home 2025
(Use no more than 30% of gross income for house payment)

Coastal Counties	
Knox	72%
Lincoln	71%
Cumberland	70%
York	68%
Sagadahoc	68%
Hancock	67%
Waldo	59%
Central Counties	
Androscoggin	63%
Kennebec	63%
Penobscot	50%
Rim Counties	
Franklin	66%
Oxford	61%
Washington	59%
Somerset	50%
Piscataquis	48%
Aroostook	42%
MAINE	**60%**

Maine Households Unable to Afford Median-Priced Home
(Use no more than 30% of gross income for house payment)



Source
MaineHousing

Transportation

+1%

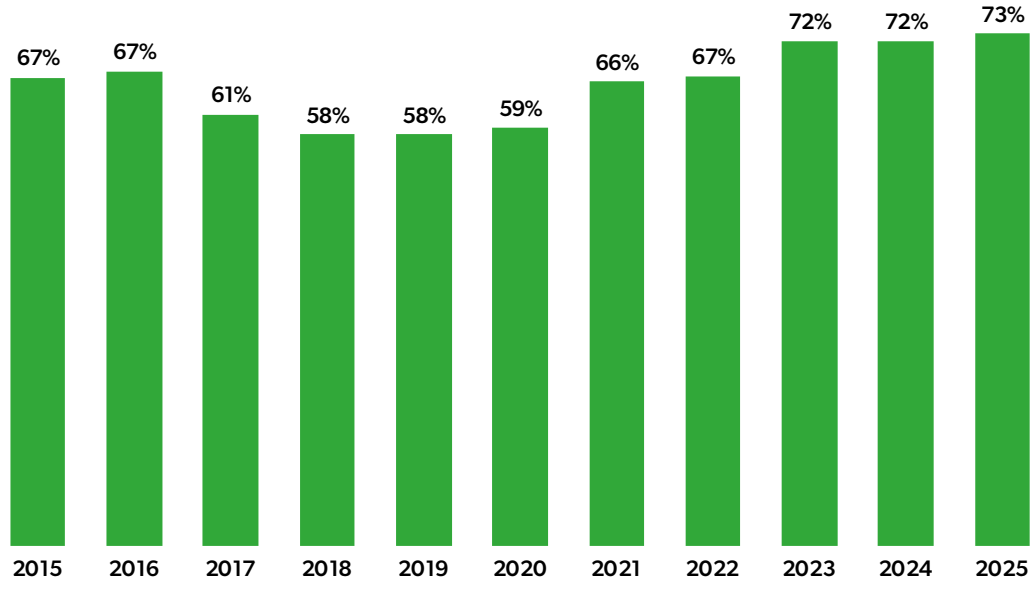
In 2025, 73% of Maine roadways were rated excellent, good, or fair.

Benchmark: At least 85% of highway corridor Priority 1 miles will be rated Excellent, Good, or Fair.

The Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) grades roadways from A (excellent) to F (unacceptable). In 2025, 1,075 miles (73%) of Maine's most-traveled and economically significant ("Priority 1") roadways were graded A, B or C, up from 72% the previous year and 58% in 2018-2019, but below the 85% benchmark. MDOT attributes this improvement to increased state and federal funding. Four hundred one miles (27%) were graded D or F. Maine's roadways carry the vast majority of passengers and freight. Poor road conditions can lead to personal injury, property damage, and extended commute times.

Transportation plays a crucial role in the functioning of our economy. Together, roads, rails, airports, and seaports promote economic activity by getting goods and people to their destinations efficiently and affordably. Public transportation is a critical component of this system, allowing people to access employment and services without a car, and reducing congestion and pollution. According to research published by the John T. Gorman Foundation, in 2022 Maine's public transit operators met just 11% of estimated need.

Highway Miles Rated Excellent, Good, or Fair



Source
Maine Department of Transportation; John T. Gorman Foundation

Higher Education Supports Growing Businesses

University of Maine System
Business & Law Clinic, Portland

A new University of Maine System initiative is supporting entrepreneurs while giving real-world experience to graduate students. The Business & Law Clinic is a first-in-the-nation program that provides coordinated support on legal issues such as contracts, trademarks, and data privacy, plus business issues such as pricing, accounting, and marketing.

The clinic helped 25 businesses in the spring and summer of 2026 and expects to serve another 20 this fall. Clients have ranged from artists, consultants, and food and beverage businesses to software, technology, and life-sciences startups. The clinic is open to businesses statewide.

Every client is assigned a law student and a graduate business student, who collaborate to develop solutions. An attorney drafting a contract, for example, may need to consider whether its requirements are practical for the business, while a business strategy may raise questions about customer data, privacy, or other legal issues. Writer Lisa Liberatore worked with students on protecting intellectual property rights. "It was really such an amazing opportunity to be able to share my knowledge and then for them to be able to share theirs; it really was a two-way street of learning."

The clinic also serves an important workforce-development role. Students receive academic credit while gaining experience working with real clients and learning to collaborate across disciplines—important career skills.



Professor Erin Cusenbary working with Ryan Morse '26 in the Business & Law Clinic.

