



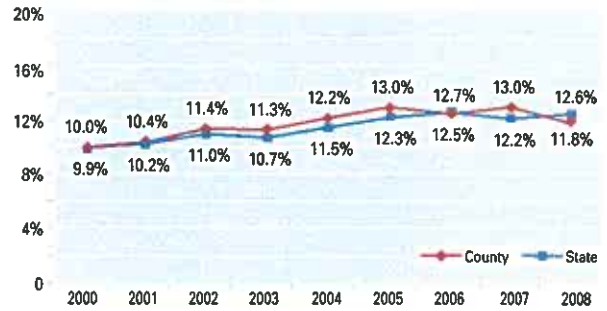
# POVERTY IN MAINE 2010

Maine Community Action Association • Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center

**PROFILE**

- Kennebec County's individual poverty rate for the population as a whole and for those under age 18 in 2008 were both somewhat lower than the state rate.
- Census estimates for 2008 show that Kennebec County has a population age profile that is close to that of the state as a whole.
- Kennebec County's 2008 median household income was slightly lower than the state's. It was about 3% above the 200% poverty level for a four-person household.
- The 2008 "livable wage" estimate in Kennebec County for a four-person household (2 parents, both wage earners, and 2 children) was 2.4 times greater than the poverty level for a four-person household.
- The proportion of net personal income from earnings in Kennebec County in 2008 was about the same as in the state as a whole; the proportion from investments (dividends, interest and rent) was somewhat lower, and the proportion from transfer payments was slightly higher.
- Kennebec County's average unemployment rate in 2009 was slightly lower than in the state as whole.
- In 2006, Kennebec County had about the same proportion of federal income tax filers claiming the earned income tax credit (EITC) as in the state as a whole, and the average amount of the credit was close to the state average.

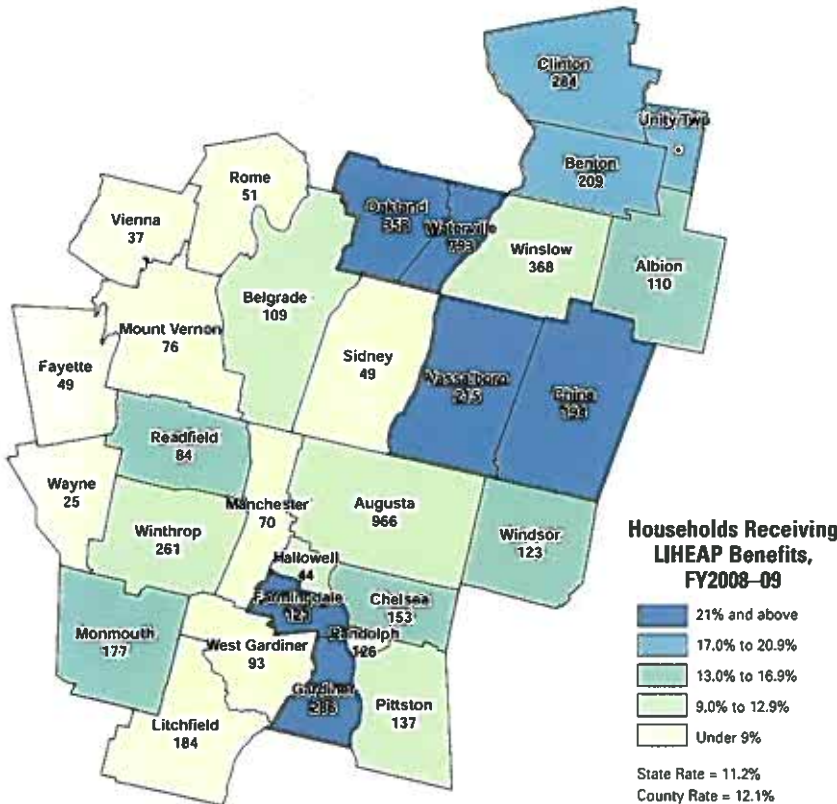
**Poverty Rate Estimates** — % Individuals Below Poverty



- Kennebec County in FY2008-09 had a slightly higher proportion of households and individuals receiving the SNAP benefit than in the state as a whole.
- The proportion of school-age children eligible for free or reduced lunch in FY2009-10 in Kennebec County was about the same as the state average.
- Kennebec County in FY2008-09 had a slightly higher proportion of households and individuals receiving LIHEAP than in the state as a whole. Compared with the state, Kennebec had a slightly higher proportion of single family households and a lower proportion of applicants age 65 and over receiving LIHEAP.

**TREND HIGHLIGHTS**

- Kennebec County's poverty rate was close to the state rate during most of the period from 2000 to 2008.
- The unemployment rate in Kennebec County closely paralleled the state rate from 2002 through 2009. As in the rest of the state, Kennebec County's 2009 unemployment rate was at its highest point in many years, almost twice what it had been in 2002.
- The number of Kennebec County households receiving LIHEAP varied by only a little from FY2001-02 through FY2007-08. With the change in eligibility requirements in FY2008-09, there was a 44.6% increase in the number of households receiving LIHEAP compared with the average over the previous seven years. This was the greatest increase among Maine's counties.
- As in the rest of the state, the number of Kennebec County households receiving the SNAP benefit increased almost every year. Kennebec had an 86.6% increase in the number of households receiving the SNAP benefit from FY2001-02 to FY2008-09.
- From FY2002-03 through FY2009-10, Kennebec County has had about the same percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch as in the state as a whole. As in the state as a whole, the percentage eligible increased each year.



**Households Receiving LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09**

- 21% and above
- 17.0% to 20.9%
- 13.0% to 16.9%
- 9.0% to 12.9%
- Under 9%

State Rate = 11.2%  
County Rate = 12.1%

Source: Derived from LIHEAP household database provided by Maine State Housing Authority.

Numbers are households receiving LIHEAP benefits.  
\* Fewer than 50 total households (Census 2000)

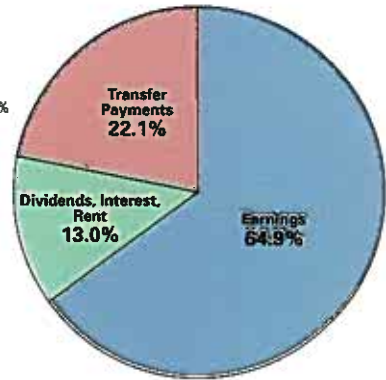
### Poverty, Employment, Income

|   | COUNTY          |       | STATE           |       |
|---|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| <b>Poverty, 2008</b>                          |                 |       |                 |       |
| All individuals                               | 15,280          | 13.1% | 161,170         | 12.6% |
| Age 0-17                                      | 4,252           | 17.1% | 43,943          | 16.5% |
| <b>Unemployment, 2009</b>                     |                 |       |                 |       |
| Labor force (total)                           | 63,552          |       | 703,367         |       |
| Monthly average unemployment rate             | 7.6%            |       | 8.2%            |       |
| <b>Earned Income Tax Credit Filings, 2006</b> |                 |       |                 |       |
| EITC Filers*                                  | 8,519           | 14.9% | 87,791          | 14.1% |
| Average EITC claimed                          | \$1,696         |       | \$1,687         |       |
| <b>Median Household Income, 2008</b>          | <b>\$43,913</b> |       | <b>\$46,419</b> |       |

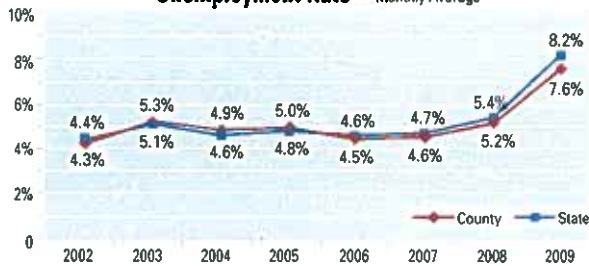
\* Percentage is based on total tax returns filed.

### Per-capita Personal Income by Source, 2008

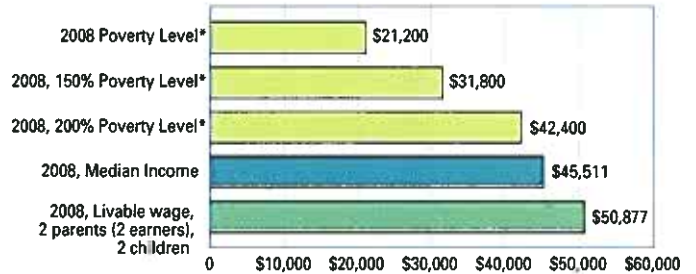
State Personal Income:  
 Net earnings = 63.8%  
 Transfer payments = 20.3%  
 Dividends, interest and rent = 15.8%



### Unemployment Rate — Monthly Average

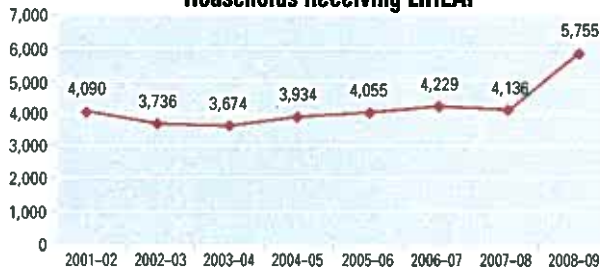


### Poverty and Livable Wages

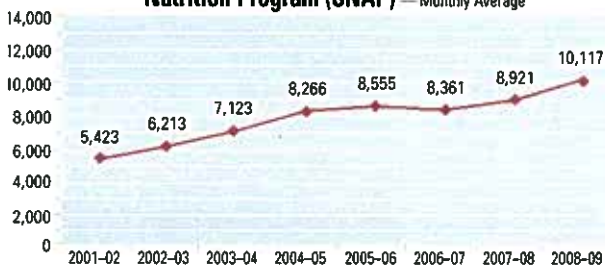


\* DHHS poverty guidelines for four-person household.

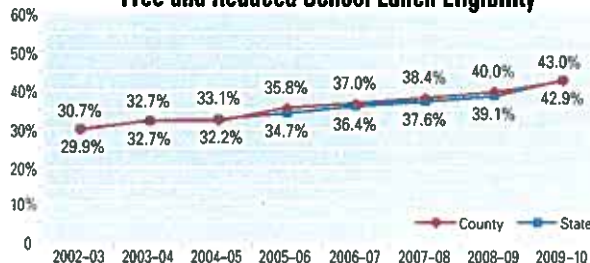
### Households Receiving LIHEAP



### Households Participating in Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) — Monthly Average



### Free and Reduced School Lunch Eligibility

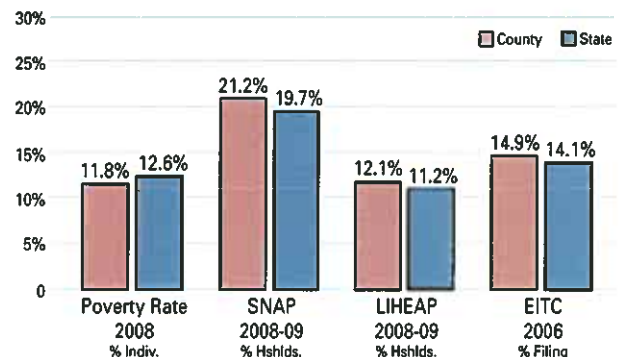


### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09

|  | COUNTY   |       | STATE    |       |
|--|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| <b>SNAP, Monthly Average*</b>                    |          |       |          |       |
| Cases (households)                               | 10,117   | 21.2% | 102,014  | 19.7% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 20,145   | 17.2% | 204,379  | 16.0% |
| <b>LIHEAP*</b>                                   |          |       |          |       |
| Households                                       | 5,755    | 12.1% | 57,937   | 11.2% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 14,768   | 12.6% | 139,132  | 10.9% |
| <b>LIHEAP Client Household Characteristics**</b> |          |       |          |       |
| Single person households                         | 2,979    | 51.8% | 28,932   | 49.9% |
| Receiving SNAP Benefits                          | 3,132    | 54.4% | 30,922   | 53.4% |
| Applicants age 65 & over                         | 1,967    | 34.2% | 21,635   | 37.3% |
| Annualized household income (average)            | \$16,349 |       | \$16,101 |       |

\* Percentage cases or households is % of total county or state households in 2000 Census, percentage recipients is % of county or state population in 2000 Census.

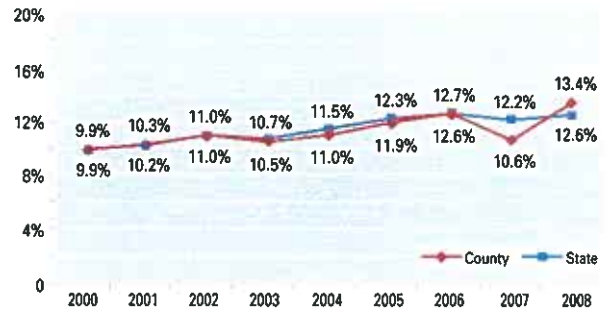
\*\*Percentage is % of LIHEAP households.



**PROFILE**

- Knox County's individual poverty rate for the population as a whole and for those under age 18 in 2008 were both somewhat higher than the state rate.
- Census estimates for 2008 show that Knox County has a somewhat higher proportion of the population age 65 and older and a somewhat lower proportion age 18 and under than in the state as a whole.
- Knox County's 2008 median household income was somewhat lower than the state's. It was slightly below the 200% poverty level for a four-person household.
- The 2008 "livable wage" estimate in Knox County for a four-person household (2 parents, both wage earners, and 2 children) was 2.6 times greater than the poverty level for a four-person household.
- The proportion of net personal income from earnings in Knox County in 2008 was lower than in the state as a whole, and from investments was considerably higher. Among Maine counties Knox had the second highest proportion of personal income from investments. This pattern is consistent with the presence of a higher proportion of well-off retirees.
- Knox County's average unemployment rate in 2009 was slightly lower than in the state as whole.
- In 2006, Knox County had about the same proportion of federal income tax filers claiming the earned income tax credit (EITC) as the state

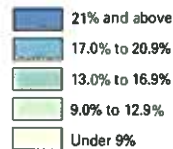
**Poverty Rate Estimates — % Individuals Below Poverty**



average, and the average amount of the credit was close to the state average.

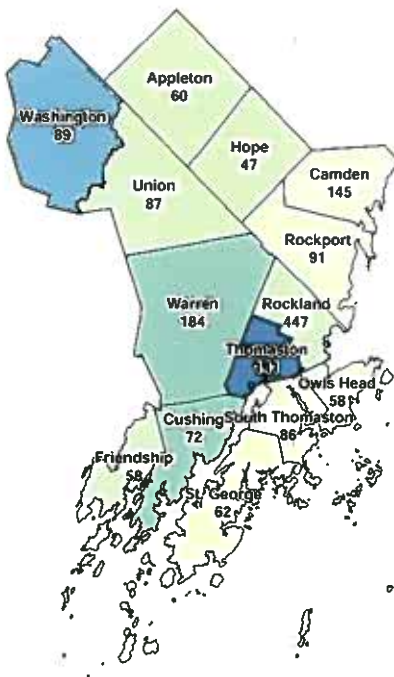
- Knox County in FY2008-09 had a slightly lower proportion of households and individuals receiving the SNAP benefit than in the state as a whole.
- The proportion of school-age children eligible for free or reduced lunch in FY2009-10 in Knox County was slightly lower than in the state as a whole.
- Knox County in FY2008-09 had a slightly lower proportion of households and individuals receiving LIHEAP than in the state as a whole. Compared with the state average, Knox had a slightly lower proportion of single family households receiving LIHEAP.

**Households Receiving LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09**



State Rate = 11.2%  
County Rate = 10.2%

Source: Derived from LIHEAP household database provided by Maine State Housing Authority.  
Numbers are households receiving LIHEAP benefits.  
\* Fewer than 50 total households (Census 2000)  
- No households or no data



**TREND HIGHLIGHTS**

- Knox County's poverty rate was generally close to the state's rate from 2000 through 2006. Knox had a dip in its poverty rate in 2007 and an increase to above the state rate in 2008.
- Knox County's unemployment rate from 2002 through 2009 increased more than the state rate, but remained below the state rate. As in the rest of the state, Knox County's 2009 unemployment rate was at its highest point in many years, more than 2.5 times higher than what it had been in 2002.
- The number of Knox County households receiving LIHEAP varied only slightly from FY2001-02 to FY2007-08. With the change in eligibility requirements in FY2008-09, the number of households receiving LIHEAP increased by 23.4% compared with the average over the previous seven years.
  - As in the rest of the state, the number of Knox County households receiving the SNAP benefit increased every year. Knox County had a 124% increase in the number of households receiving the SNAP benefit from FY2001-02 to FY2008-09, the second-highest rate of such increase among Maine's counties.
  - From FY2002-03 to FY2009-10, the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch in Knox County varied somewhat more than in the state as a whole.

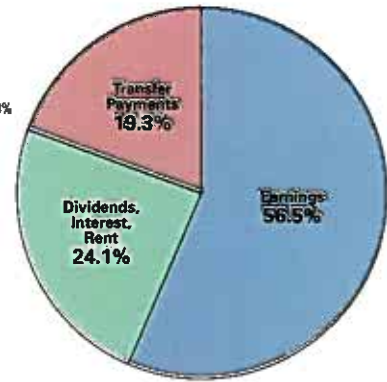
### Poverty, Employment, Income

|   | COUNTY          |       | STATE           |       |
|---|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| <b>Poverty, 2008</b>                          |                 |       |                 |       |
| All individuals                               | 4,144           | 10.6% | 161,170         | 12.6% |
| Age 0-17                                      | 1,162           | 14.6% | 43,943          | 16.5% |
| <b>Unemployment, 2009</b>                     |                 |       |                 |       |
| Labor force (total)                           | 20,549          |       | 703,367         |       |
| Monthly average unemployment rate             | 7.9%            |       | 8.2%            |       |
| <b>Earned Income Tax Credit Filings, 2006</b> |                 |       |                 |       |
| EITC Filers*                                  | 2,819           | 14.5% | 87,791          | 14.1% |
| Average EITC claimed                          | \$1,629         |       | \$1,687         |       |
| <b>Median Household Income, 2008</b>          | <b>\$44,619</b> |       | <b>\$46,419</b> |       |

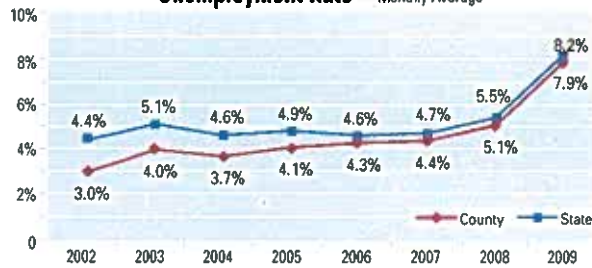
\* Percentage is based on total tax returns filed.

### Per-capita Personal Income by Source, 2008

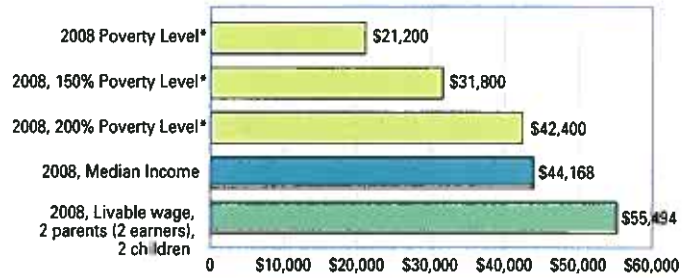
State Personal Income:  
 Net earnings = 63.8%  
 Transfer payments = 20.3%  
 Dividends, interest and rent = 15.8%



### Unemployment Rate — Monthly Average

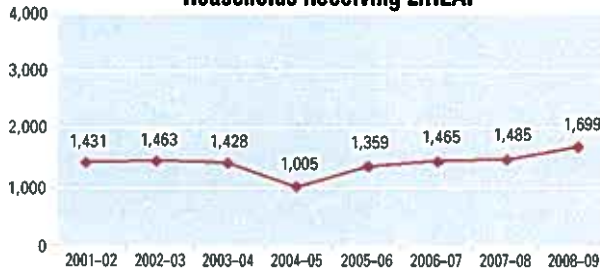


### Poverty and Livable Wages

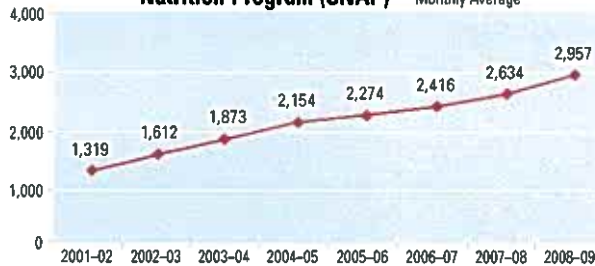


\* DHHS poverty guidelines for four-person household.

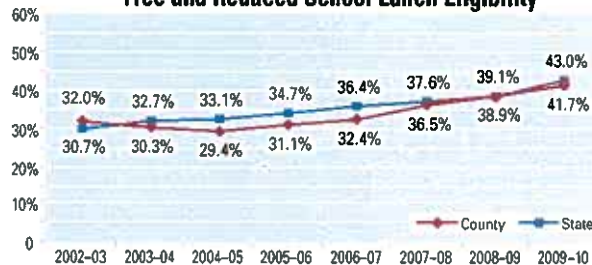
### Households Receiving LIHEAP



### Households Participating in Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) — Monthly Average



### Free and Reduced School Lunch Eligibility

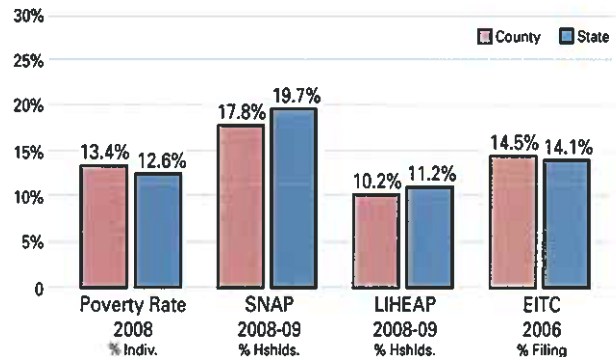


### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09

|  | COUNTY   |       | STATE    |       |
|--|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| <b>SNAP, Monthly Average*</b>                    |          |       |          |       |
| Cases (households)                               | 2,957    | 17.8% | 102,014  | 19.7% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 5,968    | 15.1% | 204,379  | 16.0% |
| <b>LIHEAP*</b>                                   |          |       |          |       |
| Households                                       | 1,699    | 10.2% | 57,937   | 11.2% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 3,779    | 9.5%  | 139,132  | 10.9% |
| <b>LIHEAP Client Household Characteristics**</b> |          |       |          |       |
| Single person households                         | 808      | 47.6% | 28,932   | 49.9% |
| Receiving SNAP Benefits                          | 895      | 52.7% | 30,922   | 53.4% |
| Applicants age 65 & over                         | 613      | 36.1% | 21,635   | 37.3% |
| Annualized household income (average)            | \$16,177 |       | \$16,101 |       |

\* Percentage cases or households is % of total county or state households in 2000 Census, percentage recipients is % of county or state population in 2000 Census.

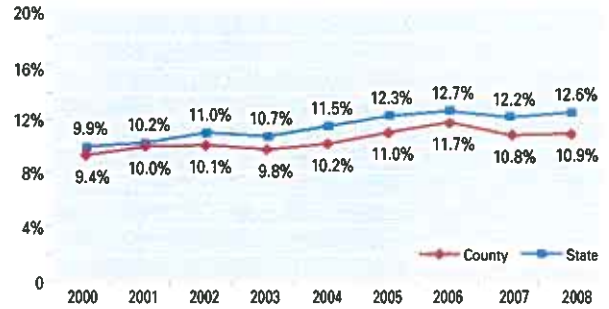
\*\* Percentage is % of LIHEAP households.



**PROFILE**

- Lincoln County's individual poverty rate for the population as a whole 2008 was lower than the state rate. The poverty rate for those under age 18 was almost two percentage points higher than the state rate, indicating that children are disproportionately represented in the below-poverty population.
- Census estimates for 2008 show that Lincoln is the oldest county in the state, with 19.2% of the population age 65 or older and the highest median age of 45.7. The county continues to see in-migration of well-off retirees from out of state.
- Median household income in 2008 Lincoln County was above the state's. Lincoln County's median household income was about 12% above the 200% poverty level for a four-person household.
- The 2008 "livable wage" estimate in Lincoln County for a four-person household (2 parents, both wage earners, and 2 children) was more than 2.5 times greater than the poverty level for a four-person household.
- The proportion of net personal income from earnings in Lincoln County in 2008 was considerably lower than in the state as a whole, and income from investments was considerably higher. Among Maine counties Lincoln had the highest proportion of personal income from investments, and the second lowest from earnings. This pattern is consistent with the presence of a higher proportion of well-off retirees.
- Lincoln County's average unemployment rate in 2009 was lower than the state's, and was the third lowest rate among Maine's counties.

**Poverty Rate Estimates — % Individuals Below Poverty**



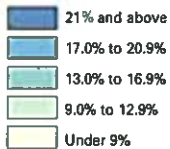
- In 2006, Lincoln County had about the same proportion of federal income tax filers claiming the earned income tax credit (EITC) as the state average, and the average amount of the credit was close to the state average.
- Lincoln County in FY2008-09 had a somewhat lower proportion of households and individuals receiving the SNAP benefit than in the state as a whole.
- The proportion of school-age children eligible for free or reduced lunch in FY2009-10 in Lincoln County was about the same as the state average. Since Lincoln County residents tended to be lower than the state average in receipt of other benefits, the relatively higher school lunch eligibility figures may be related to the higher rate of child poverty in the county compared with poverty in the county population as a whole.
- Lincoln County in FY2008-09 had a lower proportion of households and individuals receiving LIHEAP than in the state as a whole. Compared with the state, Lincoln County had a higher proportion of LIHEAP applicants age 65 and over.

**TREND HIGHLIGHTS**

- Lincoln County's poverty rate varied somewhat more than the state's from 2000 to 2008. The county's poverty rate was below that of the state during this period.
- Lincoln County's unemployment rate from 2002 to 2009 increased more than in the state's, though it remained below the state rate. As in the rest of the state, Lincoln County's 2009 unemployment rate was at its highest point in many years, and was 2.5 times higher than in 2002.
- The number of Lincoln County households receiving LIHEAP varied by only a little from FY2001-02 through FY2007-08. With the change in eligibility requirements in FY2008-09, the number of households receiving LIHEAP increased by 12% compared with the average over the previous seven years, which was a lesser increase than in most counties.
- As in the rest of the state, the number of Lincoln County households receiving the SNAP benefit increased every year. Lincoln had a 113% increase in the number of households receiving the SNAP benefit from FY2001-02 to FY2008-09, the third-highest rate of such increase among Maine's counties.
- From FY2002-03 to FY2009-10, Lincoln County's percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch increased somewhat more than in the state as a whole. Since FY2006-07, Lincoln has had a higher percentage of eligible students than in the state as a whole.



**Households Receiving LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09**



State Rate = 11.2%  
County Rate = 8.8%

Source: Derived from LIHEAP household database provided by Maine State Housing Authority.

Numbers are households receiving LIHEAP benefits.  
\* Fewer than 50 total households (Census 2000)  
- No households or no data

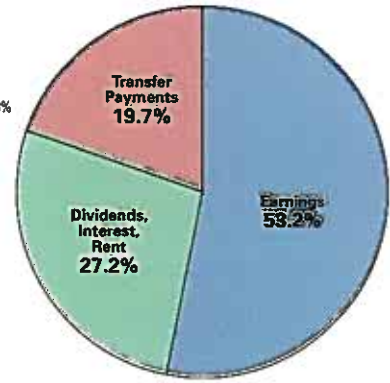
### Poverty, Employment, Income

|   | COUNTY          |       | STATE           |       |
|---|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| <b>Poverty, 2008</b>                          |                 |       |                 |       |
| All individuals                               | 3,723           | 10.9% | 161,170         | 12.6% |
| Age 0-17                                      | 1,160           | 18.2% | 43,943          | 16.5% |
| <b>Unemployment, 2009</b>                     |                 |       |                 |       |
| Labor force (total)                           | 18,045          |       | 703,367         |       |
| Monthly average unemployment rate             | 7.5%            |       | 8.2%            |       |
| <b>Earned Income Tax Credit Filings, 2006</b> |                 |       |                 |       |
| EITC Filers*                                  | 2,503           | 14.3% | 87,791          | 14.1% |
| Average EITC claimed                          | \$1,664         |       | \$1,687         |       |
| <b>Median Household Income, 2008</b>          | <b>\$49,862</b> |       | <b>\$46,419</b> |       |

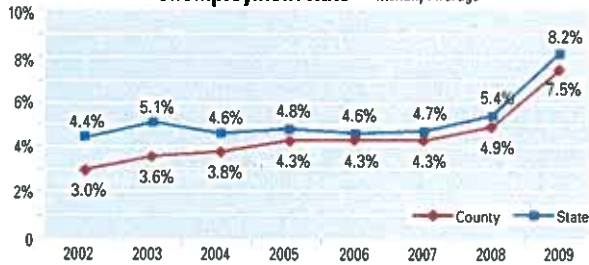
\* Percentage is based on total tax returns filed.

### Per-capita Personal Income by Source, 2008

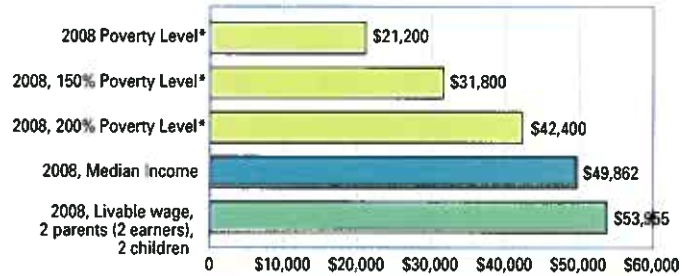
State Personal Income:  
 Net earnings = 63.8%  
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 Dividends, interest and rent = 15.8%



### Unemployment Rate — Monthly Average

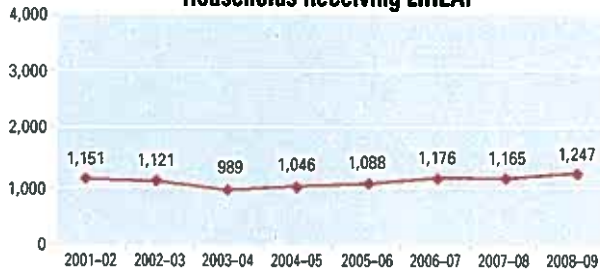


### Poverty and Livable Wages



\* DHHS poverty guidelines for four-person household.

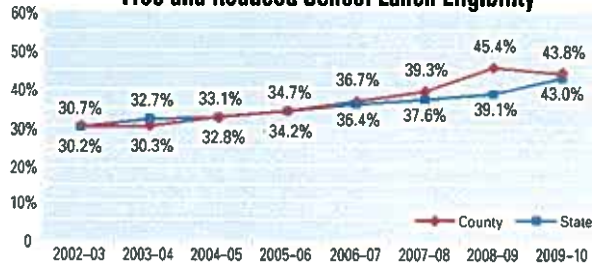
### Households Receiving LIHEAP



### Households Participating in Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) — Monthly Average



### Free and Reduced School Lunch Eligibility

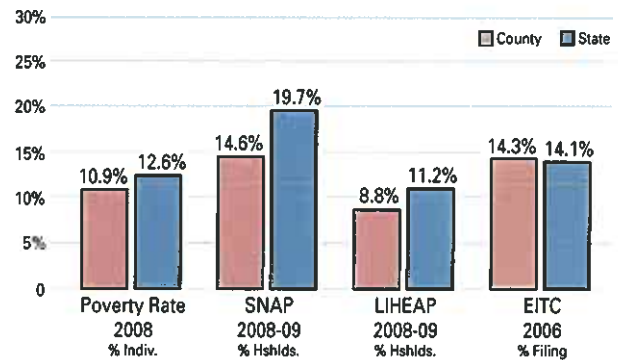


### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09

|  | COUNTY   |       | STATE    |       |
|--|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| <b>SNAP, Monthly Average*</b>                    |          |       |          |       |
| Cases (households)                               | 2,063    | 14.6% | 102,014  | 19.7% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 4,510    | 13.4% | 204,379  | 16.0% |
| <b>LIHEAP*</b>                                   |          |       |          |       |
| Households                                       | 1,247    | 8.8%  | 57,937   | 11.2% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 2,798    | 8.3%  | 139,132  | 10.9% |
| <b>LIHEAP Client Household Characteristics**</b> |          |       |          |       |
| Single person households                         | 628      | 50.4% | 28,932   | 49.9% |
| Receiving SNAP Benefits                          | 653      | 52.4% | 30,922   | 53.4% |
| Applicants age 65 & over                         | 514      | 41.2% | 21,635   | 37.3% |
| Annualized household income (average)            | \$15,861 |       | \$16,101 |       |

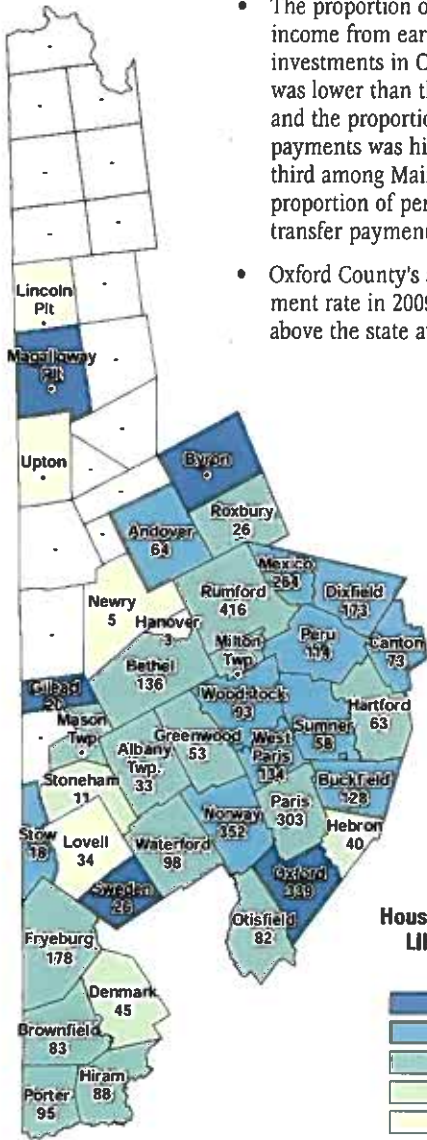
\* Percentage cases or households is % of total county or state households in 2000 Census, percentage recipients is % of county or state population in 2000 Census.

\*\*Percentage is % of LIHEAP households.



**PROFILE**

- Oxford County's 2008 individual poverty rate for the population as a whole and for those under 18 was higher than the state rate.
- Oxford County has a somewhat higher proportion of its population in the 65 and over age group, and a somewhat smaller proportion under age 18 than in the state as a whole.
- Median household income in Oxford County in 2008 was lower than the state's median household income. It was 7% below the 200% poverty level for a four-person household.
- The 2008 "livable wage" estimate for a four-person household (2 parents, both wage earners, and 2 children) in Oxford County was 2.4 times the poverty level for a four-person household.



- The proportion of 2008 net personal income from earnings and from investments in Oxford County was lower than the state average, and the proportion from transfer payments was higher. Oxford ranked third among Maine's counties in the proportion of personal income from transfer payments.
- Oxford County's average unemployment rate in 2009 was considerably above the state average.

Numbers are households receiving LIHEAP benefits.  
 \* Fewer than 50 total households (Census 2000)  
 - No households or no data

**Households Receiving LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09**

- 21% and above
- 17.0% to 20.9%
- 13.0% to 16.9%
- 9.0% to 12.9%
- Under 9%

State Rate = 11.2%  
 County Rate = 16.5%

Source: Derived from LIHEAP household database provided by Maine State Housing Authority.

**Poverty Rate Estimates — % Individuals Below Poverty**



- In 2006, Oxford County had a higher proportion of federal income tax filers claiming the earned income tax credit (EITC) than in the state as a whole. The average amount of the credit was slightly higher than the state average.
- Oxford County was considerably above the state average in FY2008-09 in the proportion of households and of the total population receiving the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit.
- The proportion of school-age children eligible for free or reduced lunch in FY2009-10 in Oxford County was considerably higher than in the state as a whole.
- Oxford County had a higher proportion of households and individuals receiving LIHEAP in FY2008-09 than in the state as a whole. Compared with the state, Oxford had a higher proportion of single family households receiving LIHEAP.

**TREND HIGHLIGHTS**

- Oxford County's poverty rate showed more variability than the state rate. However, Oxford's rate remained above the state's from 2000 to 2008.
- The unemployment rate trend in Oxford County from 2002 through 2009 generally mirrored that of the state, though Oxford's rate was higher. As in the rest of the state, Oxford County's 2009 unemployment rate was at its highest point in many years, about 1.7 times higher than in 2002.
- The number of Oxford County households receiving LIHEAP varied somewhat from FY2001-02 to FY2007-08. With the change in eligibility requirements in FY2008-09, Oxford had a 31.5% increase in the number of households receiving LIHEAP compared with the average over the previous seven years.
- As in the rest of the state, the number of households in Oxford County receiving the SNAP benefit increased every year. Oxford had an 83.8% increase in the number of households receiving the SNAP benefit from FY2001-02 to FY2008-09.
- Since FY2002-03, Oxford County has had a considerably higher percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch than in the state as a whole. The percentage eligible increased or stayed close to the same every year from FY2002-03 through FY2009-10.



