
CHAPTER 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Waterville's future will be shaped in part by regional, statewide, and national trends. An understanding of the growth and change occurring within the population is essential to developing a realistic direction for the future. [For instance, a community whose growth is fueled by the in-migration of retirees will face different issues and have different needs than a community with a large in-migration of young families with children.] This chapter provides a summary of the demographic forces at work in Waterville and the implications of those factors for the future of the City.

Population Trends: 1890 to 2000

Just 120 years ago (1890), Waterville had a population of 7,107 people, or about 45% of the 2010 population (15,722). From 1890 to 1960, Waterville's population grew from 7,107 to 18,695 people, albeit at a smaller and smaller rate each decade. The City's growth during that period reflected the movement of people from rural areas to urban areas in much of the nation as family-farming declined.

From 1960 until 2000, the population of the City declined. That decline also reflected a national trend, a movement away from urban areas into the surrounding countryside. Increased migration from Waterville was due in part to ease of commuting and people's desire to be close to amenities such as lakes and open space, larger house lots, new schools, and lower property taxes. [Between 1990 and 2000, for example, Waterville lost 1,400 persons through net migration and only 168 through natural change or decline in birth rate.]

Population: 2010

After fifty years of decline, the population of Waterville increased in 2010, albeit only by 117 persons. Waterville experienced a net in-migration of 428 persons and a net natural loss of 311 persons according to figures provided by the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG).

Table 1-1 illustrates the City's growth trends since 1890 and compares the City's population change to County and State growth.

TABLE 1-1: POPULATION CHANGE 1890-2010

	Waterville	Kennebec County	State of Maine
1890	7,107	57,012	661,087
1900	9,477	59,117	694,466
1910	11,458	62,863	742,371
1920	13,351	63,944	768,014
1930	15,454	70,691	797,423
1940	16,688	77,231	847,226
1950	18,287	73,831	914,950
1960	18,695	89,150	969,265
1970	18,192	95,247	993,722

1980	17,779	109,889	1,125,043
1990	17,173	115,904	1,227,928
2000	15,605	117,114	1,274,923
2010	15,722	122,191	1,328,361

Source: U.S. Census .

Statewide Population Comparison

According to the 2010 Census, Waterville is the fifteenth largest community by population in the State. It is smaller in population than only Portland, Lewiston, Bangor, South Portland, Auburn, Biddeford, Sanford, Brunswick, Augusta, Scarborough, Saco, Westbrook, Windham, and Gorham. The last five cities were smaller than Waterville in 1990, when Waterville was the tenth largest city by population.

[Note that in 2010 the cities in Maine with the highest populations were Portland, 66,194; Lewiston, 36,592; Bangor, 33,039; South Portland, 25,002; and Auburn, 23,055.]

Regional Population Comparison

Despite the City's population losses since 1960, it still is by far the largest community in the region and remains a service center for its region. It is worth noting, also, that although the population of Waterville has declined, the regional population has increased substantially over the past five decades. [See Table 1-2.]

TABLE 1-2: WATERVILLE AREA POPULATION CHANGE: 1960 - 2010

Community	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	% Change 1960-2010
Waterville	18,695	18,192	17,779	17,173	15,605	15,722	-15.9%
Albion	974	1,056	1,551	1,736	1,946	2,041	
Belgrade	1,102	1,302	2,043	2,375	2,978	3,189	
Benton	1,521	1,729	2,188	2,312	2,557	2,732	
China	1,961	1,850	2,918	3,713	4,106	4,328	
Clinton	1,729	1,971	2,696	3,332	3,340	3,486	
Fairfield	5,829	5,684	6,113	6,718	6,573	6,735	+15%
Oakland	3,075	3,535	5,162	5,595	5,959	6,280	+104%
Rome	367	362	627	758	980	1,010	
Sidney	988	1,319	2,052	2,593	3,514	4,208	+325%
Smithfield	382	527	748	865	930	1,033	
Vassalboro	2,446	2,618	3,410	3,679	4,047	4,340	
Winslow	5,891	7,299	8,057	7,997	7,743	7,794	+32%
Total Region	44,960	47,444	55,344	58,846	60,278	62,898	+39.9%

Source: US Census.

Population Projection

Table 1-3 shows that Waterville’s population is projected to increase by 400 persons over the next ten years. While Kennebec County also is expected to experience growth, the State as a whole is projected to decline in population by 2023.

