



# Agency Data Profile

# Community Needs Assessment



## Western Maine Community Action Profile



### About Western Maine Community Action

Established in 1965, Western Maine Community Action (WMCA) is a social service agency that has been providing assistance to low- and mid-income families living in the western mountain region of Maine for over 50 years. WMCA is funded with private, local, state and federal money.

#### **Our Mission**

It is Western Maine Community Action's mission to advocate for, strengthen, and coordinate all resources – private, local, state, and federal – that will assist us in promoting the self-sufficiency of people.

A belief in basic human dignity and the exercise of free choice motivates the agency to approach this goal in two ways: by providing services to alleviate the conditions of economic uncertainty and by advocating for changes to eliminate the causes of poverty.

#### Services Offered by WMCA

- **Nutrition Services** – Women Infants & Children (WIC), Adult and Childcare Food Program
- **Community Services** – LIHEAP (Fuel Assistance), Emergency Fuel, Senior Food Program
- **Family & Health Services** – Whole Families Coaching, Homelessness, Rapid Rehousing, Health Navigator
- **Housing Services** – Weatherization, Central Heating, Home Repair, Emergency Rental Assistance

## Environmental Scan

The following tables provide an overview of the community that Western Maine Community Action (WMCA) serves in their service area. For more detailed statewide data by county, please see the full 2021 MeCAP Statewide Community Needs Assessment.

Figure 1: Social Vulnerability Index

Measure	United States	Maine	Franklin County	Androscoggin County	Oxford County
<b>Population</b>	324,697,795	1,335,492	29,982	107,602	57,550
<b>Median Age</b>	38.1	44.7	46.3	40.1	47.0
<b>Below Poverty</b>	13.4%	11.8%	11.5%	11.8%	15.1%
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$62,843	\$57,918	\$51,422	\$53,509	\$49,204
<b>Age 65+</b>	15.6%	20.0%	21.5%	17.3%	21.3%
<b>Age 17 or Younger</b>	22.6%	18.9%	18.1%	21.8%	18.7%
<b>Unemployment (July 2021)</b>	5.4%	5.0%	5.7%	5.8%	5.9%
<b>Households with Disability</b>	12.6%	16.0%	15.5%	15.9%	18.5%
<b>Single Parent Household</b>	14.0%	21%	18%	21%	19%
<b>Speak English less than "very well"</b>	8.4%	1.5%	0.3%	2.3%	0.5%
<b>Housing Units - Mobile Homes %</b>	6.2%	9.5%	18.6%	16.1%	23.9%
<b>No Vehicle</b>	8.6%	7.1%	5.7%	9.0%	5.8%

SOURCE: American Community Survey, 2019 5-Year Estimates; 2021 County Health Rankings

Figure 2: Age and Demographics

Measure	United States	Maine	Franklin County	Androscoggin County	Oxford County
<b>Under 5 Years</b>	6.1%	4.8%	4.7%	5.9%	4.4%
<b>5 to 9 Years</b>	6.2%	5.2%	4.8%	6.2%	5.1%
<b>10 to 19</b>	12.9%	11.3%	12.0%	12.4%	11.3%
<b>20 to 34</b>	20.7%	17.5%	17.6%	18.2%	15.0%
<b>35 to 54</b>	25.6%	25.3%	22.9%	25.8%	25.4%
<b>55 to 64</b>	12.9%	15.7%	16.8%	14.2%	17.6%
<b>65+</b>	15.6%	20.0%	21.5%	17.3%	21.3%
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>					
<b>White alone, Not Hispanic or Latino</b>	60.7%	98.3%	98.7%	96.2%	98.7%
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	18.0%	1.7%	1.3%	1.9%	1.4%
<b>Black or African American</b>	12.7%	2.0%	0.8%	3.4%	1.5%
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	0.8%	1.7%	1.4%	3.9%	2.2%
<b>Asian</b>	5.5%	1.7%	0.8%	1.4%	1.5%
<b>Other</b>	5.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.2%
<b>Foreign Born Population</b>	13.3%	3.6%	1.5%	3.5%	1.5%