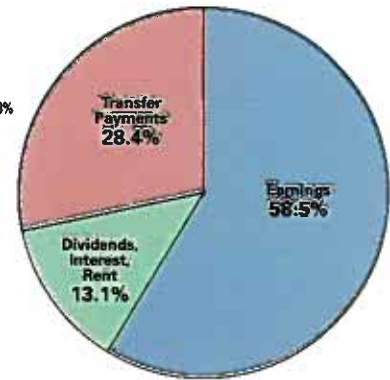
### Poverty, Employment, Income

|   | COUNTY          |       | STATE           |       |
|---|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| <b>Poverty, 2008</b>                          |                 |       |                 |       |
| All individuals                               | 7,853           | 14.1% | 161,170         | 12.6% |
| Age 0-17                                      | 2,313           | 20.8% | 43,943          | 16.5% |
| <b>Unemployment, 2009</b>                     |                 |       |                 |       |
| Labor force (total)                           | 28,371          |       | 703,367         |       |
| Monthly average unemployment rate             | 11.1%           |       | 8.2%            |       |
| <b>Earned Income Tax Credit Filings, 2006</b> |                 |       |                 |       |
| EITC Filers*                                  | 4,563           | 18.1% | 87,791          | 14.1% |
| Average EITC claimed                          | \$1,710         |       | \$1,687         |       |
| <b>Median Household Income, 2008</b>          | <b>\$41,526</b> |       | <b>\$46,419</b> |       |

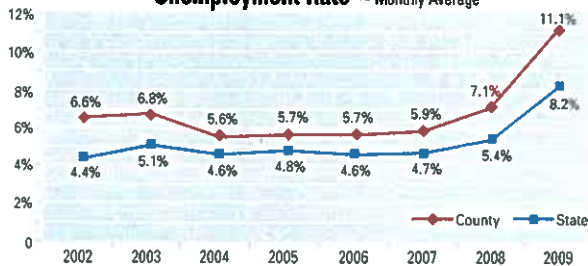
\* Percentage is based on total tax returns filed.

### Per-capita Personal Income by Source, 2008

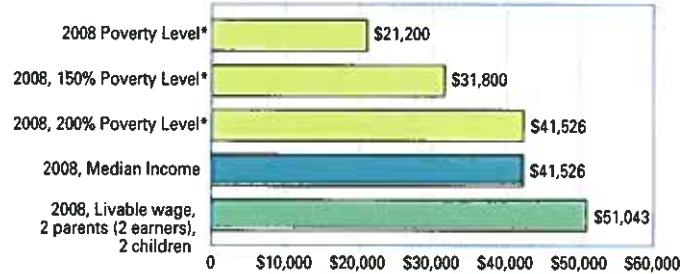
State Personal Income:  
 Net earnings = 63.8%  
 Transfer payments = 20.3%  
 Dividends, interest and rent = 15.8%



### Unemployment Rate — Monthly Average

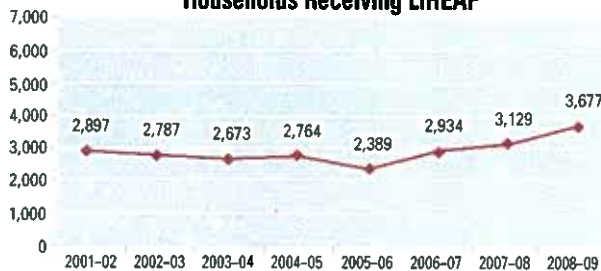


### Poverty and Livable Wages

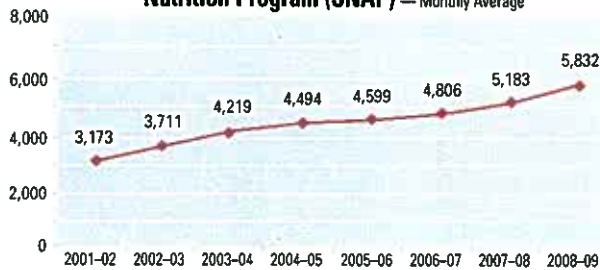


\* DHHS poverty guidelines for four-person household.

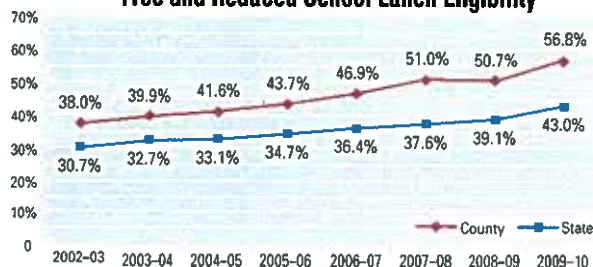
### Households Receiving LIHEAP



### Households Participating in Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) — Monthly Average



### Free and Reduced School Lunch Eligibility

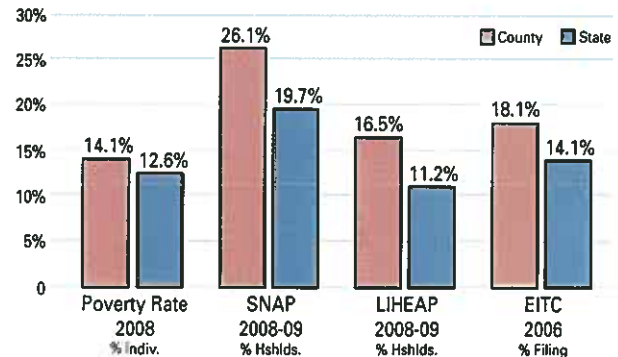


### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09

|  | COUNTY   |       | STATE    |       |
|--|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| <b>SNAP, Monthly Average*</b>                    |          |       |          |       |
| Cases (households)                               | 5,832    | 26.1% | 102,014  | 19.7% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 12,029   | 22.0% | 204,379  | 16.0% |
| <b>LIHEAP*</b>                                   |          |       |          |       |
| Households                                       | 3,677    | 16.5% | 57,937   | 11.2% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 8,812    | 16.1% | 139,132  | 10.9% |
| <b>LIHEAP Client Household Characteristics**</b> |          |       |          |       |
| Single person households                         | 1,728    | 47.0% | 28,932   | 49.9% |
| Receiving SNAP Benefits                          | 1,984    | 54.0% | 30,922   | 53.4% |
| Applicants age 65 & over                         | 1,324    | 36.0% | 21,635   | 37.3% |
| Annualized household income (average)            | \$15,922 |       | \$16,101 |       |

\* Percentage cases or households is % of total county or state households in 2000 Census; percentage recipients is % of county or state population in 2000 Census.

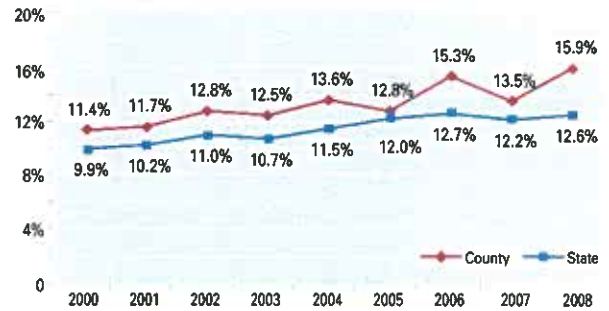
\*\*Percentage is % of LIHEAP households.



## PROFILE

- Penobscot County's 2008 individual poverty rate for the population as a whole and for those under age 18 were both higher than the state rate.
- Penobscot County has a younger population relative to other counties in the state. In 2008 Census estimates, it had the highest proportion in the 18–64 age group among Maine's counties, and had the lowest median age (39.8). This age distribution may be influenced by the large college-student population in the county.
- Penobscot county's 2008 median household income was lower than the state's. It was about 4% below the 200% poverty level for a four-person household.
- The 2008 "livable wage" estimate in Penobscot County for a four-person household (2 parents, both wage earners, and 2 children) was 2.5 times greater than the poverty level for a four-person household.
- The proportion of net personal income from earnings in Penobscot County in 2008 was about the same as in the state as a whole; the proportion from investments was lower; and the proportion from transfer payments was higher.
- Penobscot County's average unemployment rate in 2009 was about the same as the state rate.
- In 2006, Penobscot County had about the same proportion of federal income tax filers claiming the earned income tax credit (EITC) as the state average, and the average amount of the credit was close to the state average.
- Penobscot County in FY2008–09 had a slightly higher proportion of households and individuals receiving the SNAP benefit than in the state as a whole.

## Poverty Rate Estimates — % Individuals Below Poverty

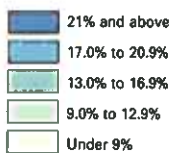


- The proportion of school-age children eligible for free or reduced lunch in FY2009–10 in Penobscot County was slightly higher than in the state as a whole.
- Penobscot County in FY2008–09 had a slightly higher proportion of households and individuals receiving LIHEAP than in the state as a whole. Compared with the state, Penobscot had a higher proportion of single family households and a considerably lower proportion of applicants age 65 and over receiving LIHEAP.

## TREND HIGHLIGHTS

- Penobscot County's poverty rate varied more than that of the state as a whole from 2000 to 2008, but remained above the state rate.
- The unemployment rate trend in Penobscot County generally paralleled the state's in most years, with Penobscot's unemployment rate higher than the state rate. As in the rest of the state, Penobscot County's 2009 unemployment rate was at its highest point in many years, almost twice what it had been in 2002.
- The number of Penobscot County households receiving LIHEAP varied slightly from FY2001–02 to FY2007–08. With the change in eligibility requirements in FY2008–09, the number of households receiving LIHEAP increased 23.5% compared with the average over the previous seven years.
- As in the rest of the state, the number of Penobscot County households receiving the SNAP benefit increased every year. Penobscot had a 94.2% increase in the number of households receiving the benefit from FY2001–02 to FY2008–09.
- From FY2002–03 to FY2009–10, Penobscot County has had a slightly higher percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch than in the state as a whole.

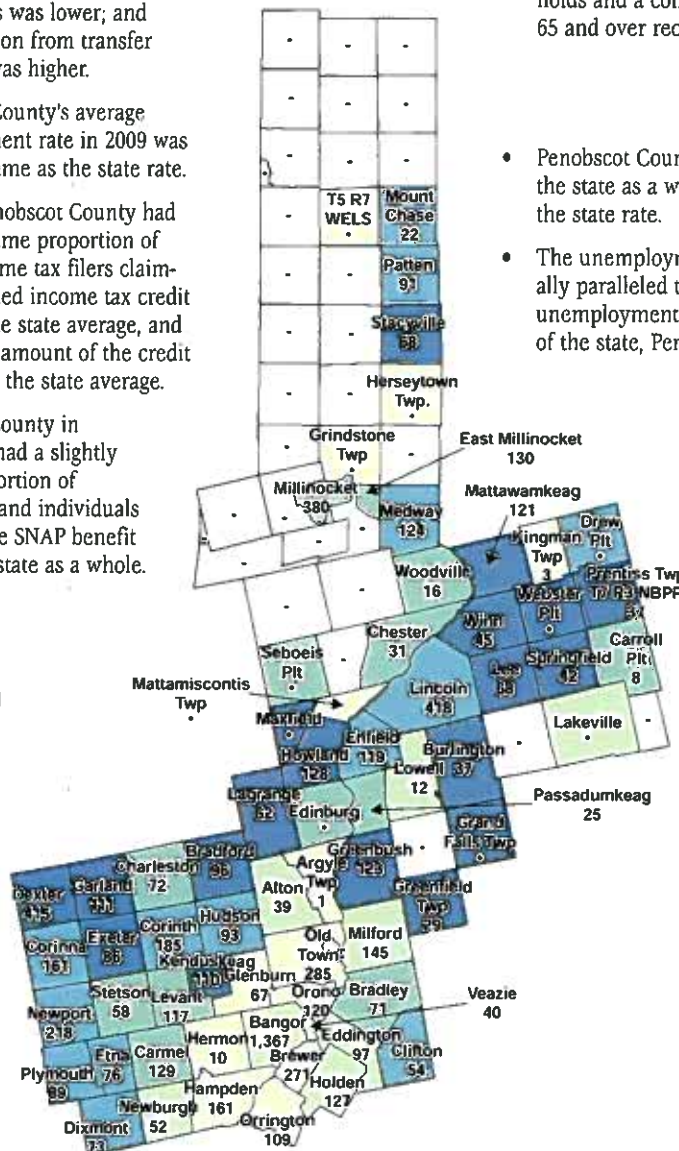
### Households Receiving LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008–09



State Rate = 11.2%  
County Rate = 12.5%

Source: Derived from LIHEAP household database provided by Maine State Housing Authority.

Numbers are households receiving LIHEAP benefits.  
\* Fewer than 50 total households (Census 2000)  
- No households or no data



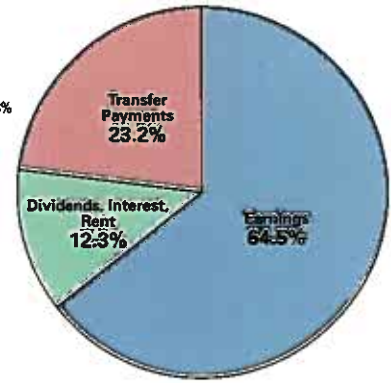
### Poverty, Employment, Income

|   | COUNTY          |       | STATE           |       |
|---|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| <b>Poverty, 2008</b>                          |                 |       |                 |       |
| All individuals                               | 22,543          | 15.9% | 161,170         | 12.6% |
| Age 0-17                                      | 5,416           | 18.6% | 43,943          | 16.5% |
| <b>Unemployment, 2009</b>                     |                 |       |                 |       |
| Labor force (total)                           | 79,108          |       | 703,367         |       |
| Monthly average unemployment rate             | 8.3%            |       | 8.2%            |       |
| <b>Earned Income Tax Credit Filings, 2006</b> |                 |       |                 |       |
| EITC Filers*                                  | 10,138          | 15.1% | 87,791          | 14.1% |
| Average EITC claimed                          | \$1,695         |       | \$1,687         |       |
| <b>Median Household Income, 2008</b>          | <b>\$42,704</b> |       | <b>\$46,419</b> |       |

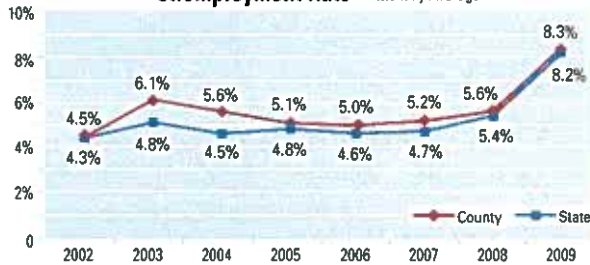
\* Percentage is based on total tax returns filed.

### Per-capita Personal Income by Source, 2008

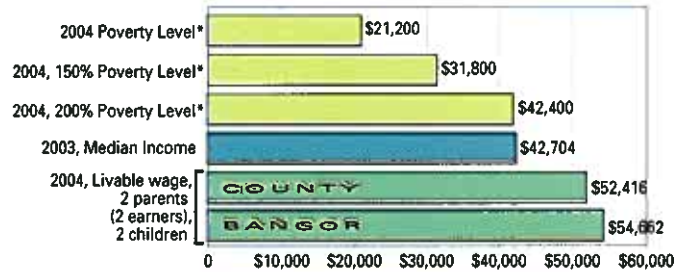
State Personal Income:  
 Net earnings = 63.8%  
 Transfer payments = 20.3%  
 Dividends, interest and rent = 15.8%



### Unemployment Rate — Monthly Average

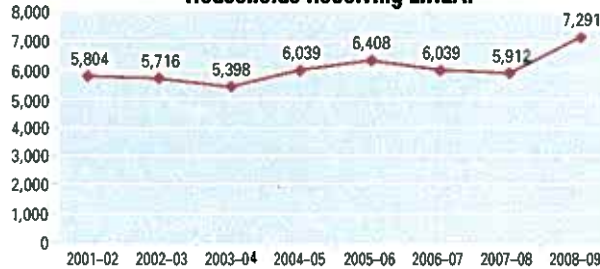


### Poverty and Livable Wages

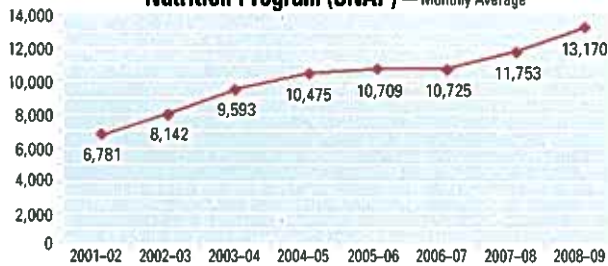


\* DHHS poverty guidelines for four-person household.

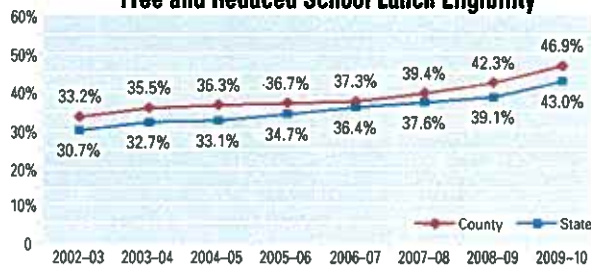
### Households Receiving LIHEAP



### Households Participating in Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) — Monthly Average



### Free and Reduced School Lunch Eligibility

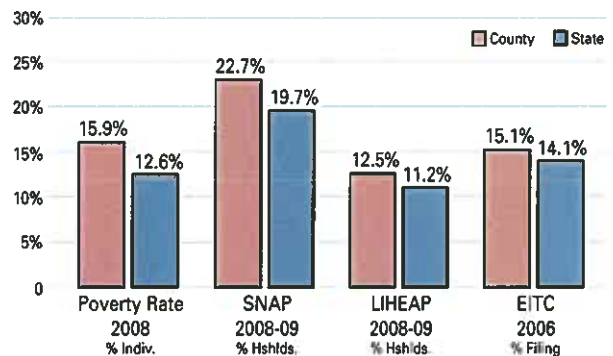


### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09

|  | COUNTY   |       | STATE    |       |
|--|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| <b>SNAP, Monthly Average*</b>                    |          |       |          |       |
| Cases (households)                               | 13,170   | 22.7% | 102,014  | 19.7% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 25,466   | 17.6% | 204,379  | 16.0% |
| <b>LIHEAP*</b>                                   |          |       |          |       |
| Households                                       | 7,291    | 12.5% | 57,937   | 11.2% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 17,034   | 11.8% | 139,132  | 10.9% |
| <b>LIHEAP Client Household Characteristics**</b> |          |       |          |       |
| Single person households                         | 3,285    | 45.1% | 28,932   | 49.9% |
| Receiving SNAP benefits                          | 4,112    | 56.4% | 30,922   | 53.4% |
| Applicants age 65 & over                         | 2,246    | 30.8% | 21,635   | 37.3% |
| Annualized household income (average)            | \$16,022 |       | \$16,101 |       |

\* Percentage cases or households is % of total county or state households in 2000 Census, percentage recipients is % of county or state population in 2000 Census.

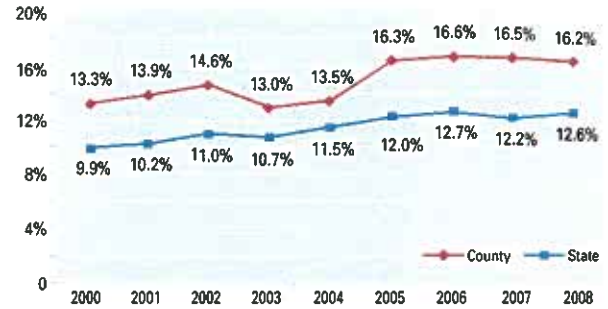
\*\*Percentage is % of LIHEAP households.



**PROFILE**

- Piscataquis County's 2008 individual poverty rate for the population as a whole and for those under 18 was considerably higher than the state's. Piscataquis had the second highest child poverty rate among Maine's counties.
- Piscataquis has an older population relative to other counties. In 2008 Census estimates, the county had a higher proportion age 65 and older and a lower proportion under age 18. The median age of 45.4 was the second oldest among Maine's counties.
- Median household income in Piscataquis County in 2008 was considerably lower than the state's, and was second lowest among Maine's counties. It was about 21% below the 200% poverty level for a four-person household.
- The 2008 "livable wage" estimate for a four-person household (2 parents, both wage earners, and 2 children) in Piscataquis County was 2.4 times the poverty level for a four-person household.
- The proportion of 2008 net personal income from transfer payments in Piscataquis County was considerably higher than in the state as a whole, and the proportion from earnings and from investments was considerably lower.
- Piscataquis County's unemployment rate in 2009 was substantially above the state's. The county had the highest unemployment rate among Maine's counties.

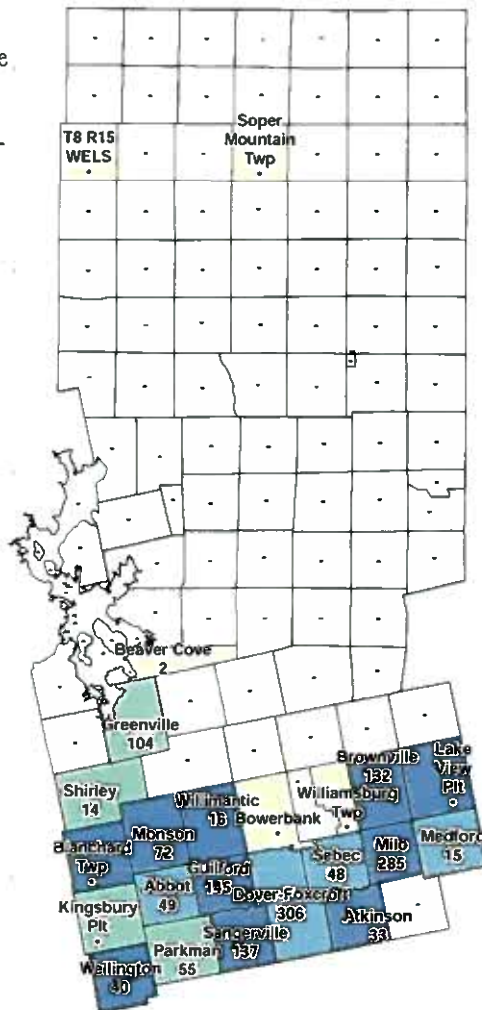
**Poverty Rate Estimates** — % Individuals Below Poverty



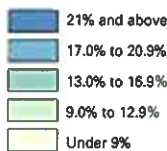
- In 2006, Piscataquis County had a considerably higher proportion of federal tax filers claiming the EITC than in the state as a whole, and the average amount of the credit was the third highest in the state.
- Piscataquis County was above the state average in FY2008-09 in the proportion of households and of the total population receiving the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit.
  - The proportion of school-age children eligible for free or reduced lunch in FY2009-10 in Piscataquis County was considerably higher than in the state as a whole. Piscataquis had the second highest school lunch eligibility rate among Maine's counties.
- Piscataquis County had a considerably higher proportion of households and individuals receiving LIHEAP in FY2008-09 than in the state as a whole.

**TREND HIGHLIGHTS**

- Piscataquis County's poverty rate had more variability than the state's. It remained considerably above the state rate from 2002 to 2009.
- The unemployment rate in Piscataquis County paralleled the state rate most years from 2002 to 2009, but the county's rate was much higher. As in the rest of the state, the Piscataquis 2009 unemployment rate was at its highest point in many years, about 1.8 times greater than it had been in 2002.
- The number of Piscataquis County households receiving LIHEAP varied only slightly from FY2001-02 to FY2007-08. With the change in eligibility requirements in FY2008-09, the number of households increased by 19% compared with the average over the previous seven years.
- As in the rest of the state, the number of Piscataquis County households receiving the SNAP benefit increased every year. Piscataquis had a 74.6% increase in the number of households receiving the SNAP benefit from FY2001-02 to FY2008-09.
- Since FY2002-03, Piscataquis County has had a considerably higher percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch than in the state as a whole.



**Households Receiving LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09**



State Rate = 11.2%  
County Rate = 20.5%

Source: Derived from LIHEAP household database provided by Maine State Housing Authority.

Numbers are households receiving LIHEAP benefits.  
\* Fewer than 50 total households (Census 2000)  
- No households or no data

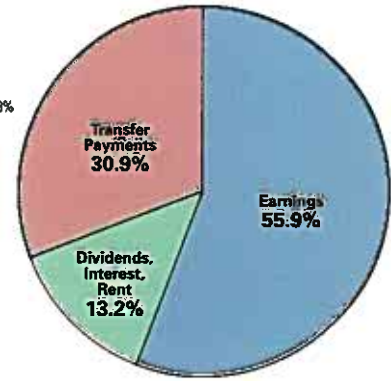
### Poverty, Employment, Income

|   | COUNTY          |       | STATE           |       |
|---|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| <b>Poverty, 2008</b>                          |                 |       |                 |       |
| All individuals                               | 2,707           | 16.2% | 161,170         | 12.6% |
| Age 0-17                                      | 815             | 26.1% | 43,943          | 16.5% |
| <b>Unemployment, 2009</b>                     |                 |       |                 |       |
| Labor force (total)                           | 7,594           |       | 703,367         |       |
| Monthly average unemployment rate             | 12.4%           |       | 8.2%            |       |
| <b>Earned Income Tax Credit Filings, 2006</b> |                 |       |                 |       |
| EITC Filers*                                  | 1,484           | 19.2% | 87,791          | 14.1% |
| Average EITC claimed                          | \$1,744.34      |       | \$1,687         |       |
| <b>Median Household Income, 2008</b>          | <b>\$35,144</b> |       | <b>\$46,419</b> |       |

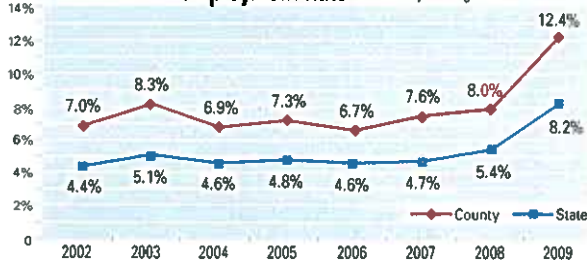
\* Percentage is based on total tax returns filed.

### Per-capita Personal Income by Source, 2008

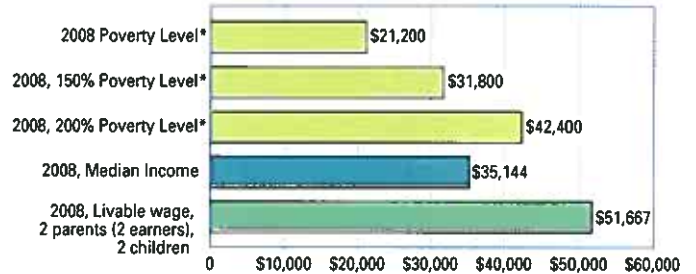
State Personal Income:  
 Net earnings = 63.8%  
 Transfer payments = 20.3%  
 Dividends, interest and rent = 15.8%



### Unemployment Rate — Monthly Average

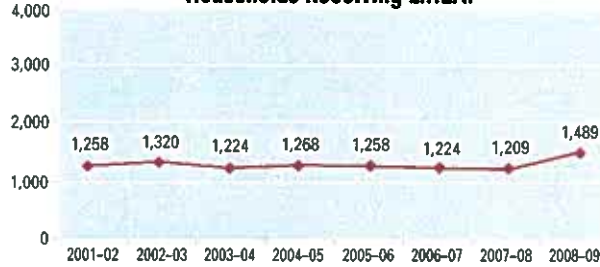


### Poverty and Livable Wages

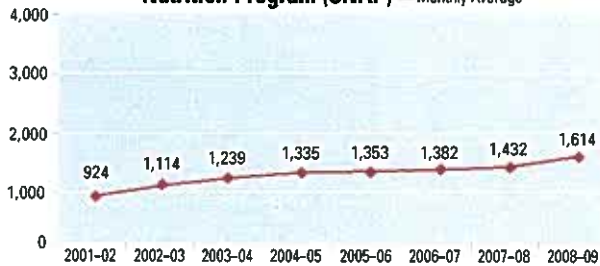


\* DHHS poverty guidelines for four-person household.

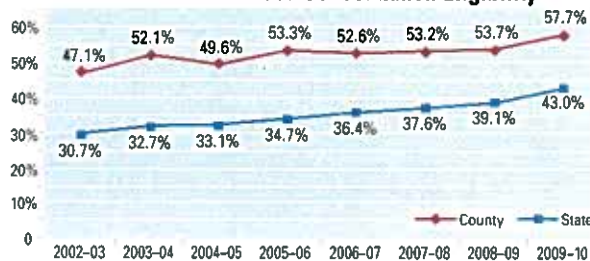
### Households Receiving LIHEAP



### Households Participating in Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) — Monthly Average



### Free and Reduced School Lunch Eligibility

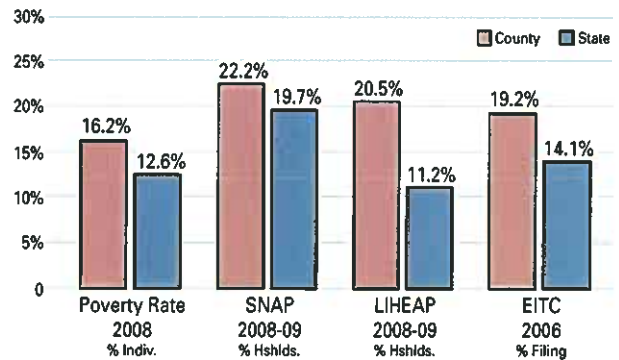


### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09

|  | COUNTY   |       | STATE    |       |
|--|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| <b>SNAP, Monthly Average*</b>                    |          |       |          |       |
| Cases (households)                               | 1,614    | 22.2% | 102,014  | 19.7% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 3,385    | 19.6% | 204,379  | 16.0% |
| <b>LIHEAP*</b>                                   |          |       |          |       |
| Households                                       | 1,489    | 20.5% | 57,937   | 11.2% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 3,433    | 19.9% | 139,132  | 10.9% |
| <b>LIHEAP Client Household Characteristics**</b> |          |       |          |       |
| Single person households                         | 687      | 46.1% | 28,932   | 49.9% |
| Receiving SNAP benefits                          | 794      | 53.3% | 30,922   | 53.4% |
| Applicants age 65 & over                         | 512      | 34.4% | 21,635   | 37.3% |
| Annualized household income (average)            | \$15,413 |       | \$16,101 |       |

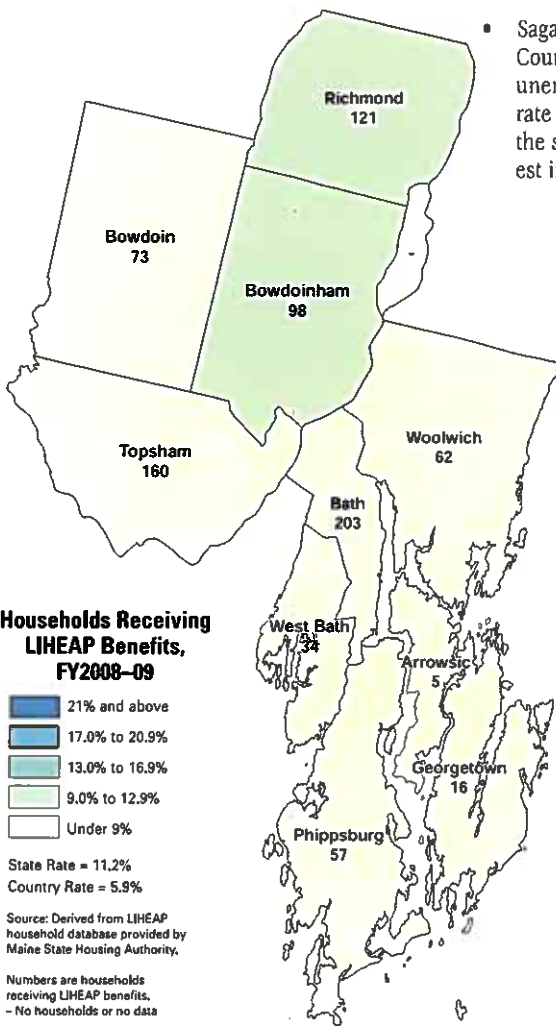
\* Percentage cases or households is % of total county or state households in 2000 Census; percentage recipients is % of county or state population in 2000 Census.

\*\*Percentage is % of LIHEAP households.



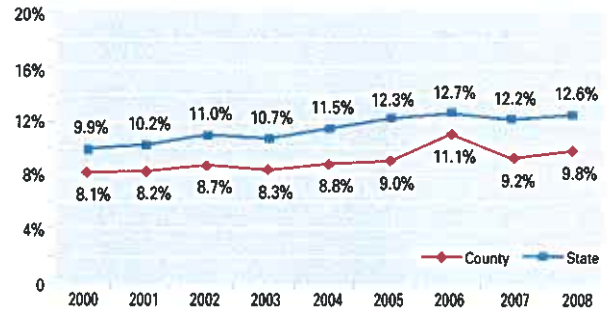
**PROFILE**

- Sagadahoc County's individual poverty rate for the population as a whole and for those under age 18 in 2008 were both lower than the state rate. Sagadahoc had the second lowest overall poverty rate and third lowest child poverty rate among Maine's counties.
- Census estimates for 2008 show that Sagadahoc County has one of the youngest populations in the state. It is tied with Cumberland and Penobscot counties in having the lowest percentage of its population age 65 and over (13.9%), and tied with Androscoggin in having the highest percentage of its population under age 18 (22.6%).
- Sagadahoc County's 2008 median household income was considerably above the state's, and was third highest among Maine's counties. It was about 20% above the 200% poverty level for a four-person household.
- Because of the high cost of living in Sagadahoc County, the 2008 "livable wage" estimate for a four-person household (2 parents, both wage earners, and 2 children) was more than 2.6 times greater than the poverty level for a four-person household.
- The proportion of 2008 net personal income from earnings and from investments in Sagadahoc County considerably higher than in the state as a whole, and the proportion from transfer payments considerably lower.



- Sagadahoc County's average unemployment rate in 2009 was the second lowest in the state.

**Poverty Rate Estimates** — % Individuals Below Poverty



- In 2006, Sagadahoc County had a considerably lower proportion of federal income tax filers claiming the earned income tax credit (EITC) than in the state as a whole. The average amount of the credit was about the same as in the state as a whole.
- Sagadahoc County was considerably below the state average in FY2008-09 in the proportion of households and of the total population receiving the SNAP benefit. Sagadahoc had the lowest percentage of both households and population receiving the SNAP benefit among Maine's counties.
- The proportion of school-age children eligible for free or reduced lunch in FY2009-10 in Sagadahoc County was considerably lower than the state average.
- Sagadahoc County had the second lowest proportion of households receiving LIHEAP among Maine's counties in FY2008-09, and was tied with Cumberland for the lowest proportion of individuals. Compared with the state as a whole, Sagadahoc County had a lower proportion of single family households and households age 65 or over receiving LIHEAP.

**TREND HIGHLIGHTS**

- Sagadahoc County's poverty rate varied less than the rate for state as a whole from 2000 to 2008, with the exception of a temporary upward jump in 2006. Sagadahoc's poverty rate was lower than the state rate during this whole period.
- The unemployment rate in Sagadahoc County varied somewhat from 2002 through 2009, though the general trend was upward. As in the rest of the state, Sagadahoc County's 2009 unemployment rate was at its highest point in many years, almost twice what it had been in 2002.
- The number of Sagadahoc County households receiving LIHEAP varied only slightly from FY2001-02 through FY2007-09. Although there was a change in eligibility requirements in FY2008-09, Sagadahoc is the only one of Maine's counties that did not see an increase in the number of households receiving the benefit that year.
- As in the rest of the state, the number of Sagadahoc County households receiving the SNAP benefit increased almost every year. Sagadahoc had an 80.1% increase in the number of households receiving the SNAP benefit from FY2001-02 to FY2008-09.
- Since FY2002-03, Sagadahoc County has had a lower percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch than in the state as a whole. For unknown reasons, the percentage of eligible students in Sagadahoc varied more than in most Maine counties from FY2002-03 through FY2009-10.

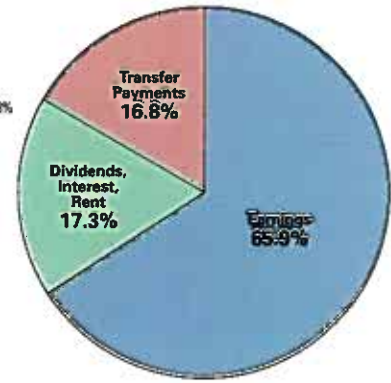
### Poverty, Employment, Income

|   | COUNTY          |       | STATE           |       |
|---|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| <b>Poverty, 2008</b>                          |                 |       |                 |       |
| All individuals                               | 3,540           | 9.8%  | 161,170         | 12.6% |
| Age 0-17                                      | 1,170           | 14.6% | 43,943          | 16.5% |
| <b>Unemployment, 2009</b>                     |                 |       |                 |       |
| Labor force (total)                           | 18,855          |       | 703,367         |       |
| Monthly average unemployment rate             | 7.0%            |       | 8.2%            |       |
| <b>Earned Income Tax Credit Filings, 2006</b> |                 |       |                 |       |
| EITC Filers*                                  | 2,213           | 12.4% | 87,791          | 14.1% |
| Average EITC claimed                          | \$1,690         |       | \$1,687         |       |
| <b>Median Household Income, 2008</b>          | <b>\$53,142</b> |       | <b>\$46,419</b> |       |

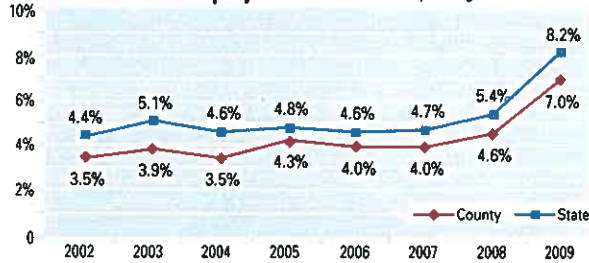
\* Percentage is based on total tax returns filed.