"We tell our students, 'The world is changing. You're going to need to work across disciplines to give your clients the best service.' "

Leigh Saufley
President/Dean
University of Maine School of Law



(Left to right) Professor Erin Cusenbary, Tyler Davis '26, Alexandra Logan '26, Faith Sacre '27, and Professor Andy Kaufman. ***(Photo Credit: University of Maine System)***

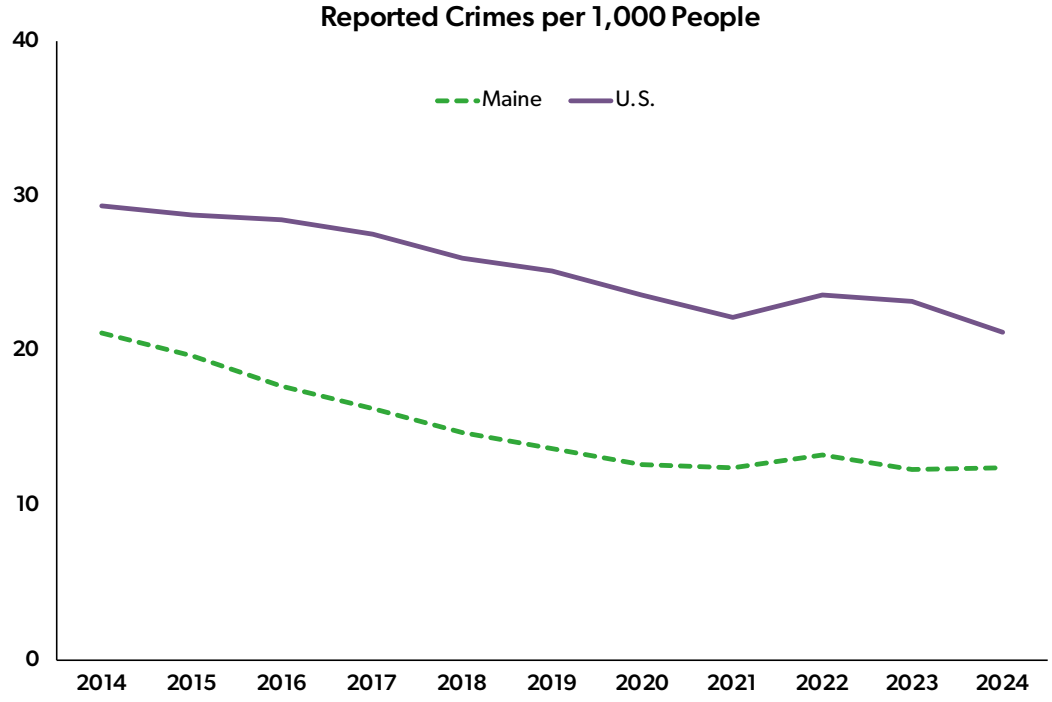
Safety

+1% **Maine's crime rate rose 1% in 2024.**

Benchmark: Maine's crime rate will remain 33% or more below the U.S. rate through 2030.

Maine's crime rate was 12.4 per 1,000 residents in 2024, up slightly from 2023 but 41% below the national average and fourth lowest of the 50 states. Violent crime fell 4% while property crime rose 1%. Maine's low crime rates are likely due in part to the age of its population since criminal offenses decline with age.

Crime rates measure physical safety, an important aspect of quality of life. Crime is costly to individuals and impacts communities by depressing property values, discouraging investment, and increasing insurance premiums. The crime rate includes data on larceny, burglary, aggravated assault, motor vehicle theft, rape, robbery, arson, and murder.



Source
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Physical Wellness

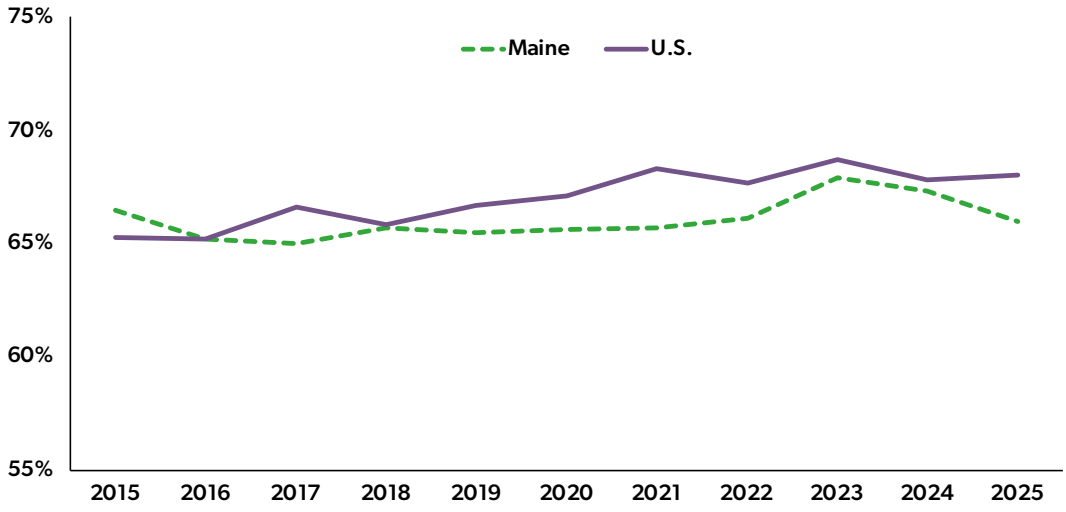
-1.3%

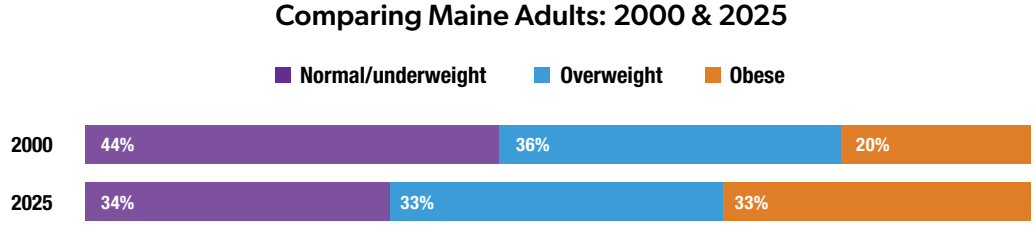
Consistently, about 2/3 of Maine adults are overweight or obese.