SOURCE: American Community Survey, 2019 5-Year Estimates

Figure 3: Household Income and Poverty

	United States	Maine	Franklin County	Androscoggin County	Oxford County
<b>Median Household (HH) Income</b>	\$62,843	\$57,918	\$51,422	\$53,509	\$49,204
<b>Total Below 100% Federal Poverty Level (FPL)</b>	13.4%	11.8%	11.5%	11.8%	15.1%
<b>Under 5 years</b>	20.3%	17.0%	21.2%	18.5%	30.3%
<b>5 to 17 years</b>	17.9%	14.4%	11.9%	13.8%	24.1%
<b>18 to 34 years</b>	16.3%	16.0%	14.2%	15.9%	20.8%
<b>35 to 64 years</b>	10.5%	9.9%	9.9%	9.8%	12.1%
<b>65 years and over</b>	9.3%	8.7%	10.0%	7.4%	7.8%
<b>Below 50% of FPL</b>	5.5%	4.0%	ND	3.7%	ND
<b>Below 125% of FPL</b>	16.3%	14.6%	ND	13.0%	ND
<b>Below 150% of FPL</b>	20.3%	18.6%	ND	17.5%	ND
<b>Below 185% of FPL</b>	26.3%	24.8%	ND	25.5%	ND
<b>Below 200% of FPL</b>	28.9%	27.7%	ND	28.5%	ND

SOURCE: American Community Survey, 2019 5-Year Estimates

Figure 4: Social Characteristics Measures

	United States	Maine	Franklin County	Androscoggin County	Oxford County
<b>Total Households</b>	120,756,048	559,921	11,848	45,630	21,338
<b>Homeownership Percentage</b>	64.0%	72.3%	79.4%	64.3%	80.8%
<b>Single Parent Household<sup>1</sup></b>	14.0%	21.0%	24.4%	23.9%	22.9%
<b>Living Alone</b>	13.3%	15.1%	14.3%	16.2%	12.4%
<b>Grandparents Responsible for Grandchildren</b>	34.1%	34.1%	22.1%	29.0%	31.2%
<b>Veteran Status</b>	7.3%	9.6%	11.2%	10.1%	10.2%
<b>Educational Attainment</b>					
<b>Less than 9th grade</b>	5.1%	2.6%	1.5%	3.9%	2.2%
<b>9th to 12th grade, no diploma</b>	6.9%	4.8%	5.9%	5.9%	5.9%
<b>High school graduate/ GED</b>	27.0%	31.5%	38.0%	35.5%	42.0%
<b>Some college, no degree</b>	20.4%	19.3%	19.2%	20.5%	19.4%
<b>Associate degree</b>	8.5%	10.1%	10.6%	11.5%	11.3%
<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	19.8%	20.0%	15.6%	15.2%	12.7%
<b>Graduate degree</b>	12.4%	11.8%	9.2%	7.6%	6.5%
<b>HS Graduation rate (2020)</b>	88.0%	87.4%	86.3%	80.1%	85.0%
<b>No Health Insurance</b>	8.8%	7.9%	10.0%	8.0%	8.8%
<b>Receiving SNAP Benefits</b>	11.7%	13.5%	13.2%	16.8%	16.3%
<b>Food Insecurity – All Ages</b>	10.9%	12.1%	18.4%	18.5%	22.9%
<b>Median Mortgage (2019)</b>	\$1,595	\$1,398	\$1,071	\$1,350	\$1,146
<b>Median Rent</b>	\$1,062	\$853	\$635	\$771	\$713
<b>Housing Cost Burdened<sup>2</sup></b>	32.88%	29.75%	23.42%	30.44%	30.10%
<b>Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Price Lunch</b>	49.5%	38.3%	38.1%	59.8%	52.8%

SOURCE: American Community Survey, 2019 5-Year Estimates; Source: Feeding America, State-By-State Resource: The Impact of Coronavirus on Food Insecurity, 2019; Annie E. Casey Foundation, Kids Count Data Center, County Graduation Rates 2014-2020 Maine.

<sup>1</sup> 2021 County Health Rankings.

<sup>2</sup> The percentage of households that spend 30% or more of their income on housing.