TABLE 1-3

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

WATERVILLE, KENNEBEC COUNTY, STATE

	2010	2018	2023	CHANGE 2010 - 2023
Waterville	15,722	16,151	16,122	400
Kennebec County	122,151	123,655	124,186	2,035
State of Maine	1,328,361	1,327,070	1,322,449	(5,912)

Source: Maine State Planning Office, 2010

Seasonal Population

With only 66 seasonal housing units (2010 Census), Waterville clearly does not have a significant number of seasonal units. However, the population does fluctuate over the course of the year. Some Waterville residents escape the cold winter weather, leaving their homes empty until the spring. Others move to second homes on the lakes in nearby towns during the summer. Furthermore, the City hosts a significant number of college students each school year at Colby College and Thomas College. [The 2010 Census lists 1,826 non-institutionalized persons in group quarters.] Waterville also benefits from summer residents and tourists staying in housing on lakes in other, smaller towns who frequent commercial and cultural venues in Waterville.

While neither Colby College nor Thomas College offer summer sessions, both offer special programs to visiting groups. Colby schedules over 50 summer programs, including refresher courses for doctors and athletic camps for children, and attracts approximately 7,000 persons to Waterville over the course of the summer. Thomas College offers Elder Hostel.

Daytime Versus Resident Population

It is important to note that Waterville’s population fluctuates not only by season, but also by time of day. As a service center community, Waterville provides public services to both residents and to persons who commute to Waterville to work or travel to Waterville for shopping, medical and

professional appointments, and entertainment and other amenities. Various studies estimate our daytime population at over 21,000, well above our 2010 resident population of 15,722. [See Chapter 6: Public Facilities and Services.]

Household Change

The 1970s saw a dramatic decrease in household size. In Waterville, the average household shrank from 3.15 persons in 1970 to 2.50 in 1980. That decrease was typical of national trends and was caused by a variety of factors including lower birth rates, increased longevity among the elderly, higher divorce rates, and more elderly and young people living independently in their own homes.

The trend of decreasing household size has continued, but at a slower rate. The 2010 Census indicated an average household size of 2.13 persons in Waterville. There were 2,481 single person households representing more than a third (38.9%) of Waterville's 6,370 households. Husbands and wives without their own children under age 18, accounted for 1,387 or 21.8% of households.

Only 1,577 households, about a quarter (24.8%) of Waterville's households, had children. Of those households with children, 565 were headed by single mothers and 181 were headed by single fathers. [For school enrollment projections, see Chapter 6: Public Facilities and Services.]

Impact of Household Change on Housing Demand

Over the past fifty years, the decrease in household size has had a substantial impact on residential development in Maine communities, including Waterville. During the 1980s, for example, although the population of Waterville declined by 606 persons, the number of households increased by 382. Consequently, more dwelling units were needed to house fewer people.

Between 1990 and 2010, Waterville lost 8.4% of its population (1,451 persons). Over that same period of twenty years, Waterville lost only 213 households or 3.2% of its households. [There were 6,583 households in Waterville in 1990 compared with 6,370 households in 2010.]

Assuming that there will be 400 additional persons in Waterville in 2023 and that the number of persons per household will remain at 2.13, we can estimate that 188 additional housing units will be required by 2023. In 2012, fifty-eight (58) one-bedroom units of low-income, elderly housing were approved for construction on the current site of St. Francis Church on Elm Street. After those units are completed, at least 130 more units will be needed to fill the demand and others will be necessary to replace dilapidated units. [See Chapter 2: Housing.]

Age Distribution

As might be expected, and as shown on Table 1-4, in 2010 Waterville had a much higher percentage of college-aged adults (18-20) and a lower median age than both Kennebec County and the State. Those statistics reflect the presence of Colby College and Thomas College. Also in part because of 20-year olds in the colleges, Table 1-5 shows that Waterville had a higher percentage of adults in the child-rearing age group (20-39) than the County or the State.

TABLE 1-4
COLLEGE AGE AND MEDIAN AGE
WATERVILLE, KENNEBEC COUNTY, STATE
2010

	18-20 Years	Median Age
Waterville	1,593 10.1%	36.8
Kennebec County	4,927 4.0%	42.8
State of Maine	53,834 4.0%	42.7

Source: U.S. Census 2010.

Table 1-5 shows, too, that the City also had a higher percentage of elderly (85 and older) than Kennebec County or the State. This is explained in part by the presence of numerous nursing homes and apartments, including apartments provided for the elderly by Waterville Housing Authority and the Catholic Church. The ease of access to shopping and medical services in this service center community also makes it an attractive location for the elderly.