Benchmark: The combined percentage of overweight and obese adults in Maine will decline to 50% by 2030.

In 2025, 2 out of 3 Maine adults (66%) were overweight (body mass index of 25 to 29.9) or obese (body mass index of 30 or greater), just below the national average but above the 50% benchmark. This was a small decline from 2024. Prior to 2023, Maine's rate was steadily rising, up from 56% in 2000. Excess body weight increases the risk of chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease, stroke, asthma, arthritis, and some cancers. These conditions negatively affect quality of life and workplace productivity, and increase medical expenses.

In 2023-2024, over 1 in 3 Maine youth ages 6-17 (34.5%) was overweight or obese, above the national rate of 31.3%. Childhood obesity is a serious, widespread problem that can cause long-term health challenges.





Source
U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Center for Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative

Mental & Behavioral Health

0%

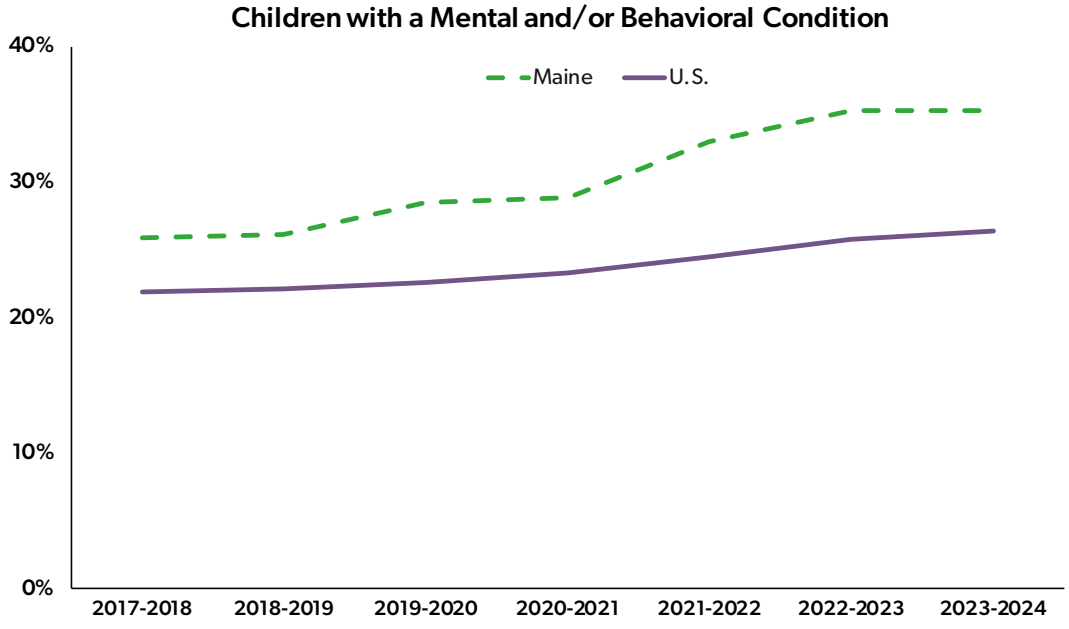
In 2023-2024, the percentage of children with a mental and/or behavioral condition was unchanged.

Benchmark: The share of Maine children with a diagnosed mental and/or behavioral condition will decline over time.

In 2023-2024, an estimated 35% of Maine children had a diagnosed mental, emotional, and/or behavioral condition such as anxiety, depression, a learning disability, or autism.* This was up from 26% in 2017-2018 and significantly higher than the U.S. average of 26%. In 2025, 28% of Maine high schoolers reported feeling sad or hopeless every day for two weeks or more. According to the Maine Children's Alliance, "teen mental health is a growing crisis in the state and the nation." It plays an important role in how children learn, grow, form relationships, and handle stress. It influences their overall health and well-being, and their future conduct as employees, parents, and community members.

Many older Mainers are also experiencing challenges. Mental wellness impacts individuals' quality of life and their activities at home, at work, and within their communities. In 2024, approximately 27% of Maine adults reported having depression at some point in their life, compared to 22% nationwide. Maine saw record drug-related deaths in recent years, but the numbers are declining. In 2025, 390 individuals died, the lowest number since 2019.

* Diagnoses are reported by parents and include anxiety, depression, behavior and conduct problems, developmental delay, intellectual disability, speech or language disorder, learning disability, Autism, Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, and Tourette Syndrome.



Source
National Children's Health Survey; Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey; U.S. Center for Disease Control (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System); State of Maine Office of the Governor

Health Insurance Coverage

+0.4%

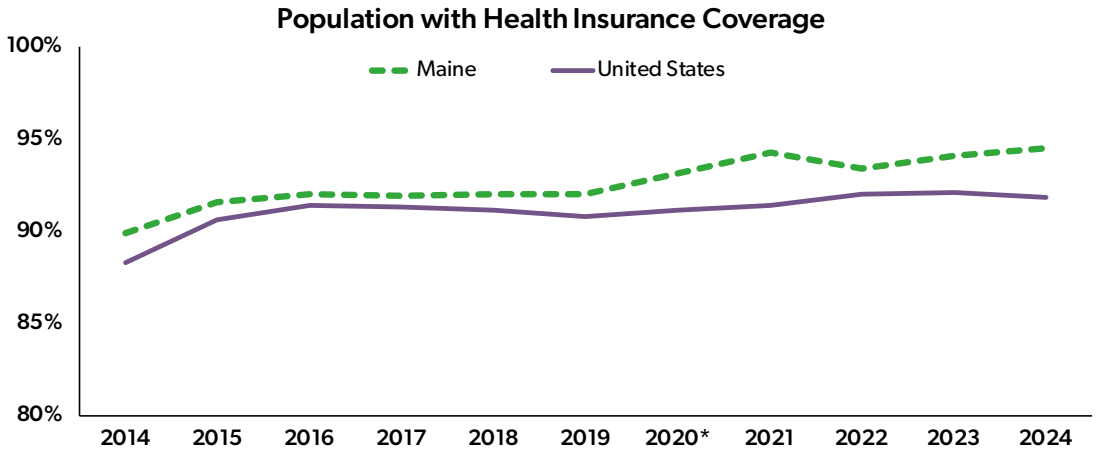
Maine's health insurance coverage remains above the U.S. average.