Figure 5: Health Overview

	United States	Maine	Franklin County	Androscoggin County	Oxford County
<b>Poor Mental Health Days</b>	3.8	5.0	4.6	4.9	4.8
<b>Poor Physical Health Days</b>	3.4	4.2	4.0	4.2	4.5
<b>Frequent Mental Health Distress</b>	11.7%	12.7%	15%	16%	16%
<b>Ratio of Primary Care Providers</b>	880:1	900:1	930:1	1,150:1	1,650:1
<b>Ratio of Mental Health Providers</b>	170:1	200:1	340:1	200:1	390:1
<b>Ratio of Dentists</b>	1,210:1	1,480:1	2,750:1	1,800:1	2,760:1
<b>Chronic Disease Prevalence (per 100,000)</b>					
<b>Adults with Heart Disease</b>	26.81%	22.48%	20.83%	21.15%	22.48%
<b>High Blood Pressure</b>	57.20%	48.71%	47.37%	44.67%	48.86%
<b>Adults with Asthma</b>	4.97%	4.68%	4.52%	3.75%	4.19%
<b>Diagnosed Diabetes</b>	26.95%	22.55%	23.53%	21.91%	21.98%
<b>Leading Causes of Death (deaths per 100,000)<sup>3</sup></b>					
<b>Heart Disease</b>	166.0	147.9	151.5	165.0	138.9
<b>Cancer</b>	155.5	169.2	180.6	179.0	183.2
<b>Unintentional Injury</b>	45.7	59.1	56.0	56.4	54.6
<b>Diabetes</b>	21.2	22.3	33.5	24.5	34.8
<b>Alzheimer's</b>	29.4	27.6	24.0	53.2	26.8
<b>Suicide Rates (Age-Adjusted Rate per 100,000)</b>	14.5	18	20	17	19
<b>Adult Obesity Prevalence (Age-Adjusted Rate per 100,000)</b>	42.2	31.7	30.3	33.5	30.4
<b>Maine Adults Past Month Binge Drinking</b>	25.8%	17.9%	17.2%	17%	14.8%
<b>Percent Adults Current Smokers</b>	16.1%	22.6	18.1%	17.0%	30.8%
<b>COVID-19 Confirmed Cumulative Cases (as of 9/12/21)</b>	41.3M	57,752	1,220	6,281	2,829
<b>COVID-19 Deaths (as of 9/12/21)</b>	662K	897	17	89	71

Source: County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2018; National Institute on Minority Healthy & Health Disparities HDPulse; Death Rate Report for Maine by County 2014 – 2018; National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention & Health Promotion; Division of Population Health Places Database, 2018; The State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup, Tobacco Prevention & Control Dashboard, 2015 – 2017

<sup>3</sup> NIH, HDPulse. Death Rates Table.

## Qualitative Research Findings

	Number of Participants
Focus Group Participants	10
Stakeholders Interviewed	14
Community Survey Respondents	253

### Key Stakeholder Interview Quotes

A total of 14 stakeholders were interviewed from the WMCA service area. A selection of quotes that provide some insight into the strengths, needs, and challenges and barriers include the following:

- “I think the first thing that comes to mind for me is the outpouring of assistance from the food banks.”
- “Transportation is a big issue in the area.”
- “The population is ageing so there is more demand for services.”
- “One [paper] mill is struggling. There was a time when high school graduates could make \$70,000 a year. Without those jobs, there are not many options. There are not enough jobs to earn a living wage.”
- “Kids leave. Few comes back. The wage base has never been strong. We don’t have the excitement of Portland.”
- “We have Western Maine Transportation. It’s a good service but the county commissioners cut the budget. They had to raise money privately.”
- “Maine has one of the oldest housing stock in the country.”
- “It’s especially hard to find childcare for shift workers.”
- “When I talk to our childcare provider, it’s hard to attract people to the profession.”
- “There are no psych beds in Franklin County.”
- “There’s not recognition that mental health can help. People are taught to suck it up and not bother people.”
- “There’s a lot of generational poverty in the area.”