The middle-age group (40-64), on the other hand, is a smaller percentage of the population in Waterville than it is in Kennebec County or the State. Given that the entire baby boom generation (plus others who are younger than the baby boomers) was included in the age 40-64 cohort in 2010 and that it covers a span of 24 years, it is surprising that that group is not larger in Waterville. This relatively small cohort may suggest that the trend of population movement from the City to surrounding rural communities has continued among persons in the 40-64 age group. Those persons moving out may be motivated in part by the limited supply of newer homes for sale at the higher end of the housing market in Waterville. Many of them presumably are commuting back into Waterville to work.

TABLE 1-5**AGE DISTRIBUTION COMPARISONS****POPULATION AND PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION BY AGE GROUP****WATERVILLE, KENNEBEC COUNTY, AND STATE****2010**

	Under Age 5	5-19 Years	20-39 Years	40-64 Years	65-84 Years	85+ Years
Waterville	855 5.4%	2,932 18.6%	4,592 29.2%	4,720 30.0%	2,034 12.9%	589 3.7%
Kennebec County	6,334 5.2%	22,248 18.2%	27,832 22.8%	46,777 38.3%	16,293 13.3%	2,667 2.2%
State of Maine	69,520 5.2%	241,439 18.1%	304,175 22.9%	502,147 37.8%	181,944 13.7%	29,136 2.2%

Source: U.S. Census 2010. (Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.)

Population Projection to 2023 by Age Group

The State has no population projection by age group for the year 2023 for Waterville. However, we can expect to see a slight increase in the number of persons ages 18 to 21, because of a planned increase in enrollment at Thomas College. We also will see an increase in the 65-84 age group, as the older half of the baby boom will have moved into that bracket by 2023.

Educational Attainment

In 2010 Waterville had a smaller percentage of people age 25 and older with at least a high school diploma (86.9%) than the State (89.8%). In addition, Waterville had a smaller percentage of people age 25 and older with at least a bachelor's degree or higher (23.1%) than the State (26.5%). One might expect a higher percentage of persons with advanced degrees given the presence of Colby College and Thomas College and the City's hospitals. Furthermore, Waterville is a service center community where professional services such as legal, accounting, engineering, medical, and dental services are available. This lower than expected percentage of persons with advanced

degrees may be indicative of the number of middle income persons who have moved out to the outlying towns and who commute back to Waterville for work. The lower percentage of people age 25 and older with at least a high school diploma reflects the poverty rate in Waterville.

Income Characteristics

Table 1-6 shows that Waterville's 2010 median household income (\$33,461) was substantially lower than that of Kennebec County (\$45,973) and the State (\$46,933). In addition, the percentage of families below federal poverty level in Waterville (21%) was significantly higher than in both Kennebec County (12.8%) and the State (12.8%).

TABLE 1-6
INCOME CHARACTERISTICS
WATERVILLE, KENNEBEC COUNTY, STATE
2010

	Median Household Income	% of Families Below Federal Poverty Level
Waterville	\$33,461	21.0%
Kennebec County	\$45,973	12.8%
State of Maine	\$46,933	12.8%

Source: US Census, 2010.

Persons Below the Federal Poverty Level Over Time

Even more dramatic than the percentage of families below the federal poverty level (above) is the percentage and number of persons in poverty in Waterville. Table 1-7 shows the change in poverty between 1979 and 2009. During that thirty-year period, while Waterville lost population, the number of persons in poverty increased. Some of the increase in poverty in Waterville was the result of Waterville residents falling below the poverty level for various reason (for example: unemployment, under-employment, medical expenses, retirement, divorce or death of a spouse, birth of a child, or the cost of heating their homes). Some of the increase in poverty resulted from persons in poverty moving into Waterville.

TABLE 1-7**CHANGE IN POPULATION AND POVERTY 1979 - 2009****WATERVILLE**

YEAR	PERCENT OF PERSONS BELOW FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL	TOTAL POPULATION	TOTAL PERSONS IN POVERTY
1979	16%	17,779	2,845
1989	16%	17,173	2,748
1999	19.2%	15,605	2,996
2009	24.3%	15,722	3,820
CHANGE 1979 - 2009	+ 8.3%	- 2,057	+ 975

U. S. Census Bureau, State and County QuickFacts 2011.

Poverty by Jurisdiction

Table 1-8 shows how the level of poverty in Waterville compares with poverty in other jurisdictions.