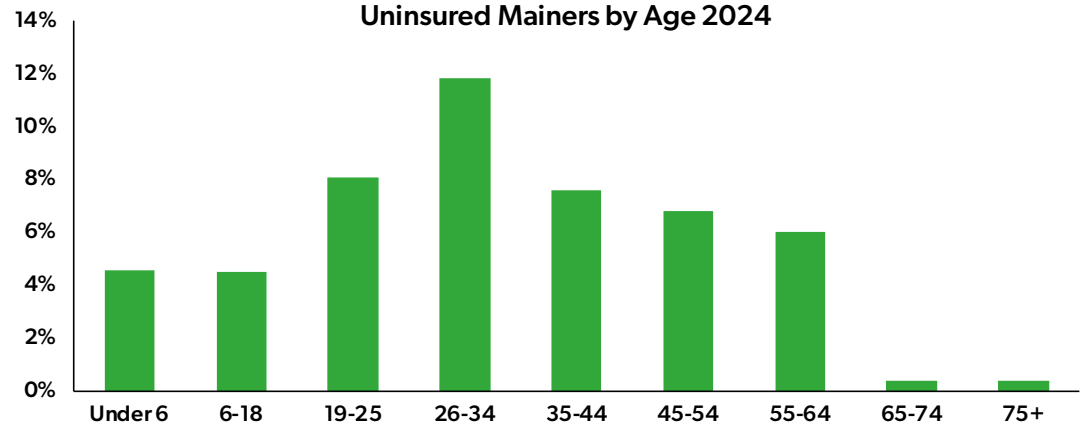
Benchmark: The percentage of Maine's population with health insurance coverage will rise and remain above the U.S. rate.

The proportion of Maine residents with health insurance coverage has exceeded 90% since 2015. In 2024, it rose slightly to 94.5% and was above the national average of 91.8%, meeting the benchmark. Higher health insurance coverage rates improve access to health care services, support local health care systems, and boost families' ability to pay for necessities.

An estimated 77,000 people in Maine do not have health insurance coverage. Regionally, health insurance coverage rates for people under age 65 range from 89% in Washington County to 95% in York County. Coverage also varies significantly by age. Thanks to Medicare, nearly all (99.6%) of Mainers age 65 and older have insurance. By contrast, more than 1 in 10 young adults (age 19-34) lacks insurance.

The Census Bureau's Small Area Health Insurance Estimates offer data on racial differences in health insurance coverage in Maine. In 2024, over 93% of White and Asian Mainers under age 65 had health insurance coverage, compared to just 85% of Hispanic Mainers and 89% of American Indian Mainers.





Source
U.S. Census Bureau

Food Security

+2%

In 2022-2024, the share of Mainers experiencing food insecurity rose 2 percentage points.

Benchmark: Maine's percentage of food insecure households will decline to the U.S. average by 2030.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, about 1 in 8 Maine households (12.9%) was food insecure in 2022-2024, up 10.9% in 2021-2023, and a low of 9.5% in 2019-2021.* This increase may reflect the cessation of pandemic-era federal supports for low-income households, such as the expanded Child Tax Credit, and new restrictions to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Maine's rate of food insecurity was below the national average of 13.3% and above the New England unweighted average of 11.0%.

County-level data are from a different source with a slightly higher estimate of food insecurity (14.5% for Maine in 2024). According to Feeding America, 2024 food insecurity ranged from 12.1% in Cumberland County to over 17% in Aroostook, Piscataquis, Somerset, and Washington counties.

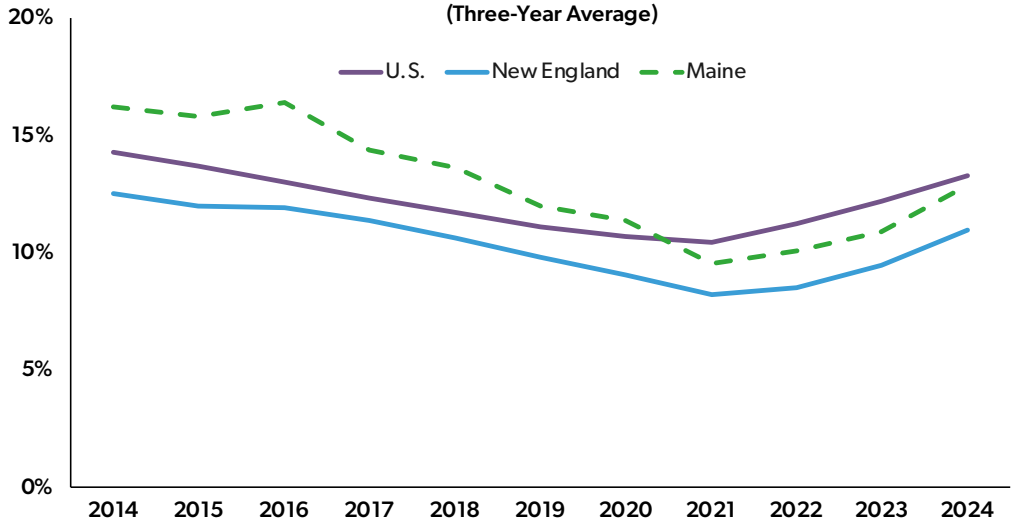
Food insecurity has broad negative impacts on health, child development, education outcomes, and productivity. Food-insecure households have disrupted eating patterns, reduced food intake, and reduced quality or variety of diet.