## Key Focus Group Quotes

Comments and Ideas	
<b>Top Challenges Mentioned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to Mental Health Care; shortage of mental health professionals</li> <li>• Safe, lead-free, affordable housing</li> <li>• Workforce development, especially for new Mainers</li> </ul>
<b>Unique Strength or Challenge Mentioned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having a low barrier shelter is huge. Many people have mental health issues and can't go other places. When you come back drunk or high then they didn't kick them out.</li> </ul>
<b>Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People are getting the vouchers but no housing for them to go.</li> </ul>
<b>Mental Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L/A, North Jay, and Farmington all have SUD challenges.</li> <li>• Addiction is hard to treat. Its time sensitive treatment and it's hard to find anyone who make a diagnosis and treat patients immediately. ED docs can diagnose general symptoms, but then let patient go. If the patient would have showed up drunk, she would have gotten help, but the docs/providers hands are tied.</li> </ul>
<b>Childcare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the Wilton area 3 childcares opened in last year so it's been a tremendous help to get people back to work. Plenty in the area.</li> <li>• Androscoggin: shortage of childcare, plus transportation is tough.</li> <li>• Lewiston: there are enough childcare centers but not affordable. YMCA had childcare on site and good for nurses who worked 12 hours, but it recently closed, and it's been a huge blow to area hospital's workforce. Good quality childcare exists. People who can't afford school setting, they put their kids in group home care which is more babysitting.</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outside L/A there is the Western Maine Transportation, but it is hard to find a bus that meets everyone's needs. No taxi service or its very expensive.</li> <li>• The bus is not convenient, can take all day to get to an appointment and back.</li> </ul>
<b>Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before COVID, most businesses were grocery stores or pizza places, and it's the same now. Big changes haven't happened and not sure they will since it's so expensive to bring businesses into Western Maine. It's hard to get supplies from the highway.</li> <li>• Anyone who has ambition or desire for education, a healthier and wealthier life, they all leave. Direct care workers can't afford to work in their jobs, and this will be bad as population ages – we need to create a different system.</li> </ul>
<b>Basic Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In some parts of Franklin County, the elderly need to choose between car registration or medications. Insurance and problems w/insurance are tough.</li> </ul>
<b>Magic Wand Highlight</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open access to healthcare - people in crisis should get the care they need.</li> </ul>
<b>Noted Policy Area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow every employee in social services to have 10 hours a month to learn about other services available – a true No Wrong Door approach for the community.</li> </ul>



## Community Survey Results

Western Maine Community Action		
	Need	Percent
1	Making dental care more affordable	58.8%
2	Creating more emergency shelter beds for people who are homeless	57.0%
3	Expanding crisis services for mental health and substance use disorders	56.3%
4	Providing more flexible and affordable childcare options for working parent(s)	55.3%
5	Increasing programs for major housing repairs (roofs, windows, etc.)	55.3%
6	Reducing the amount of other drug misuse (heroin, cocaine, etc.)	54.6%
7	Reducing the amount of opioid misuse	54.6%
8	Increasing the number of mental health providers in rural communities	54.6%
9	Increasing the number of affordable houses for sale	54.6%
10	Increasing the number of affordable apartments	53.5%
11	Reducing the amount of childhood obesity	53.2%
12	Reducing stigma associated with mental health and substance misuse	52.8%
13	Improving access to high-speed internet and technology	52.1%
14	Developing more livable-wage jobs	51.8%
15	Providing help with the cost of vehicle repairs	51.1%
16	Increasing the number of affordable childcare providers	50.7%
17	Increasing the number of dentists who serve MaineCare patients	50.4%
18	Increasing the number of landlords who accept housing vouchers	50.4%
19	Creating more shelter beds for certain populations (children, women, families, LGBTQ, veterans, etc.)	50.0%
20	Expanding open hours at food banks	49.6%
21	Providing more senior housing options	49.6%
22	Providing job growth opportunities	49.3%
23	Making public transportation available in rural communities	49.3%
24	Providing help with utility assistance (heating fuel, electricity, etc.)	49.3%
25	Increasing the availability of prepared foods for seniors (Meals on Wheels, etc.)	48.9%
26	Creating higher quality rental apartments and houses	48.6%
27	Creating technical school, trade school, or other job training options	48.2%
28	Increasing programs for minor housing repairs (paint, upgrades, etc.)	48.2%
29	Developing rental and mortgage assistance programs	48.2%
30	Providing more recreational opportunities for youth	47.9%
31	Creating more affordable public transportation options	47.9%
32	Increasing the number of substance use disorder providers and services	47.2%
33	Providing more after-school programs for school-aged children	47.2%
34	Providing help with weatherization	47.2%
35	Reducing building costs of new affordable housing units	46.8%
36	Increasing the number of detox facilities	45.4%
37	Increasing the number of childcare providers who offer age-appropriate education	45.4%
38	Adding better routes and time schedules to current public transportation system	45.4%
39	Reducing the amount of smoking and vaping	45.1%
40	Helping more people who are homeless to find their missing identification documents (driver's license, social security number, etc.)	44.7%
41	Providing soft skills education (customer service, showing up on time, etc.)	44.0%
42	Providing help with the cost of vehicle insurance and regular maintenance	44.0%