### Per-capita Personal Income by Source, 2008

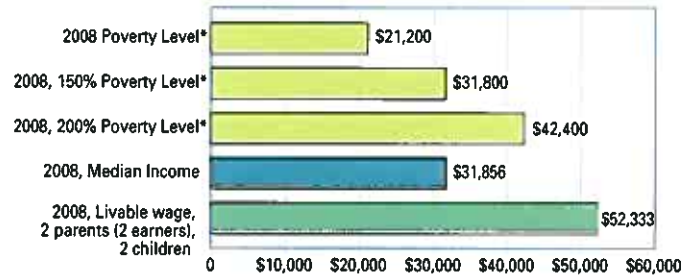
State Personal Income:  
 Net earnings = 63.8%  
 Transfer payments = 20.3%  
 Dividends, interest and rent = 15.8%



### Unemployment Rate — Monthly Average

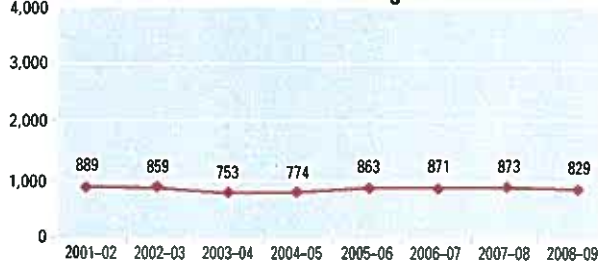


### Poverty and Livable Wages



\* DHHS poverty guidelines for four-person household.

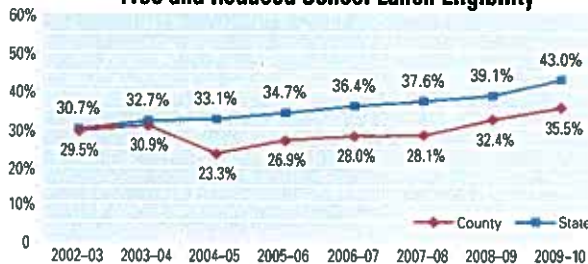
### Households Receiving LIHEAP



### Households Participating in Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) — Monthly Average



### Free and Reduced School Lunch Eligibility

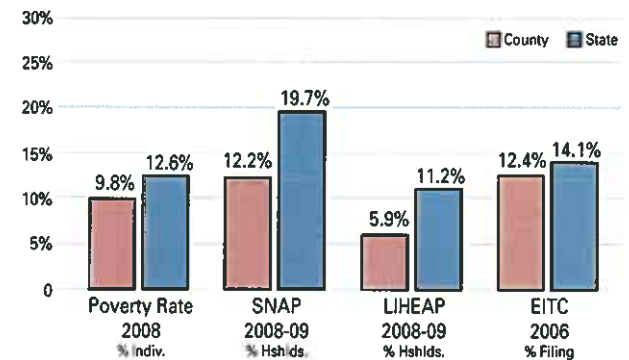


### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09

|  | COUNTY   |       | STATE    |       |
|--|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| <b>SNAP, Monthly Average*</b>                    |          |       |          |       |
| Cases (households)                               | 1,720    | 12.2% | 102,014  | 19.7% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 3,722    | 10.6% | 204,379  | 16.0% |
| <b>LIHEAP*</b>                                   |          |       |          |       |
| Households                                       | 829      | 5.9%  | 57,937   | 11.2% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 1,787    | 5.1%  | 139,132  | 10.9% |
| <b>LIHEAP Client Household Characteristics**</b> |          |       |          |       |
| Single person households                         | 367      | 44.3% | 28,932   | 49.9% |
| Receiving SNAP Benefits                          | 426      | 51.4% | 30,922   | 53.4% |
| Applicants age 65 & over                         | 272      | 32.8% | 21,635   | 37.3% |
| Annualized household income (average)            | \$16,308 |       | \$16,101 |       |

\* Percentage cases or households is % of total county or state households in 2000 Census, percentage recipients is % of county or state population in 2000 Census.

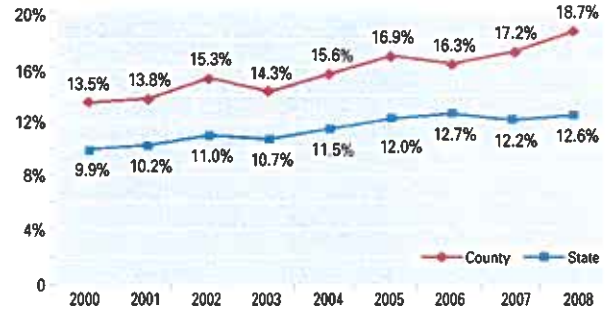
\*\*Percentage is % of LIHEAP households.



PROFILE

- Somerset County's 2008 individual poverty rate for the population as a whole and for those under 18 was considerably higher than the state's. Somerset had the second highest overall poverty rate and the third highest child poverty rate among Maine's counties.
- Somerset County has a slightly older population relative to other counties. In 2008 Census estimates, it had a slightly higher percentage age 65 and older and a slightly lower percentage under age 18.
- Somerset County's 2008 median household income was considerably lower than the state's, and was the third lowest among Maine's counties. It was about 21% below the 200% poverty level for a four-person household.
- The 2008 "livable wage" estimate for a four-person household (2 parents, both wage earners, and 2 children) in Somerset County was 2.3 times the poverty level for a four-person household.
- The proportion of 2008 net personal income from transfer payments in Somerset County was considerably higher than in the state as a whole and the proportion from investments was considerably lower. Somerset had the lowest percentage of personal income from investments among Maine's counties.
- Somerset County's unemployment rate in 2009 was substantially above the state average. Somerset had the third highest unemployment rate among Maine's counties.
- In 2006, Somerset County had a considerably higher proportion of federal tax filers claiming the EITC than in the state as a whole.

Poverty Rate Estimates — % Individuals Below Poverty

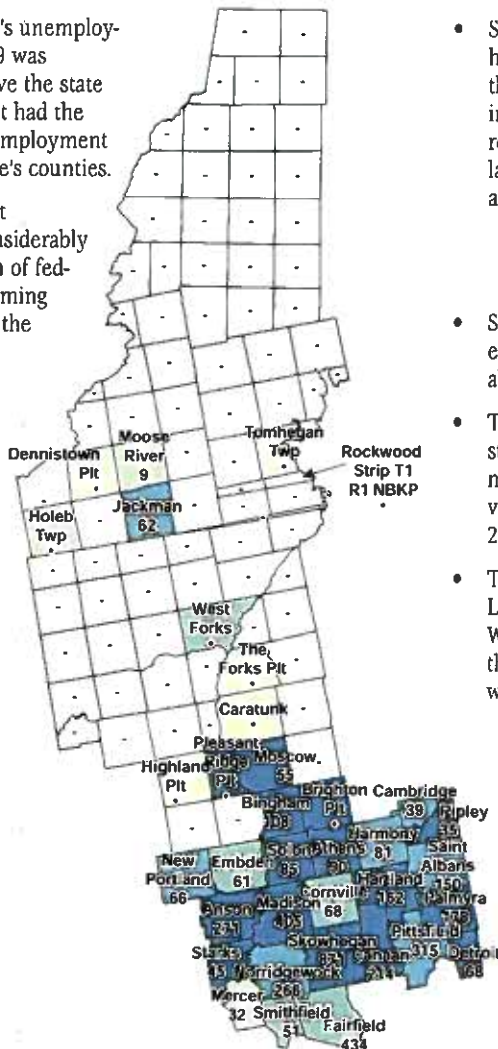


The percentage filing was the second highest among Maine's counties, and the average credit was the highest.

- Somerset County was considerably above the state average in FY2008-09 in the proportion of households and total population receiving the SNAP benefit. It ranked first among Maine's counties in the proportion of both households and individuals receiving this benefit.
- The proportion of Somerset County's school-age children eligible for free or reduced lunch in FY2009-10 was considerably higher than the state average. Somerset had the third highest school lunch eligibility rate among Maine's counties.
- Somerset County had a considerably higher proportion of households and individuals receiving LIHEAP in FY2008-09 than in the state as a whole. Somerset tied with Aroostook in having the second highest percentage of households receiving LIHEAP. Compared with the state, there were larger proportions of households receiving the SNAP benefit and of applicants age 65 and over.

TREND HIGHLIGHTS

- Somerset County's poverty rate trended upward almost every year from 2000 through 2008, and was considerably above the state rate during the entire period.
- The unemployment rate in Somerset County paralleled the state rate from 2002 through 2009, but the county's rate was much higher. The county's poverty rate had already been very high in 2002 so the magnitude of increase from 2002 to 2009 was not as great as in most other counties.
- The number of Somerset County households receiving LIHEAP varied only slightly from FY2001-02 to FY2007-08. With the change in eligibility requirements in FY2008-09, the number of households increased by 38.1% compared with the average over the previous seven years.
  - As in the rest of the state, the number of Somerset County households receiving the SNAP benefit increased almost every year. Somerset had a 76.7% increase in the number of households receiving this benefit from FY2001-02 to FY2008-09.
  - Since FY2002-03, Somerset County has had a considerably higher percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch than in the state as a whole.





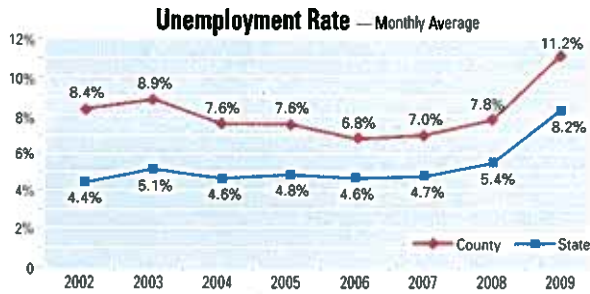
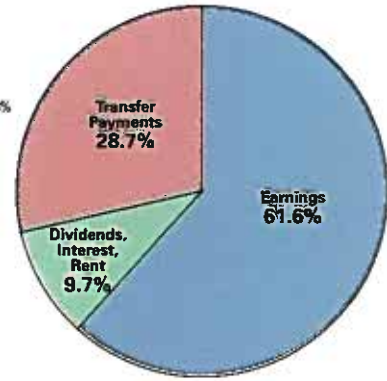
### Poverty, Employment, Income

|   | COUNTY          |       | STATE           |       |
|---|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| <b>Poverty, 2008</b>                          |                 |       |                 |       |
| All individuals                               | 9,429           | 18.7% | 161,170         | 12.6% |
| Age 0-17                                      | 2,579           | 24.8% | 43,943          | 16.5% |
| <b>Unemployment, 2009</b>                     |                 |       |                 |       |
| Labor force (total)                           | 25,121          |       | 703,367         |       |
| Monthly average unemployment rate             | 11.2%           |       | 8.2%            |       |
| <b>Earned Income Tax Credit Filings, 2006</b> |                 |       |                 |       |
| EITC Filers*                                  | 4,456           | 20.0% | 87,791          | 14.1% |
| Average EITC claimed                          | \$1,798         |       | \$1,687         |       |
| <b>Median Household Income, 2008</b>          | <b>\$35,277</b> |       | <b>\$46,419</b> |       |

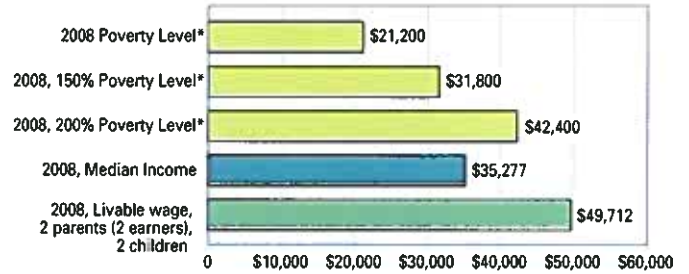
\* Percentage is based on total tax returns filed.

### Per-capita Personal Income by Source, 2008

State Personal Income:  
 Net earnings = 63.8%  
 Transfer payments = 20.3%  
 Dividends, interest and rent = 15.8%

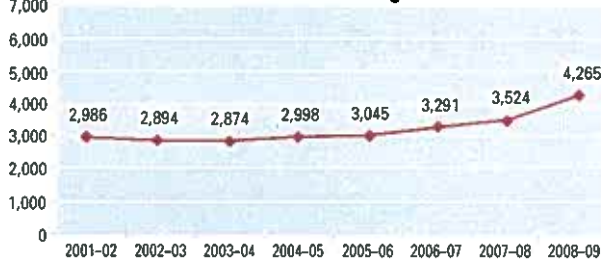


### Poverty and Livable Wages

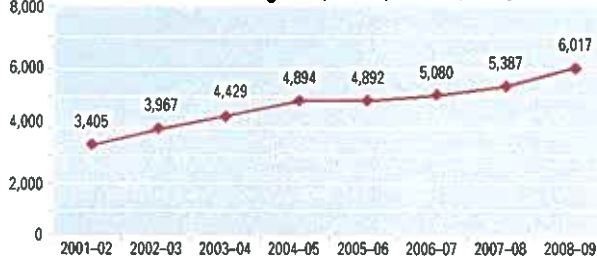


\* DHHS poverty guidelines for four-person household.

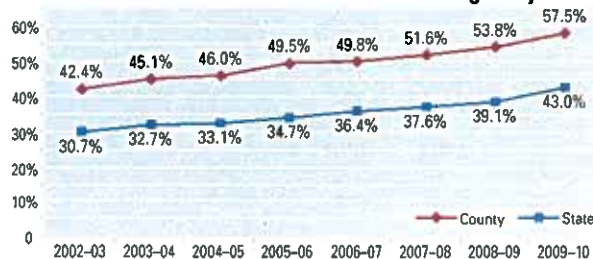
### Households Receiving LIHEAP



### Households Participating in Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) — Monthly Average



### Free and Reduced School Lunch Eligibility

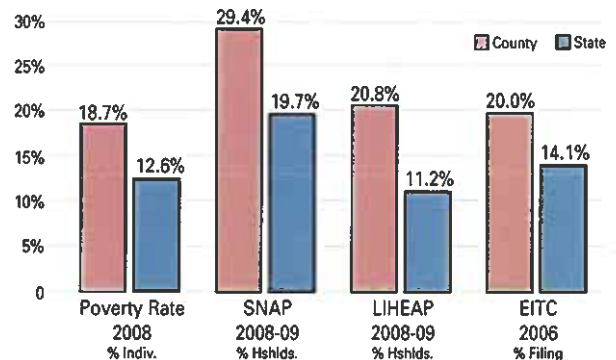


### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09

|  | COUNTY   |       | STATE    |       |
|--|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| <b>SNAP, Monthly Average*</b>                    |          |       |          |       |
| Cases (households)                               | 6,017    | 29.4% | 102,014  | 19.7% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 12,218   | 24.0% | 204,379  | 16.0% |
| <b>LIHEAP*</b>                                   |          |       |          |       |
| Households                                       | 4,265    | 20.8% | 57,937   | 11.2% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 10,715   | 21.1% | 139,132  | 10.9% |
| <b>LIHEAP Client Household Characteristics**</b> |          |       |          |       |
| Single person households                         | 2,115    | 49.6% | 28,932   | 49.9% |
| Receiving SNAP Benefits                          | 2,663    | 62.4% | 30,922   | 53.4% |
| Applicants age 65 & over                         | 2,115    | 49.6% | 21,635   | 37.3% |
| Annualized household income (average)            | \$15,514 |       | \$16,101 |       |

\* Percentage cases or households is % of total county or state households in 2000 Census; percentage recipients is % of county or state population in 2000 Census.

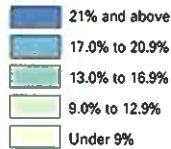
\*\*Percentage is % of LIHEAP households.



**PROFILE**

- Waldo County's individual poverty rate for the population as a whole in 2008 was the same as the state's. For those under 18, Waldo's rate of 19.3% was higher than the state rate of 16.5%, indicating that children are disproportionately represented in the below-poverty population.
- Waldo County's population age distribution is comparable to that of the state as a whole, though Waldo has a slightly smaller proportion in the under 18 age group, and slightly higher proportions in the age 18-64 and 65 and over groups.
- Median household income in Waldo County in 2008 was somewhat lower than the state's median household income. It was just slightly below the 200% poverty level for a four-person household.
- The 2008 "livable wage" estimate for a four-person household (2 parents, both wage earners, and 2 children) in Waldo County was 2.6 times the poverty level for a four-person household.
- The proportion of net personal income from earnings and transfer payments in Waldo County in 2008 was somewhat higher than in the state as a whole, and the proportion from investments was lower.

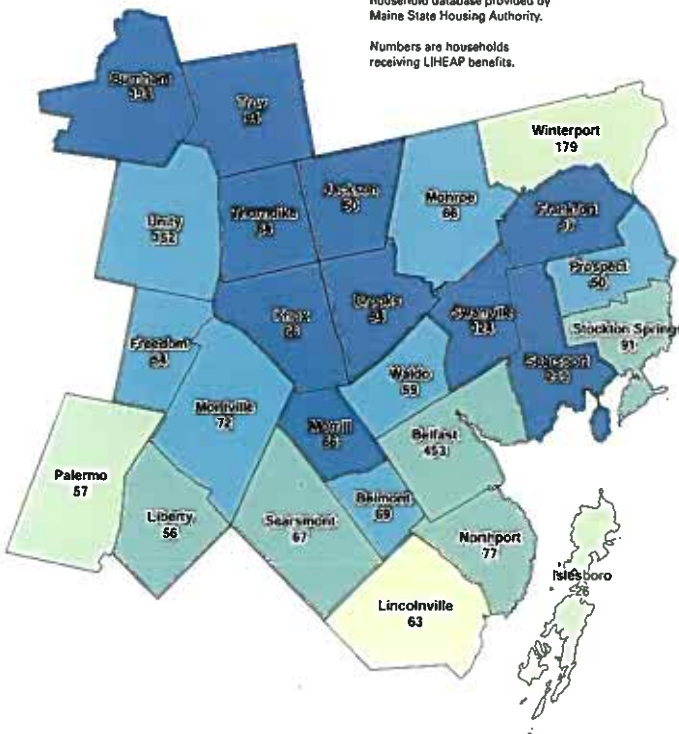
**Households Receiving LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09**



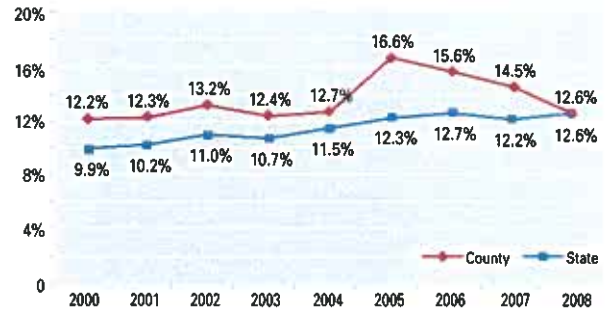
State Rate = 11.2%  
County Rate = 17.8%

Source: Derived from LIHEAP household database provided by Maine State Housing Authority.

Numbers are households receiving LIHEAP benefits.



**Poverty Rate Estimates — % Individuals Below Poverty**



- Waldo County's average unemployment rate in 2009 was slightly above the state average.
- In 2006, Waldo County had a higher proportion of federal income tax filers claiming the earned income tax credit (EITC) than in the state as a whole, and the average amount of the credit was somewhat higher than the state average.
- Waldo County was above the state average in FY2008-09 in the proportion of households and of the total population receiving the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit.
- The proportion of school-age children eligible for free or reduced lunch in FY2009-10 in Waldo County was higher than the state average.
- Waldo County had a higher proportion of households and individuals receiving LIHEAP in FY2008-09 than in the state as a whole. Compared with the state, there were somewhat lower proportions of single family households and of applicants age 65 and over in Waldo County.

**TREND HIGHLIGHTS**

- Waldo County's poverty rate varied a good deal more than the state rate from 2002 to 2008. Waldo's poverty rate was above the state rate throughout most of this period, reaching a peak in 2005 before declining to the same rate as the state in 2008.
- The unemployment rate in Waldo County from 2002 through 2009 has generally mirrored the state's. Waldo's unemployment rate was slightly below the state's in 2002 and 2003, but since then Waldo's rate has remained somewhat above the state rate.
- The number of Waldo County households receiving LIHEAP varied only slightly from FY2001-02 to FY2007-08. With the change in eligibility requirements in FY2008-09, there was a 22.0% increase in Waldo households receiving LIHEAP compared with the average over the previous seven years.
- As in the rest of the state, the number of Waldo County households receiving the SNAP benefit increased almost every year. Waldo had over a 100% increase in the number of households receiving the SNAP benefit from FY2001-02 to FY2008-09.
- Since FY2002-03, Waldo County has had a higher percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch than in the state as a whole. The percentage eligible increased most years from FY2002-03 to FY2009-10.

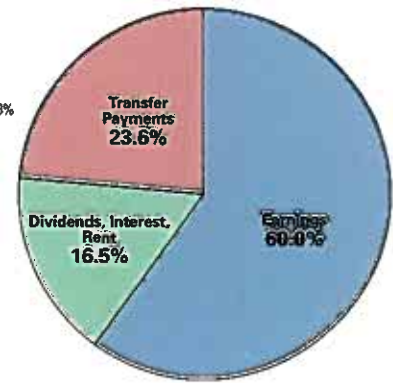
### Poverty, Employment, Income

|   | COUNTY          |       | STATE           |       |
|---|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| <b>Poverty, 2008</b>                          |                 |       |                 |       |
| All individuals                               | 4,727           | 12.6% | 161,170         | 12.6% |
| Age 0-17                                      | 1,491           | 19.3% | 43,943          | 16.5% |
| <b>Unemployment, 2009</b>                     |                 |       |                 |       |
| Labor force (total)                           | 19,116          |       | 703,367         |       |
| Monthly average unemployment rate             | 9.0%            |       | 8.2%            |       |
| <b>Earned Income Tax Credit Filings, 2006</b> |                 |       |                 |       |
| EITC Filers*                                  | 3,041           | 17.3% | 87,791          | 14.1% |
| Average EITC claimed                          | \$1,746.03      |       | \$1,687         |       |
| <b>Median Household Income, 2008</b>          | <b>\$43,597</b> |       | <b>\$46,419</b> |       |

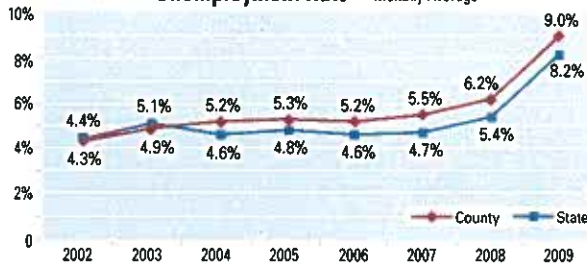
\* Percentage is based on total tax returns filed.

### Per-capita Personal Income by Source, 2008

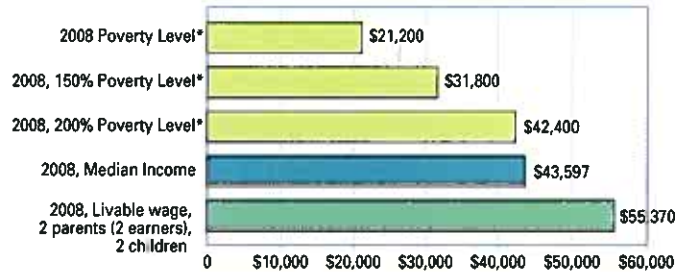
State Personal Income:  
 Net earnings = 63.8%  
 Transfer payments = 20.3%  
 Dividends, interest and rent = 15.8%



### Unemployment Rate — Monthly Average



### Poverty and Livable Wages

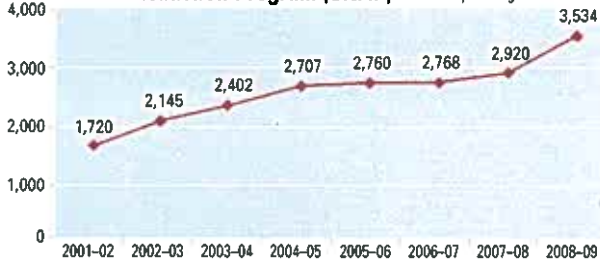


\* DHHS poverty guidelines for four-person household.

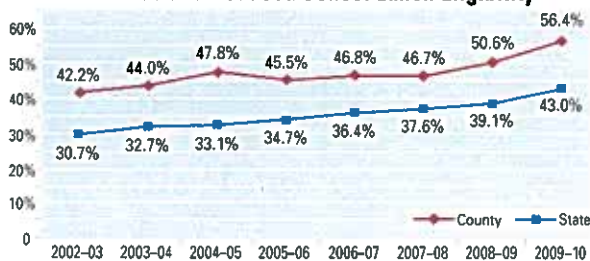
### Households Receiving LIHEAP



### Households Participating in Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) — Monthly Average



### Free and Reduced School Lunch Eligibility

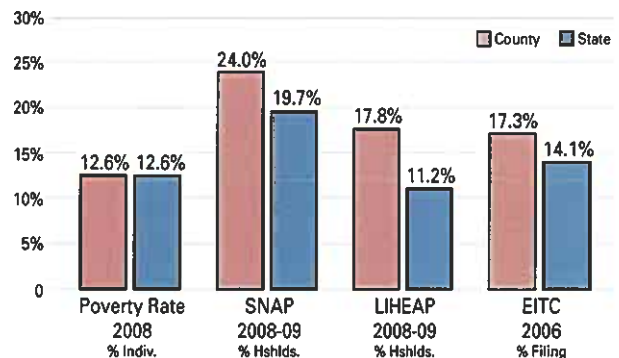


### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09

|  | COUNTY   |       | STATE    |       |
|--|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| <b>SNAP, Monthly Average*</b>                    |          |       |          |       |
| Cases (households)                               | 3,534    | 24.0% | 102,014  | 19.7% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 7,570    | 20.9% | 204,379  | 16.0% |
| <b>LIHEAP*</b>                                   |          |       |          |       |
| Households                                       | 2,619    | 17.8% | 57,937   | 11.2% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 5,734    | 15.8% | 139,132  | 10.9% |
| <b>LIHEAP Client Household Characteristics**</b> |          |       |          |       |
| Single person households                         | 1,130    | 43.1% | 28,932   | 49.9% |
| Receiving SNAP Benefits                          | 1,487    | 56.8% | 30,922   | 53.4% |
| Applicants age 65 & over                         | 816      | 31.2% | 21,635   | 37.3% |
| Annualized household income (average)            | \$15,558 |       | \$16,101 |       |

\* Percentage cases or households is % of total county or state households in 2000 Census, percentage recipients is % of county or state population in 2000 Census.

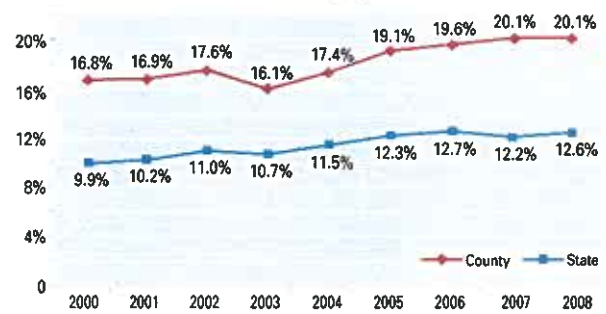
\*\*Percentage is % of LIHEAP households.



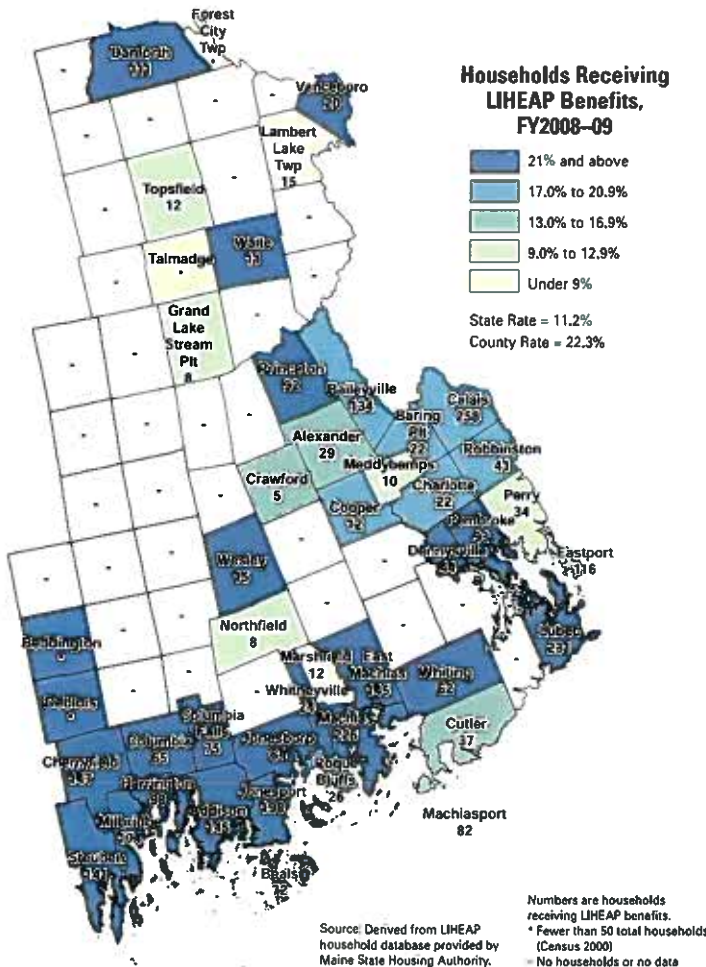
**PROFILE**

- Washington County's 2008 individual poverty rate for the population as a whole and for those under 18 was considerably higher than the state's. Washington had the highest overall and child poverty rates among Maine's counties.
- The county has an older population relative to other counties. In 2008 Census estimates, Washington had the lowest proportion in the working-age group (18-64) among Maine's counties and the second highest age 65 and over.
- Median household income in Washington County in 2008 was substantially lower than the state's, and was the lowest among Maine's counties. It was more than 28% below the 200% poverty level for a four-person household.
- The 2008 "livable wage" estimate for a four-person household (2 parents, both wage earners, and 2 children) in Washington County was 2.4 times the poverty level for a four-person household.
- The proportion of 2008 net personal income from transfer payments in Washington County was substantially higher than in the state as a whole; the proportion from earnings and investments was considerably lower. Washington had the lowest proportion of personal income from earnings and the highest from transfer payments among Maine's counties.
- Washington County's unemployment rate in 2009 was considerably above the state average and was the second highest among Maine's counties.

**Poverty Rate Estimates** — Individuals Below Poverty



- In 2006, Washington County had a considerably higher proportion of federal tax filers claiming the EITC than in the state as a whole. The percentage filing was the highest among Maine's counties, and the average credit was the third highest.
- Washington County was considerably above the state average in FY2008-09 in the proportion of households and individuals receiving the SNAP benefit. It ranked second among Maine's counties in the proportion of both households and individuals receiving this benefit.
- The proportion of Washington County's school-age children eligible for free or reduced lunch in FY2009-10 was substantially higher than in the state as a whole. Washington ranked first among Maine's counties in school-lunch eligibility.
- Washington County had a considerably higher proportion of households and individuals receiving LIHEAP in FY2008-09 than in the state as a whole. It had the highest proportion of LIHEAP households among Maine's counties. Annualized household income of LIHEAP recipients was the lowest among Maine's counties.



**TREND HIGHLIGHTS**

- Washington County's poverty rate trended upward almost every year from 2000 to 2008. The county's poverty rate varied a good deal more than the state's, but remained considerably above the state rate.
- Washington County's unemployment rate varied more than the state's from 2002 to 2009, and was much higher than the state's. The county's unemployment rate had already been very high in 2002 so the magnitude of increase from 2002 to 2009 was not as great as in most other counties.
- The number of Washington County households receiving LIHEAP varied only slightly from FY2001-02 to FY2007-08, though there was a downward trend. With the change in eligibility requirements in FY2008-09, the number of households increased by 15.6% compared with the average over the previous seven years.
- As in the rest of the state, the number of Washington County households receiving the SNAP benefit increased almost every year. Washington had a 63.0% increase in the number of households receiving the benefit from FY2001-02 to FY2008-09.
- Since FY2002-03, Washington County has had a substantially higher percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch than in the state as a whole. Washington had the highest eligibility rate among Maine's counties from FY2002-03 to FY2009-10.

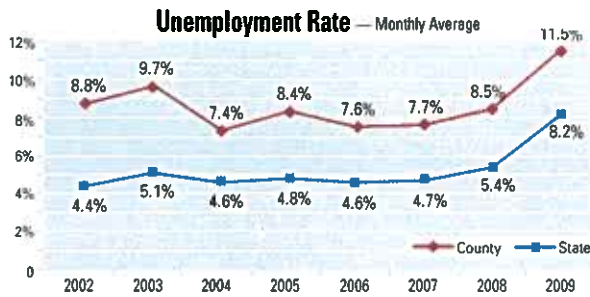
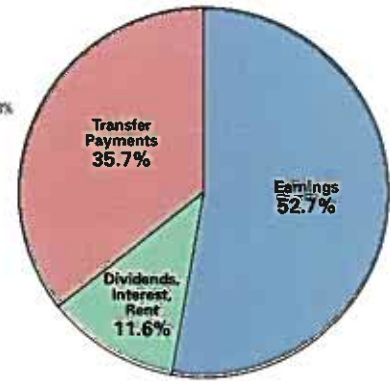
### Poverty, Employment, Income

|   | COUNTY          |       | STATE           |       |
|---|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| <b>Poverty, 2008</b>                          |                 |       |                 |       |
| All individuals                               | 6,335           | 20.1% | 161,170         | 12.6% |
| Age 0-17                                      | 1,827           | 28.7% | 43,943          | 16.5% |
| <b>Unemployment, 2009</b>                     |                 |       |                 |       |
| Labor force (total)                           | 14,643          |       | 703,367         |       |
| Monthly average unemployment rate             | 11.5%           |       | 8.2%            |       |
| <b>Earned Income Tax Credit Filings, 2006</b> |                 |       |                 |       |
| EITC Filers*                                  | 3,088           | 21.5% | 87,791          | 14.1% |
| Average EITC claimed                          | \$1,786         |       | \$1,687         |       |
| <b>Median Household Income, 2008</b>          | <b>\$31,856</b> |       | <b>\$46,419</b> |       |

\* Percentage is based on total tax returns filed.

### Per-capita Personal Income by Source, 2008

State Personal Income:  
 Net earnings = 63.8%  
 Transfer payments = 20.3%  
 Dividends, interest and rent = 15.8%

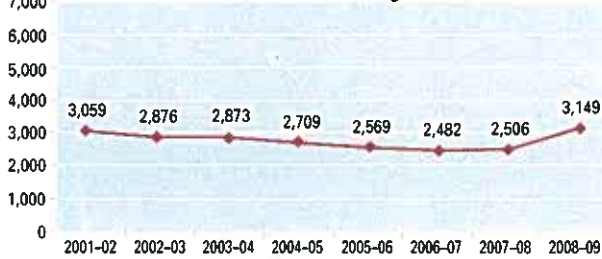


### Poverty and Livable Wages

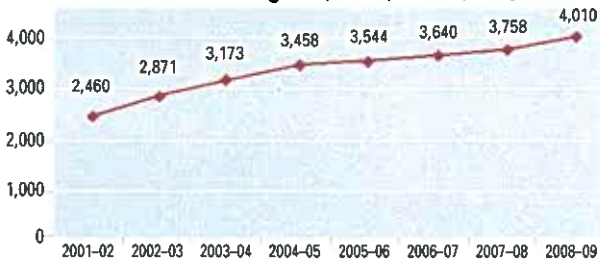


\* DHHHS poverty guidelines for four-person household.

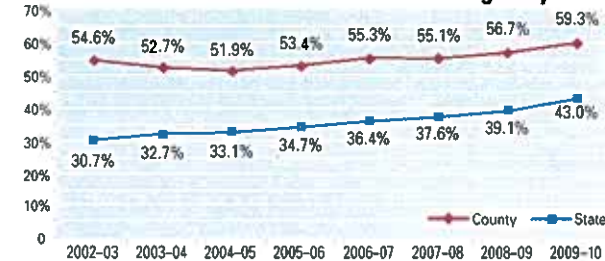
### Households Receiving LIHEAP



### Households Participating in Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) - Monthly Average



### Free and Reduced School Lunch Eligibility

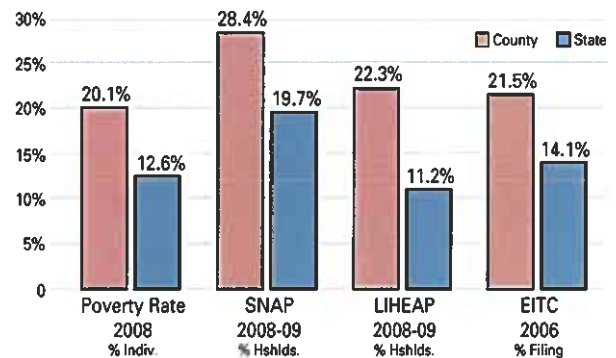


### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09

|  | COUNTY   |       | STATE    |       |
|--|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| <b>SNAP, Monthly Average*</b>                    |          |       |          |       |
| Cases (households)                               | 4,010    | 28.4% | 102,014  | 19.7% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 7,715    | 22.7% | 204,379  | 16.0% |
| <b>LIHEAP*</b>                                   |          |       |          |       |
| Households                                       | 3,149    | 22.3% | 57,937   | 11.2% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 6,696    | 19.7% | 139,132  | 10.9% |
| <b>LIHEAP Client Household Characteristics**</b> |          |       |          |       |
| Single person households                         | 1,367    | 43.4% | 28,932   | 49.9% |
| Receiving SNAP Benefits                          | 1,737    | 55.2% | 30,922   | 53.4% |
| Applicants age 65 & over                         | 1,066    | 33.9% | 21,635   | 37.3% |
| Annualized household income (average)            | \$14,584 |       | \$16,101 |       |

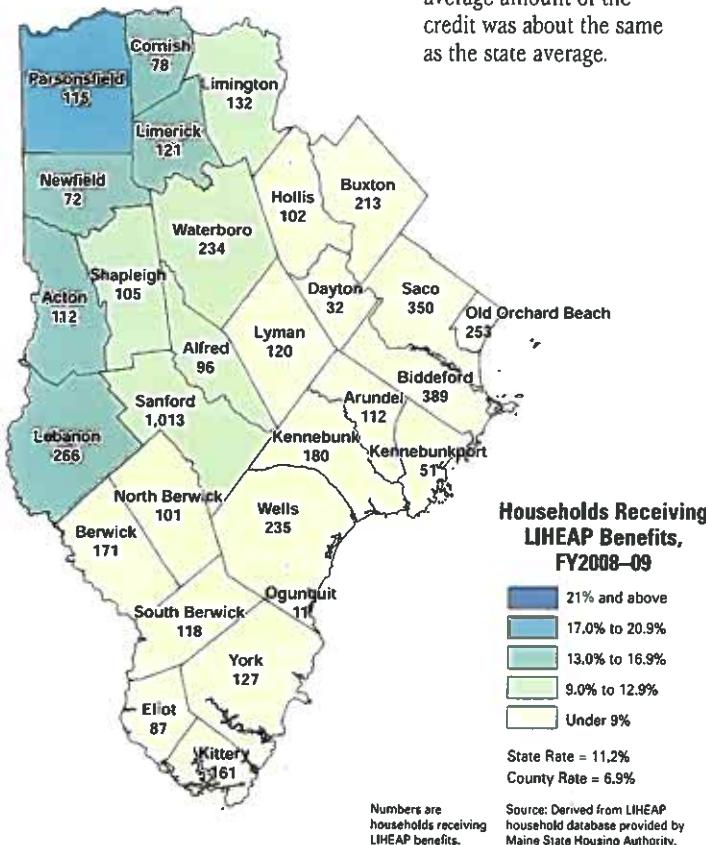
\* Percentage cases or households is % of total county or state households in 2000 Census, percentage recipients is % of county or state population in 2000 Census.