* In September 2025, the U.S. Department of Agriculture terminated the annual Household Food Security Reports that generate these estimates.

Food Insecurity Rates by County 2024

Coastal Counties	Rate
Cumberland	12.1%
York	12.5%
Knox	12.6%
Sagadahoc	12.8%
Lincoln	13.0%
Hancock	13.8%
Waldo	14.6%
Central Counties	
Kennebec	15.2%
Androscoggin	16.3%
Penobscot	16.5%
Rim Counties	
Oxford	16.0%
Franklin	16.1%
Somerset	17.0%
Aroostook	17.8%
Piscataquis	18.1%
Washington	18.8%

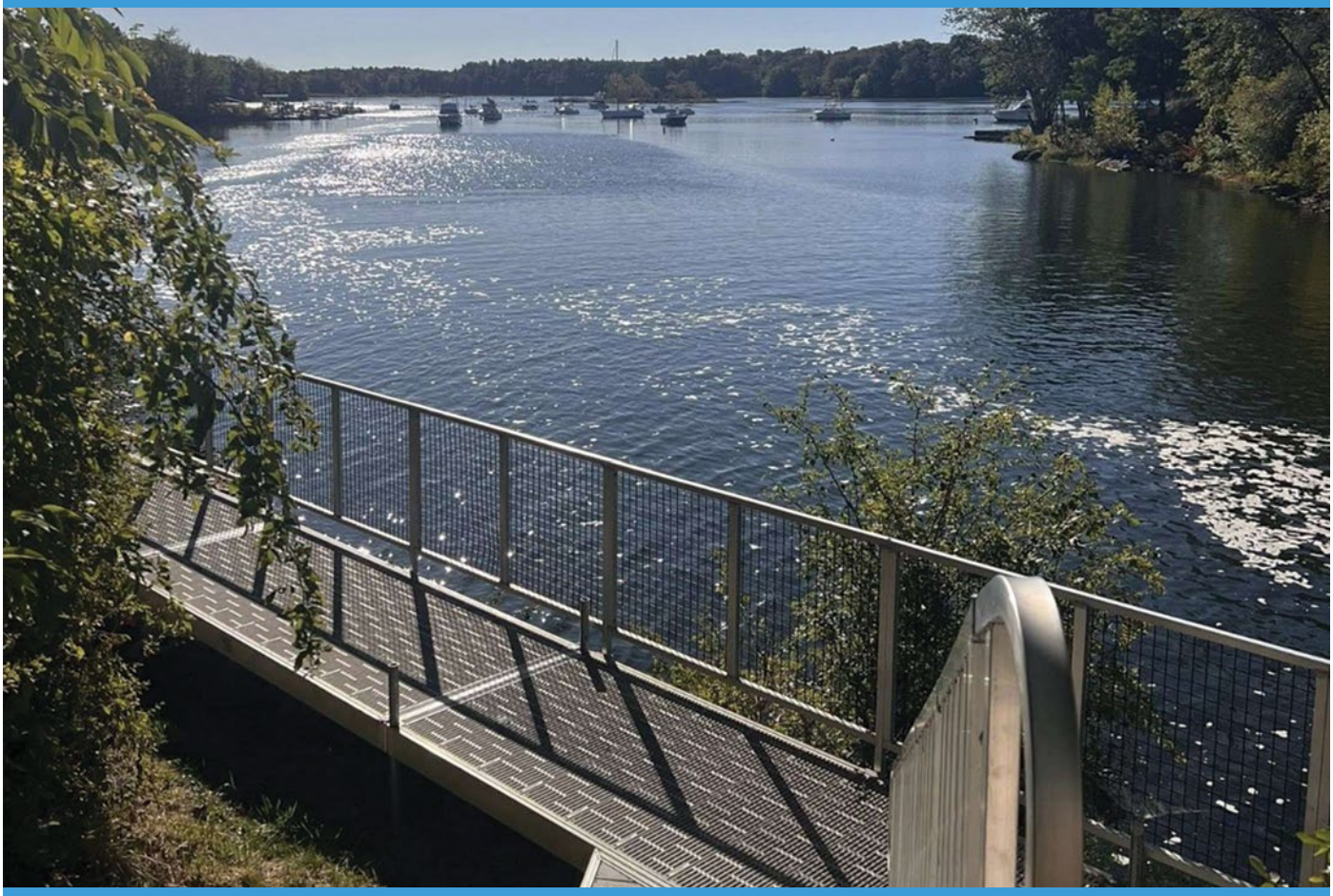
Food Insecure Households 2014-2024
(Three-Year Average)



Source
U.S. Department of Agriculture; Feeding America

ENVIRONMENT

By land, lake, sea, and stream



Saco Riverfront Park
(Photo Credit: Saco Main Street)