<b>43</b>	Reducing the amount of alcohol misuse	43.7%
<b>44</b>	Reducing the amount of adult obesity	43.0%
<b>45</b>	Reducing stigma associated with the housing voucher program	42.3%
<b>46</b>	Increasing the number of high quality licensed childcare providers	41.5%
<b>47</b>	Expanding food options for people with dietary restrictions or allergies at food banks	40.8%
<b>48</b>	Providing more transportation options to childcare services	39.4%
<b>49</b>	Reducing MaineCare transportation limitations (i.e., limited to one parent and child)	36.3%

Figure 6: Top 5 Needs by Household Income - WMCA

Need							
	Under \$15,000	Between \$15,000 and \$29,999	Between \$30,000 and \$49,999	Between \$50,000 and \$74,999	Between \$75,000 and \$99,999	Between \$100,000 and \$150,000	Over \$150,000
1	Making dental care more affordable	Reducing the amount of opioid misuse	Reducing the amount of other drug misuse (heroin, cocaine, etc.)	Providing more flexible and affordable childcare options for working parent(s)	Expanding crisis services for mental health and substance use disorders	Expanding crisis services for mental health and substance use disorders	Expanding crisis services for mental health and substance use disorders
2	Increasing the number of dentists who serve MaineCare patients	Making dental care more affordable	Creating more emergency shelter beds for people who are homeless	Creating more emergency shelter beds for people who are homeless	Making public transportation available in rural communities	Improving access to high-speed internet and technology	Increasing the number of detox facilities
3	Providing help with utility assistance (heating fuel, electricity, etc.)	Providing more flexible and affordable childcare options for working parent(s)	Expanding crisis services for mental health and substance use disorders	Expanding open hours at food banks	Reducing stigma associated with mental health and substance misuse	Increasing the number of substance use disorder providers and services	Reducing the amount of childhood obesity
4	Increasing the number of landlords who accept housing vouchers	Increasing programs for major housing repairs (roofs, windows, etc.)	Reducing stigma associated with mental health and substance misuse	Improving access to high-speed internet and technology	Reducing the amount of opioid misuse	Increasing the number of childcare providers who offer age-appropriate education	Reducing the amount of smoking and vaping
5	Increasing the number of mental health providers in rural communities	Expanding crisis services for mental health and substance use disorders	Increasing programs for major housing repairs (roofs, windows, etc.)	Increasing the number of dentists who serve MaineCare patients	Reducing the amount of childhood obesity	Providing help with the cost of vehicle repairs	Making dental care more affordable

## Needs Prioritization

Survey Rank	Need
1	Increasing the number of affordable childcare providers
2	Increasing the number of affordable housing units
8	Creating more emergency shelter beds for people experiencing homelessness
12	Making public transportation available in rural communities

## Stakeholder Interview Participants

Name	Organization
April Kerr	Consumer Council System of Maine
Jan Collins	Consumer Council System of Maine
Betsy Sawyer-Manter	Seniors Plus
Jeff Kerr	Consumers Council System of Maine
Susan Crane	Farmington Area Ecumenical Ministry
Renee Whitley	Franklin County Children's Task Force
Sabrina LoPizzo	Healthy Community Coalition
Rhonda Palmer	Jay General Assistance
Janet Smith	New Ventures Maine
Betsy Norcross Plourde	Promise Early Education Center
Nancy Allen	RSU 9 Adult Ed
Scott Landry	Representative District 113
Catherine Ryder	Tri-County Mental Health
Lisa Laflin	United Way TVA