\*\*Percentage is % of LIHEAP households.

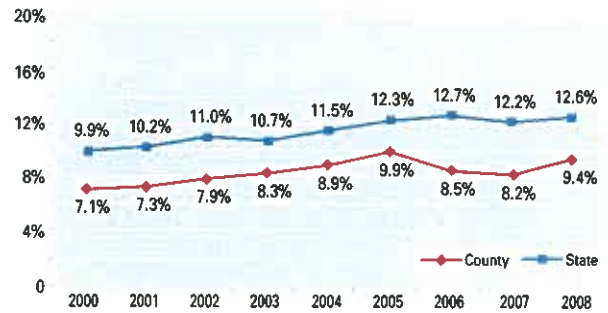


**PROFILE**

- York County's 2008 individual poverty rate for the population as a whole and for those under age 18 were both lower than the state rate. The county had the lowest overall poverty rate and lowest child poverty rate among Maine's counties.
- Census estimates for 2008 show that York County has a population age profile that is close to that of the state as a whole.
- York County's 2008 median household income was considerably above the state's, and was highest of all Maine's counties. York's median household income was about 23% above the 200% poverty level for a four-person household.
- Because of the high cost of living in York County, the 2008 "livable wage" estimate for a four-person household (2 parents, both wage earners, and 2 children) was more than 2.7 times greater than the poverty level for a four-person household.
- The proportion of net personal income from earnings in York County in 2008 was considerably higher than in the state as a whole, and the proportion from transfer payments was considerably lower. Among Maine counties York had the highest proportion of personal income from earnings.
- York County's average unemployment rate in 2009 was slightly lower than in the state as whole.
- In 2006, York County had a considerably lower proportion of federal income tax filers claiming the earned income tax credit (EITC) than in the state as a whole. It was the second lowest among Maine's counties in the percentage of filers claiming the EITC; the average amount of the credit was about the same as the state average.



**Poverty Rate Estimates** — % Individuals Below Poverty



- York County was considerably below the state average in FY2008-09 in the proportion of households and of the total population receiving the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit.
- The proportion of school-age children eligible for free or reduced lunch in FY2009-10 in York County was considerably lower than the state average. York had the second lowest percentage of eligible students among Maine's counties.
- York County had the third lowest proportion of households and individuals receiving LIHEAP among Maine's counties in FY2008-09. Compared with the state as a whole, York had a much higher proportion of single family households and a somewhat higher proportion of households age 65 or over receiving LIHEAP.

**TREND HIGHLIGHTS**

- York County's poverty rate varied somewhat more than the state's from 2000 through 2008, though York's rate was lower than the state rate during the whole period.
- The unemployment rate in York County was higher than the state rate in 2002, about the same in 2003, and has been lower than the state rate since then. As in the rest of the state, York County's 2009 unemployment rate was at its highest point in many years, about 1.7 times higher than it had been in 2002.
  - The number of York County households receiving LIHEAP varied somewhat more from year to year than in other counties from FY2001-02 to FY2007-08. With the change in eligibility requirements in FY2008-09, there was a 41.6% increase in York County households receiving LIHEAP compared with the average over the previous seven years. This was the second greatest increase in LIHEAP participation among Maine's counties.
  - As in the rest of the state, the number of York County households receiving the SNAP benefit increased almost every year. York had over a 100% increase in the number of households receiving the SNAP benefit from FY2001-02 to FY2008-09.
  - Since FY2002-03, York County has had a lower percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch than in the state as a whole. The percentage eligible increased every year from FY2002-03 to FY2009-10.

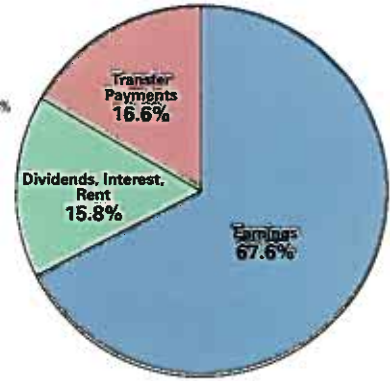
### Poverty, Employment, Income

|   | COUNTY          |       | STATE           |       |
|---|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| <b>Poverty, 2008</b>                          |                 |       |                 |       |
| All individuals                               | 18,720          | 9.4%  | 161,170         | 12.6% |
| Age 0-17                                      | 5,004           | 11.8% | 43,943          | 16.5% |
| <b>Unemployment, 2009</b>                     |                 |       |                 |       |
| Labor force (total)                           | 113,733         |       | 703,367         |       |
| Monthly average unemployment rate             | 7.9%            |       | 8.2%            |       |
| <b>Earned Income Tax Credit Filings, 2006</b> |                 |       |                 |       |
| EITC Filers*                                  | 10,839          | 11.2% | 87,791          | 14.1% |
| Average EITC claimed                          | \$1,650         |       | \$1,687         |       |
| <b>Median Household Income, 2008</b>          | <b>\$54,626</b> |       | <b>\$46,419</b> |       |

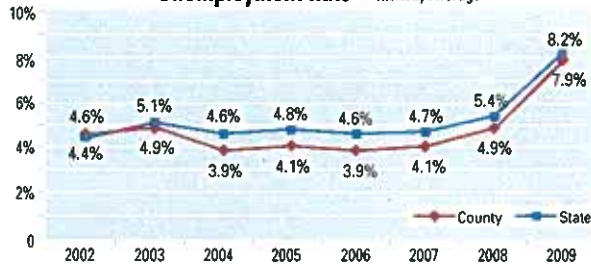
\* Percentage is based on total tax returns filed.

### Per-capita Personal Income by Source, 2008

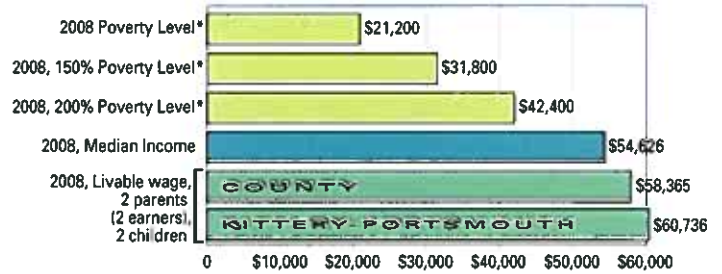
State Personal Income:  
 Net earnings = 63.8%  
 Transfer payments = 20.3%  
 Dividends, interest and rent = 15.8%



### Unemployment Rate — Monthly Average

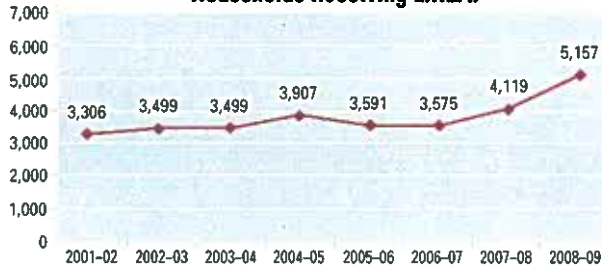


### Poverty and Livable Wages

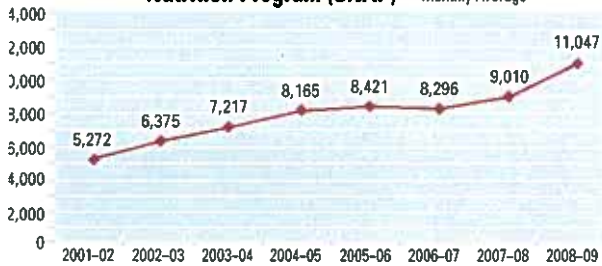


\* DHHS poverty guidelines for four-person household.

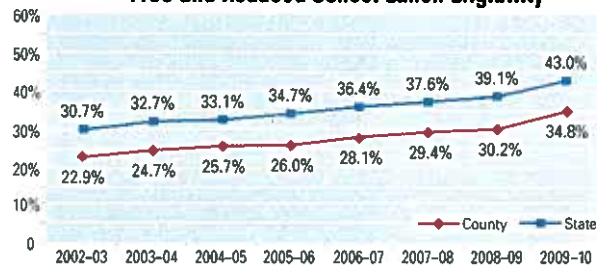
### Households Receiving LIHEAP



### Households Participating in Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) — Monthly Average



### Free and Reduced School Lunch Eligibility

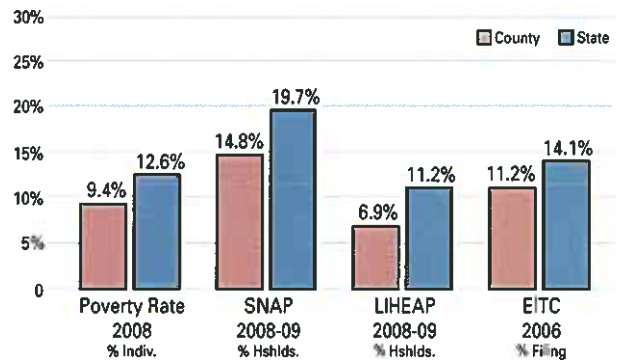


### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09

|  | COUNTY   |       | STATE    |       |
|--|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| <b>SNAP, Monthly Average*</b>                    |          |       |          |       |
| Cases (households)                               | 11,047   | 14.8% | 102,014  | 19.7% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 22,736   | 12.2% | 204,379  | 16.0% |
| <b>LIHEAP*</b>                                   |          |       |          |       |
| Households                                       | 5,157    | 6.9%  | 57,937   | 11.2% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 13,660   | 7.3%  | 139,132  | 10.9% |
| <b>LIHEAP Client Household Characteristics**</b> |          |       |          |       |
| Single person households                         | 2,820    | 54.7% | 28,932   | 49.9% |
| Receiving SNAP Benefits                          | 2,510    | 48.7% | 30,922   | 53.4% |
| Applicants age 65 & over                         | 2,250    | 43.6% | 21,635   | 37.3% |
| Annualized household income (average)            | \$17,651 |       | \$16,101 |       |

\* Percentage cases or households is % of total county or state households in 2000 Census, percentage recipients is % of county or state population in 2000 Census.

\*\*Percentage is % of LIHEAP households.



APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF SELECTED INDICATORS

|   | State           | Androscoggin    | Aroostook       | Cumberland      | Franklin        | Hancock         |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Population below poverty (2008)</b>  |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| All persons (% total population)  | 12.6%           | 13.1%           | 15.2%           | 10.4%           | 17.5%           | 10.8%           |
| Age 17 and below (% population 17 and below)  | 16.5%           | 18.1%           | 19.7%           | 12.5%           | 22.5%           | 15.9%           |
| <b>Median household income (2008)</b>   | <b>\$46,419</b> | <b>\$44,484</b> | <b>\$36,107</b> | <b>\$54,053</b> | <b>\$36,405</b> | <b>\$47,849</b> |
| <b>Personal income by source (2008)</b>   |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| Wages and self-employment   | 63.8%           | 66.4%           | 56.9%           | 67.0%           | 59.0%           | 57.2%           |
| Dividends, interest and rent  | 15.8%           | 10.3%           | 11.2%           | 18.7%           | 14.3%           | 23.1%           |
| Transfer payments   | 20.3%           | 23.3%           | 31.9%           | 14.3%           | 26.7%           | 19.7%           |
| <b>Unemployment rate (2009)</b>   | <b>8.2%</b>     | <b>8.6%</b>     | <b>10.2%</b>    | <b>6.4%</b>     | <b>10.7%</b>    | <b>8.8%</b>     |
| <b>Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Filing (2006)</b>                                |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| Filers (% of all income tax filers)   | 14.1%           | 16.3%           | 17.1%           | 10.5%           | 16.2%           | 14.4%           |
| Average credit per return   | \$1,687         | \$1,791         | \$1,755         | \$1,563         | \$1,717         | \$1,634         |
| <b>Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (FY2008-09)</b>                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| Cases (% all households)  | 19.7%           | 25.4%           | 25.0%           | 14.7%           | 23.5%           | 13.8%           |
| Recipients (% total population)   | 16.0%           | 21.0%           | 19.7%           | 11.5%           | 18.8%           | 12.1%           |
| <b>LIHEAP (FY2008-09)</b>   |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| Households (% all households)   | 11.2%           | 11.0%           | 20.8%           | 4.7%            | 19.6%           | 11.3%           |
| Recipients (% total population)   | 10.9%           | 10.6%           | 17.5%           | 5.1%            | 22.7%           | 10.9%           |
| <b>LIHEAP household characteristics (FY2008-09)</b>                                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| Single person households (% households)   | 49.9%           | 50.4%           | 44.9%           | 64.8%           | 57.4%           | 50.8%           |
| Receiving food stamps (% households)  | 53.4%           | 52.6%           | 50.8%           | 47.6%           | 55.5%           | 48.9%           |
| Applicants age 65 and over (% applicants)   | 37.3%           | 38.8%           | 40.0%           | 45.6%           | 41.4%           | 36.2%           |
| Annualized household income (avg.)  | \$16,101        | \$16,361        | \$16,659        | \$16,081        | \$16,072        | \$14,975        |
| <b>Free and reduced lunch eligible (October 31, 2009) (% school-age population)</b> | <b>43.0%</b>    | <b>49.8%</b>    | <b>52.4%</b>    | <b>30.9%</b>    | <b>52.6%</b>    | <b>41.4%</b>    |

NOTES

Population below poverty and median household income are from the U.S. Census Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates Program (SAIPE)

Personal income by source is from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System (REIS)

Monthly average unemployment rate is from the Maine Department of Labor, Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2009.

EITC filing from the IRS for 2006 (most recent year available) generated and calculated from the Brookings Institution interactive Web site

SNAP and LIHEAP information is for FY Oct. 1, 2008 - Sept. 30, 2009.

SNAP figures are monthly average counts computed from the DHHS Geographic Distribution of Programs and Benefits Report, RE-PM001.

LIHEAP information is derived from a database provided by MaineHousing.

School lunch eligibility is from the Maine Department of Education



| Kennebec | Knox     | Lincoln  | Oxford   | Penobscot | Piscataquis | Sagadahoc | Somerset | Waldo    | Washington | York     |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|----------|----------|------------|----------|
| 11.8%    | 13.4%    | 10.9%    | 14.1%    | 15.9%     | 16.2%       | 9.8%      | 18.7%    | 12.6%    | 20.1%      | 9.4%     |
| 15.3%    | 19.1%    | 18.2%    | 20.8%    | 18.6%     | 26.1%       | 14.6%     | 24.8%    | 19.3%    | 28.7%      | 11.8%    |
| \$45,511 | \$44,168 | \$49,862 | \$41,526 | \$42,704  | \$35,144    | \$53,142  | \$35,277 | \$43,597 | \$31,856   | \$54,626 |
| 64.9%    | 56.5%    | 53.2%    | 58.5%    | 64.5%     | 55.9%       | 65.9%     | 61.6%    | 60.0%    | 52.7%      | 67.6%    |
| 13.0%    | 24.1%    | 27.2%    | 13.1%    | 12.3%     | 13.2%       | 17.3%     | 9.7%     | 16.5%    | 11.6%      | 15.8%    |
| 22.1%    | 19.3%    | 19.7%    | 28.4%    | 23.2%     | 30.9%       | 16.8%     | 28.7%    | 23.6%    | 35.7%      | 16.6%    |
| 7.6%     | 7.9%     | 7.5%     | 11.1%    | 8.3%      | 12.4%       | 7.0%      | 11.2%    | 9.0%     | 11.5%      | 7.9%     |
| 14.9%    | 14.5%    | 14.3%    | 18.1%    | 15.1%     | 19.2%       | 12.4%     | 20.0%    | 17.3%    | 21.5%      | 11.2%    |
| \$1,696  | \$1,629  | \$1,664  | \$1,710  | \$1,695   | \$1,744     | \$1,690   | \$1,798  | \$1,746  | \$1,786    | \$1,650  |
| 21.2%    | 17.8%    | 14.6%    | 26.1%    | 22.7%     | 22.2%       | 12.2%     | 29.4%    | 24.0%    | 28.4%      | 14.8%    |
| 17.2%    | 15.1%    | 13.4%    | 22.0%    | 17.6%     | 19.6%       | 10.6%     | 24.0%    | 20.9%    | 22.7%      | 12.2%    |
| 12.1%    | 10.2%    | 8.8%     | 16.5%    | 12.5%     | 20.5%       | 5.9%      | 20.8%    | 17.8%    | 22.3%      | 6.9%     |
| 12.6%    | 9.5%     | 8.3%     | 16.1%    | 11.8%     | 19.9%       | 5.1%      | 21.1%    | 15.8%    | 19.7%      | 7.3%     |
| 51.8%    | 47.6%    | 50.4%    | 47.0%    | 45.1%     | 46.1%       | 44.3%     | 49.6%    | 43.1%    | 43.4%      | 54.7%    |
| 54.4%    | 52.7%    | 52.4%    | 54.0%    | 56.4%     | 53.3%       | 51.4%     | 62.4%    | 56.8%    | 55.2%      | 48.7%    |
| 34.2%    | 36.1%    | 41.2%    | 36.0%    | 30.8%     | 34.4%       | 32.8%     | 37.3%    | 31.2%    | 33.9%      | 43.6%    |
| \$16,349 | \$16,177 | \$15,861 | \$15,922 | \$16,022  | \$15,413    | \$16,308  | \$15,514 | \$15,558 | \$14,584   | \$17,651 |
| 42.9%    | 41.7%    | 43.8%    | 56.8%    | 46.9%     | 57.7%       | 35.5%     | 57.5%    | 56.4%    | 59.3%      | 34.8%    |

## APPENDIX 2: SOURCES

## PRIMARY SOURCES

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## MAINE COMMUNITY ACTION ASSOCIATION



Matthew Smith, Executive Director  
Susan Richards, Communications & Contract Manager  
Vickie Hoyle, Program & Resource Development Manager  
66 Winthrop Street • Augusta, ME 04330  
(207) 622-0203 • [www.mainecommunityaction.org](http://www.mainecommunityaction.org)

## COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES

### Aroostook County Action Program, Inc.

Connie Sandstrom, Executive Director  
P.O. Box 1116 (771 Main St.)  
Presque Isle, ME 04769-1116  
764-3721 or 1-800-432-7881 Tel  
768-3022 Fax  
[www.acap-me.org](http://www.acap-me.org)

### Community Concepts, Inc.

Mike Burke, Chief Executive Officer  
P.O. Box 278 (17-19 Market Square)  
South Paris, ME 04281-0278  
743-7716 Tel  
743-6513 Fax  
[www.community-concepts.org](http://www.community-concepts.org)

### Kennebec Valley Community Action

Pat Kosma, Chief Executive Officer  
97 Water Street  
Waterville, ME 04901  
859-1500 Tel  
873-0158 Fax  
[www.kvcap.org](http://www.kvcap.org)

### Midcoast Maine Community Action

Jessica Tysen, Executive Director  
34 Wing Farm Pkwy.  
Bath, ME 04530  
442-7963 Tel  
443-7447 Fax  
[www.midcoastmainecommunityaction.org](http://www.midcoastmainecommunityaction.org)

### Penquis

Charles Newton, Executive Director  
P.O. Box 1162 (262 Harlow Street)  
Bangor, ME 04402  
973-3500 Tel  
973-3699 Fax  
[www.penquis.org](http://www.penquis.org)

### People's Regional Opportunity Program

Cathy Fellenz, Chief Executive Officer  
510 Cumberland Avenue  
Portland, ME 04101  
553-5800 Tel  
874-1155 Fax  
[www.propeople.org](http://www.propeople.org)

### Waldo Community Action Partners

Joyce C. Scott, Executive Director  
P.O. Box 130 (9 Field Street)  
Belfast, ME 04915-0130  
338-6809 Tel  
338-6812 Fax  
[www.waldocap.org](http://www.waldocap.org)

### Washington Hancock Community Agency

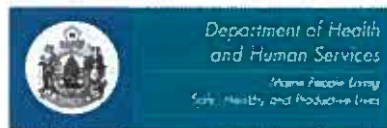
Tim King, Executive Director  
P.O. Box 280 (corner of Main and Maple Sts.)  
Milbridge, ME 04658-0280  
546-7544 Tel  
546-3216 Fax  
[www.whcacap.org](http://www.whcacap.org)

### Western Maine Community Action

Fenwick Fowler, Executive Director  
P.O. Box 200  
East Wilton, ME 04234-0200  
645-3764 Tel  
645-9604 Fax  
[www.wmca.org](http://www.wmca.org)

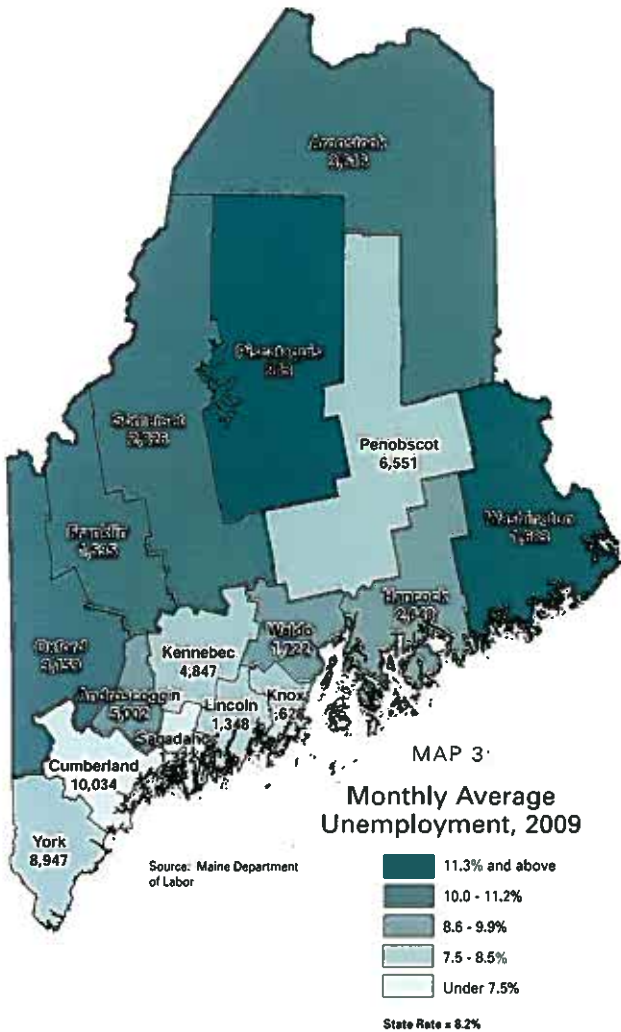
### York County Community Action Corp.

Barbara Crider, Executive Director  
P.O. Box 72 (6 Spruce Street)  
Sanford, ME 04073  
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John E. Baldacci, Governor      Brenda M. Harvey, Commissioner





in unemployment among Maine's counties (Map 3, Figure 8). Piscataquis County had the state's highest unemployment rate (12.4%). Washington, Somerset and Oxford Counties had unemployment rates of over 11%. The lowest unemployment rate was in Cumberland County (6.4%). Cumberland County had the largest number of unemployed individuals (10,034), followed by York County (8,947), reflecting the larger populations in those counties.

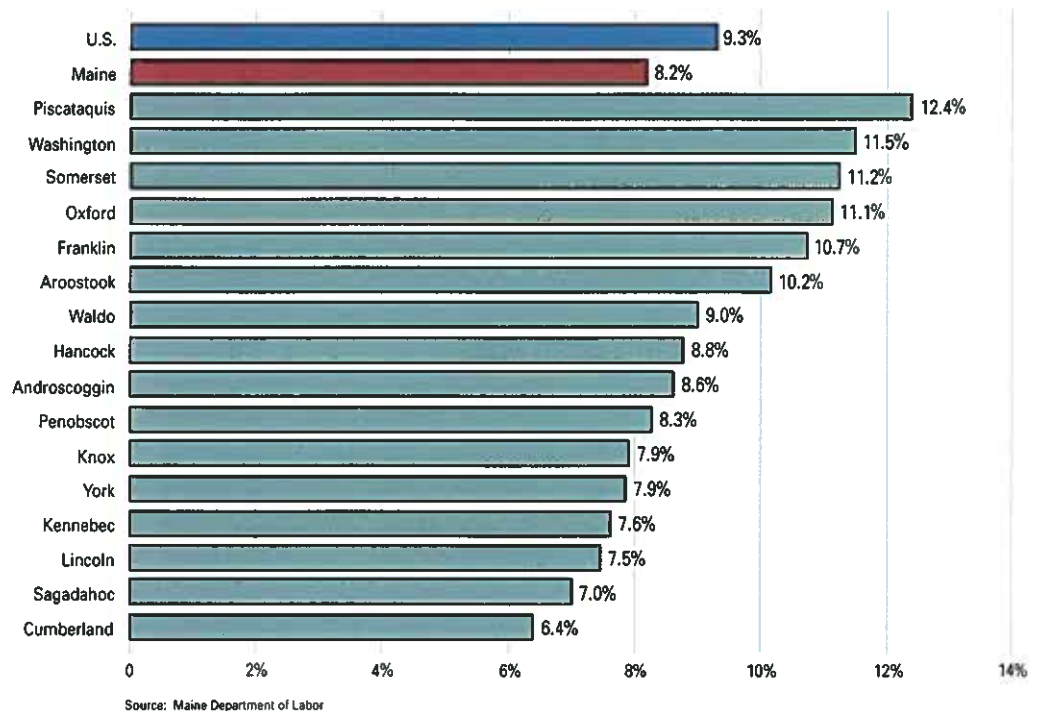
The regional pattern of unemployment was somewhat different in 2009 than it has been in recent years. Piscataquis County had the highest unemployment rate in the state, more than four percentage points above the state average. In most recent year's Washington County has had the state's highest unemployment. York County, which usually has close to the lowest rate, dropped to fifth lowest. Kennebec County usually is in the middle of Maine's counties in terms of unemployment, and has had about the same unemployment rate as the state. In 2009 Kennebec had a lower rate than the state as a whole and the fourth lowest rate in the state. This may reflect the fact that there was relatively less job loss among government employees than in other employment sectors.

important measure that not only serves as a "barometer" of the economy, but also has important policy ramifications in a number of programs.

Maine unemployment increased sharply in 2008 and 2009 as the recession impacted the state (Figure 7). The state's monthly average unemployment rate of 8.2% in 2009 was the highest it has been in many years, over 78% higher than it had been in 2006 and 2007 when it stood at 4.6%. However, Maine's unemployment rate was lower than the national average of 9.3%.

As in previous years, in 2009 there were major differences

**FIGURE 8: Monthly Average Unemployment Rates: United States, Maine and Maine Counties, 2009**



It should be stressed that the actual rate of unemployment and numbers of people out of work are likely higher than the figures presented here. This is because unemployment figures do not include "discouraged workers" who are not actively seeking work, and because part-time workers are considered employed.

Even in better economic times, Maine's employment pattern is characterized by a rate of multiple-job holding that is higher than the national average. In 2007, 8.1% of Mainers reported holding more than one job over the course of the year, compared with 5.2% nationally. The rate of multiple-job holding has decreased nationally since 1995. However, in Maine it has increased (Maine SPO 2009: 17). Multiple-job holding is related to two primary factors in Maine: low wages and seasonal employment. Low wage rates contribute to multiple-job holding, since lower-wage workers often need to work several jobs at the same time just to get by. Maine also has a high number of seasonal jobs, especially in tourism and natural resource-based industries. Data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis clearly show that more Mainers are employed in the summer than in the winter (Maine SPO 2009: 17). Although some seasonal employment pays well, income from seasonal work is generally not enough to sustain families year-round. Seasonal employment earnings in Maine are also unpredictable, dependent in part on factors such as weather, the state of the national economy, and even the world economy (as demonstrated by the impact of increased fuel prices in 2007-08 on economic sectors ranging from tourism to lobster fishing).

The Maine Economic Growth Council sees multiple-job holding as a proxy for job quality in Maine. Their 2009 "Measures of Growth" report states that the "relatively higher multiple job holding rate in Maine suggests that many jobs are not paying a livable wage or providing adequate benefits" (MDF 2009: 9).

### Benefits and Assistance

Poverty often is assessed by analyzing the provided level and distribution of benefits designed to serve the lower-income population. A drawback to this approach is that it deals only with those who

are receiving benefits, and does not allow us to estimate the level of unmet needs. In this report, we combine data from benefits and assistance programs with Census, IRS and other economic data. Comparing poverty and income data from the Census and economic data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis with information about the rate of receipt of various benefits can give us at least an approximate idea of possible service gaps and unmet needs. However, since some benefit and assistance programs do not use the federal poverty guidelines, and others use "multiples" of the guidelines (e.g., 125% or 150% of the poverty level), this kind of comparison serves only as a "proxy" measure of unmet need.

There are a very large numbers of programs and benefits aimed at assisting lower-income families and individuals. Many, though by no means all, of these programs are provided for those at or below the poverty level. Some programs provide direct cash assistance which can be spent by recipients based on their needs (for example, TANF, unemployment benefits, the earned income tax credit). Others provide assistance in the form of vouchers or credits for particular goods or services (for example, SNAP and child care), or subsidies that are paid on behalf of the individual or family (for example, housing and energy). Still other programs are aimed at assisting individuals to achieve better-paying, more stable employment and thereby gain greater self-sufficiency for themselves and their families. Examples of these programs include the Parents as Scholars [PAS] program, the Job Corps, retraining programs for displaced workers, and federal and state higher education grants and loans. Another type of education program is Head Start, which aims to try to break the poverty cycle by providing early education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services for low-income preschoolers and their families. The sidebar lists a number of the more important programs and benefits aimed at lower income families and individuals.

Since the passage of welfare reform in 1996<sup>6</sup>, a wide range of programs and policies have been developed on both the federal state levels to help raise incomes for working families and to provide supplementary assistance to close the gap between earnings and basic expenses for lower-income workers. The aim of such "work-support"

6. The act passed by the U.S. Congress during the Clinton administration was entitled the "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act," or PRWORA, but is commonly referred to as "welfare reform."

## Examples of Programs to Address Poverty and Family Income Security

### *Direct (cash) Payments*

- TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families)** – Federal, administered by Maine DHHS Office of Integrated Access and Support
- General Assistance** – short-term emergency funds administered through municipalities to allow purchase of basic necessities for those without means to pay
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** – Federal, administered by Social Security administration, designed to help aged, blind, and disabled people who have little or no income
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)** – Federal and state, administered through the IRS and Maine Revenue Services, aimed at working families
- Unemployment Insurance Benefits** – Federal Department of Labor and employers, administered by Maine Department of Labor

### *Subsidies/Vouchers*

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (Formerly Food Stamps)** – USDA, administered by Maine DHHS Office of Integrated Access and Support
- Free and Reduced School Lunch** – USDA, administered by Maine Department of Education
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)** – USDA, administered by Maine DHHS Office of Integrated Access and Support
- Child Care Vouchers** – Federal Child Care Development Fund and Maine DHHS Office of Child and Family Services
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)** – Federal block grant, Office of Community Services, administered by MaineHousing through the Community Action agencies.
- Weatherization Assistance** – U.S. Department of Energy, administered by Maine Community Action agencies
- Housing (rental) Subsidies** – Federal Department of Housing and Urban Renewal (HUD) and MaineHousing. Programs include Housing Choice vouchers (Section 8), Rental Assistance Coupons Plus (aimed at the homeless), and subsidized apartments.

### *Employment, Training and Education Programs*

- Pell Grants, Subsidized Loans** – Federal Department of Education, for higher education
- Parents as Scholars (PaS)** – Federal DHHS and Maine DHHS Office of Integrated Access and Support (student aid program to help low-income parents enrolled in two or four-year college programs)
- Job Corps** – U.S. Department of Labor
- Head Start** – Federal and Maine DHHS. Early education for low-income pre-schoolers.

### *Healthcare*

- Medicaid** – Federal DHHS, with state matching funds, administered by Maine DHHS. Family health insurance for low-income parents and children, and for disabled at any income level.
- State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)** – Federal block grant, with state maintenance of effort; administered by state DHHS with broad federal guidelines. Covers low income children and some parents with family income above the Medicaid limit.

benefits and programs is that families with a full-time worker should not fall below the poverty line. These benefits either supplement low earnings or reduce expenses by subsidizing the costs of needed goods and services (Cauthen 2007). Because certain categories of expenses such as housing, child care, energy costs, and transportation represent a larger proportion of the budgets of lower-income households than of higher-income ones, benefits aimed at these categories of expense are particularly important. In addition, lower-income households are more sensitive to increases in the cost for these essential items, as was evident when energy costs increased so sharply in 2007-08 (Acheson 2009). A number of the programs listed in the sidebar are considered to be work-support programs, including the earned income tax credit, Medicaid and SCHIP, housing and child care subsidies, and various nutrition assistance programs (Cauthen 2007: 25-27).

We provide details here about four of the most widely-utilized non-medical assistance programs for lower-income households: the earned income tax credit (EITC), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and the free and reduced school lunch program.

**Earned Income Tax Credit.** The federal EITC was begun in 1975 and has been refined several times since. It is a tax benefit administered through the IRS which must be applied for when a worker submits his/her income tax return. The credit is designed to encourage work and to help families become independent. It helps reduce the impact of payroll and income taxes and also provides an earnings supplement for very low-wage workers. By the mid-1990s, the EITC had become the largest anti-poverty program for those under age 65 (Beamer 2007). Working families with children and with annual incomes below about \$35,000-\$48,000 (depending on marital status and number of children) generally are eligible for the EITC (CBPP nd).<sup>7</sup> In 2008, this eligibility cut-off level was equivalent to approximately 200% of the poverty level for a three-to five-person family. Twenty-four states, including Maine, and the District of Columbia also have state earned income tax credits, with the amount set to a percentage of the federal credit. State credits range from 3.5% (Louisiana) to as much

7. Workers without children who have very low incomes, below about \$13,000, or \$16,000 for a married couple, are eligible for a very small benefit.

as 43% (Wisconsin) ([www.stateeitc.com/map/index.asp](http://www.stateeitc.com/map/index.asp)). Maine is on the lower end of states in its credit of 5%.

An important feature of the federal EITC and the credit in most states is that it is refundable.<sup>8</sup> This means that recipients are entitled to a payment even if no taxes are owed, i.e. (i.e., if the amount of the credit is greater than the income tax liability) the worker is paid the difference as a cash rebate. The federal credit was made refundable because policymakers recognized that the income tax was not the only federal tax paid by low- and middle-income workers, who usually pay more in payroll taxes than they do in income taxes (Acheson 2009: 38). Another important feature of the EITC is that, unlike the minimum wage, the credit amounts are indexed for inflation each year.

The amount of the credit depends on family size and amount of earnings. In the United States, the average credit in 2006 was \$1,951 and in Maine it was \$1,687 (Table 5). Nationally, 16.5% of federal income tax filers in 2006 claimed the EITC, and 14.1% of Mainers did so. There was a good deal of variability among Maine's counties in the average percentage of filers claiming the federal EITC, ranging from a high of 21.5% in Washington County to a low of 10.5% in Cumberland County. Amounts ranged from a high of \$1,798 in Somerset County to a low of \$1,563 in Cumberland County (Table 5). In six of Maine's counties, the percentage of filers claiming the EITC was higher than the U.S. average. However, in no county was the average amount of the credit claimed higher than the U.S. average. Maine's lower average EITC likely reflects the state's lower wages; it is also possible that Maine's working families are smaller than the national average. (Number of children is one of the factors determining the size of the credit.)