Air Quality

-8 days

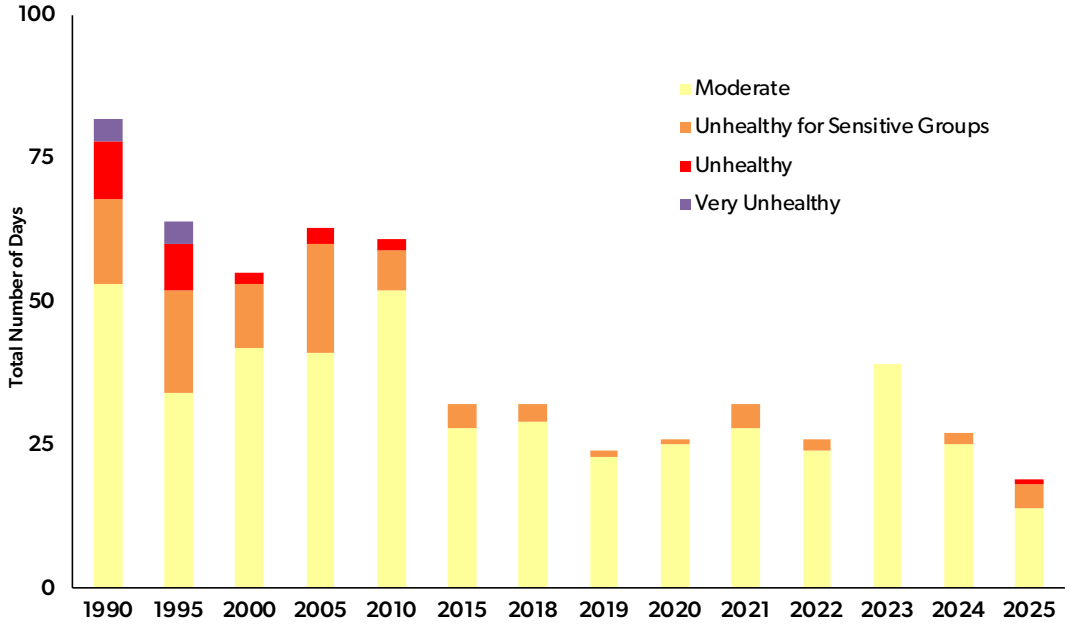
In 2025, there were 19 moderately unhealthy days, 8 fewer than in 2024.

Benchmark: The overall number of days classified as a health risk and the severity of risks will be maintained through 2030.

In 2025, there were 14 moderate air quality days, 4 days rated unhealthy for sensitive groups (e.g., people with heart and lung disease, older adults, children), and 1 unhealthy day for the general public. This was a return to recent levels after a spike in 2023 due to smoke from wildfires beyond Maine's borders.

After declining in the 1980s and 1990s, air quality in Maine has improved substantially, and is better than most other states. Maine's air quality index is based on ozone levels, and reflects the number of days each year when the maximum ozone level recorded in the state reaches moderate or unhealthy levels. Maine's air quality contributes to health and wellness, and makes it an attractive place to live, do business, and visit. Air quality is subject to factors both within and beyond our borders.

Maine Air Quality Index 1990-2025



Source
Maine Department of Environmental Protection

Sustainable Forestlands

+1%

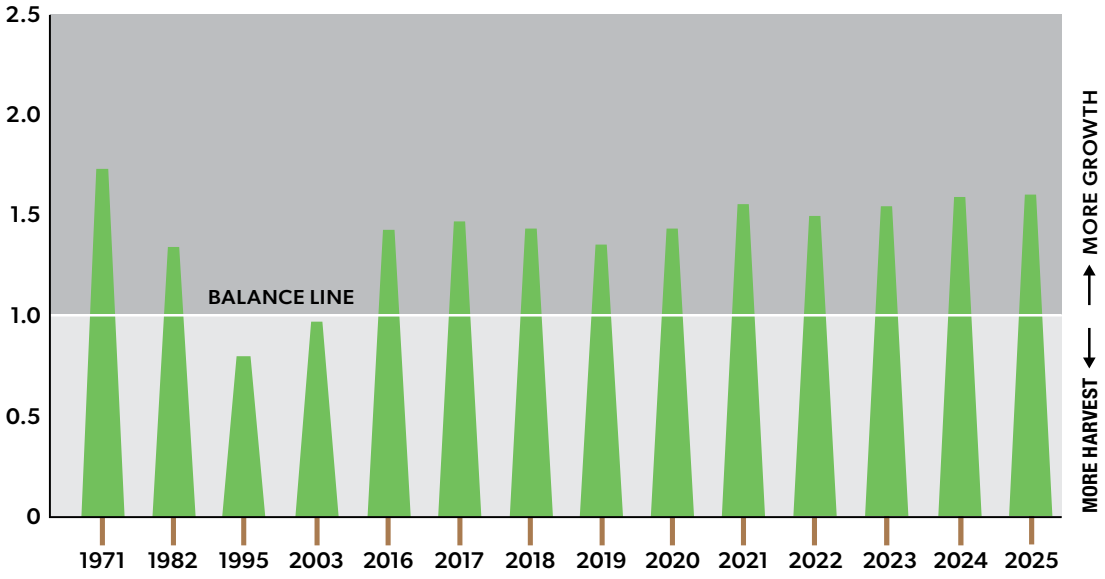
In 2025, the ten-year growth-to-removal ratio rose 1% to 1.61 and remained above the sustainability goal.

Benchmark: A net growth-to-removal ratio of approximately 1:1 will be maintained over time.

In 2025, the ten-year growth-to-removal ratio rose 1% to 1.61 and remained sustainable. Net timber volume growth has exceeded removals over the past decade. In other words, Maine has been growing more wood volume than it has been harvesting.

Forests cover an estimated 88% of Maine's land area. Private entities and individuals own 92% of forested acreage, with much of it accessible to the public. Forests provide habitat for wildlife, help protect air and water quality, offer recreational opportunities, and supply raw materials for products ranging from paper to building materials to alternative fuels. Sustainable forestry supports Maine's economy, environment, and quality of life, and well-planned forest management activities can help address issues related to forest health, climate change, and other factors affecting forest conditions.