The federal poverty line is 33% of the median income in the United States. Federal poverty guidelines for assistance programs are based on household size. In 2010, for a single person the guideline was \$10,830. For a family of four it was \$22,050. [See "2011 Report on Poverty" prepared by the Maine State Planning Office and available on line.]

TABLE 1-8
PERCENT OF PERSONS
BELOW THE FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL
BY JURISDICTION
2009

JURISDICTION	POPULATION	PERCENT OF PERSONS IN POVERTY 2009
Waterville	15,722	24.3%
Kennebec County	122,151	12.9%
Maine	1,328,361	12.6%
United States	308,745,538	14.3% 13.8% (as of December 2011 from the 5-year American Community Survey)
Augusta	19,136	20%
Winslow	7,794	11.4%
Aroostook County	71,870	16.4%
Cumberland County	281,674	9.3%
Hancock County	54,418	11.9%
Piscataquis County	17,535	16.1%
Somerset County	52,228	19.3%
Waldo County	38,786	14.7%
Washington County	32,856	20.6%

U. S. Census Bureau, State and County QuickFacts 2011.

Poverty by Age Group

Poverty varies by age group. Table 1-9 shows that the poorest age group in Waterville is children under age five at 42.3%, followed by persons under age eighteen at 37.2%.

TABLE 1-9
PERCENT OF PERSONS
BELOW THE FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL
BY AGE GROUP
2010

AGE GROUP	PERCENT
All People	23.5
Children Under 5 Years	42.3
Children 5-17 Years	34.3
Under 18 Years	37.2
18 Years and Over	20.2
18 to 64 Years	22.4
65 Years and Over	11.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey

Poverty Among Children

Poverty is very apparent in the elementary schools. The Waterville School Department reported that 67% of children in kindergarten in the 2007-2008 school year were from low income families and 48% "scored below the norms that lead to successful transition into public school" when screened prior to entering kindergarten. Among all kindergarten through third grade students in the Waterville public schools in 2010, 64% received free or reduced-price lunches. This percentage is considerably higher than the 34% of children in all grades in Maine and 36% in Kennebec County who qualify for free or reduced-priced meals. (Sources: Educare Central Maine application July 2008 and August 2011 Promise Neighborhoods Grant Application.)

[For more information, see the Kids Count web site.]

Percent Low or Moderate Income

In 2009, Waterville conducted an income survey which determined that 56% of Waterville's population is low- or moderate-income (LMI). Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) accepted the results of the survey, making Waterville income-eligible to apply for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for public facilities. [LMI means an income at or below 80% of the county median, adjusted for family size.]

Community Evaluation Factor

An additional indicator of distress in Waterville is the City's community evaluation factor calculated by a consultant for DECD in 2011. The score is intended to assess each community's relative need for grant assistance for public infrastructure, public facilities, and economic development. [DECD's Office of Community Development (OCD) no longer uses it in scoring housing assistance program applications. For that program, the Office uses percent LMI instead.]

The community evaluation factor is composed of 4 components, with a range of 0 to 5 points each:

1. tax burden [total local property tax commitment in 2008 divided by (total population times per capita income), a score of 2 points],
2. per capita income [5 points for a per capita income below \$20,000; Waterville was at \$19,160 in 2009],
3. unemployment [3 points for an unemployment rate of 8.9% in July 2010], and
4. 5 points for being a service center community.

Waterville scored 15 out of a possible 20 points, 20 points indicating the greatest need for State assistance. Waterville was assigned a distress score higher than all towns in the State with the exception of the eleven towns below with higher scores and the eighteen towns with which Waterville tied.

Scoring 18 points were: Milbridge, Millinocket, and Skowhegan. Scoring 17 points were: Bethel, Eastport, Rangeley, and Rumford. Scoring 16 points were: Dexter, Guilford, Jackman, and Lubec. Tying with Waterville were: Ashland, Bancroft, Beddington, Blue Hill, Calais, Damariscotta, Deblois, Dover-Foxcroft, Houlton, Lincoln, Madawaska, Newport, Norway, Oxford, Rockland, Sanford, Southwest Harbor, and Van Buren.

Issues and Needs

1. Waterville needs to attract young people to the *region* in order to fill projected job openings (nurses, for example). Expanding the workforce, in turn, will attract new businesses to bolster the economy.
2. Waterville needs to plan for those in poverty and residents 65 and older.