Because the EITC is such an important and widely-available benefit, policymakers and planners would like to ensure that all those eligible for the benefit in fact receive it. Recent studies by the Marguerite Casey Foundation (MCF) estimated that about 10–15% of federal EITC benefits are unclaimed annually; in Maine, these benefits are

TABLE 5:

Earned Income Tax Credit Filings, United States, Maine and Maine Counties, 2006

|              | % Tax filers claiming EITC | Avg. EIC claim per return |
|--------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>U.S.</b>  | <b>16.5%</b>               | <b>\$1,950.89</b>         |
| <b>Maine</b> | <b>14.1%</b>               | <b>\$1,686.91</b>         |
| Androscoggin | 16.3%                      | \$1,790.63                |
| Aroostook    | 17.1%                      | \$1,754.81                |
| Cumberland   | 10.5%                      | \$1,563.38                |
| Franklin     | 16.2%                      | \$1,716.65                |
| Hancock      | 14.4%                      | \$1,634.34                |
| Kennebec     | 14.9%                      | \$1,695.64                |
| Knox         | 14.5%                      | \$1,629.44                |
| Lincoln      | 14.3%                      | \$1,664.40                |
| Oxford       | 18.1%                      | \$1,710.07                |
| Penobscot    | 15.1%                      | \$1,695.33                |
| Piscataquis  | 19.2%                      | \$1,744.34                |
| Sagadahoc    | 12.4%                      | \$1,689.62                |
| Somerset     | 20.0%                      | \$1,798.13                |
| Waldo        | 17.3%                      | \$1,746.03                |
| Washington   | 21.5%                      | \$1,786.48                |
| York         | 11.2%                      | \$1,650.28                |

Sources: Maine: Brookings Institution, EITC Interactive  
 United States: Internal Revenue Service Earned Income Tax Credit Statistics and SOI Tax Stats - Filing Season Weekly Reports

estimated to be approximately \$20 million (Beamer 2007: 51). Maine families (and the Maine economy) are foregoing these potential millions because workers either do not know they are eligible, and hence do not apply when they file their tax returns, or they miscalculate their credits (MCF 2007). Numbers of states have initiated education campaigns to raise awareness of the federal EITC, resulting in increases in both the amounts of total benefits coming to residents of those states, and increases in the percentage of workers filing for the credit.<sup>9</sup>

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).** SNAP is one of the most wide-reaching means-tested benefits in the United States and in Maine. Map 4 depicts the number and proportion of total households in each county that received the SNAP benefit in FY2008–09, and Figure 9 shows the proportion of the population receiving the benefit. The numbers are based on the average monthly count of those receiving the benefit that year. In the state as a whole, 19.7% of all households received the SNAP benefit. Highest household participation rates were in

8. Maine is one of only a handful of states whose credit is not refundable. The recently-defeated tax overhaul package included a feature which would have made Maine's credit partially refundable.  
 9. For example, Michigan and Washington found that federal EITC benefits rose 14–17% after creating new tax assistance offices. A tax counseling program outside the Chicago area yielded Illinois residents more than \$30 million in benefits in 2004, at a cost of \$17 per return for the 22,000 filed; funding for the project came from the state's TANF block grant (NGA 2007).

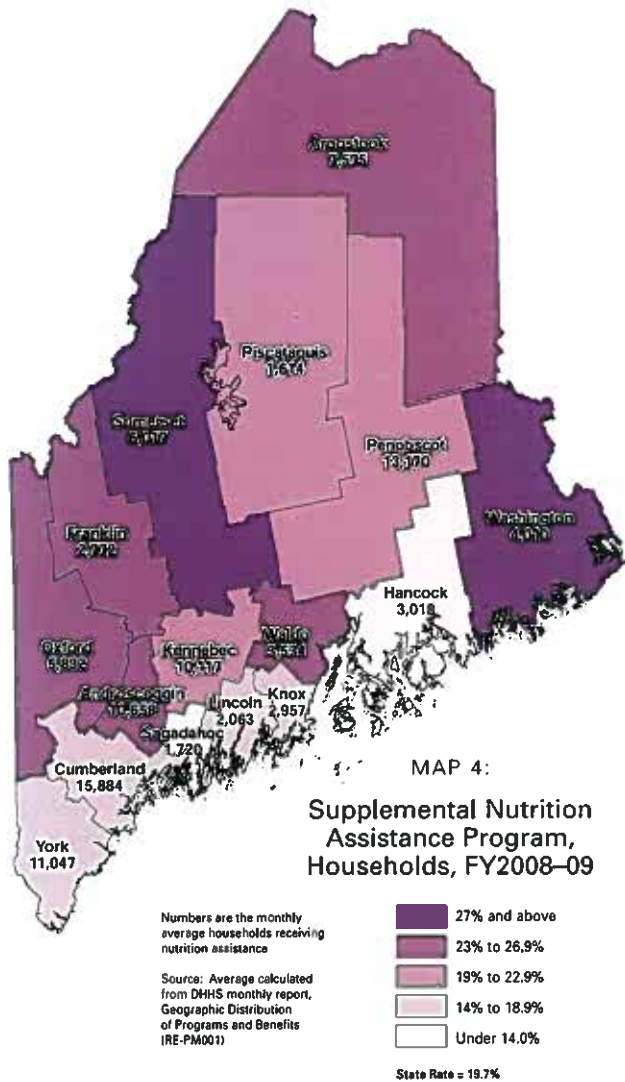
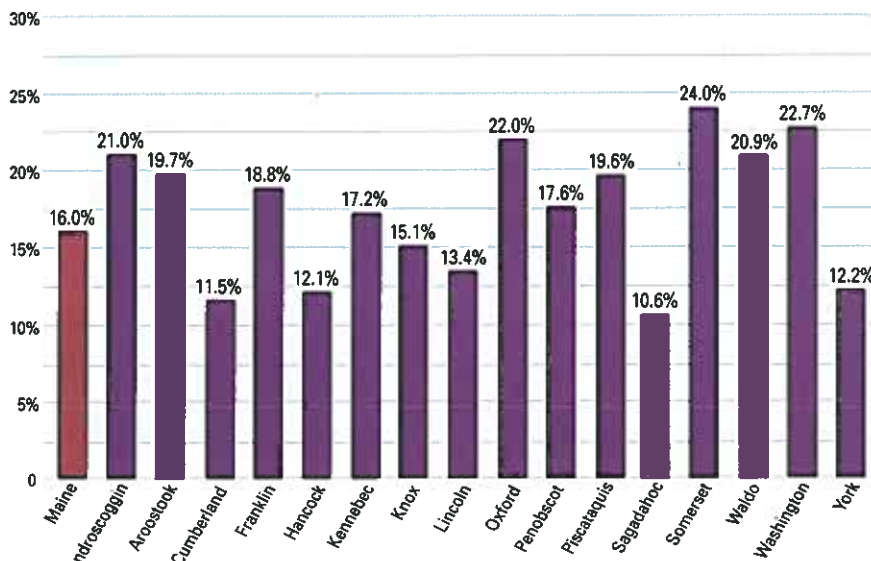


FIGURE 9:

Percentage of Maine Population Participating in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Monthly Average), FY2008-09



Source: Average calculated from DHHS monthly report, Geographic Distribution of Programs and Benefits, (RE-PM001)

Somerset County (29.4%), Washington County (28.4%) and Oxford County (26.1%). Lowest household participation rates were in Sagadahoc County (12.2%) and Hancock County (13.8%). In terms of individuals, 16% of Maine's population received the SNAP benefit in FY2008-09. Washington, Somerset, and Oxford counties had the highest population participation rates, more than 22% of all individuals; in Somerset County, almost one-fourth of the population received the SNAP benefit. In Cumberland, Hancock, Lincoln and Sagadahoc counties, 12% or less of county residents participated.

Over the eight-year period from FY2002 to FY2009, there has been a marked increase in the monthly average number of households and individuals in Maine receiving the SNAP benefit (Figure 10, Figure 11). During this period the number of households increased by 86.6% (from 54,501 to 101,729) and the number of individuals increased by 91.8% (from 106,228 to 203,764).

The increased participation rates in FY2009 can be attributed, in large part, to the effects of the recession on Maine households. However, even before the current recession, a number of factors contributed to increased participation in SNAP. First, more households probably became eligible for the benefit, due to loss of employment and income. Even though Maine's unemployment rate has been below the national average, there are many discouraged workers (who have exhausted unemployment benefits) and many people who are underemployed or working multiple low-paying jobs. Second, some of the pre-recession increase in SNAP participation may be attributable to a greater share of already eligible people choosing to participate for a variety of reasons. Rising energy prices, especially for home heating, have driven additional households to enroll for the SNAP benefit. The 2002 federal Farm Bill had some options that made it easier for eligible households, especially those with working members, to obtain and retain the benefit (Llobera 2004).



FIGURE 10:

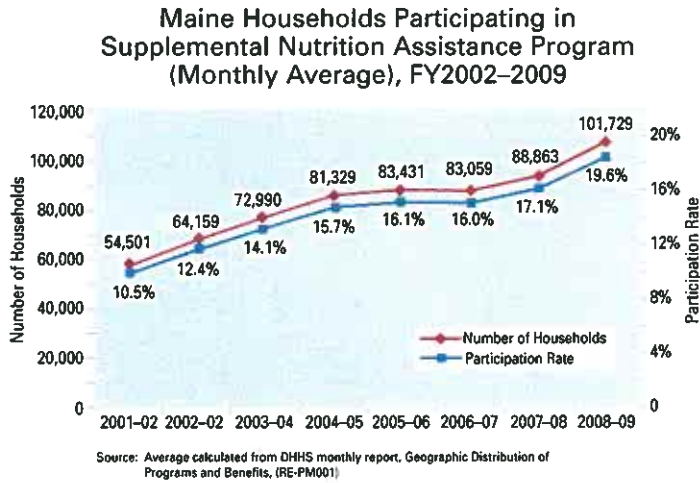
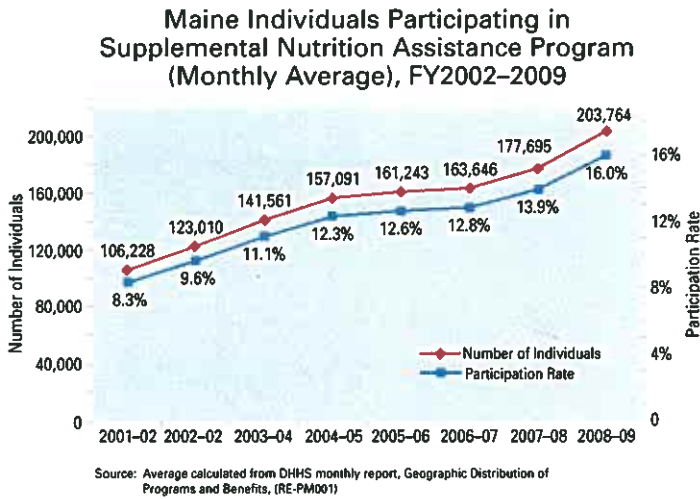


FIGURE 11:



Third, Maine was one of several states that initiated specific pilot programs to increase the historically low participation of eligible elder adults in the SNAP program.

Additionally, the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) had several systemic changes that may have increased participation rates. DHHS replaced the traditional paper food stamps with a card system, comparable to a debit card, which has benefit dollars upon which the recipient can draw. While there is no concrete evidence, it has been suggested that having a card reduces some of the stigma of receiving state benefits and increases the willingness of some individuals to participate. The new computer system implemented by DHHS also may have

contributed to increased participation rates, since it simplifies the application process. If a person applies for any program under DHHS (TANF, child care vouchers, etc.) there is a common application that serves all programs, and the new computer program automatically checks for eligibility for other programs.

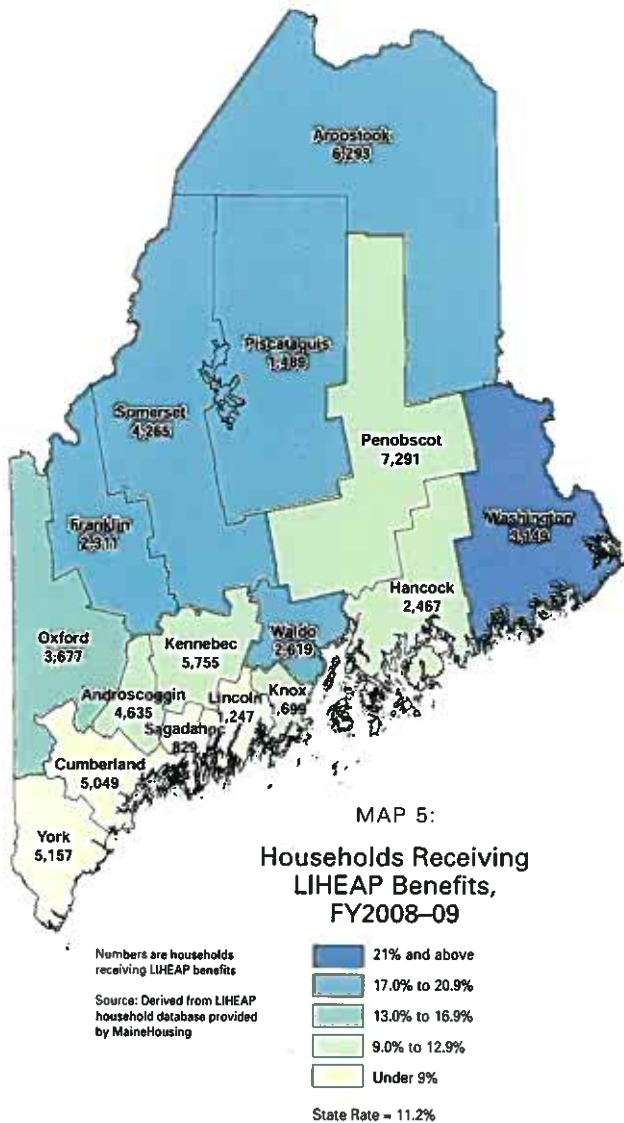
**Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).** The federal LIHEAP program exists to meet the immediate home energy needs of low income households that pay a high proportion of their income on home energy. Because the pot of money is allocated anew to each state each year, with supplemental funds in some years, all potentially eligible households may not be reached each year, and the amount each household receives may change from one year to the next. LIHEAP is therefore different from other means-tested programs such as SNAP and TANF, or from programs such as Medicaid and the social security disability program that provide specified benefits to all eligible applicants.

Map 5 shows the number and rate of participation by households in LIHEAP in FY2009.<sup>10</sup> Statewide, 11.2% of households participated in LIHEAP. This is lower than the participation rate for SNAP that year (19.7%) and less than the state poverty rate of 12.6% in 2008. This is perhaps not surprising, given that LIHEAP funds are limited and that disbursement of these funds must be prioritized. LIHEAP household participation rates at the county level ranged from under 4.7% (Cumberland County) to over 20% (Aroostook, Piscataquis, Somerset and Washington counties). Washington County's rate of 22.3% was highest in the state.

The county profile section of this report presents further details about the characteristics of households that received LIHEAP in FY2009 in individual counties. Statewide, almost 50% were single-person households, 37% of applicants were age 65 or over, and 53% received SNAP benefits.

The number of households receiving LIHEAP benefits varied somewhat from year to year from FY2002 to FY2007, but had a slight increase in FY2008 and a major increase in FY2009 (Figure 12). The increase in the number of households served by LIHEAP in FY2009 came about because of a change in household eligibility levels, which

10. The Community Action Association agencies in Maine administer the LIHEAP program and submit household and individual enrollment and benefit amount data to MaineHousing. The numbers presented here are derived from the MaineHousing database.



was enacted in light of the extreme hardship caused by the sharp rise in fuel prices the previous year. The eligibility changed to include qualifying households with income up to 230% of the poverty level (or 75% of the area's average median income, whichever is lower); the former cap was 170% of the poverty level.

**Free and Reduced School Lunch Program.**

The National School Lunch Program is a federally-assisted meal program administered through the state's Department of Education, which operates the program through agreements with local schools.

FIGURE 12:  
Maine Households Receiving LIHEAP Benefits, FY2002-2009\*

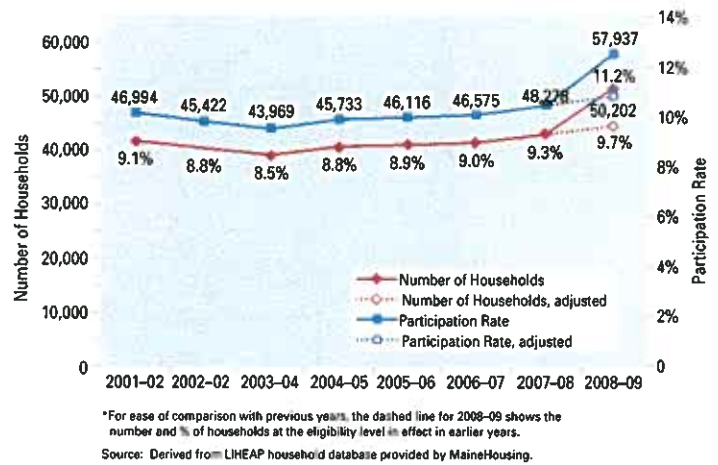
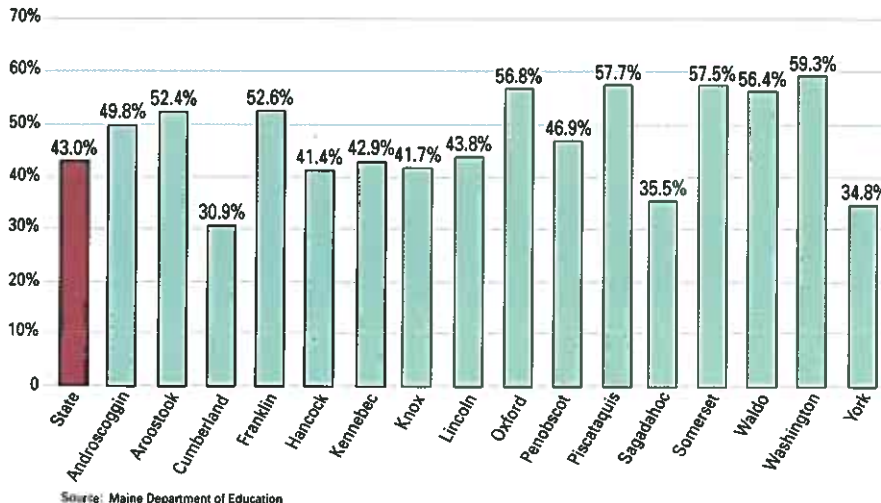


FIGURE 13:  
Percentage of Enrolled Students in Maine Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch, October 1, 2009



Children from families with incomes at or below 130% of the poverty level are eligible for free meals, while those with incomes between 130% and 185% of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals. In order to determine eligibility, schools each fall send home forms that must be filled out and returned. Since only completed applications can be screened for eligibility, there can be variation from one school or school system to the next based not just on the local

level of need but on how thoroughly the school or school system tries to encourage completion of the applications. The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch is important as a poverty indicator. However, the percentage of eligible students also has practical implications beyond helping the children served. A higher eligibility level entitles schools and school districts to obtain additional federal funds and to participate in programs aimed at disadvantaged students.

In Maine in FY2010, a record-high 43.0% of school-age children were eligible for the free or reduced lunch benefit. More than half of students in Aroostook, Franklin, Oxford, Piscataquis, Somerset, Waldo, and Washington counties were eligible for free or reduced school lunch. Lowest rates of eligibility were in Sagadahoc, Cumberland and York counties (Figure 13, Table 6).

The number of students in the state eligible for free or reduced lunch has increased somewhat each year from FY2003 to FY2010 (Figure 14). There was a particularly sharp increase in the number of eligible students in FY2010, about 11% over the previous year, reflecting the effects of the recession on family incomes.

**Benefit Programs Comparisons.**

There is a varied picture when we compare participation in several benefits and assistance programs across Maine’s counties, both in any given year and over time. Looking at the state as a whole, a larger proportion of households in FY2009 received SNAP benefits than LIHEAP benefits. However, in Aroostook, Franklin, Hancock and Piscataquis counties, participation rates in these two programs were closer to one another. In Androscoggin, Cumberland, Sagadahoc and York counties, household participation rates in SNAP were more than twice as great as in LIHEAP. The free and reduced school lunch program had higher eligibility rates statewide and in all counties than did the SNAP and LIHEAP programs because of the program’s different eligibility standards.

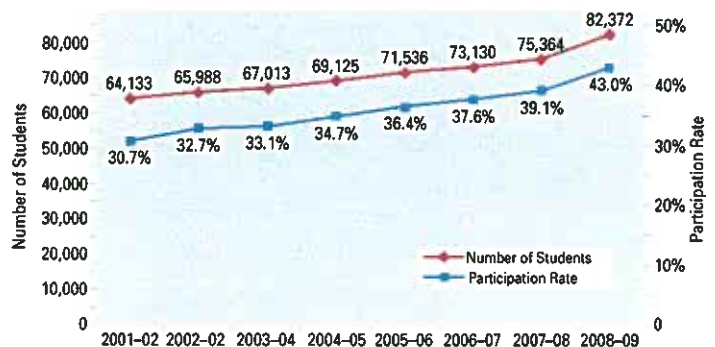
In terms of trends statewide, the number of households participating in SNAP increased greatly, by 86.6% over the eight-year period from FY2002 to FY2009, and the number of individuals increased by 91.8%. Several counties (Hancock, Knox, Lincoln, Waldo and York) had increases of over 100% in the number of households receiving SNAP benefits from FY2002 to FY2009. In general, counties that had higher participation rates to begin with (e.g., Aroostook, Piscataquis, Somerset and Washington) did not experience the magnitude of increased SNAP participation as counties

TABLE 6  
Maine Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility, October 1, 2009

| County       | Enrolled       | Eligible Free | % Free       | Eligible Reduced | % Reduced   | Total Eligible | % Eligible   |
|--------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|------------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|
| <b>Maine</b> | <b>191,613</b> | <b>68,400</b> | <b>35.7%</b> | <b>13,972</b>    | <b>7.3%</b> | <b>82,372</b>  | <b>43.0%</b> |
| Androscoggin | 16,306         | 6,904         | 42.3%        | 1,213            | 7.4%        | 8,117          | 49.8%        |
| Aroostook    | 10,610         | 4,531         | 42.7%        | 1,028            | 9.7%        | 5,559          | 52.4%        |
| Cumberland   | 40,417         | 10,491        | 26.0%        | 1,975            | 4.9%        | 12,466         | 30.9%        |
| Franklin     | 4,163          | 1,834         | 44.1%        | 357              | 8.6%        | 2,191          | 52.6%        |
| Hancock      | 6,707          | 2,167         | 32.3%        | 608              | 9.1%        | 2,775          | 41.4%        |
| Kennebec     | 18,286         | 6,511         | 35.6%        | 1,337            | 7.3%        | 7,848          | 42.9%        |
| Knox         | 4,726          | 1,648         | 34.9%        | 324              | 6.9%        | 1,972          | 41.7%        |
| Lincoln      | 4,610          | 1,666         | 36.1%        | 353              | 7.7%        | 2,019          | 43.8%        |
| Oxford       | 9,946          | 4,817         | 48.4%        | 836              | 8.4%        | 5,653          | 56.8%        |
| Penobscot    | 21,853         | 8,496         | 38.9%        | 1,745            | 8.0%        | 10,241         | 46.9%        |
| Piscataquis  | 2,738          | 1,286         | 47.0%        | 293              | 10.7%       | 1,579          | 57.7%        |
| Sagadahoc    | 5,333          | 1,496         | 28.1%        | 399              | 7.5%        | 1,895          | 35.5%        |
| Somerset     | 8,147          | 3,882         | 47.7%        | 804              | 9.9%        | 4,686          | 57.5%        |
| Waldo        | 5,072          | 2,389         | 47.1%        | 470              | 9.3%        | 2,859          | 56.4%        |
| Washington   | 4,671          | 2,341         | 50.1%        | 428              | 9.2%        | 2,769          | 59.3%        |
| York         | 28,028         | 7,941         | 28.3%        | 1,802            | 6.4%        | 9,743          | 34.8%        |

Source: Maine Department of Education.

FIGURE 14:  
Enrolled Maine Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch and Program Participation Rates, FY2002–FY2010



Source: Maine Department of Education

that started with lower participation rates. During this same time period, the number of households receiving LIHEAP benefits varied somewhat, but all counties had an increase in LIHEAP participation in FY2009 due to the change in eligibility levels. The number of enrolled students eligible for free and reduced lunch statewide increased each year from FY2003 to FY2010 statewide and in most counties, with the greatest single year increase occurring between FY2009 and FY2010.

The EITC benefit has the potential to assist a substantial number of working families that are above the poverty level and may not be eligible for a number of other kinds of benefits. One national study found that 44% of EITC-eligible families are below the poverty level and 13% are in the “near poor” category of the 150% poverty level (Turner and Barnow 2003). This means that another 43% of eligible families are above 150% of poverty. The same study found that 99% of EITC-eligible families had incomes in the lowest 20th percentile.

Looking at statistics for EITC filing can provide some indication of the numbers of working families that are sometimes referred to as the “working poor,” many of whom are not counted in poverty statistics. However, they may be living in situations of economic insecurity, where only the slightest change in costs for essential budget items (e.g., fuel) or slight decreases in income (e.g., decreases in hours of work) can lead to major hardship. Maine’s rate of EITC filers is somewhat lower than the national average, though in several counties it is above that average. Comparing the poverty rate and the rate of EITC filing reveals some interesting patterns among Maine’s counties.<sup>11</sup> In almost all counties the percentage of those filing for the EITC is higher than the county’s poverty rate, which is expectable given the fact that lower-income families above the poverty level are eligible for the EITC. In Franklin and Penobscot counties, the rate of EITC filing is actually slightly under the poverty rate in those counties. In some counties (Hancock, Lincoln, Waldo), the rate of EITC filing is substantially higher than the county’s poverty rate. This may reflect the presence of a proportionally larger number of “working poor” in those counties.

## Summary

Analysis of data on poverty, income, employment, and receipt of various benefits shows the impact of the recent severe recession in Maine. There have been sharp increases in the use of safety-net benefits such as SNAP and the free and reduced lunch program across all counties. There has been an increase in the proportion of personal income from transfer payments, and a decrease in the proportion from earnings. Unemployment is at its highest rate in many years. In addition, as in previous years Maine continues to have wide regional variation in measures of poverty and economic distress, with highest rates of poverty and unemployment, and highest use of benefits programs, generally in the state’s “rim” counties (Aroostook, Franklin, Oxford, Piscataquis, Somerset, and Washington). As of mid-2010, statistical indicators at the national and state level suggest there is a gradual improvement in the economy. However, because the current recession is so long and so deep in terms of job losses, analysts suggest it may take many years to fully recover. Unemployment and poverty, both lagging indicators, are likely to continue to trend upward or remain at their current elevated levels.

To address the near-term effects of the severe recession and the longer-term effects of persistent poverty and economic insecurity, Federal, state and local efforts are all needed to expand opportunities for jobs with adequate wages; to continue to assist lower-income households by providing needed assistance to pay for high-budget items such as child care, health care, housing and energy; to increase support for those seeking post-secondary education and job skills training or retraining that will improve their long-term prospects for having higher and more stable incomes; and to provide education and outreach so more eligible people take advantage of benefits to which they are entitled such as child care and nutrition benefits and the EITC.

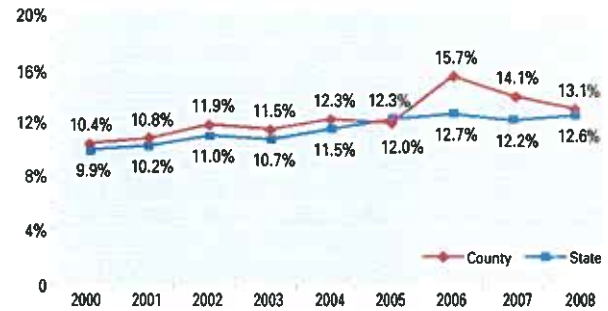
In the following section of the report, we present figures and trends providing a profile of each of Maine’s counties.

11. These comparisons should be considered with some caution, as the data for the EITC and the poverty rate are from two different time period (2006 for the EITC and 2008 for the poverty rate).

### PROFILE

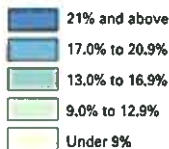
- Androscoggin County's individual poverty rate for the population as a whole in 2008 was just slightly higher than the state rate. For those under 18, Androscoggin's rate of 18.1% was higher than the state rate of 16.5%, indicating that children are disproportionately represented in the below-poverty population.
- The county has a younger population relative to other counties in the state. In 2008, it tied with Sagadahoc County in having the highest proportion of children and youth under age 18.
- Median household income in Androscoggin County in 2008 was slightly lower than the state's median household income. It was just slightly above the 200% poverty level for a four-person household.
- The 2008 "livable wage" estimate for a four-person household (2 parents, both wage earners, and 2 children) in Androscoggin County was 2.4 times the poverty level for a four-person household.
- The proportion of net personal income from earnings and transfer payments in Androscoggin County in 2008 was somewhat higher than in the state as a whole, and the proportion from investments (dividends, interest and rent) was lower.
- Androscoggin County's average unemployment rate in 2009 was slightly above the state average.

### Poverty Rate Estimates — % Individuals Below Poverty



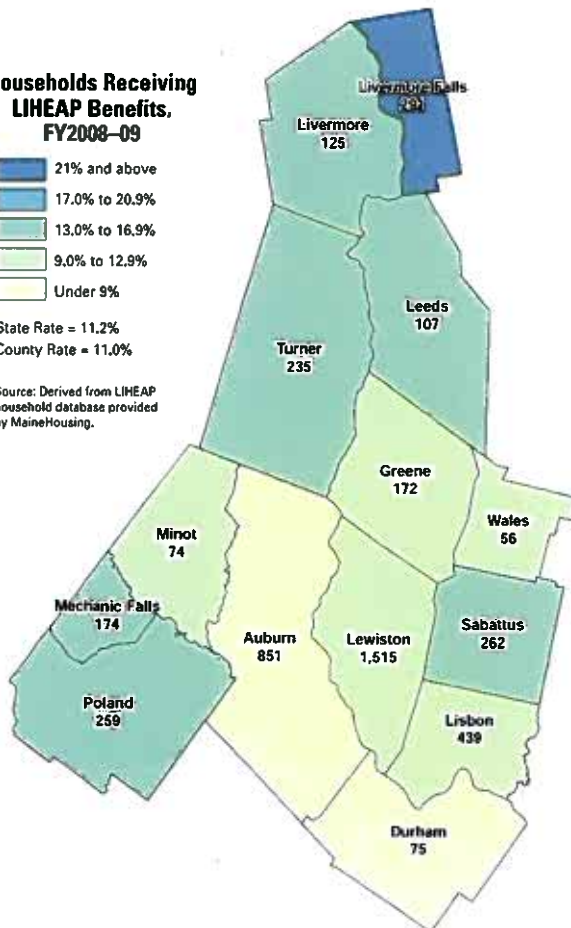
- In 2006, Androscoggin County had a higher proportion of federal income tax filers claiming the earned income tax credit (EITC) than in the state as a whole, and the average amount of the credit was the second highest in the state.
- Androscoggin County was considerably above the state average in FY2008-09 in the proportion of households and of the total population receiving the SNAP benefit.
- The proportion of school-age children eligible for free or reduced lunch in FY2009-10 in Androscoggin County was higher than the state average.
- The profile of Androscoggin County LIHEAP recipients was about the same as for the state as a whole in the proportion of households and individuals receiving the benefit, and the proportions of single family households, households over age 65, and households receiving the SNAP benefit.

### Households Receiving LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09



State Rate = 11.2%  
County Rate = 11.0%

Source: Derived from LIHEAP household database provided by MaineHousing.



### TREND HIGHLIGHTS

- Androscoggin County's poverty rate varied more than the state rate from 2000 to 2008, especially in 2006-2007 when it was considerably higher than the state rate.
- The unemployment rate trend in Androscoggin County from 2002 to 2009 generally mirrored that of the state except in 2006 when there was a sharp one-year upward increase. As in the rest of the state, Androscoggin's 2009 unemployment rate was at its highest point in many years, twice what it had been in 2002.
- The number of Androscoggin County households receiving LIHEAP varied only slightly from FY2001-02 to FY2007-08. With the change in eligibility requirements in FY2008-09, there was a 28.3% increase in households compared with the average over the previous seven years.
- As in the rest of the state, the number of Androscoggin County households receiving the SNAP benefit increased almost every year. There was an 86.4% increase in household participation in SNAP from FY2001-02 to FY2008-09.
- Since FY2002-03, Androscoggin County has had a higher percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch than in the state as a whole. The percentage eligible increased almost every year from FY2002-03 to FY2009-10.

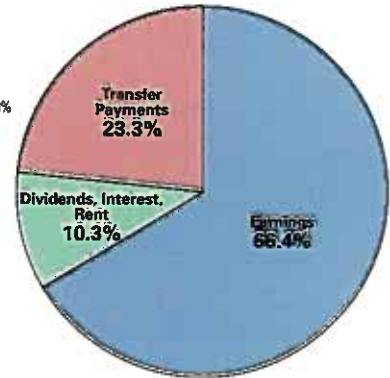
## Poverty, Employment, Income

|   | COUNTY          |       | STATE           |       |
|---|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| <b>Poverty, 2008</b>                          |                 |       |                 |       |
| All individuals                               | 10,597          | 13.1% | 161,170         | 12.6% |
| Age 0-17                                      | 4,246           | 18.1% | 43,943          | 16.5% |
| <b>Unemployment, 2009</b>                     |                 |       |                 |       |
| Labor force (total)                           | 58,004          |       | 703,367         |       |
| Monthly average unemployment rate             | 8.6%            |       | 8.2%            |       |
| <b>Earned Income Tax Credit Filings, 2006</b> |                 |       |                 |       |
| EITC Filers*                                  | 8,003           | 16.3% | 87,791          | 14.1% |
| Average EITC claimed                          | \$1,791         |       | \$1,687         |       |
| <b>Median Household Income, 2008</b>          | <b>\$44,484</b> |       | <b>\$46,419</b> |       |

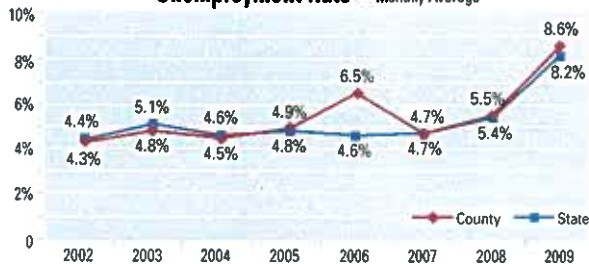
\* Percentage is based on total tax returns filed.

## Per-capita Personal Income by Source, 2008

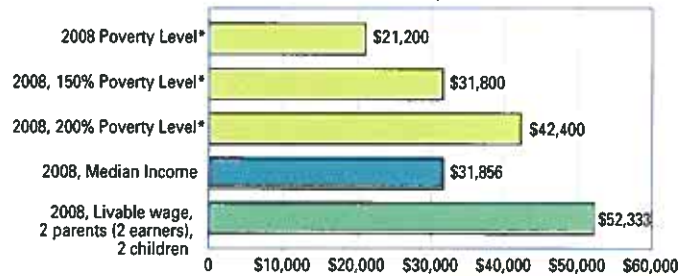
State Personal Income:  
 Net earnings = 63.8%  
 Transfer payments = 20.3%  
 Dividends, interest and rent = 15.8%



## Unemployment Rate — Monthly Average

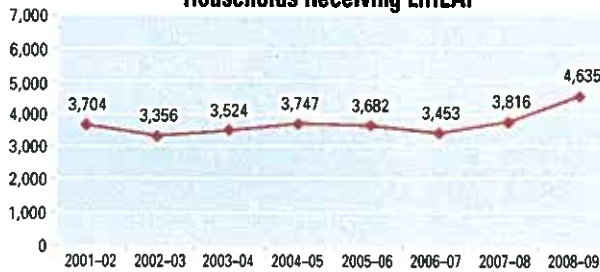


## Poverty and Livable Wages

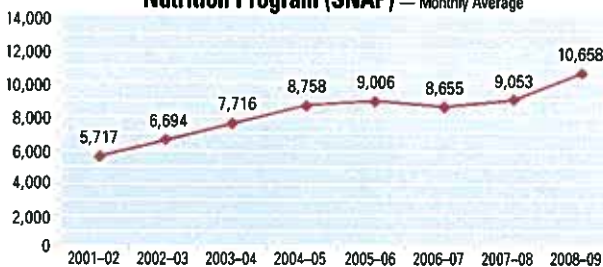


\* DHHS poverty guidelines for four-person household.

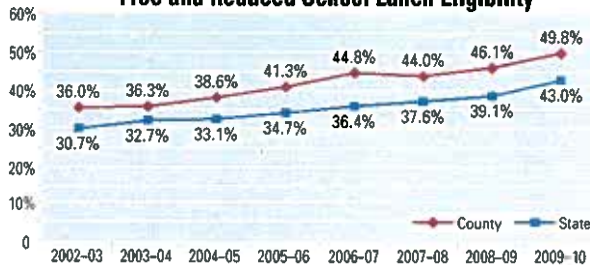
## Households Receiving LIHEAP



## Households Participating in Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) — Monthly Average



## Free and Reduced School Lunch Eligibility

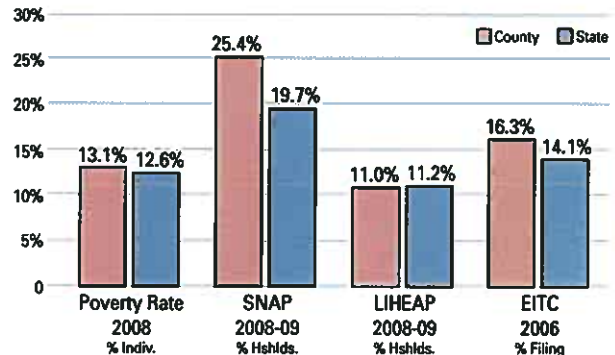


## Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09

|  | COUNTY   |       | STATE    |       |
|--|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| <b>SNAP, Monthly Average*</b>                    |          |       |          |       |
| Cases (households)                               | 10,658   | 25.4% | 102,014  | 19.7% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 21,822   | 21.0% | 204,379  | 16.0% |
| <b>LIHEAP*</b>                                   |          |       |          |       |
| Households                                       | 4,635    | 11.0% | 57,937   | 11.2% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 10,974   | 10.6% | 139,132  | 10.9% |
| <b>LIHEAP Client Household Characteristics**</b> |          |       |          |       |
| Single person households                         | 2,336    | 50.4% | 28,932   | 49.9% |
| Receiving SNAP Benefits                          | 2,440    | 52.6% | 30,922   | 53.4% |
| Applicants age 65 & over                         | 1,797    | 38.8% | 21,635   | 37.3% |
| Annualized household income (average)            | \$16,361 |       | \$16,101 |       |

\* Percentage cases or households is % of total county or state households in 2000 Census; percentage recipients is % of county or state population in 2000 Census.