Timberland Growth-to-Removal Ratio



Source
Maine Forest Service

Growing Opportunity from Maine Waters

OystHERS Raw Bar & Bubbly, Bath

For Lauren and Sadia Crosby, the ocean has always been part of life. The sisters were born and raised in a Maine lobstering family, where they learned firsthand both the rewards and challenges of working on the water. They helped with the family business as children and carried those experiences with them through college and their early careers—Lauren as a teacher and musician and Sadia as an entomologist.

After their father died unexpectedly in 2021, the sisters decided to continue the family business in a new way. A few years earlier, Sadia had started a small oyster farm. She was developing a loyal following for her fresh, locally grown oysters. Together, the sisters leased a neglected waterfront building in Bath and transformed it into OystHERS, a raw bar overlooking the Kennebec River. It features oysters from Sadia's nearby farm, along with other Maine seafood and regional products.

Lauren manages the restaurant, while Sadia oversees the farm. Together, they have created a business that connects customers directly to the source of their food while adding value to Maine's coastal economy. OystHERS has become a gathering place, hosting local events and supporting artists, and they even offer scholarships to local high school students. Lauren and Sadia's success demonstrates that some of Maine's most promising economic opportunities come not from replacing its traditional industries, but from reimagining them.



Sisters and OystHERS co-owners Lauren and Sadia Crosby outside their raw bar in Bath.

"We really are sea-farm to table. We have an intense love for our product because we've been raising it for three years."

Lauren Crosby
Co-owner



OystHERS co-founder Sadia Crosby checks oysters at her sea farm on the Kennebec River in Georgetown. ***(Photo Credit: OystHERS)***

Water Quality

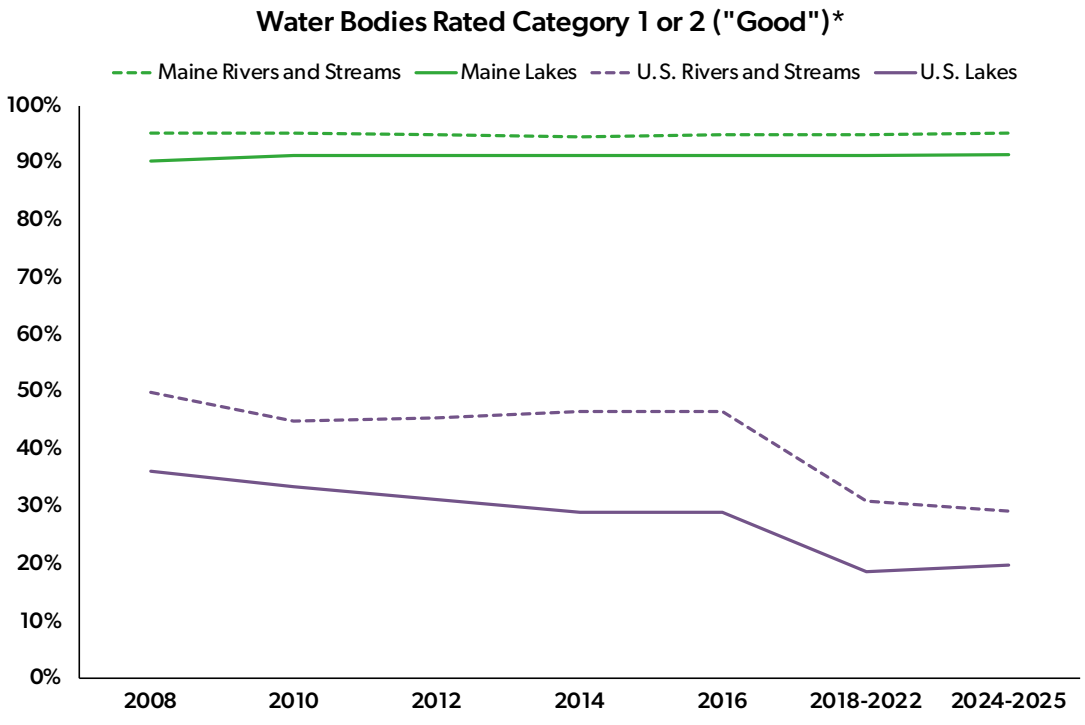
0%

In 2024, Maine maintained its excellent water quality rating.

Benchmark: The percentage of Maine's assessed water bodies classified as Categories 1 or 2 will be maintained over time.

Since 2008, Maine's water quality has been very high, with 95% of rivers and streams and 91% of lakes achieving Category 1 or 2 in 2024. Nationally, just 29% of U.S. rivers and streams, and 20% of the lakes, were rated "good" in 2025. The drop in U.S. quality has many causes, including a significant increase in the number of assessed water bodies, differing assessment methods across states, and actual declines in water quality.

This measure is based on reports by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on the water quality of Maine rivers, streams, and lakes. The proportion of water bodies achieving Category 1 and 2 ("good") classifications is compared to the rest of the U.S. Maine's rivers, lakes, and streams provide drinking water and support ecosystems. They are part of the natural environment that supports tourism.



