

## Somerset County – Fact Sheet on Key Measures of Health, Wellbeing, and Education

This fact sheet presents recent data on measures of community health, wellbeing, and education in Somerset County. Data are presented on key issues related to the Opportunity 2028 focus areas of meeting basic needs and promoting self-sufficiency for all; preventing, treating, and supporting recovery from substance use disorder; and quality early learning experiences for all children. Beyond Opportunity 2028 focus areas, there are also data about other potential areas of need in the county.

Data presented are the most recently available, but for several measures, the most recent data is from 2020 or earlier and may not reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic or other challenges the community has faced.

### Health and Wellbeing

County Health Rankings & Roadmaps ranks Somerset County among the lowest percentile of Maine counties (0%-25%) in terms of health outcomes and factors.

Health issues that were highlighted by the County Health Rankings were: adult smoking; adult obesity; food environment; physical inactivity; teen births; lack of healthcare workforce (PCPs, dentists, mental health providers); high school and college completion; unemployment; children in poverty; and injury deaths.

Strength areas include lower rates of excessive drinking and preventable hospital stays, as well as a higher rate of mammography screening compared to Maine as a whole.

### Service Requests Through 211 Maine

211 Maine provides insights into what services individuals are trying to access in the community. The following table shows the broad areas of service requests for 2021 that exceeded 5% of service requests and the top issues within these broad areas:

Broad Need Category	Percent of All Service Inquiries to 211	Top Need Sub-Category
<b>Healthcare and COVID-19</b>	40.9%	COVID vaccination
<b>Housing and Shelter</b>	10.4%	Rent assistance
<b>Mental Health and Addictions</b>	8.9%	Substance use and addictions
<b>Utilities</b>	5.0%	Electricity

**BOLD GOAL #1:**  
**Meet basic needs and promote self-sufficiency for all**

**Economic wellbeing**

- When compared to Maine as a whole, Somerset County has a lower median household income and greater rates of childhood poverty and overall poverty. There is greater usage of MaineCare and benefits access compared to the Maine average.

Measure	Date of Data	Somerset	Maine
<b>Median Household Income</b>	2020	\$43,694	\$59,145
<b>% of children receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families benefits</b>	2020	3.4%	2.9%
<b>% of school children eligible for subsidized school lunch</b>	2021	64.4%	38.3%
<b>% of children 5 years and younger receiving SNAP benefits in Maine</b>	2020	30.5%	21.9%
<b>% of children participating in MaineCare</b>	2020	57.8%	44.8%
<b>Children in poverty</b>	2021	23%	14%
<b>Poverty rate</b>	2019	20.4%	11.8%

**Safety**

- Somerset County has higher rates of domestic assaults and substantiated child abuse/neglect than Maine as a whole.

Measure	Date of Data	Somerset	Maine
<b>Domestic assaults reported to police per 100K</b>	2019	479.4	274.4
<b>Substantiated child abuse and/or neglect victims per 1,000</b>	2020	28.4	17.6

**Food Access**

- Compared to Maine as a whole, there is a higher rate of food insecurity and a poorer food environment index. This index looks at factors such as distance to grocery stores or supermarkets and food cost.

Measure	Date of Data	Somerset	Maine
<b>Food environment index - Index of factors that contribute to a healthy food environment, from 0 (worst) to 10 (best):</b>	2021	6.9	8.0
<b>Percentage of population who lack adequate access to food</b>	2021	17%	13%

### Housing

- The cost burden of housing is similar to Maine as a whole. Renting tends to be less affordable than Maine as a whole, while purchasing tends to be more affordable.

Measure	Date of Data	Somerset	Maine
<b>Percentage of households that spend 50% or more of their household income on housing</b>	2021	13%	12%
<b>Rental affordability index</b>	2020	.79 (unaffordable) 59.9% of households are unable to afford median 2BR rent	.88 (unaffordable) 55.0% of households are unable to afford median 2BR rent.
<b>Housing affordability index</b>	2021	.98 (unaffordable) 51.3% of households unable to afford median home	.80 (unaffordable) 61.6% of households unable to afford median home.