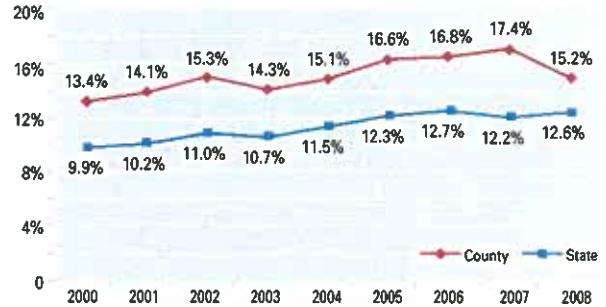
\*\*Percentage is % of LIHEAP households.



**PROFILE**

- Aroostook County's individual poverty rate in 2008 for the population as a whole and for those under 18 was considerably higher than the state rate.
- The county has an older population relative to the state as a whole and to other counties. In 2008 Census estimates, it was the third oldest county in the state in the percentage of population age 65 and older.
- Median household income in Aroostook County in 2008 was considerably lower than in the state as a whole, and was the third lowest among Maine's counties. It was about 19% below the 200% poverty level for a four-person household.
- The 2008 "livable wage" estimate for a four-person household (2 parents, both wage earners, and 2 children) in Aroostook County was 2.5 times the poverty level for a four-person household.
- The proportion of 2008 net personal income from transfer payments in Aroostook County was considerably higher than in the state as a whole, and the proportion from earnings and from investments was considerably lower. Aroostook ranked second highest among Maine's counties in the percentage of personal income from transfer payments, reflecting the county's older and poorer population.
- Aroostook County's average unemployment rate in 2009 was above the state average.
- In 2006, Aroostook County had a higher proportion of federal income tax filers claiming the earned income tax credit

**Poverty Rate Estimates — % Individuals Below Poverty**

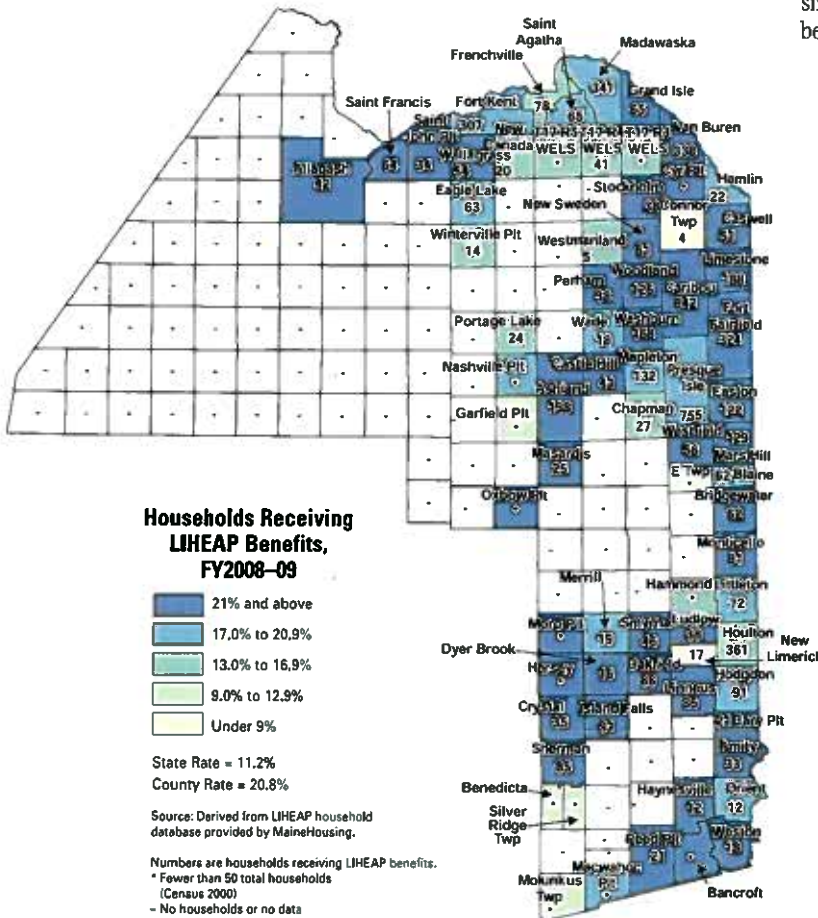


(EITC) than in the state as a whole, and the average amount of the credit was the third highest in the state.

- Aroostook County was above the state average in FY2008-09 in the proportion of households and of the total population receiving the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit.
- The proportion of school-age children eligible for free or reduced lunch in FY2009-10 in Aroostook County was higher than the state average.
- Aroostook County had a considerably higher proportion of households and individuals receiving LIHEAP in FY2008-09 than in the state as a whole. Aroostook tied with Somerset in having the second highest percentage of households receiving LIHEAP. Compared with the state, Aroostook LIHEAP recipients had a somewhat smaller proportion of single family households and households receiving the SNAP benefit, and a somewhat higher proportion over age 65.

**TREND HIGHLIGHTS**

- Aroostook County's poverty rate showed more variability than the state's from 2000 to 2008.
- The unemployment rate in Aroostook County increased at a faster rate from 2002 to 2009 than in the state as a whole. As in the rest of the state, Aroostook County's 2009 unemployment rate was at its highest point in many years, more than twice what it had been in 2002.
- The number of Aroostook County households receiving LIHEAP varied by only a little from FY2001-02 to FY2007-08. With the change in eligibility requirements in FY2008-09, the number of households receiving LIHEAP increased by 12% compared with the average over the previous seven years; this was among the lowest rates of increase in the state.
- As in the rest of the state, the number of Aroostook County households receiving the SNAP benefit increased every year from FY2001-02 to FY2008-09. The overall increase was lowest among Maine's counties, 46.2% since FY2001-02.
- Since FY2002-03, Aroostook County has had a considerably higher percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch than in the state as a whole. The percentage eligible increased every year from FY2002-03 to FY2009-10.



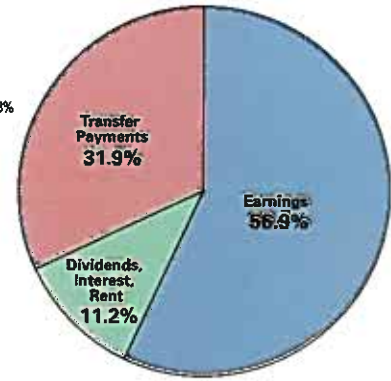
### Poverty, Employment, Income

|   | COUNTY          |       | STATE           |       |
|---|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| <b>Poverty, 2008</b>                          |                 |       |                 |       |
| All individuals                               | 10,597          | 15.2% | 161,170         | 12.6% |
| Age 0-17                                      | 2,682           | 19.7% | 43,943          | 16.5% |
| <b>Unemployment, 2009</b>                     |                 |       |                 |       |
| Labor force (total)                           | 35,567          |       | 703,367         |       |
| Monthly average unemployment rate             | 10.2%           |       | 8.2%            |       |
| <b>Earned Income Tax Credit Filings, 2006</b> |                 |       |                 |       |
| EITC Filers*                                  | 5,584           | 17.1% | 87,791          | 14.1% |
| Average EITC claimed                          | \$1,755         |       | \$1,687         |       |
| <b>Median Household Income, 2008</b>          | <b>\$36,107</b> |       | <b>\$46,419</b> |       |

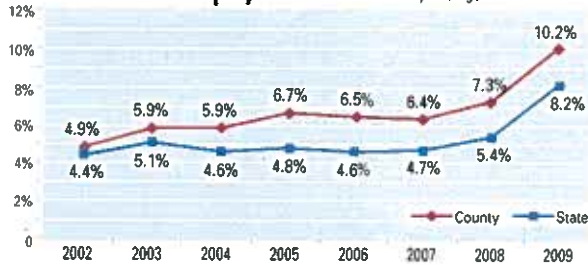
\* Percentage is based on total tax returns filed.

### Per-capita Personal Income by Source, 2008

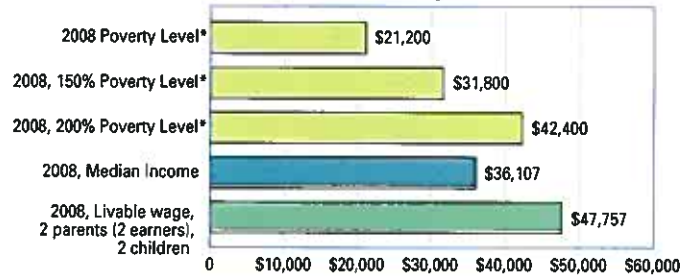
State Personal Income:  
 Net earnings = 63.8%  
 Transfer payments = 20.3%  
 Dividends, interest and rent = 15.8%



### Unemployment Rate — Monthly Average

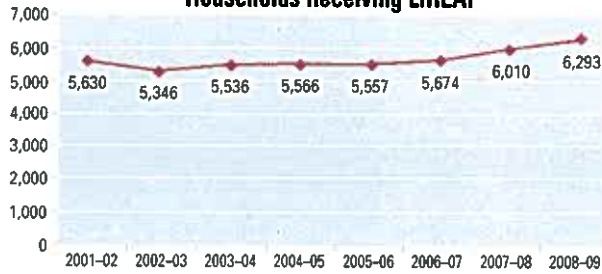


### Poverty and Livable Wages

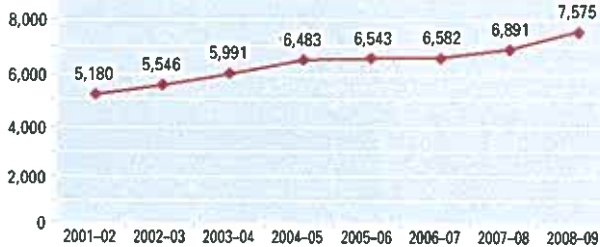


\* DHHS poverty guidelines for four-person household.

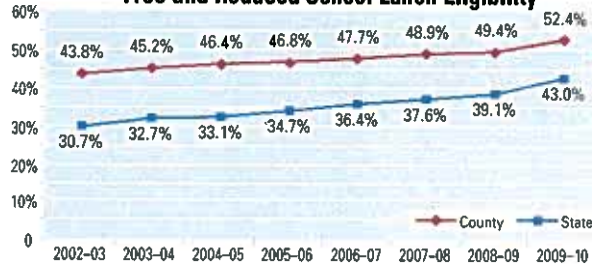
### Households Receiving LIHEAP



### Households Participating in Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) — Monthly Average



### Free and Reduced School Lunch Eligibility

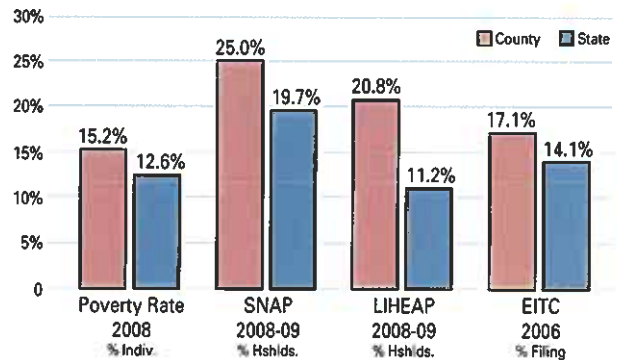


### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09

|  | COUNTY   |       | STATE    |       |
|--|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| <b>SNAP, Monthly Average*</b>                    |          |       |          |       |
| Cases (households)                               | 7,575    | 25.0% | 102,014  | 19.7% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 14,602   | 19.7% | 204,379  | 16.0% |
| <b>LIHEAP*</b>                                   |          |       |          |       |
| Households                                       | 6,293    | 20.8% | 57,937   | 11.2% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 12,974   | 17.5% | 139,132  | 10.9% |
| <b>LIHEAP Client Household Characteristics**</b> |          |       |          |       |
| Single person households                         | 2,336    | 50.4% | 28,932   | 49.9% |
| Receiving SNAP Benefits                          | 3,194    | 50.8% | 30,922   | 53.4% |
| Applicants age 65 & over                         | 2,517    | 40.0% | 21,635   | 37.3% |
| Annualized household income (average)            | \$16,659 |       | \$16,101 |       |

\* Percentage cases or households is % of total county or state households in 2000 Census; percentage recipients is % of county or state population in 2000 Census.

\*\* Percentage is % of LIHEAP households.

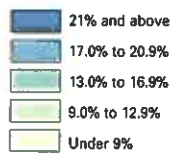




**PROFILE**

- Cumberland County's individual poverty rate for the population as a whole and for those under age 18 in 2008 were both lower than the state rate. Cumberland had the third lowest overall poverty rate and second lowest child poverty rate among Maine's counties.
- Census estimates for 2008 show that Cumberland County has a younger population relative to other counties in the state in both the under 18 and 18-64 age categories. It is tied with two other counties (Sagadahoc and Penobscot) in having the lowest percentage of its population age 65 and over.
- Cumberland County's 2008 median household income was considerably above the state's, and was second highest of Maine's counties. It was about 22% above the 200% poverty level for a four-person household.
- Because of the high cost of living in Cumberland County, the 2008 "livable wage" estimate for a four-person household (2 parents, both wage earners, and 2 children) was more than 2.7 times greater than the poverty level for a four-person household, with a greater gap in Portland.
- The proportion of net personal income from earnings and from investments in Cumberland County in 2008 was considerably higher than in the state as a whole, and the proportion from transfer payments was considerably lower. Among Maine counties Cumberland had the second highest proportion of personal income from earnings and the lowest from transfer payments.
- Cumberland County's average unemployment rate in 2009 was the lowest in the state.
- In 2006, Cumberland County had a considerably lower proportion of federal

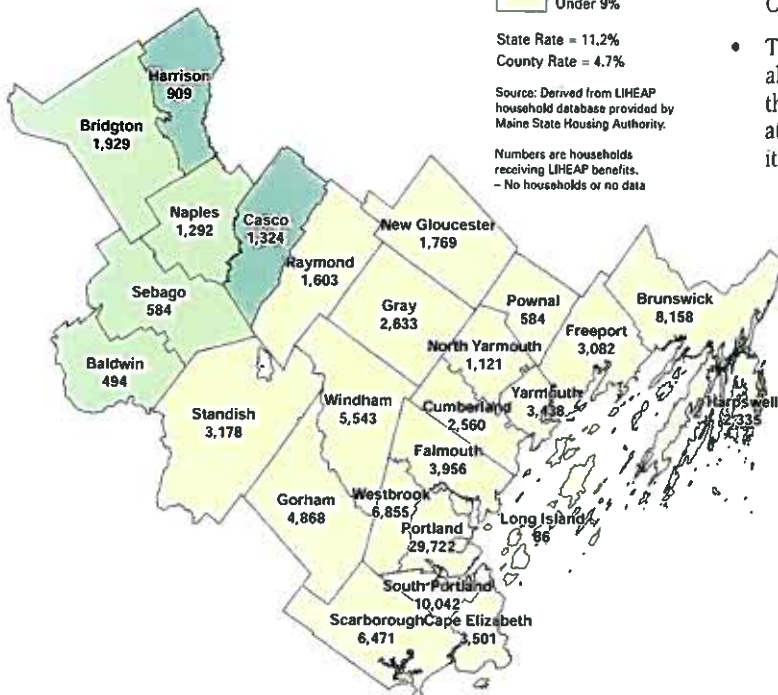
**Households Receiving LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09**



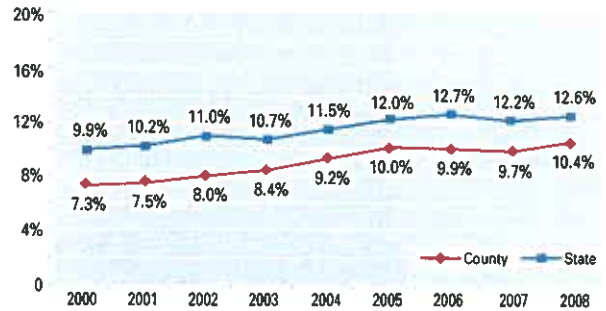
State Rate = 11.2%  
County Rate = 4.7%

Source: Derived from LIHEAP household database provided by Maine State Housing Authority.

Numbers are households receiving LIHEAP benefits.  
- No households or no data



**Poverty Rate Estimates — % Individuals Below Poverty**



income tax filers claiming the earned income tax credit (EITC) than the state average. It was the lowest among Maine's counties in the percentage of filers claiming the EITC and in the average amount of the credit.

- Cumberland County was considerably below the state average in FY2008-09 in the proportion of households and of the total population receiving the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit.
- The proportion of school-age children eligible for free or reduced lunch in FY2009-10 in Cumberland County was considerably lower than the state average, and was the lowest among Maine's counties.
- Cumberland County had the lowest proportion of households and individuals receiving LIHEAP among Maine counties in FY2008-09. Compared with the state average, Cumberland had a much higher proportion of single family households and households age 65 or over receiving LIHEAP.

**TREND HIGHLIGHTS**

- Cumberland County's poverty rate trend was about the same as the state as a whole from 2000 through 2008, though Cumberland's rate was lower than the state's.
- The unemployment rate in Cumberland County increased almost every year from 2002 to 2009. As in the rest of the state, Cumberland's 2009 unemployment rate was at its highest point in many years, more than twice what it was in 2002.
- The number of Cumberland County households receiving LIHEAP varied more from year to year than in other counties from FY2001-02 to FY2007-08. With the change in eligibility requirements in FY2008-09, there was 19.2% increase in households receiving LIHEAP compared with the average over the previous seven years.
- As in the rest of the state, the number of Cumberland County households receiving the SNAP benefit increased almost every year. Cumberland had an 88.9% increase in the number of households receiving the SNAP benefit from FY2001-02 to FY2008-09.
- The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch in Cumberland County increased or remained close to the same every year from FY2002-03 to FY2009-10.

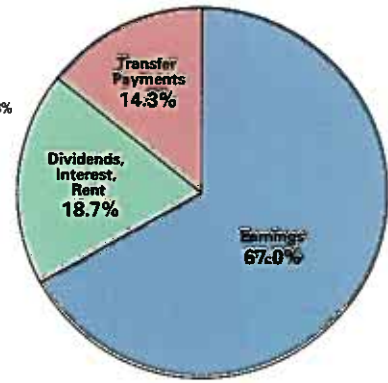
### Poverty, Employment, Income

|   | COUNTY          |       | STATE           |       |
|---|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| <b>Poverty, 2008</b>                          |                 |       |                 |       |
| All individuals                               | 27,789          | 10.4% | 161,170         | 12.6% |
| Age 0-17                                      | 7,233           | 12.5% | 43,943          | 16.5% |
| <b>Unemployment, 2009</b>                     |                 |       |                 |       |
| Labor force (total)                           | 156,680         |       | 703,367         |       |
| Monthly average unemployment rate             | 6.4%            |       | 8.2%            |       |
| <b>Earned Income Tax Credit Filings, 2006</b> |                 |       |                 |       |
| EITC Filers*                                  | 14,533          | 10.5% | 87,791          | 14.1% |
| Average EITC claimed                          | \$1,563.38      |       | \$1,687         |       |
| <b>Median Household Income, 2008</b>          | <b>\$54,053</b> |       | <b>\$46,419</b> |       |

\* Percentage is based on total tax returns filed.

### Per-capita Personal Income by Source, 2008

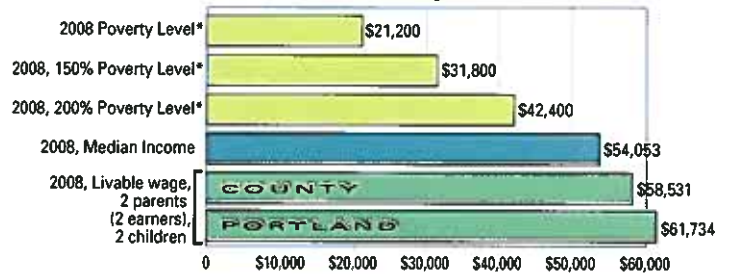
State Personal Income:  
 Net earnings = 63.8%  
 Transfer payments = 20.3%  
 Dividends, interest and rent = 15.6%



### Unemployment Rate — Monthly Average

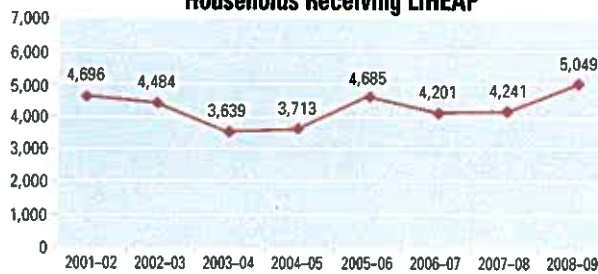


### Poverty and Livable Wages

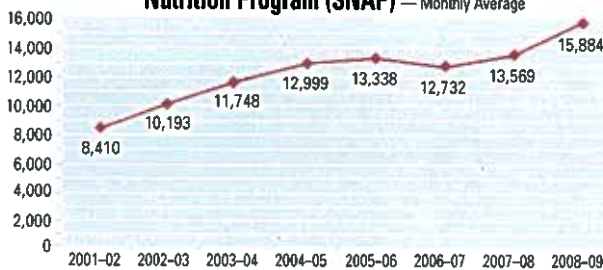


\* DHHS poverty guidelines for four-person household.

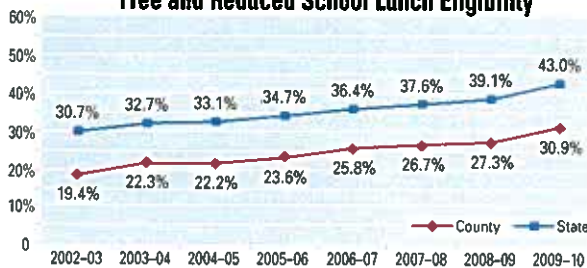
### Households Receiving LIHEAP



### Households Participating in Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) — Monthly Average



### Free and Reduced School Lunch Eligibility

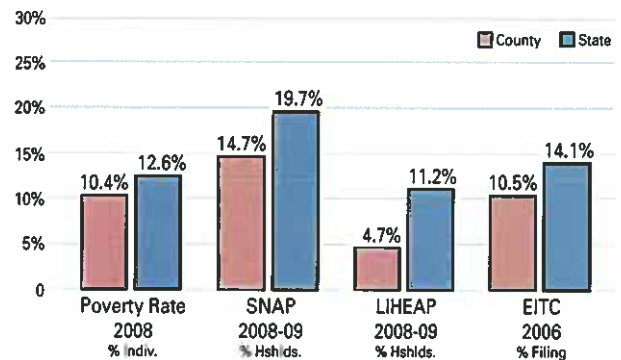


### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09

|  | COUNTY   |       | STATE    |       |
|--|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| <b>SNAP, Monthly Average*</b>                    |          |       |          |       |
| Cases (households)                               | 15,884   | 14.7% | 102,014  | 19.7% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 30,630   | 11.5% | 204,379  | 16.0% |
| <b>LIHEAP*</b>                                   |          |       |          |       |
| Households                                       | 5,049    | 4.7%  | 57,937   | 11.2% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 13,648   | 5.1%  | 139,132  | 10.9% |
| <b>LIHEAP Client Household Characteristics**</b> |          |       |          |       |
| Single person households                         | 3,272    | 64.8% | 28,932   | 49.9% |
| Receiving SNAP Benefits                          | 2,402    | 47.6% | 30,922   | 53.4% |
| Applicants age 65 & over                         | 2,300    | 45.6% | 21,635   | 37.3% |
| Annualized household income (average)            | \$16,081 |       | \$16,101 |       |

\* Percentage cases or households is % of total county or state households in 2000 Census; percentage recipients is % of county or state population in 2000 Census.

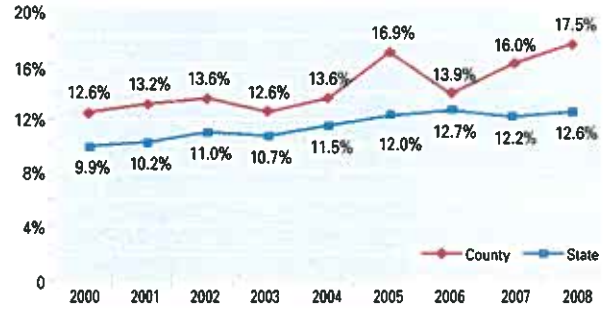
\*\*Percentage is % of LIHEAP households.



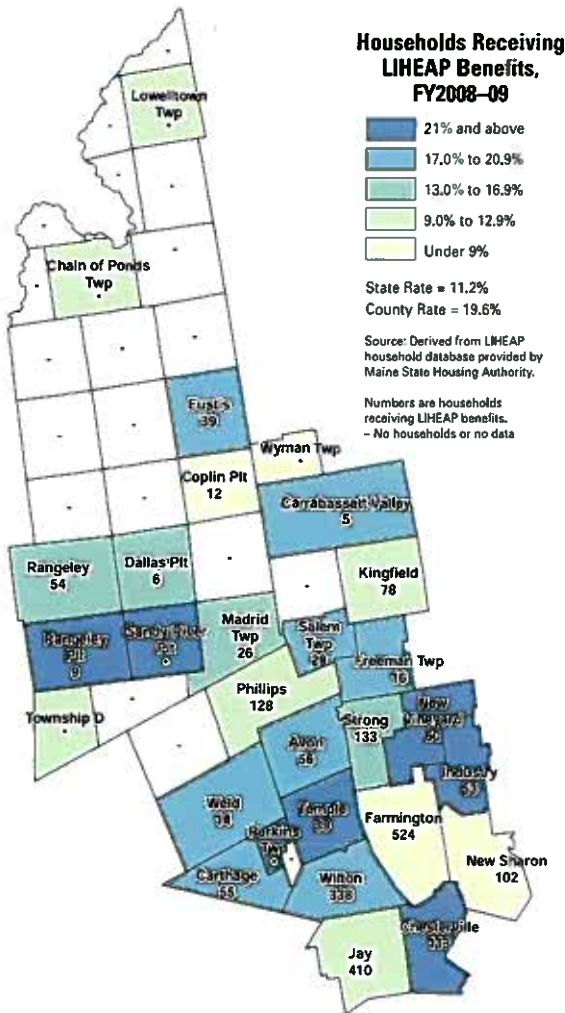
**PROFILE**

- Franklin County's 2008 individual poverty rate for the population as a whole and for those under 18 was considerably higher than the state rate.
- The county has a younger population relative to other counties. In 2008 Census estimates, it had the highest proportion of those in the 18-64 age group, possibly due to the college-age population at the University of Maine-Farmington.
- Median household income in Franklin County in 2008 was considerably lower than the state's median household income. It was 18% below the 200% poverty level for a four-person household.
- The 2008 "livable wage" estimate for a four-person household (2 parents, both wage earners, and 2 children) in Franklin County was 2.4 times the poverty level for a four-person household.
- The proportions of net personal income from earnings and from transfer payments in Franklin County in 2008 were lower than in the state as a whole, and the proportion from investments was higher.
- Franklin County's average unemployment rate in 2009 was above the state average.

**Poverty Rate Estimates — % Individuals Below Poverty**



- In 2006, Franklin County had a higher proportion of federal income tax filers claiming the earned income tax credit (EITC) than in the state as a whole. The average amount of the credit was close to the state average.
- Franklin County was considerably above the state average in FY2008-09 in the proportion of households and of the total population receiving the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit.
- The proportion of school-age children eligible for free or reduced lunch in FY2009-10 in Franklin County was higher than the state average.
- Franklin County had a considerably higher proportion of households and individuals receiving LIHEAP in FY2008-09 than in the state as a whole. Compared with the state, Franklin LIHEAP recipients had a higher proportion of single family households and applicants age 65 or over.



**TREND HIGHLIGHTS**

- Franklin County's poverty rate had more variability than the state rate from 2000 to 2008. However, Franklin's poverty rate remained considerably above the state rate during almost this entire period.
- The unemployment rate trend in Franklin County from 2002 through 2009 generally mirrored that of the state. As in the rest of the state, Franklin County's 2009 unemployment rate was at its highest point in many years, almost twice what it had been in 2002.
- The number of Franklin County households receiving LIHEAP varied only slightly from FY2001-02 to FY2007-08, except for FY2004-05 when there was a temporary upward jump. With the change in eligibility requirements in FY2008-09, there was an 18.7% increase in the number of households receiving LIHEAP compared with the average over the previous seven years.
- As in the rest of the state, the number of Franklin County households receiving the SNAP benefit increased every year. Franklin had an 88.3% increase in the number of households receiving the SNAP benefit from FY2001-02 to FY2008-09.
- Since FY2002-03, Franklin County has had a considerably higher percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch than in the state as a whole. The percentage eligible increased or stayed close to the same every year from FY2002-03 to FY2009-10.

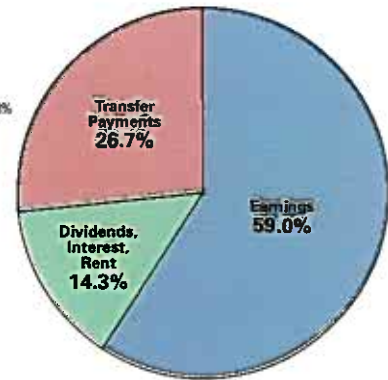
## Poverty, Employment, Income

|   | COUNTY          |       | STATE           |       |
|---|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| <b>Poverty, 2008</b>                          |                 |       |                 |       |
| All individuals                               | 4,564           | 16.0% | 161,170         | 12.6% |
| Age 0-17                                      | 1,228           | 21.5% | 43,943          | 16.5% |
| <b>Unemployment, 2009</b>                     |                 |       |                 |       |
| Labor force (total)                           | 14,310          |       | 703,367         |       |
| Monthly average unemployment rate             | 10.7%           |       | 8.2%            |       |
| <b>Earned Income Tax Credit Filings, 2006</b> |                 |       |                 |       |
| EITC Filers*                                  | 2,160           | 16.2% | 87,791          | 14.1% |
| Average EITC claimed                          | \$1,716.65      |       | \$1,687         |       |
| <b>Median Household Income, 2008</b>          | <b>\$39,929</b> |       | <b>\$46,419</b> |       |

\* Percentage is based on total tax returns filed.

## Per-capita Personal Income by Source, 2008

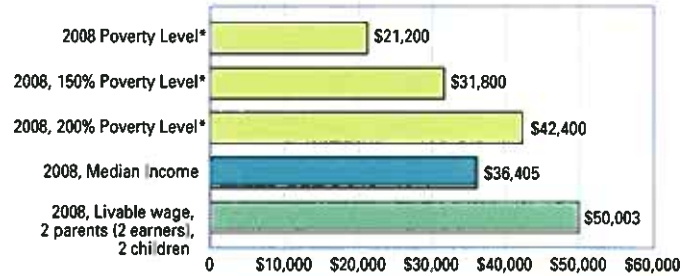
State Personal Income:  
 Net earnings = 63.8%  
 Transfer payments = 20.3%  
 Dividends, interest and rent = 15.8%



## Unemployment Rate — Monthly Average

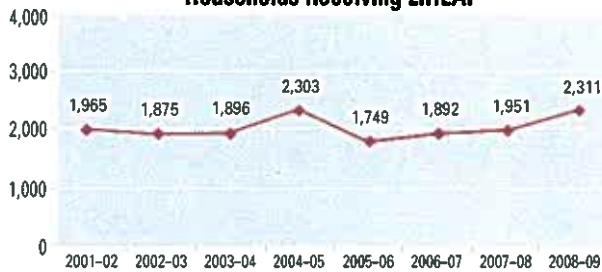


## Poverty and Livable Wages

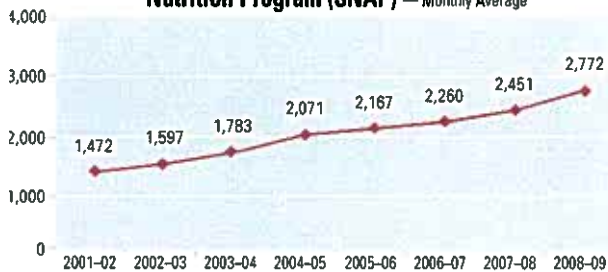


\* DHHS poverty guidelines for four-person household.

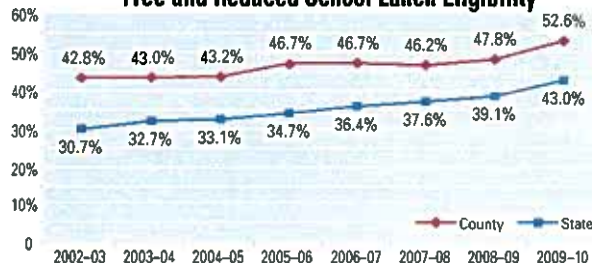
## Households Receiving LIHEAP



## Households Participating in Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) — Monthly Average



## Free and Reduced School Lunch Eligibility

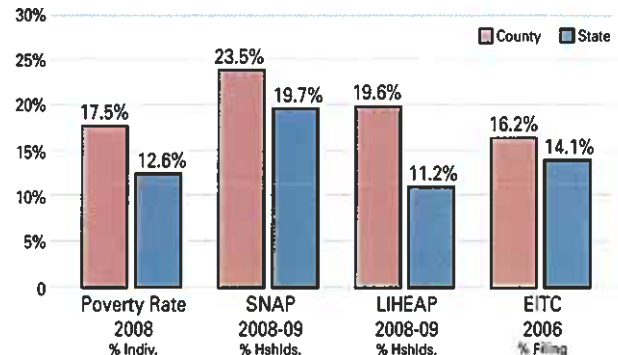


## Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09

|                                       | COUNTY   |       | STATE    |       |
|---------------------------------------|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| <b>SNAP, Monthly Average*</b>         |          |       |          |       |
| Cases (households)                    | 2,772    | 23.5% | 102,014  | 19.7% |
| Recipients (individuals)              | 5,549    | 18.8% | 204,379  | 16.0% |
| <b>LIHEAP*</b>                        |          |       |          |       |
| Households                            | 2,311    | 19.6% | 57,937   | 11.2% |
| Recipients (individuals)              | 6,683    | 22.7% | 139,132  | 10.9% |
| <b>Single person households</b>       |          |       |          |       |
| Receiving SNAP benefits               | 1,283    | 55.5% | 30,922   | 53.4% |
| Applicants age 65 & over              | 956      | 41.4% | 21,635   | 37.3% |
| Annualized household income (average) | \$16,072 |       | \$16,101 |       |

\* Percentage cases or households is % of total county or state households in 2000 Census; percentage recipients is % of county or state population in 2000 Census.

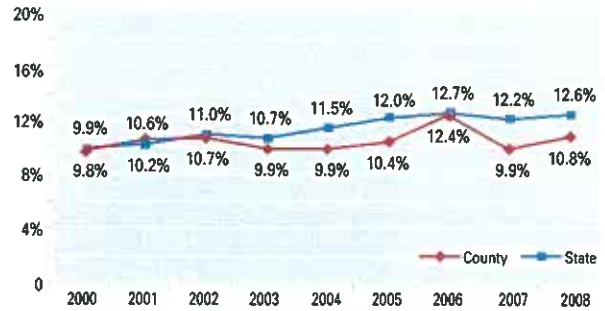
\*\* Percentage is % of LIHEAP households.



**PROFILE**

- Hancock County's individual poverty rate for the population as a whole and for those under age 18 in 2008 were both lower than the state rate.
- Census estimates for 2008 show that Hancock County has a somewhat older population compared with other Maine counties, with a higher percentage in the 18–64 and 65 and over age categories, and a lower percentage age 18 and under.
- Hancock County's 2008 median household income was somewhat above the state's. It was about 8% above the 200% poverty level for a four-person household.
- The 2008 "livable wage" estimate in Hancock County for a four-person household (2 parents, both wage earners, and 2 children) was more than 2.6 times greater than the poverty level for a four-person household.
- The proportion of net personal income from earnings in Hancock County in 2008 was considerably lower than in the state as a whole, and income from investments was considerably higher; the proportion from transfer payments was about the same. Among Maine counties Hancock had the third highest proportion of personal income from investments. This pattern is consistent with the presence of a higher proportion of well-off retirees.
- Hancock County's average unemployment rate in 2009 was about the same as the state as whole.
- In 2006, Hancock County had about the same proportion of federal income tax filers claiming the earned income tax credit (EITC) as in the state as a whole, and the average amount of the credit was close to the state average.

**Poverty Rate Estimates — % Individuals Below Poverty**

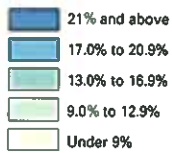


- Hancock County was considerably below the state average in FY2008–09 in the proportion of households and of the total population receiving the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit. Hancock had the second lowest percentage of households receiving the SNAP benefit among Maine's counties.
- The proportion of school-age children eligible for free or reduced lunch in FY2009–10 in Hancock County was just slightly lower than the state average.
- Hancock County in FY2008–09 had about the same proportion of households and individuals receiving LIHEAP as in the state as a whole. Compared with the state, Hancock County had a much lower proportion of LIHEAP recipients receiving the SNAP benefit. Annualized household income of LIHEAP recipients in Hancock County was lowest in the state among Maine's counties.