Source
Maine Department of Environmental Protection

**U.S. ratings for 2016 reflect multiple years between 2014 and 2022. 2018-2022 includes reporting for 2018, 2020, and 2022. The chart shows 2024 for Maine and 2025 for the U.S. As of the release of this report, Maine's 2024 ratings have not yet been verified by the EPA.*

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

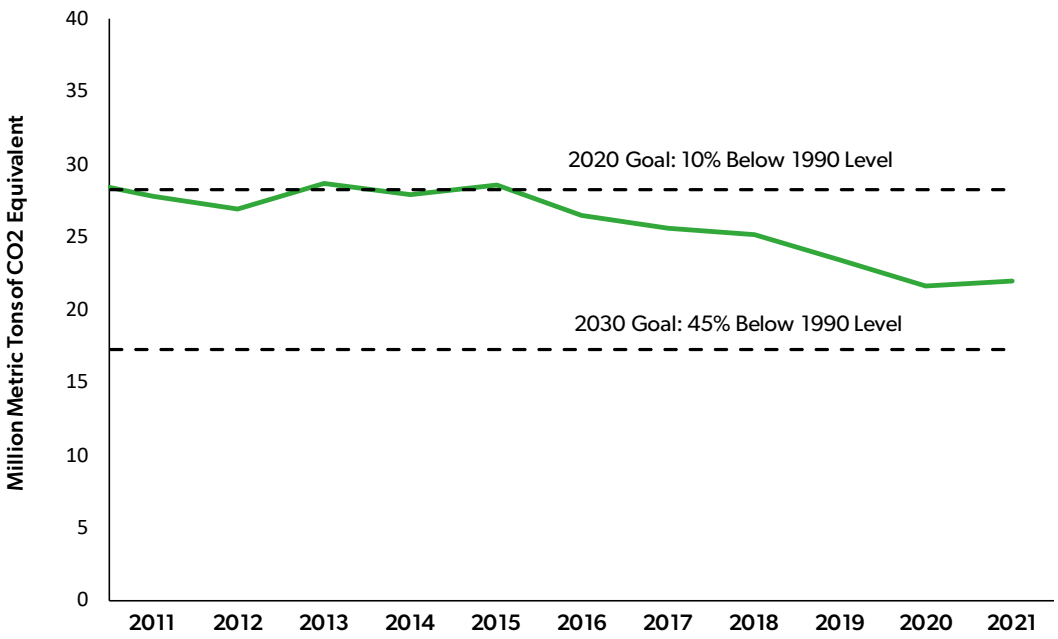
+1.4% **From 2020 to 2021, GHG emissions rose 1.4%.**

Benchmark: Greenhouse gas emissions will fall 45% below 1990 levels by 2030.

In 2020, Maine's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions fell when the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily halted daily activities. In 2021, they rose slightly, from 21.6 to 21.9 million metric tons of carbon dioxide.* However, emissions were still 30% below 1990 levels, meaning Maine is continuing to progress toward its goal of 45% below 1990 levels by 2030.

According to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, 94% of Maine's emissions are from energy consumption, mostly from the combustion of petroleum products. The other 6% is from agriculture, industrial processes, and waste management. Movement toward renewable energy sources and lower carbon fuels such as natural gas have contributed to reduced emissions.

* In 2025, the Environmental Protection Agency stopped publishing some of the datasets and an emissions modeling tool used to calculate Maine's GHG emissions. Maine and other states are currently pursuing alternative approaches and partnerships to replace the discontinued data products.



Source
Maine Department of Environmental Protection

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 equitable, 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.

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.

Acknowledgements

The Maine Economic Growth Council and MDF extend their sincere appreciation to the individuals and organizations that generously provided data and guidance in the development of this report. Special thanks to Ethan Moskowitz (Maine Connectivity Authority), Andrew Bickmore and James Havu (Maine Department of Transportation), Jim Damicis (Camoin Associates), Wade Merritt and Abby Plante (Maine International Trade Center), Jonathan Kurzfeld (MaineHousing), Morten Moesswilde and Jereme Frank (Maine Forest Service), Nicole Madore (Maine Department of Education), and Stacy Knapp, Meagan Sims, and Martha Waverly (Maine Department of Environmental Protection). This year's report was written by Catherine Reilly with contributions by MDF's Kathleen Shannon Nichols. The print version was designed by Cassidy Parmley of Pica and printed by Edison Press. The web version was designed by Josh Emerson of VONT.

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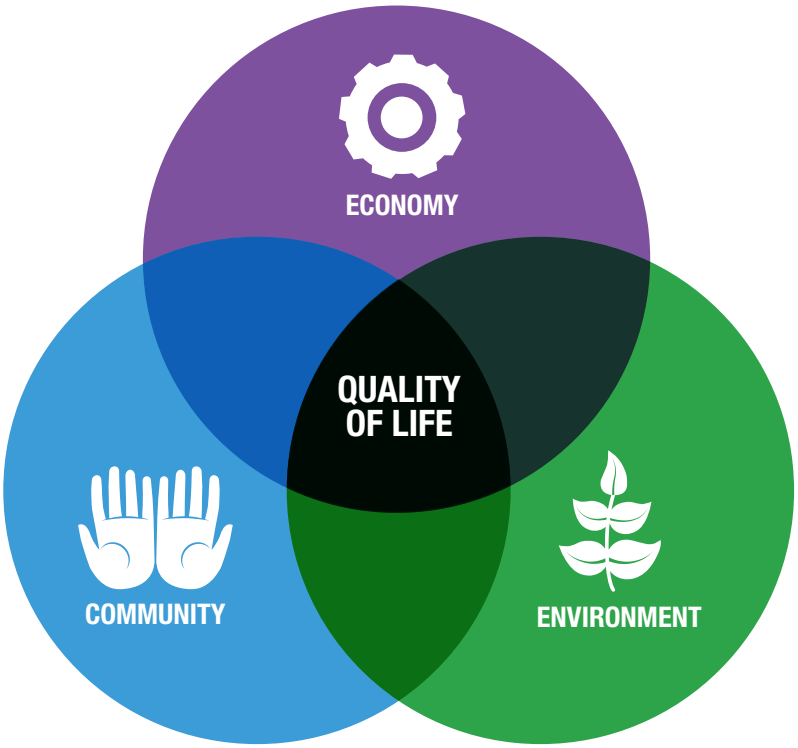
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VISION

A high quality of life for all Maine people



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