Let’s Get Real

Priority Populations: Poverty in Maine

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Definitions

• **Working poor** is a term used to describe individuals and families who maintain regular employment but remain in relative poverty due to low levels of pay and dependent expenses.*

• Workers earning inadequate income as judged by government-established standards of poverty.**

*Wikipedia  
**The Foundation for American Communities
Some Stats

- Maine’s estimated individual poverty rate in 2008 was 12.6% compared to the estimated 13.1% for the national rate.
- There are continued marked regional differences in the poverty rates with Washington (20%) ranked highest followed by Somerset (18.7%) and Franklin (17.5%). The lowest poverty rates were in York (9.4%) and Sagadahoc (9.8%).
- 2008 estimations of highest proportion of working age population are in Franklin (66.1%), Penobscot (65%), and Cumberland (64.6%).
- Three of the state’s four counties with the highest % of elders, Washington (18.6%), Aroostook (18%), and Piscataquis (17.6%) are among the poorest.
## Federal Poverty Guidelines, 2008

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<th>Persons in family or household</th>
<th>100</th>
<th>125</th>
<th>150</th>
<th>175</th>
<th>185</th>
<th>200</th>
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</table>

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Median Household Income:
United States, Maine and Maine Counties, 2008

Source: U.S. Census Small Area Income and Poverty Rate Estimates (SAIPE)
Personal Income by Source:
United States, Maine and Maine Counties, 2008

Source: Calculated from U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis Regional Economic Information System (REIS)
Age 0–17 in Poverty: United States, Maine and Maine Counties, 2008

- U.S.: 18.2%
- Maine: 16.5%
- Washington: 28.7%
- Piscataquis: 26.1%
- Somerset: 24.0%
- Franklin: 22.5%
- Oxford: 20.8%
- Aroostook: 19.7%
- Waldo: 19.3%
- Knox: 19.1%
- Penobscot: 18.6%
- Lincoln: 18.2%
- Androscoggin: 18.1%
- Hancock: 15.9%
- Kennebec: 15.3%
- Sagadahoc: 14.6%
- Cumberland: 12.5%
- York: 11.8%

Source: U.S. Census Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)
FIGURE 13:
Percentage of Enrolled Students in Maine Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch, October 1, 2009

Source: Maine Department of Education
Unemployment Rates:

Source: Maine Department of Labor
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)
Discussion/Conclusions

• How does this effect the workforce?

• Maine’s business climate?

• The small and large scales of economy?

• Possible solutions? What already exists?
Thanks for your time!

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- Poverty in Maine 2010 document and information can be found at www.mainecommunityaction.org/ or at http://www.umaine.edu/mscs/