**TREND HIGHLIGHTS**

- Hancock County's poverty rate varied somewhat more than that of the state rate from 2000 to 2008.
- The unemployment rate trend in Hancock County generally paralleled the state's from 2002 through 2009. In 2002 and 2003 Hancock's rate was close to that of the state, but from 2004 to 2009 it was higher than the state rate. As in the rest of the state, Hancock County's 2009 unemployment rate was at its highest point in many years, twice what it had been in 2002.
- The number of Hancock County households receiving LIHEAP varied by only a little from FY2001–02 to FY2007–08. With the change in eligibility requirements in FY2008–09, the number of households receiving LIHEAP increased by 30.7% compared with the average over the previous seven years
- As in the rest of the state, the number of Hancock County households receiving the SNAP benefit increased every year. Hancock had a 128% increase from FY2001–02 to FY2008–09, the highest increase among Maine's counties. However, the proportion of households and individuals receiving the SNAP benefit was lower than might be expected, given the county's rates of poverty and unemployment and the receipt of other benefits during this period.
- From FY2002–03 to FY2009–10, Hancock County had a slightly lower percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch than in the state as a whole.

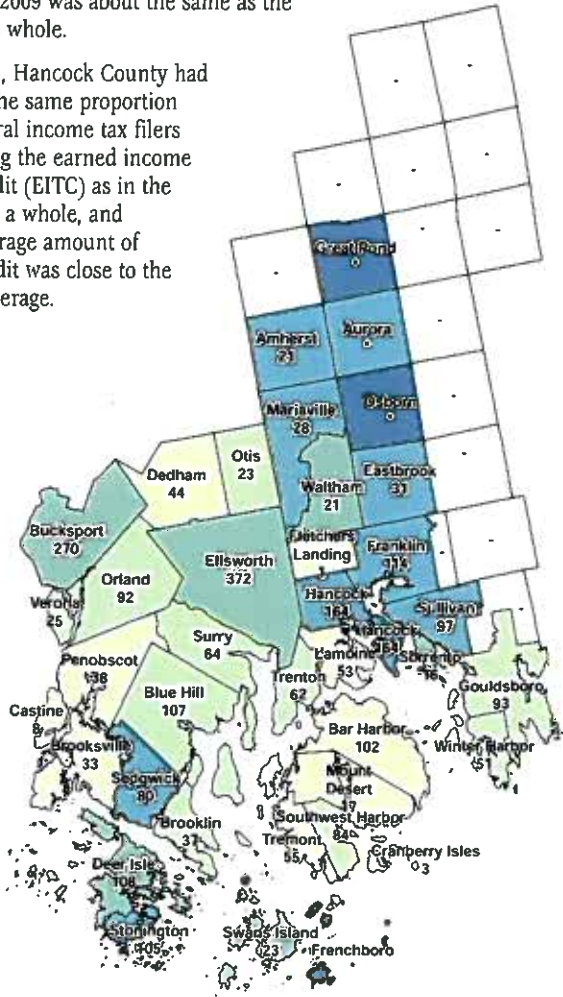
**Households Receiving LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008–09**



State Rate = 11.2%  
County Rate = 11.3%

Source: Derived from LIHEAP household database provided by Maine State Housing Authority.

Numbers are households receiving LIHEAP benefits.  
\* Fewer than 50 total households (Census 2000)  
- No households or no data



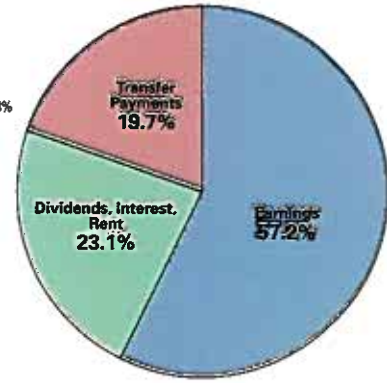
### Poverty, Employment, Income

|   | COUNTY          |       | STATE           |       |
|---|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| <b>Poverty, 2008</b>                          |                 |       |                 |       |
| All individuals                               | 5,149           | 9.9%  | 161,170         | 12.6% |
| Age 0-17                                      | 1,523           | 15.0% | 43,943          | 16.5% |
| <b>Unemployment, 2009</b>                     |                 |       |                 |       |
| Labor force (total)                           | 30,124          |       | 703,367         |       |
| Monthly average unemployment rate             | 8.8%            |       | 8.2%            |       |
| <b>Earned Income Tax Credit Filings, 2006</b> |                 |       |                 |       |
| EITC Filers*                                  | 3,848           | 14.4% | 87,791          | 14.1% |
| Average EITC claimed                          | \$1,634.34      |       | \$1,687         |       |
| <b>Median Household Income, 2008</b>          | <b>\$44,632</b> |       | <b>\$46,419</b> |       |

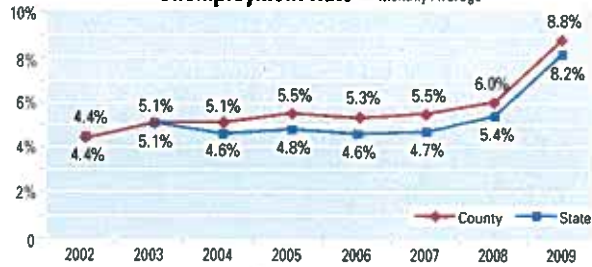
\* Percentage is based on total tax returns filed.

### Per-capita Personal Income by Source, 2008

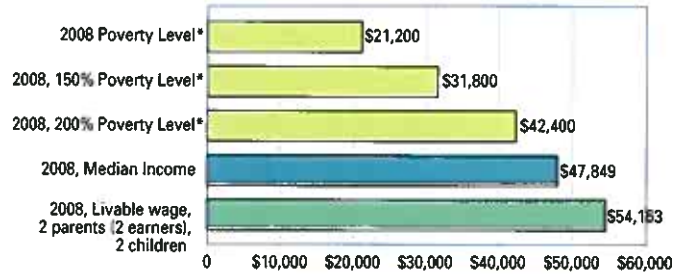
State Personal Income:  
 Net earnings = 63.8%  
 Transfer payments = 20.3%  
 Dividends, interest and rent = 15.8%



### Unemployment Rate — Monthly Average

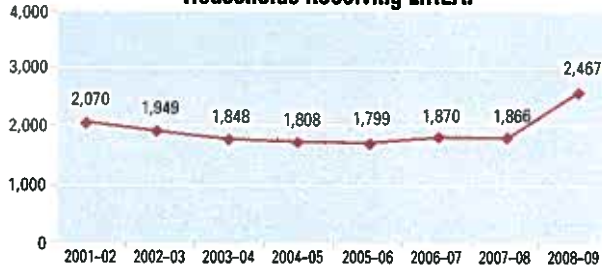


### Poverty and Livable Wages



\* DHHS poverty guidelines for four-person household.

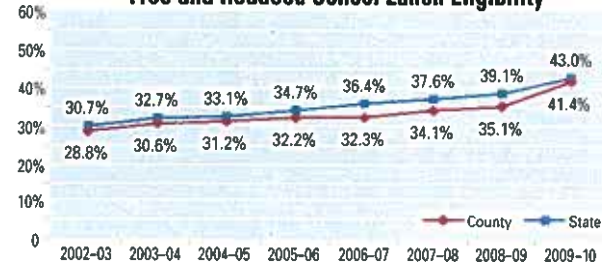
### Households Receiving LIHEAP



### Households Participating in Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) — Monthly Average



### Free and Reduced School Lunch Eligibility

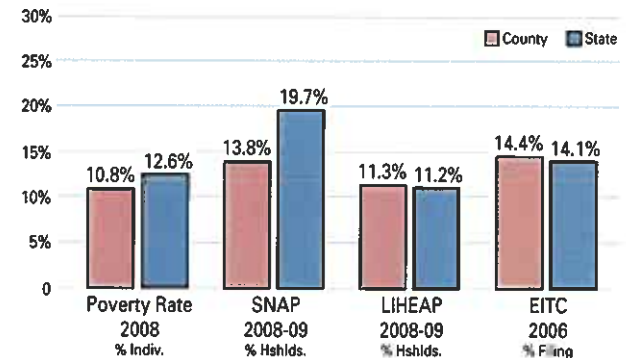


### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and LIHEAP Benefits, FY2008-09

|  | COUNTY   |       | STATE    |       |
|--|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| <b>SNAP, Monthly Average*</b>                    |          |       |          |       |
| Cases (households)                               | 3,018    | 13.8% | 102,014  | 19.7% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 6,261    | 12.1% | 204,379  | 16.0% |
| <b>LIHEAP*</b>                                   |          |       |          |       |
| Households                                       | 2,467    | 11.3% | 57,937   | 11.2% |
| Recipients (individuals)                         | 5,624    | 10.9% | 139,132  | 10.9% |
| <b>LIHEAP Client Household Characteristics**</b> |          |       |          |       |
| Single person households                         | 1,253    | 50.8% | 932      | 49.9% |
| Receiving SNAP benefits                          | 1,206    | 48.9% | 30,922   | 53.4% |
| Applicants age 65 & over                         | 894      | 36.2% | 21,635   | 37.3% |
| Annualized household income (average)            | \$14,975 |       | \$16,101 |       |

\* Percentage cases or households is % of total county or state households in 2000 Census, percentage recipients is % of county or state population in 2000 Census.

\*\*Percentage is % of LIHEAP households.



# Poverty in Maine

## 2010

Prepared for the  
**Maine Community Action Association**

By  
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Orono, Maine

July 2010

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*This report was funded with support from the Maine Community Action Association,  
the State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services, and the Community Services Block Grant program.*

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Dear Readers,

This year as the Maine Community Action Association (MCAA) presents *Poverty in Maine 2010*, Maine is grappling with high unemployment, growing food insecurity, and a budget that has deteriorated at the expense of our most vulnerable citizens. We understand that the challenges are great, but we also believe that the possibilities are vast.

During the 10 years that the MCAA has worked with the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center to document the trends of economic uncertainty among Maine families living in poverty, we have witnessed two recessions and a period of economic expansion. Knowing that modest expansions were not likely to raise all boats, MCAA used the opportunity to build its capacity so that it could better serve people who might not benefit from an economy built on home ownership and market investment. Stagnant wages and dwindling assets were a reality for the poorest Maine households during the expansion, but even this could not prepare people for what was to come next. When recessions hit, they hit hard. The first jobs lost were those that pay the lowest wages, leaving the already vulnerable in a state of true uncertainty. MCAA was prepared with supports and services to get families through, and we will continue to search for the most effective strategies to help families in Maine until we finally end poverty once and for all.

This report only strengthens our resolve to ensure that Maine people have access to affordable housing, warm homes, nutritious food, and quality care for their children, all while maintaining their dignity and a sense of hope. We hope that you will see this report as we do, not a story of overwhelming odds but one of possibilities. Our goal in commissioning this report is to provide the citizens of Maine with a look at the challenges and opportunities we must confront if we are to create stronger, more inclusive communities. A strong community is one where all people have the ability to contribute. As a state, we must find a way to grow economic opportunities for all so that we each, individually and collectively, are able to flourish.

We are deeply appreciative of the generous support offered by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services and all ten members of the Maine Community Action Association. We would like to thank the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center at the University of Maine for organizing and analyzing the data and for preparing this publication. Thank you to John Hennessy of Moose Ridge Associates for the guidance provided to the MCAA in producing and disseminating this report. We also would like to thank staff of the Maine Department of Health and Human Services Office of Integrated Access and Support and MaineHousing for their cooperation, and for providing the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center access to information from their reports and databases.

Respectfully,



Matthew Smith, Executive Director  
Maine Community Action Association



*Helping People. Changing Lives.*

The concept of Community Action was developed nationally and implemented across Maine in the 1960s with the belief that locally-controlled and governed organizations are best suited to address the needs of the poor within our communities. Forty years later, a remarkable network of ten Community Action agencies stretching statewide is the heart of Maine's constant and unwavering efforts to address the causes and conditions of poverty so prevalent in our communities.

**Here are a few of our cumulative achievements for 2009:**

## Our Neighbors

- \* **153,000** individuals were helped at **185** service sites throughout the state
- \* **3,836** children were enrolled in Head Start
- \* **70,000** families received fuel assistance (estimated through June 2010), with an average benefit of \$861 dollars
- \* **48 million** miles were driven by our transportation programs
- \* **1,507** homes will have been weatherized by March 1, 2010 (This is in line with far greater production schedules made possible by American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding.)
- \* **1,384** homes underwent repairs
- \* **259** families were helped to become new homeowners and **43** new homes were built for lower income families

## Our Economic Value

- \* **1,985** people were employed by Maine Community Action agencies for a total payroll (with benefits) of **54 Million Dollars**
- \* **2.1 Million Dollars** - estimated expenditure for new homes built
- \* **7.9 Million Dollars** - estimated expenditure for weatherization services as of March 1, 2010
- \* **30 Million Dollars** - estimated private investment for 313 affordable rental apartments (over the past five years).
- \* **150 Million Dollars** - annual statewide expenditures
- \* **6.8%** - annual average administrative cost



## Maine Community Action American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Funds at Work

- \* Helping defray salary cost of the Prescription Assistance Program Coordinator, who assists low income eligible patients have access to deeply reduced or free medications
- \* Creating a Family Assistance Advocate position to better connect clients with services. As of December 2009, over 200 clients had sought help
- \* Hiring 10 youth to participate in a paid work experience in renewable energy and construction
- \* Establishing a call center with four new staff to better assist clients who are unavailable during traditional work hours. "On-Call" has answered 16,585 calls and placed 10,881 calls to clients since October 2009
- \* Hiring a homelessness prevention specialist who has served and/or referred 101 cases since November 2009. **"Thank you so much. Without this grant assistance, my children and I would be on the streets."**
- \* Providing prescription glasses to an unemployed person, thus removing a major barrier to finding work
- \* Hiring a coordinator for the Ken-Som team which helps displaced workers by offering resources and support including preparation for re-entering the workforce. **"Jobs are tough to get, but even at my age I realize I have value."**
- \* Keeping over 40 jobs and saving the living arrangements for 89 low-income elderly or disabled individuals when the Eastern Area Agency on Aging was unable to continue providing these services
- \* Providing assistance to over 300 homeowners who were either in default/foreclosure or at risk of default/foreclosure
- \* Creating or saving 408 jobs thanks to ARRA funding, including jobs in new Community Services Block Grant projects; weatherization (most of which are private sector jobs among weatherization contractors); and new and retained positions in Head Start

## Executive Summary

This report presents a picture of poverty in Maine. It provides a statewide and county-by-county view of selected indicators and of trends over the past eight to nine years, along with individual poverty profiles and trends for each county. The report updates and adds to information published in two earlier reports (*Poverty in Maine: 2003*, *Poverty in Maine: 2006*) and in a series of Poverty Update newsletters, all produced by the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center and funded by the Maine Community Action Association and its member agencies.

The data and analysis in this report reflect the impact in Maine of the severe world-wide recession that began in late 2007. Elevated levels of poverty, steeply rising unemployment rates, flattened household incomes, and greatly increased use of safety net benefits programs such as fuel and food assistance all point to the widespread effects of the recession in Maine.

The intent here, as in our earlier reports and newsletters, is two-fold. The first is to present an objective current picture of poverty and economic distress in Maine and trends in indicators over time. The second is to document some key programs and benefits aimed at addressing poverty in the state in order to help illuminate potential areas of unmet need. We hope that the information and analysis presented here can be used to help facilitate program planning and policy.

This picture of poverty in Maine uses a few sets of data selected for their measurement properties of accuracy, completeness, and longitudinal availability, rather than using a larger variety of less thorough datasets. The datasets and indicators analyzed in this report are: (1) the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP, formerly food stamps]; (2) the free and reduced lunch program; (3) the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP); (4) labor force and unemployment information; (5) data on personal income at the county, state, and national levels; (6) data regarding living costs and livable wages in Maine's counties and municipalities; (7) updated Census information on poverty and income; (8) information on the earned income tax credit. The datasets used in this report are from slightly different time periods, but all information represents the most

recent data releases available from the respective sources, generally the periods of FY2008–09 and calendar years 2008 and 2009. The indicators are a subset of standard ones used in the United States in evaluating the extent of poverty, assessing needs, and measuring services and benefits aimed at lower-income populations.

### Poverty and Demography

- Maine's estimated individual poverty rate in 2008 was 12.6%, somewhat below the national rate of 13.1%.
- As in past years, there continue to be marked regional differences in poverty rates, with the highest rates in 2008 in the state's rim counties. Washington County had the highest rate (20.1%), followed by Somerset (18.7%) and Franklin (17.5%) counties. Lowest poverty rates were in York (9.4%) and Sagadahoc (9.8%) counties. The state's estimated two-year average individual poverty rate of 12.4% in 2007–2008 was virtually the same as in 2006–2007 and 2005–2006, and remains higher than its recent low of 10.1 percent in 2000–2001. Because the poverty rate is a lagging indicator, the 2008 figures have only begun to reflect the full impact of the recession that began late in 2007.
- The poverty rate for children is higher than for the general population. In 2008, an estimated 16.5% of Maine children age 17 and under were below poverty, compared with the national rate of 18.2%. Regional disparities are evident in child poverty rates as in the overall poverty rate. Highest rates of child poverty were in Washington (28.7%), Piscataquis (26.1%) and Somerset (24.8%) counties. Lowest child poverty rates were in Cumberland (12.5%) and York (11.8%) counties.
- Having a higher proportion of the population not in the labor force (the "dependent" population, consisting of children and older retirees) usually contributes to higher poverty rates. Having a higher proportion of the population in the working-age range (18–64) relative to those not in the labor force generally contributes to lower poverty rates. Census estimates (2008) indicate that counties with the highest proportion of the working-age population are Franklin (66.1%), Penobscot (65.8%), and Cumberland (64.6%). Three of the state's four counties with the highest proportion of elders

(age 65 and over) are among the poorest in the state: Washington (18.6%), Aroostook (18.0%), and Piscataquis (17.6%). Lincoln is the "oldest" county in the state, with 19.2% age 65 and over and the state's highest median age of 45.7; however, Lincoln does not have a high poverty rate compared with other counties because many in the older population are well-off retirees from out of state.

### Income

- Maine's median household income of \$46,419 was below the national average of \$52,029. Maine is in the lowest third of states in median household income. The gap between Maine's median household income and that of the country as a whole, which had narrowed somewhat in 2004–2005, has widened over the last three years (2006–2008). There continues to be a wide range in the median household income across Maine's counties. Median household income in Aroostook, Piscataquis, Somerset and Washington was more than 20% lower than the state median in 2008. The greatest income disparity was in Washington County, whose median household income of \$31,856 fell 31.4% below the state's; Washington County's median household income (lowest in the state) was 41.7% lower than York County's (highest in the state).
- The Bureau of Economic Analysis measure of personal income includes both cash and non-cash income: net earnings; income from investments; and income from government transfer payments (e.g., Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, unemployment benefits, nutrition assistance). In Maine, earnings (63.8%) and investment income (15.8%) account for a smaller proportion of total personal income than in the nation as a whole, while income from transfer payments (20.3%) represents a higher proportion. Within Maine, there are marked differences between counties in the relative proportion of income from wages, from investments, and from transfer payments. Transfer payments were close to or greater than 30% of personal income in several counties. Washington was the highest, at 35.7%, followed by Aroostook (31.9%) and Piscataquis (30.9%) counties. These are among the poorest counties in the state and among those with the highest proportion of elderly residents.

- Transfer payments have constituted an increasing proportion of Maine's total personal income since 2000. This is understandable, given Maine's demographic trends, particularly its increasing proportion of elderly and lower-income residents. Nationally, by contrast, the proportion of personal income from transfer payments remained relatively constant from 2002 through 2007. In 2008, however, the country experienced an increase in the proportion of personal income from transfer payments, as job losses during the recession led to decreased income from wages, coupled with an increase in benefits payments for laid-off or underemployed workers, such as unemployment benefits, nutrition assistance, and Medicaid.
- Over 80% of transfer payments in Maine in 2008 were medical (Medicare, Medicaid), disability, and retirement benefits. Contrary to popular perception, income maintenance benefits such as TANF, nutrition assistance, and SSI constitute a relatively small proportion of transfer payments statewide (8.1%).
- A livable wage is the level estimated for a household to maintain a basic needs budget and be self-sufficient from any benefits or assistance. The level varies depending both on household size and characteristics and on regional differences in cost of living, particularly housing and child care costs. There is a large gap between poverty levels and a basic needs budget (livable wage) in all of Maine's counties and metropolitan areas. There is also a gap between median household incomes and livable wages, even in counties such as Cumberland and York where household incomes are higher, because of the higher cost of living in those counties.

### Employment

- The employment picture in Maine and the nation since 2008 has been dominated by the severe recession that began in late 2007. Maine unemployment increased sharply in 2008 and 2009. The state's monthly average unemployment rate of 8.2% in 2009 was the highest it has been in many years, over 78% higher than it had been in 2006 and 2007 when it stood at 4.6%. However, Maine's 2009 unemployment rate was lower than the national average of 9.3%.

- As in previous years, in 2009 there were major differences in unemployment among Maine's counties. The highest unemployment rate was in Piscataquis County (12.4%), while Washington, Somerset and Oxford Counties had unemployment rates of over 11%. The lowest unemployment rate was in Cumberland County (6.4%). However, Cumberland and York counties had the largest number of unemployed individuals, reflecting the larger populations in those counties.

### Benefits and Assistance

- The federal earned income tax credit (EITC) is designed to encourage work and to help families become independent. Working families with children and with annual incomes below about \$35,000-\$48,000 (depending on marital status and number of children) generally are eligible for the EITC; in 2008, this eligibility cut-off level was equivalent to approximately 200% of the poverty level for a three- to five-person family. The amount of the credit depends on family size and amount of earnings. In Maine in 2006, the average credit was \$1,687, while nationally it was \$1,951. In Maine 14.1% of federal income tax filers claimed the EITC, compared to 16.5% nationally.
- There was a good deal of variability among Maine's counties in the percentage of EITC filers, ranging from a high of 21.5% in Washington County to a low of 10.5% in Cumberland County. There was also variability in the average size of the credit between counties, but in no county was the average amount higher than the U.S. average. EITC statistics can provide some indication of the numbers of "working poor" families, many of whom are not counted in poverty statistics. However, they may be living in situations of economic insecurity, where only the slightest change in costs for essential budget items (e.g., fuel) or slight decreases in income (e.g., decreases in hours of work) can lead to major hardship.
- Statewide in FY2008-09 19.6% of all households and 16.0% of the population received benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP). Individual participation rates in the program ranged from 10.6% in Sagadahoc County, to 24% in Washington County. Aroostook, Oxford, Somerset, Waldo and Washington counties each had over 20% of their population receiving this benefit. Over the eight-year period from FY2002 to FY2009, there has been a marked increase in the monthly average number of households and individuals in Maine receiving SNAP benefits. During this period, the number of households increased by 86.6% (from 54,501 to 101,729), and the number of individuals increased by 91.8% (from 106,228 to 203,764). The increased participation rates in FY2009 can be attributed in large part to the effects of the recession on Maine households. However, even before the current recession, a number of factors contributed to increased participation in SNAP, including policy and procedural changes and increased enrollment due to outreach campaigns.
- In FY2008-09, 57,937, or 11.2%, of households statewide participated in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). This represented a sharp increase over the average in previous years, due to a change in eligibility which allowed more households to qualify for the benefit. The eligibility change had been enacted in light of the extreme hardship caused by the sharp rise in fuel prices the previous heating season. LIHEAP household participation rates at the county level ranged from under 4.7% (Cumberland County) to over 20% (Aroostook, Piscataquis, Somerset and Washington counties). Washington County's rate of 22.3% was highest in the state.
- In FY2010, a record-high 43% of Maine's school-age children were eligible for the free or reduced lunch benefit. More than half of students in Aroostook, Franklin, Oxford, Piscataquis, Somerset, Waldo, and Washington counties were eligible. The highest rate was in Washington County, where 59.3% were eligible. The number of eligible students in the state has increased each year from FY2003 to FY2010. There was a particularly marked increase in the number in FY2010, about 11% over the previous year, reflecting the effects of the recession on family incomes.

## Conclusions

Analysis of data on poverty, income, employment, and receipt of various benefits shows the impact of the recent severe recession in Maine. There have been sharp increases in the use of safety-net benefits such as SNAP and the free and reduced lunch program across all counties. There has been an increase in the proportion of personal income from transfer payments, and a decrease in the proportion from earnings. Unemployment is at its highest rate in many years. In addition, as in previous years Maine continues to have wide regional variation in measures of poverty and economic distress, with highest rates of poverty and unemployment, and highest use of benefits programs, generally in the state's "rim" counties (Aroostook, Franklin, Oxford, Piscataquis, Somerset, and Washington). As of mid-2010, statistical indicators at the national and state level suggest there is a gradual improvement in the economy. However, because the current recession is so long and so deep in terms of job losses, analysts suggest it may take many years to fully recover. Unemployment and poverty, both lagging indicators, are likely to continue to trend upward or remain at their current elevated levels.

To address the near-term effects of the severe recession and the longer-term effects of persistent poverty and economic insecurity, Federal, state and local efforts are all needed to expand opportunities for jobs with adequate wages; to continue to assist lower-income households by providing needed assistance to pay for high-budget items such as child care, health care, housing and energy; to increase support for those seeking post-secondary education and job skills training or retraining that will improve their long-term prospects for having higher and more stable incomes; and to provide education and outreach so more eligible people take advantage of benefits to which they are entitled.

## Introduction

This report presents a statewide and county-by-county picture of poverty in Maine. It updates and adds to information published in two earlier reports (*Poverty in Maine: 2003*, *Poverty in Maine: 2006*) and in a series of "Poverty Update" newsletters, produced by the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center and funded by the Maine Community Action Association and its member agencies.<sup>1</sup>

The data and analysis in this report reflect the impact in Maine of the severe world-wide recession that began in late 2007. Elevated levels of poverty, steeply rising unemployment rates, flattened household incomes, and greatly increased use of safety net benefits programs such as fuel and food assistance all point to the widespread effects of the recession in Maine.

The intent here, as in our earlier reports and newsletters, is two-fold. The first is to present an objective current picture of poverty and economic distress in Maine and trends in indicators over time. The second is to document some key programs and benefits aimed at addressing poverty in the state in order to help illuminate potential areas of unmet need. We hope that the information and analysis presented here can be used to help facilitate program planning and policy.

### Methodology and Data Sources

Staff from the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center worked with the Maine Community Action Association to select indicators that are most useful and relevant to the mission of the community action programs and the needs of Maine's population. The indicators used here are a subset of standard ones used in the United States in evaluating the extent of poverty and assessing needs. These include several types of income measures, poverty

rate, employment, and measures of services and benefits aimed at low-income populations.

This picture of poverty in Maine uses a few sets of data selected for their measurement properties of accuracy, completeness, and longitudinal availability, rather than using a larger variety of less thorough datasets. The datasets and indicators selected for analysis are: (1) the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP, formerly food stamps] administered by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services; (2) the free and reduced lunch program administered by the Maine Department of Education; (3) the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) administered by MaineHousing through the community action agencies; (4) labor force and unemployment information from the Maine Department of Labor; (5) data on personal income at the county, state, and national levels from the federal Bureau of Economic Analysis Regional Economic Information System (REIS), derived from a variety of sources using a complex methodology; (6) data originally developed by the Maine Center for Economic Policy (MECEP) regarding living costs and livable wages in Maine's counties and municipalities (Pohlmann and St. John 2005) and now provided by the Maine Department of Labor (2010); (7) updated Census information on poverty and income from the U.S. Census Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates [SAIPE] program;<sup>2</sup> (8) information on earned income tax credit recipients from IRS data provided through the Brookings Institution interactive Web site.

The datasets used in this report are from slightly different time periods. However, all information presented represents the most recent data releases available from the respective sources. Information about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP] and LIHEAP is from the most recent federal fiscal year (October 2008-September 2009). Information on the school lunch program is as of October 31, 2009 and is for FY2009-10.

1. Some of the general background material from the 2003 and 2006 reports is included verbatim in this current report, since it is still relevant and is important to understanding how poverty is measured and why particular indicators are being used. Poverty Update Newsletters published in 2008 and 2009 may be seen at [http://mcspolicycenter.umaine.edu/?q=poverty\\_in\\_Maine](http://mcspolicycenter.umaine.edu/?q=poverty_in_Maine)
2. The U.S. Census Bureau, with support from other federal agencies, created the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) program to provide more current estimates of selected income and poverty statistics than the most recent decennial census. Estimates are created for states, counties, and school districts. The main objective of this program is to provide updated estimates of income and poverty statistics for the administration of federal programs and the allocation of federal funds to local jurisdictions. These estimates are derived from small samples, not from surveys of the entire population which are only done every 10 years.



Unemployment rates are an average for January through December 2009. Livable wage information from the Maine Department of Labor is for 2008. County-level personal income data from the federal Bureau of Economic Analysis REIS and data from the U.S. Census SAIPE program are for 2008. The most recent information on the earned income tax credit is for tax year 2006 filings.

Information that is gathered in program implementation is rarely perfectly suited for outcome measurement or for needs assessment. As policy researchers, we almost always work with information that was collected for a different purpose than the task at hand. For example, in social service programs such as LIHEAP, SNAP, and the free and reduced school lunch program, information is usually collected to establish individual eligibility, avert fraud, and count services rendered. In addition, we face the reality that numbers and statistics can give us broad a picture of what is being done and who is being served, but they do not directly address unmet needs or tell us who is not being served by programs aimed at addressing poverty and economic insecurity.

## Report Organization

This report is divided into three sections. This first, introductory section provides a general description of poverty, income, employment and benefits indicators. The second section is an overall statewide view of a subset of these indicators. These are presented in a series of maps, charts, and tables with accompanying text. These maps, charts, and tables allow for county-by-county comparisons of the selected indicators, as well as comparison of the county-level information with that for the state as a whole. In this section, we also include a discussion of trends in these indicators over time.

The third section presents “poverty profiles” of each county. Each profile includes two tables and several charts of poverty and benefits indicators comparing the county with the state, a map for one selected indicator (households in each town receiving LIHEAP assistance in FY2008–09), and several graphs showing indicator trends for poverty

and economic distress since 2001–2002. Each county profile also includes a brief narrative analysis of highlights of these indicators and trends.

## Defining and Analyzing Poverty, Economic Distress, and Income

### Poverty Thresholds and Guidelines

Poverty is a complex concept. It can be defined *absolutely* as the inability to meet very basic survival needs such as adequate food and housing, safe water and sanitation. In the United States and other industrialized countries where most of the population has basic needs met, poverty is defined in *relative* terms, which means that the level of household income is compared with some “line” or threshold that defines the “poverty level.”

In the United States, the most widely known and commonly used poverty indicator is the federal poverty measure.<sup>3</sup> This income-based measure was officially established in 1969 by the Office of Management and Budget, based on work done during the 1950s. Gross cash income for the household is compared with the appropriate threshold and adjusted for family size to determine poverty status. There are two slightly different versions of the federal poverty measure: poverty thresholds and poverty guidelines. Both of these are updated annually for price changes using the consumer price index for all urban consumers (CPI-U).

- **Poverty thresholds:** This is the statistical version of the poverty measure, issued by the Census Bureau. It is used in calculating the number of persons and households in poverty in the United States or in states and regions. The Census poverty threshold uses separate figures for aged and non-aged, one-person and two-person households. In this report, when we refer to households or individuals as being below or above poverty, we are normally using the Census poverty thresholds.
- **Poverty guidelines:** This is the administrative version of the poverty measure, and is issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The poverty guidelines are a

3. Information here on the federal poverty measure is derived from the excellent University of Wisconsin Institute for Research on Poverty Web site, in the “Frequently Asked Questions” section (<http://www.irp.wisc.edu/faqs.html>).

simplification of the poverty thresholds and are used in determining financial eligibility for many federally funded programs. The poverty guidelines do not make a distinction between elderly and non-elderly households as do the Census poverty thresholds. Some programs use a percentage multiple of the guidelines in determining eligibility, such as 125%, 150%, or 185%. A major reason for having poverty guidelines distinct from thresholds is that thresholds for a given year are not published in final form until late summer of the following calendar year. The poverty guidelines are sometimes loosely referred to as the "federal poverty level." Table 1 shows the federal guidelines in effect in 2008.

Some federal programs use poverty guidelines in determining benefit eligibility, while others have their own criteria based on household income and other factors. Some examples of programs using federal poverty guidelines to determine eligibility include LIHEAP; home weatherization assistance; several food assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the school lunch and breakfast programs; and Head Start. Some programs that use other criteria in determining eligibility include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (and its predecessor, Aid to Families with Dependent Children [AFDC]), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program, the Department of Housing and Urban Development's means-tested housing assistance programs, and the Social Services Block Grant. Some relatively recent provisions of Medicaid use the poverty guidelines, but the rest of that program (accounting

for about three-quarters of Medicaid eligibility determinations) does not. Some state and local governments use the federal poverty guidelines in some of their own programs and activities, as do some private companies in determining eligibility for their services to low-income people.

Information on poverty in the Census is derived from a sample of the population, with figures projected for the general population. Poverty status at the household level is determined based on overall household income reported by respondents (from all cash sources including wages, self-employment, "social welfare" cash benefits, interest and dividends, and pensions), adjusted for household size and age. Poverty on the individual level is defined as any individual living in a household that is below poverty.

The federal poverty measure has come under a good deal of criticism, and there are ongoing efforts to modify the way the measure is calculated to make it more relevant and meaningful. When the measure was originally developed, food costs accounted for about one-third of household budgets, and the poverty level was calculated by using the cost of a minimum food budget, as determined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and multiplying that figure by three. The formula has not been changed, even though food constitutes a much smaller proportion of household budgets than it did when the poverty measure was developed.

Changes in federal policy, regional differences, and changing levels or patterns of consumption by American households have not been incorporated into the federal poverty measure.

In terms of policy, changes in the tax code (e.g., increased payroll and income taxes) have changed the amount of available income for households. In-kind benefits (e.g., nutrition and housing assistance) are not included in calculations of household resources. Regional variations in the cost of living, especially housing costs, are not considered when determining a household's consumption needs. Costs of child care, medical care, and health insurance also are not included.

TABLE 1:  
Federal Poverty Guidelines, 2008

| Persons in family or household | Percentage Poverty |          |          |          |          |          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|                                | 100                | 125      | 150      | 175      | 185      | 200      |
| 1                              | \$10,400           | \$13,000 | \$15,600 | \$18,200 | \$19,240 | \$20,800 |
| 2                              | \$14,000           | \$17,500 | \$21,000 | \$24,500 | \$25,900 | \$28,000 |
| 3                              | \$17,600           | \$22,000 | \$26,400 | \$30,800 | \$32,560 | \$35,200 |
| 4                              | \$21,200           | \$26,500 | \$31,800 | \$37,100 | \$39,220 | \$42,400 |
| 5                              | \$24,800           | \$31,000 | \$37,200 | \$43,400 | \$45,880 | \$49,600 |
| 6                              | \$28,400           | \$35,500 | \$42,600 | \$49,700 | \$52,540 | \$56,800 |
| 7                              | \$32,000           | \$40,000 | \$48,000 | \$56,000 | \$59,200 | \$64,000 |
| 8                              | \$35,600           | \$44,500 | \$53,400 | \$62,300 | \$65,860 | \$71,200 |

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Several important studies and reports have suggested ways in which the federal poverty measure can be revised. However, for now, program planning and evaluation and policy studies continue to rely on the existing federal poverty thresholds and guidelines.<sup>4</sup>

### *Income*

Three of the most widely used measures of household income are the Census Bureau's measure of *money income*, the Internal Revenue Service's measure of *adjusted gross income of individuals*, and the Bureau of Economic Analysis' measure of *personal income*. Poverty information reported by the Census Bureau is based on self-reporting of money income. Adjusted gross income of individuals as reported to the IRS excludes some categories of income, particularly non-monetary benefits such as nutrition assistance benefits. Economists generally consider the personal income measure to be the most comprehensive of these three income measures.

**Personal Income.** For both the national and regional levels, personal income includes three broad types of income: net earnings (from wages and self employment); income from investments (dividends, interest and rent); and income from transfer payments. Examining the breakdown of income from each of these types can tell us a lot about the economic characteristics of an area. For example, having a higher level of personal income from transfer payments in a given state, region, or county is generally an indicator of higher poverty levels, presence of an older population, or both combined.

Transfer payments are payments for which no current services are performed. These are payments by federal, state, and local governments and by businesses. They include retirement and disability insurance benefits (e.g., Social Security [old age, survivors', and disability benefits]; worker's compensation); medical payments (mainly Medicare and Medicaid); income maintenance benefits (e.g., TANF, SNAP, SSI); unemploy-

ment insurance benefits; veterans' benefits; and federal grants and loans to students.

Transfer payments may be made directly to individuals (e.g., retirement and disability insurance payments, income maintenance benefits, unemployment insurance benefits), or they may be made on behalf of individuals (e.g., medical payments—Medicare, Medicaid—paid to providers). Because personal income amounts include government medical benefits, per capita personal income figures are higher than per capita income as computed by the Census' measure of money income or the IRS' adjusted gross income figures.

Some types of transfer payments are *means-tested*, that is, they are based on income level formulas. These include income maintenance benefits such as TANF, SNAP, and SSI, as well as medical payments to providers for most Medicaid programs. However, most transfer payments are *non-means-tested*. These are sometimes colloquially referred to as "entitlements," and include government retirement and disability benefits such as Social Security and military pensions, unemployment compensation, Medicare payments to providers, and some Medicaid payments (e.g., for the disabled).

