

# Waldo Community Action Partners Profile



## WALDO COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERS

### About Waldo Community Action Partners

Waldo Community Action Partners is a charitable, educational, 501(c)(3) private non-profit organization located in Belfast, Maine. It is designed to utilize and mobilize public and private resources to assist low-income Waldo County residents in the alleviation of poverty and address its underlying causes.

### Our Vision

Waldo Community Action Partners was founded in 1965. Waldo Community Action Partners provides leadership and advocacy in the community to collaborate and develop programs and workgroups that address community problems and obstacles that prevent families from thriving. Elimination and alleviation of poverty in the areas of body, mind and spirit is our ultimate goal and service and advocacy are the primary tools.

Waldo Community Action Partners provides programs and services to support members of our community as they strive to lead meaningful and productive lives. We have strong commitments to Transportation Services, Housing Repair Services, Family Services such as Head Start/Child Nutrition, Energy Services, and Community Services carried out in partnership with other community groups.

We hold the following declarations as guidance for the work we do:

- Every member of our community desires self-sufficiency and has an innate capacity with appropriate supports
- Every member of the community has the right to be treated with dignity and respect
- Every member of the community, regardless of economic status, should have a voice in the way of the state and federal policies and programs are developed and operated.

Waldo Community Action Partners has committed to:

- Respectful and dignified treatment of clients
- Responsible governance
- Exemplary fiscal management
- Thoughtful and deliberate use of technology
- Excellence in customer service
- Community leadership and partnership
- Effective advocacy for the vulnerable and needy populations
- Integrity in all actions

Overall, WCAP is dedicated to and strives to provide win-win solutions for clients, staff, volunteers and the entire community with a “no wrong door” policy in order to find viable options so that no person goes unserved.

## **Purpose and Mission**

In order to reduce poverty in its community, a Community Action Agency works to better focus available local, state, private, and federal resources to assist low-income individuals and families to acquire useful skills and knowledge, gain access to new opportunities, and achieve economic self-sufficiency.

The mission of WCAP is “Building strong families and communities by empowering people to achieve economic independence and self-reliance”.

## **Services Offered by WCAP**

WCAP offers a full array of services including but not limited to:

- Public Transportation and non-emergency Transportation
- Energy Assistance including emergency heating assistance
- Early Childhood Programing including Head Start, Early Head Start and Pre-K
- Housing Services including Rental Assistance, weatherization, CHIP, AST, and Home Repair
- Community Services including, Food Assistance Programs, Case Management, Emergency Assistance, and Healthcare Navigation.
- Community Partnerships programs, Holiday food boxes, Holiday gifts for children, the Cinderella Project of Maine.

## Environmental Scan

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

Figure 1: Social Vulnerability Index

Measure	United States	Maine	Waldo County
<b>Population</b>	324,697,795	1,335,492	39,539
<b>Median Age</b>	38.1	44.7	46.2
<b>Below Poverty</b>	13.4%	11.8%	13.5%
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$62,843	\$57,918	\$51,931
<b>Age 65+</b>	15.6%	20.0%	21.7%
<b>Age 17 or Younger</b>	22.6%	18.9%	18.8%
<b>Unemployment (July 2021)</b>	5.4%	5.0%	5.1%
<b>Households with Disability</b>	12.6%	16.0%	16.8%
<b>Single Parent Household</b>	14.0%	21%	23.0%
<b>Speak English less than “very well”</b>	8.4%	1.5%	0.5%
<b>Housing Units - Mobile Homes %</b>	6.2%	9.5%	30.0%
<b>No Vehicle</b>	8.6%	7.1%	5.5%