### Health

- Access to and availability of healthcare providers is far more challenging in Somerset County compared to that of Maine.
- Indicators, including suicide, obesity and smoking rates are higher than the state average.

Measure	Date of Data	Somerset	Maine
<b>Ratio of Primary Care Providers</b>	2018	1810:1	900:1
<b>Ratio of Mental Health Providers</b>	2018	570:1	200:1
<b>Ration of Dentists</b>	2018	5610:1	1480:1
<b>Suicide Rates (Age-Adjusted Rate per 100,000)</b>	2018	25	18
<b>% Adults Current Smokers</b>	2018	26.3%	22.6%
<b>Adult Obesity Prevalence (Age-Adjusted Rate per 100,000)</b>	2018	33.4%	31.7%
<b>No Health Insurance</b>	2019	9.4%	7.9%

**BOLD GOAL #2:  
Prevent, treat and support recovery from substance use disorder**

- Somerset has a higher rate of babies born exposed to or affected by substances than Maine as a whole.
- Because data on substance-use disorder is combined with Kennebec County, it is not possible to isolate Somerset’s rate of substance-use disorder.

Measure	Date of Data	Somerset	Maine
<b>Babies born exposed/affected to substances in Maine</b>	2021	9.3%	6.7%
<b>Suspected and confirmed drug overdoses and deaths</b>	2021	26	
<b>EMS Overdose Incidents Requiring Naloxone</b>	2021	82	
<b>Estimated percentage of individuals above the age of twelve that suffer from substance-use disorder – data is combined for Kennebec and Somerset</b>	2016/2017/2018 average	8.22%	8.64%

**BOLD GOAL #3:  
All children have quality early learning experiences**

- Somerset County has a higher public preschool enrollment than Maine as a whole.
- Fourth grade reading scores fall below the state average.
- Somerset has a higher percentage of high quality-rated childcares than Maine as a whole. This is particularly the case for center-based childcare providers.

Measure	Date of Data	Somerset	Maine
<b>Public preschool enrollment</b>	2021	59.5%	42.5%
<b>Licensed childcare in Somerset</b>	2021	27 licensed center-based childcare, 30 licensed family childcare	
<b>High quality Child Care (QRIS at level 3 or 4)</b>	2021	Somerset center-based childcare providers 37.9%	Maine center-based childcare providers 23.8%
		Somerset family childcare providers 14.3%	Maine family childcare providers 11.1%
<b>Fourth grade reading based on Maine Educational Assessment (Students in public schools who took the Grade 4 MEA test and achieved a level of "at or above state expectations" as opposed to "Below or well below state expectations")</b>	2019	45.7%	56.2%

**KVCAP COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT**  
**Prioritized Community Needs**

Rank	Need	Score	Level of Need	Agency response to need
1	Increasing the number of affordable housing units	6.52381	2	3
2	Providing more flexible and affordable childcare options for working parent(s)	6.52381	2/3**	2/3
3	Reducing the amount of opioid and other drug (heroin, meth, cocaine, etc.) misuse	6.47619	2	4
4	Increasing the number of affordable childcare providers	6.333333	2	3
5	Expanding crisis services for mental health and substance use disorders	6.285714	2	5
6	Increasing the number of high quality licensed childcare providers	6.285714	2	2
7	Increasing the number of substance use disorder providers and services	6.238095	2	5
8	Making public transportation available in rural communities	6.238095	2	2
9	Creating more emergency shelter beds for people experiencing homelessness	6.190476	2	4
10	Increasing the number of mental health providers in rural communities	6.142857	2	4

Level of Need:

- 1 – Individual
- 2 – Community
- 3 – Agency

Response:

- 2 - KVCAP take lead role, with partners
- 3 – KVCAP be a major participant, not lead role
- 4 – KVCAP supports/advocates – others lead
- 5 – KVCAP plays minimal role

Sources:

County Health Rankings and Roadmaps: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>  
 211countys.org: <https://me.211counts.org/>  
 Kids Count Data Center: <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/>  
 Maine State Housing Authority: <https://www.mainehousing.org/policy-research/housing-data>  
 KVCAP Needs Assessment: <https://www.kvcap.org/our-work/community-needs-assessments/>