4. A useful summary of a 1999 conference evaluating the federal poverty measure may be found in a paper by Thomas Corbett, "Poverty: Improving the Measure after Thirty Years: A Conference," which is available on the University of Wisconsin Institute for Research on Poverty Web site. <http://www.irp.wisc.edu/publications/focus/pdfs/foc202.pdf#page=51> Links to the Census Bureau's reports on experimental poverty measures may be found at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/poverty/povmeas/reports.html>

## Statewide Patterns

### Poverty and Demography

The individual poverty rate in Maine remained at an elevated level through 2008. The state's estimated two-year average individual poverty rate of 12.4 percent in 2007-08 was virtually the same as in 2006-2007 and 2005-2006.<sup>5</sup> It remains higher than its recent low of 10.1 percent in 2000-2001. Maine's poverty rate in 2007-2008 was 1.3% below the national rate of 13.1%, and has been somewhat below the national rate for at least the last nine years.

Over the years since the decennial Census (2000-2008), the individual poverty rate in the United States and Maine has been trending generally upward (Figure 1). The poverty rate is considered a "lagging" indicator of economic distress, in that it tends to rise after the "official" end of recessions. The poverty rate numbers for 2008 therefore do not yet reflect the full impact of the recession. Experts suggest that a big spike in poverty is likely to be reflected in the 2009 figures, since there was a sharp increase in unemployment that year due to the ongoing impact of the severe national and global economic downturn (Eckholm 2009).

Marked regional disparities in poverty continue in Maine. In 2008, nine counties had poverty rates above the state's rate of 12.6% (Map 1). As in years past, highest individual poverty rates were predominantly in the state's "rim" counties (Aroostook, Franklin, Oxford, Piscataquis, Somerset and Washington). The highest poverty rates in 2008 were in Washington County (20.1%), followed by Somerset (18.7%) and Franklin (17.5%); lowest rates were in York (9.4%) and Sagadahoc (9.8%). The poverty rate increased or remained the same in 2008 as in 2007 in Cumberland, Franklin, Hancock, Knox, Lincoln, Penobscot, Sagadahoc, Somerset, Washington, and York counties, and decreased in the other counties. However, because of the possibility of sampling and modeling errors, year by year poverty rate changes on the county level may not be significant.

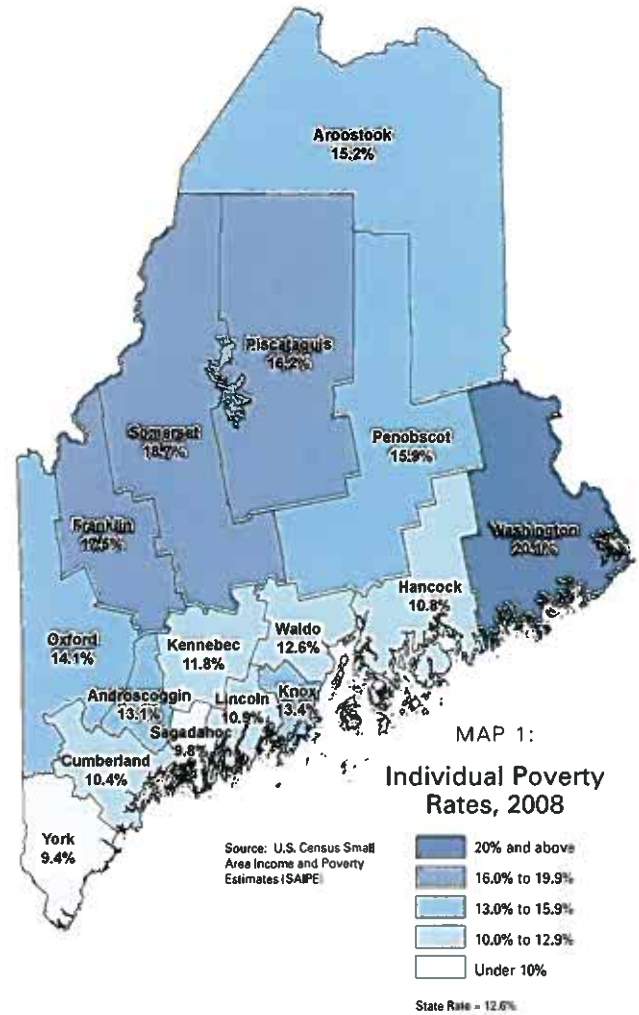
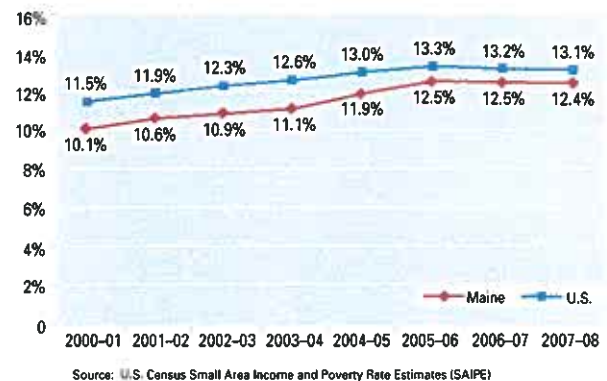


FIGURE 1:  
Maine and United States Individual Poverty Rates, Two-year Averages, 2000-2008



5. Because of possible fluctuations due to sampling error in poverty estimates, the Census Bureau recommends reporting changes in state poverty rates over time as two-year averages.

The age distribution of the population is an important factor in policy and planning regarding poverty. Of particular importance is the proportion of those classified as “young” and “old” relative to those of working age. Having a higher proportion of the population not in the labor force (termed the “dependent” population) usually contributes to higher poverty rates.

An older dependent population is generally considered to be more expensive than a younger one. Throughout the United States, the aging of the “baby boom” population (those born from the late 1940s through the early 1960s) is expected to have a significant impact on the economy, including poverty rates. Maine currently is ranked as the “oldest” state in the country. In Maine, the impact of the aging population has been exacerbated by the differential out-migration of younger, working-age adults from a number of counties, which have seen a shrinking overall population.

As shown in Table 2, counties with the highest proportion of the working-age population (18-64) are Franklin (66.1%), Penobscot (65.8%), and Cumberland (64.6%). However, the age distribution in Franklin and Penobscot counties may be skewed somewhat by the presence of college student populations in those counties. Three of the state’s four counties with the highest

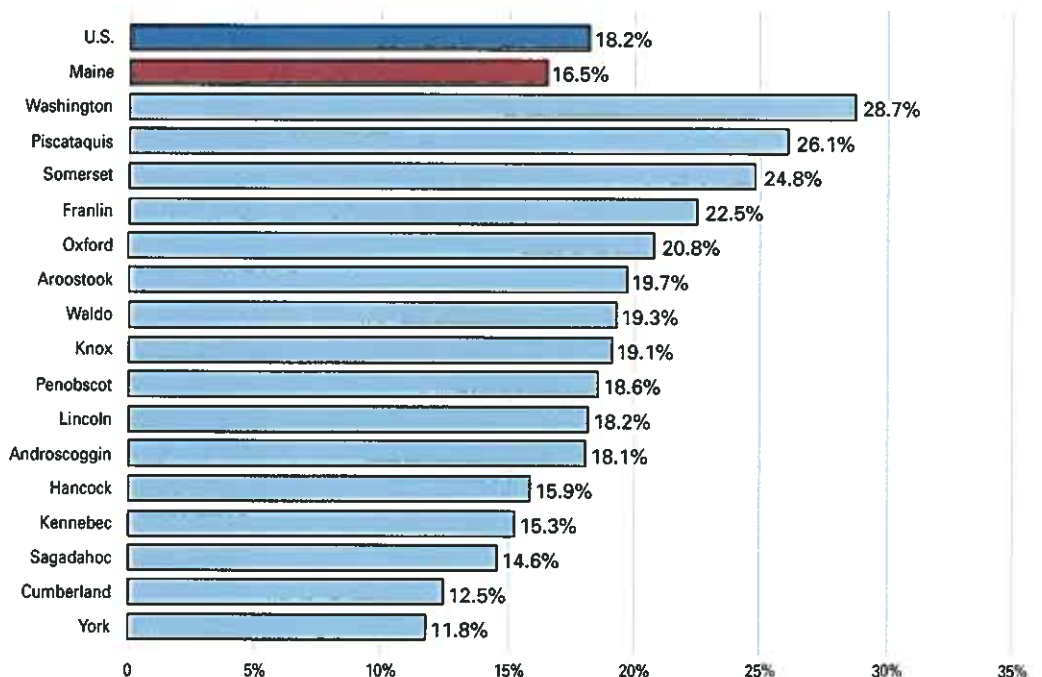
proportion of elders (age 65 and over) are among the poorest in the state: Washington (18.6%), Aroostook (18.0%), and Piscataquis (17.6%). Lincoln is the “oldest” county in the state, with 19.2% age 65 or over and the state’s highest median age of 45.7; however, Lincoln does not have a high poverty rate because many in the

TABLE 2:  
Maine Population Age Distribution, Census Estimate (July 1, 2008)

|              | Population Estimate | under 18       |              | 18-64          |              | 65 & over      |              | Median Age  |
|--------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
|              |                     | (number)       | (percent)    | (number)       | (percent)    | (number)       | (percent)    |             |
| <b>Maine</b> | <b>1,316,456</b>    | <b>274,867</b> | <b>20.9%</b> | <b>842,402</b> | <b>64.0%</b> | <b>199,187</b> | <b>15.1%</b> | <b>42.0</b> |
| Androscoggin | 106,877             | 24,177         | 22.6%        | 67,229         | 62.9%        | 15,471         | 14.5%        | 39.7        |
| Aroostook    | 71,676              | 14,029         | 19.6%        | 44,713         | 62.4%        | 12,934         | 18.0%        | 44.1        |
| Cumberland   | 276,047             | 59,301         | 21.5%        | 178,440        | 64.6%        | 38,306         | 13.9%        | 41.5        |
| Franklin     | 29,857              | 5,700          | 19.1%        | 19,732         | 66.1%        | 4,425          | 14.8%        | 40.8        |
| Hancock      | 53,137              | 10,240         | 19.3%        | 34,075         | 64.1%        | 8,822          | 16.6%        | 44.0        |
| Kennebec     | 120,959             | 24,895         | 20.6%        | 78,038         | 64.5%        | 18,026         | 14.9%        | 41.7        |
| Knox         | 40,686              | 7,931          | 19.5%        | 25,458         | 62.6%        | 7,297          | 17.9%        | 44.1        |
| Lincoln      | 34,628              | 6,554          | 18.9%        | 21,427         | 61.9%        | 6,647          | 19.2%        | 45.7        |
| Oxford       | 56,741              | 11,492         | 20.3%        | 36,048         | 63.5%        | 9,201          | 16.2%        | 43.2        |
| Penobscot    | 148,651             | 30,208         | 20.3%        | 97,853         | 65.8%        | 20,590         | 13.9%        | 39.8        |
| Piscataquis  | 16,961              | 3,230          | 19.0%        | 10,742         | 63.3%        | 2,989          | 17.6%        | 45.4        |
| Sagadahoc    | 36,332              | 8,218          | 22.6%        | 23,060         | 63.5%        | 5,054          | 13.9%        | 41.9        |
| Somerset     | 51,377              | 10,827         | 21.1%        | 32,466         | 63.2%        | 8,084          | 15.7%        | 42.2        |
| Waldo        | 38,342              | 7,957          | 20.8%        | 24,591         | 64.1%        | 5,794          | 15.1%        | 42.1        |
| Washington   | 32,499              | 6,565          | 20.2%        | 19,886         | 61.2%        | 6,048          | 18.6%        | 43.9        |
| York         | 201,686             | 43,543         | 21.6%        | 128,644        | 63.8%        | 29,499         | 14.6%        | 42.2        |

Source: U.S. Census, 2008 Population Estimates

FIGURE 2:  
Age 0–17 in Poverty: United States, Maine and Maine Counties, 2008



Source: U.S. Census Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)

older population are well-off retirees from out of state. Sagadahoc and Androscoggin counties have the highest proportion of children and youth under age 18 (22.6%).

While we do not have current figures for the overall age distribution of those below poverty in Maine's counties, in the 2000 Census, older persons (age 65 and older) were represented in the below-poverty population in greater numbers in Aroostook, Piscataquis, and Washington counties than in the state as a whole. It is likely that the same pattern still prevails.

Poverty differentially impacts children. In the U.S. as a whole, in the state of Maine, and in all Maine counties, the proportion of children under the age of 18 below poverty is higher than the overall individual poverty rates (Figure 2).

In 2008, an estimated 16.5% of Maine children age 17 and under were below poverty, compared with the national rate of 18.2%. Regional disparities are evident in child poverty rates as in the overall poverty rate. Highest rates of child poverty were in Washington (28.7%), Piscataquis (26.1%) and Somerset (24.8%) counties. Lowest child poverty rates were in Cumberland (12.5%) and York (11.8%) counties.

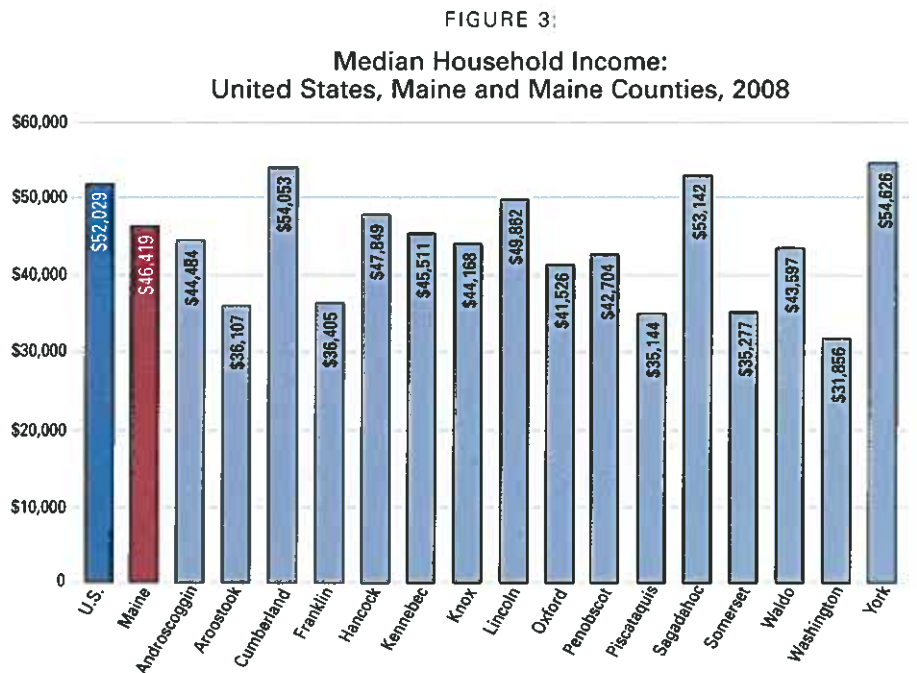
in ranking from the 2005–2007 period, when Maine's median household income was 31st lowest, but is an improvement compared with 2003–2005, when Maine ranked as 39th lowest.

Information on household income is drawn from a sample of the population. People are asked to self-report cash income from various sources. According to Census analysts, actual income is estimated to be higher than what is self-reported. Moreover, for years in between the decennial census of the population, smaller population samples are used, leading to larger margins of error. Nonetheless, the income numbers shown here (Figure 3) are useful in displaying the relative household income differences between various parts of the state.

There are marked disparities in income from one county to another: Aroostook, Piscataquis Somerset and Washington counties' 2008 median household income was more than 20 percent lower than the state median of \$46,419. The greatest income disparity was in Washington County, where the 2008 estimated median household income of \$31,856 was 31.4% below the state's median household income. Washington County's median household income (lowest in the state) was 41.7% lower than York County's (highest in the state).

Income

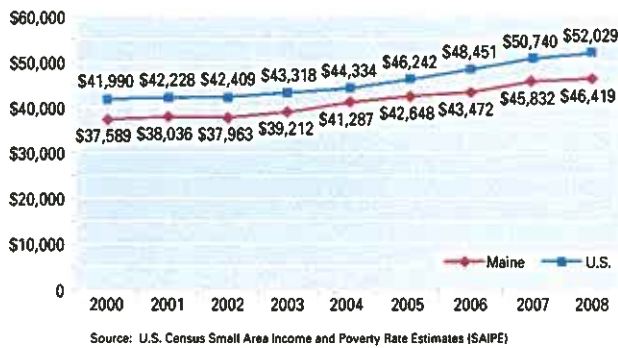
**Census-reported Money Income.** Figures from the annual Current Population Survey of the Census show Maine to be consistently in the lower third of states in median household income. (Median income is the mid-point of incomes in a given area, with half of households below and half above this point). The state's median household income averaged over the 3-year period from 2006 to 2008 was \$48,568 (based on 2008 inflation-adjusted dollars). This placed Maine as the 33rd lowest state in the country (i.e., only 17 states had lower household incomes). This was a drop



Source: U.S. Census Small Area Income and Poverty Rate Estimates (SAIPE)

FIGURE 4:

Median Household Income:  
Maine and the United States, 2000–2008



Looking at household income trends in absolute dollars (not adjusted for inflation), the gap between Maine's median household income and that of the country as a whole, which had narrowed somewhat in 2004–2005, has widened over the last three years (2006–2008) (Figure 4). Maine's household income remained virtually unchanged from 2007 to 2008, while in the U.S. it increased somewhat. However, analysts point out that after adjusting for inflation, U.S. median household income actually sank 3.6% in 2008 (to \$50,303) during the first full year of the recession; adjusting for inflation, Maine's median household income in 2008 was \$44,748. Given continued job losses in 2009, we expect household income figures to show an even further decline.

**Personal Income.** As noted in the introduction to this report, the Bureau of Economic Analysis measure of personal income is generally considered by economists to be the most comprehensive measure of actual income. It includes both cash and non-cash income of three types: net earnings (from wages and self employment); income from investments (dividends, interest and rent); and income from transfer payments, which are payments by local, state, and federal governments and by businesses for which no current services are performed. Looking at the relative proportion of each of these types of income can tell us a lot about the economic characteristics of

different parts of the state, particularly about relative economic distress or well-being.

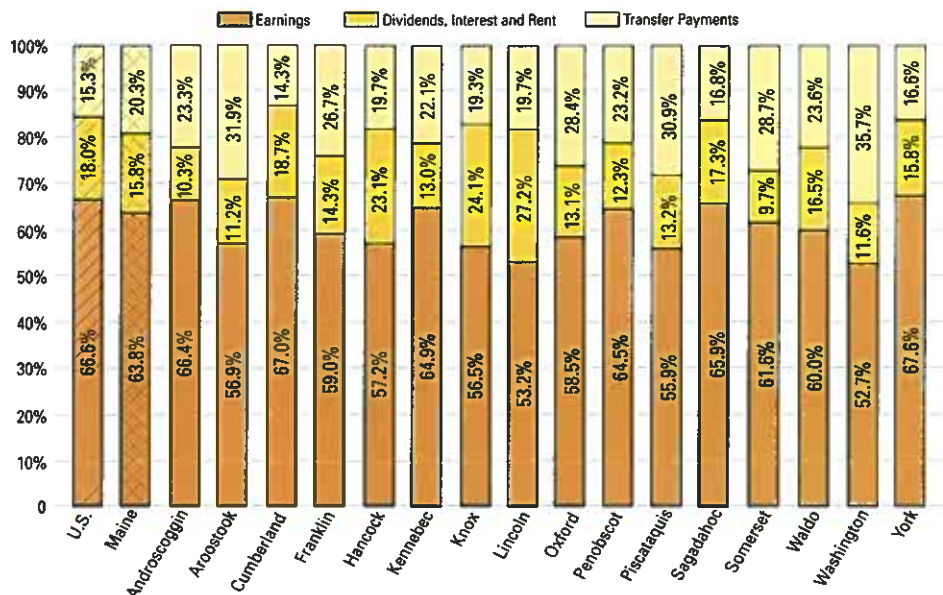
Nationally, in 2008 income from wages and self-employment was 66.6%; income from investments (dividends, interest and rent) was 18.0%; and transfer payments accounted for 15.3% of personal income. In Maine, earnings (63.8%) and investment income (15.8%) accounted for a smaller proportion of total personal income than in the nation as a whole, while income from transfer payments (20.3%) represented a higher proportion.

Within Maine, there are marked differences between counties in the relative proportion of income from wages, from investments, and from transfer payments. Figure 5 shows the proportion of personal income by type for each county, and Map 2 depicts the proportion of personal income from transfer payments in each county.

The Maine State Planning Office (2005) estimates that the ratio of earned to unearned income is expected to decline even further as the population of baby boomers moves into retirement. Counties with the highest proportion of income from net earnings are York (67.6%), Cumberland (67.0%) and Androscoggin (66.4%). Differences in the proportion of income from investments can be seen quite strikingly in

FIGURE 5:

Personal Income by Source:  
United States, Maine and Maine Counties, 2008



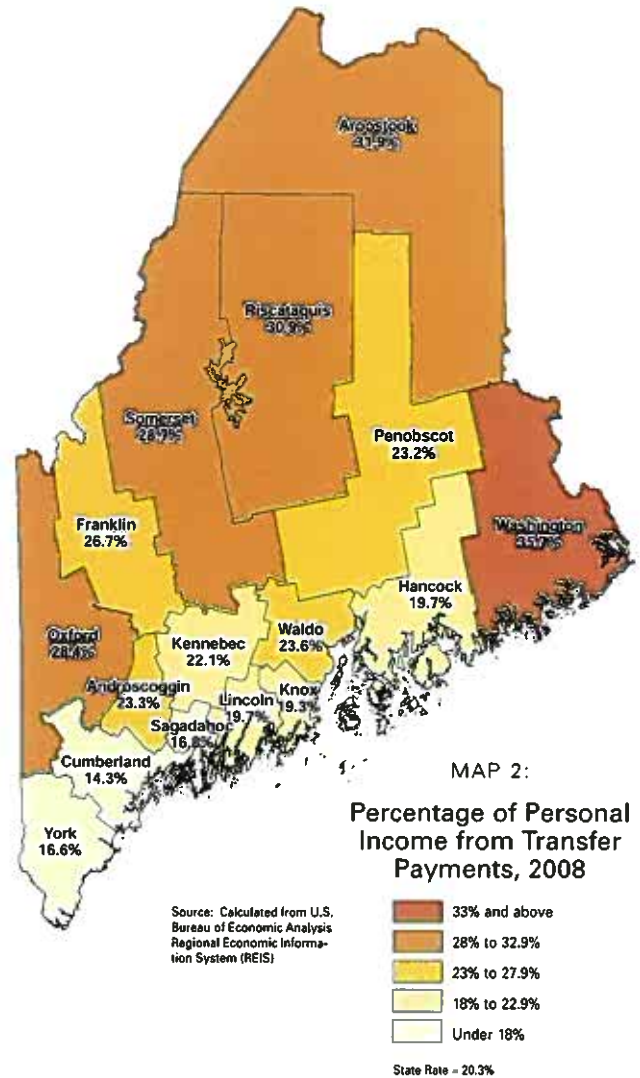
the coastal counties of Lincoln, Knox, and Hancock, which have attracted numbers of better-off retirees. In these counties, investment income represents 20% or more of personal income, with a high of 27.2% in Lincoln County (Figure 5). In all other counties, investments are less than 20% of personal income.

In Maine as a whole, transfer payments accounted for about 20% of personal income in 2008. Such payments were close to or greater than 30% of personal income in several counties. Washington was the highest, at 35.7%, followed by Aroostook (31.9%) and Piscataquis (30.9%) counties (Figure 5, Map 2). These are among the poorest counties in the state and among those with the highest proportion of elderly residents.

Nationally, in Maine, and in all Maine counties except Lincoln, government medical benefits constituted the largest proportion of transfer payments in 2008 (Table 3). These medical payments are not received directly by individuals and are not available to them for consumption purposes, but rather are payments made to providers on behalf of individuals. In several counties (Androscoggin, Aroostook, Somerset, and Washington) government medical benefits accounted for close to half or more of total transfer payments. More than half of government medical benefits in the state as a whole, and in every county except Lincoln, are in the form of “public assistance medical benefits,” largely Medicaid.

Retirement and disability benefits, primarily Social Security, are the second largest category of transfer payments in all counties except Lincoln (where they are the largest category), ranging from 28.1% of total transfer payments in 2008 (Washington County) to 42.1% (Lincoln County). Contrary to popular perception, income maintenance benefits such as TANF, nutrition assistance, and SSI constitute a relatively small proportion of transfer payments statewide (8.1%) and in most counties. In 2008, the highest proportion of income maintenance benefits was in Androscoggin and Somerset counties, where it was slightly over 10% of total transfer payments.

Over time, transfer payments have constituted an increasing proportion of Maine's total personal income (Figure 6). This is perhaps to be expected, given Maine's demographic trends, particularly its increasing proportion of elderly and lower-income residents. By contrast, in the U.S. the proportion



of personal income from transfer payments remained relatively constant from 2002 through 2007. In 2008, however, the country experienced an increase in the proportion of personal income from transfer payments, reflecting the effects of the recession, with increased job losses leading to decreased income from wages, coupled with an increase in benefits such as unemployment benefits, nutrition assistance, and Medicaid.

**Basic Needs Budgets and Livable Wages.** As noted in the Introduction, a livable wage is the level that is estimated for a household to maintain a basic needs budget and be self-sufficient from any benefits or assistance. Maine has many working households whose income is below the level of the basic needs budgets in their area. The amount required in a basic needs budget for a household depends on household size; on household characteristics, such as how many wage earners there are and how many children; and on the cost for



TABLE 3:

## Transfer Payments by Type: United States, Maine and Maine Counties, 2008

|              | Medical benefits | Retirement and disability insurance benefits | Income maintenance benefits | Unemployment insurance compensation | Veterans' benefits | Education and training assistance <sup>a</sup> | Other transfer receipts of individuals from governments <sup>b</sup> | Transfer receipts of nonprofit institutions <sup>c</sup> | Current transfer receipts of individuals from businesses <sup>d</sup> |
|--------------|------------------|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--|--|--|---|
| <b>U.S.</b>  | <b>44.0%</b>     | <b>34.2%</b>                                 | <b>9.8%</b>                 | <b>2.8%</b>                         | <b>2.4%</b>        | <b>2.4%</b>                                    | <b>1.8%</b>  | <b>1.7%</b>  | <b>1.1%</b>   |
| <b>Maine</b> | <b>47.4%</b>     | <b>33.8%</b>                                 | <b>8.1%</b>                 | <b>1.8%</b>                         | <b>4.0%</b>        | <b>1.5%</b>                                    | <b>1.0%</b>  | <b>1.4%</b>  | <b>0.9%</b>   |
| Androscoggin | 50.7%            | 29.0%  | 10.2%                       | 1.9%                                | 3.7%               | 1.2%   | 1.2%   | 1.3%   | 0.8%  |
| Aroostook    | 50.6%            | 30.6%  | 8.0%                        | 2.1%                                | 4.6%               | 1.3%   | 1.0%   | 1.1%   | 0.7%  |
| Cumberland   | 48.7%            | 35.1%  | 6.7%                        | 1.0%                                | 3.1%               | 1.9%   | 0.9%   | 1.6%   | 1.0%  |
| Franklin     | 45.3%            | 33.1%  | 8.9%                        | 4.0%                                | 3.6%               | 2.0%   | 1.1%   | 1.3%   | 0.8%  |
| Hancock      | 44.5%            | 37.9%  | 6.3%                        | 2.5%                                | 3.8%               | 1.5%   | 1.1%   | 1.4%   | 0.9%  |
| Kennebec     | 45.5%            | 32.8%  | 9.0%                        | 1.8%                                | 5.6%               | 2.1%   | 1.1%   | 1.3%   | 0.8%  |
| Knox         | 45.2%            | 38.1%  | 7.9%                        | 1.3%                                | 3.4%               | 0.9%   | 1.0%   | 1.4%   | 0.9%  |
| Lincoln      | 41.5%            | 42.1%  | 6.6%                        | 1.4%                                | 4.1%               | 0.9%   | 1.1%   | 1.4%   | 0.9%  |
| Oxford       | 47.3%            | 33.2%  | 9.2%                        | 2.7%                                | 3.6%               | 0.8%   | 1.1%   | 1.3%   | 0.8%  |
| Penobscot    | 47.4%            | 31.9%  | 9.2%                        | 1.7%                                | 4.4%               | 2.3%   | 1.1%   | 1.3%   | 0.8%  |
| Piscataquis  | 44.9%            | 36.0%  | 8.2%                        | 1.7%                                | 5.6%               | 0.7%   | 1.1%   | 1.1%   | 0.7%  |
| Sagadahoc    | 43.1%            | 38.4%  | 7.0%                        | 1.4%                                | 5.4%               | 1.0%   | 1.1%   | 1.6%   | 1.0%  |
| Somerset     | 49.7%            | 29.0%  | 10.1%                       | 3.0%                                | 4.3%               | 0.8%   | 1.1%   | 1.2%   | 0.8%  |
| Waldo        | 45.4%            | 33.7%  | 9.3%                        | 2.8%                                | 4.1%               | 1.1%   | 1.3%   | 1.4%   | 0.9%  |
| Washington   | 53.2%            | 28.1%  | 8.1%                        | 2.3%                                | 4.4%               | 1.2%   | 1.2%   | 1.0%   | 0.6%  |
| York         | 45.6%            | 37.9%  | 6.8%                        | 1.4%                                | 3.3%               | 1.3%   | 1.0%   | 1.7%   | 1.0%  |

<sup>a</sup> Consists largely of federal fellowship payments, interest subsidy on higher education loans, basic educational opportunity grants, and Job Corps payments.

<sup>b</sup> Consists largely of special payments to individuals, such as education exchange payments, compensation of survivors of public safety officers, compensation of victims of crime, disaster relief payments, and other special payments.

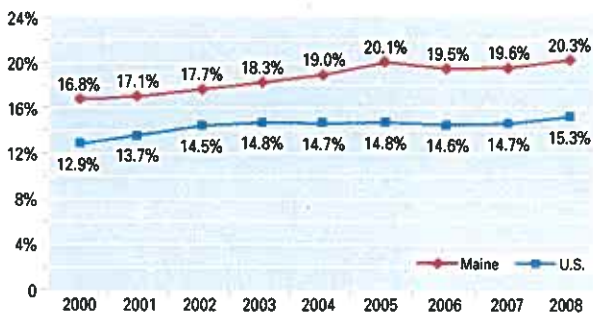
<sup>c</sup> Consists of state and local government educational assistance payments to non-profit institutions, and other state and local government payments to non-profit institutions.

<sup>d</sup> Consists largely of personal injury payments to individuals other than employees and other business transfer payments.

Source: Calculated from U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System (REIS)

FIGURE 6:

## Percentage of Personal Income from Transfer Payments: Maine and the United States, 2000–2008



Source: Calculated from U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System (REIS)

basic budget items in the area where the household is located. For example, households with two working parents or with a single working parent have costs for child care and additional transportation costs that a household with one stay-at-home parent would not have.

There are also variations in the cost of living between different parts of the state that affect the estimates of basic needs budget levels. The recent analysis of livable wages by the Maine

Department of Labor (Pease 2009) indicates that variations in livable wages across regions are due to differences in housing (rent) and child care costs, which are the only budget lines for which regional data are available. This report notes that in "areas where rent and/or child care expenses are relatively high, higher income is required to cover costs, which in turn can increase the tax burden.

The combined

effect on income needed to cover expenses can trigger a series of further adjustments to expenses and taxes and result in a livable wage differential that is far greater than the initial cost differential" (Pease 2009: 4). Housing costs were highest in the Kittery-Portsmouth and Portland metropolitan areas, followed by Cumberland, York and Sagadahoc counties. Child care costs were highest in York County and the Kittery-Portsmouth metropolitan area and next highest in Cumberland County and the Portland metropolitan area.

There is a big gap between poverty levels and a basic needs budget (livable wages) in all of Maine's counties and metropolitan areas (Table 4). For example, for a four-person household with two working parents and two children, the difference between the poverty level and the annual livable wage estimates ranges from \$26,557 (Aroostook County) to over \$40,534 (the Portland metropolitan area). Even though households at or below the poverty level are eligible to receive direct and in-kind benefits that are not included in their cash income (e.g., housing and child care subsidies, Medicaid, LIHEAP, SNAP benefits, free school lunch, and so on), these benefits do not make up for the huge gap in what is needed for an adequate living. Even households with incomes that are at the 200% of poverty level are eligible for some benefits and are far from self-sufficient.

TABLE 4:  
**Livable Wages, Poverty Guidelines, and  
 Median Household Income in Maine Counties, 2008**

|                                    | 2008 Livable Wage, 2 parents (2 earners), 2 children | 2008 Median Household Income | 2008 Poverty Level, 4-person household | Gap between poverty level and livable wage | Gap between median household income and livable wage |
|------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Maine</b>                       | \$54,371   | \$46,419                     | \$21,200                               | \$33,171                                   | \$7,952  |
| Androscoggin                       | \$51,958   | \$44,484                     | \$21,200                               | \$30,758                                   | \$7,474  |
| Aroostook                          | \$47,757   | \$36,107                     | \$21,200                               | \$26,557                                   | \$11,650   |
| Cumberland                         | \$58,531   | \$54,053                     | \$21,200                               | \$37,331                                   | \$4,478  |
| Portland Metropolitan Area         | \$61,734   |                              | \$21,200                               | \$40,534                                   |  |
| Franklin                           | \$50,003   | \$36,405                     | \$21,200                               | \$28,803                                   | \$13,598   |
| Hancock                            | \$54,163   | \$47,849                     | \$21,200                               | \$32,963                                   | \$6,314  |
| Kennebec                           | \$50,877   | \$45,511                     | \$21,200                               | \$29,677                                   | \$5,366  |
| Knox                               | \$55,494   | \$44,168                     | \$21,200                               | \$34,294                                   | \$11,326   |
| Lincoln                            | \$53,955   | \$49,862                     | \$21,200                               | \$32,755                                   | \$4,093  |
| Oxford                             | \$51,043   | \$41,526                     | \$21,200                               | \$29,843                                   | \$9,517  |
| Penobscot                          | \$52,416   | \$42,704                     | \$21,200                               | \$31,216                                   | \$9,712  |
| Bangor Metropolitan Area           | \$54,662   |                              | \$21,200                               | \$33,462                                   |  |
| Piscataquis                        | \$51,667   | \$35,144                     | \$21,200                               | \$30,467                                   | \$16,523   |
| Sagadahoc                          | \$56,618   | \$53,142                     | \$21,200                               | \$35,418                                   | \$3,476  |
| Somerset                           | \$49,712   | \$35,277                     | \$21,200                               | \$28,512                                   | \$14,435   |
| Waldo                              | \$55,370   | \$43,597                     | \$21,200                               | \$34,170                                   | \$11,773   |
| Washington                         | \$52,333   | \$31,856                     | \$21,200                               | \$31,133                                   | \$20,477   |
| York                               | \$58,365   | \$54,626                     | \$21,200                               | \$37,165                                   | \$3,739  |
| Portland-Kittery Metropolitan Area | \$60,736   |                              | \$21,200                               | \$39,536                                   |  |

Sources: Livable wage: Pease (2009). median income: U.S. Census, SAHPE program. poverty level: DHHS 2008 guidelines

The Department of Labor report notes that having increased household income can lead to loss of eligibility for benefits, with the net result that a household could actually be worse off than it was previously: much more income is needed to cover the lost government benefits, a phenomenon called a “cliff effect” (Pease 2009: 6). The benefits lost might include subsidized health care, the federal earned income tax credit, or renter’s property tax rebates. Cliff effects also can occur when an income increase leads to a higher tax bracket, resulting in loss of available income.

### Employment

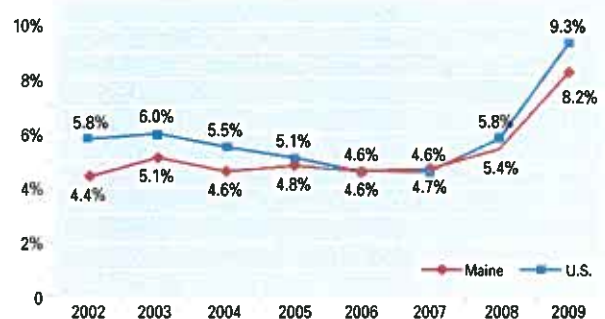
Employment is a key factor in the poverty picture. In Maine, long-term economic changes mirror those of the United States as a whole, with a decline in once-prevalent manufacturing and natural resource-based industries and jobs, and a shift to more knowledge- and service-based jobs requiring a higher level of education. Moreover, those with lower levels of education who previously might have been able to have relatively well-paying jobs in manufacturing industries find themselves having to accept lower-paid service-industry positions such as retail, food service, and so on.

The employment picture in Maine and the nation since 2008 has been dominated by the severe recession that began in late 2007. Since the start of the recession, the nation has had a net loss of about 6.1% of its nonfarm payroll jobs (Rampell 2010). The rate of job loss has been steeper, and has lasted much longer, than in most previous recessions. One of the most widely used—and widely watched—measures of employment is the unemployment rate. Like the poverty rate, the unemployment rate is a “lagging” indicator. This means that during economic downturns such as the current one, unemployment continues to rise even after the economic situation starts to improve, as employers do not start hiring immediately.

Determination of the unemployment rate is a complex process, based primarily on information collected in the Census Current Population Survey (CPS), a household survey administered monthly to a sample of the population, combined with Current Employment Statistics (CES) data and data from state unemployment insurance systems. The unemployment rate is the percentage of the labor force (considered as age 16 and over) that is unemployed and actively seeking work. The unemployment rate methodology does not include discouraged workers who have dropped out of the labor force after unsuccessfully seeking employment, and counts part-time workers as employed. The unemployment rate is, nonetheless, an

FIGURE 7:

### Unemployment Rates: Maine and the United States, 2002–2009



Source: Maine Department of Labor