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

Figure 2: Age and Demographics

Measure	United States	Maine	Waldo County
<b>Under 5 Years</b>	6.1%	4.8%	4.5%
<b>5 to 9 Years</b>	6.2%	5.2%	5.1%
<b>10 to 19</b>	12.9%	11.3%	11.5%
<b>20 to 34</b>	20.7%	17.5%	15.7%
<b>35 to 54</b>	25.6%	25.3%	24.8%
<b>55 to 64</b>	12.9%	15.7%	16.6%
<b>65+</b>	15.6%	20.0%	21.7%
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>			
<b>White alone, Not Hispanic or Latino</b>	60.7%	98.3%	97.9%
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	18.0%	1.7%	1.5%
<b>Black or African American</b>	12.7%	2.0%	1.2%
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	0.8%	1.7%	1.3%
<b>Asian</b>	5.5%	1.7%	0.9%
<b>Other</b>	5.5%	0.4%	0.6%
<b>Foreign Born Population</b>	13.3%	3.6%	2.2%

SOURCE: American Community Survey, 2019 5-Year Estimates

Figure 3: Household Income and Poverty

	United States	Maine	Waldo County
<b>Median Household (HH) Income</b>	\$62,843	\$57,918	\$51,931
<b>Total Below 100% Federal Poverty Level (FPL)</b>	13.4%	11.8%	13.5%
<b>Under 5 years</b>	20.3%	17.0%	24.8%
<b>5 to 17 years</b>	17.9%	14.4%	15.7%
<b>18 to 34 years</b>	16.3%	16.0%	19.4%
<b>35 to 64 years</b>	10.5%	9.9%	12.4%
<b>65 years and over</b>	9.3%	8.7%	7.2%
<b>Below 50% of FPL</b>	5.5%	4.0%	ND
<b>Below 125% of FPL</b>	16.3%	14.6%	ND
<b>Below 150% of FPL</b>	20.3%	18.6%	ND
<b>Below 185% of FPL</b>	26.3%	24.8%	ND
<b>Below 200% of FPL</b>	28.9%	27.7%	ND

SOURCE: American Community Survey, 2019 5-Year Estimates

Figure 4: Social Characteristics Measures

	United States	Maine	Waldo County
<b>Total Households</b>	120,756,048	559,921	17,236
<b>Homeownership Percentage</b>	64.0%	72.3%	79.2%
<b>Single Parent Household<sup>1</sup></b>	14.0%	21.0%	23.0%
<b>Living Alone</b>	13.3%	15.1%	14.2%
<b>Grandparents Responsible for Grandchildren</b>	34.1%	34.1%	21.4%
<b>Veteran Status</b>	7.3%	9.6%	10.3%
<b>Educational Attainment</b>			
<b>Less than 9th grade</b>	5.1%	2.6%	2.4%
<b>9th to 12th grade, no diploma</b>	6.9%	4.8%	5.4%
<b>High school graduate/ GED</b>	27.0%	31.5%	32.2%
<b>Some college, no degree</b>	20.4%	19.3%	20.1%
<b>Associate degree</b>	8.5%	10.1%	8.5%
<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	19.8%	20.0%	20.1%
<b>Graduate degree</b>	12.4%	11.8%	11.3%
<b>HS Graduation rate (202)</b>	88.0%	87.4%	85.1%
<b>No Health Insurance</b>	8.8%	7.9%	11.1%
<b>Receiving SNAP Benefits</b>	11.7%	13.5%	14.1%
<b>Food Insecurity – All Ages</b>	10.9%	12.1%	19.5%
<b>Median Mortgage (2019)</b>	\$1,595	\$1,398	\$1,207
<b>Median Rent</b>	\$1,062	\$853	\$814
<b>Housing Cost Burdened<sup>2</sup></b>	32.88%	29.75%	26.77%
<b>Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Price Lunch</b>	49.5%	38.3%	49.1%

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

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

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

Figure 5: Health Overview

	United States	Maine	Waldo County
Poor Mental Health Days	3.8	5.0	4.8
Poor Physical Health Days	3.4	4.2	4.1
Frequent Mental Health Distress	11.7%	12.7%	15%
Ratio of Primary Care Providers	880:1	900:1	1,370:1
Ratio of Mental Health Providers	170:1	200:1	380:1
Ratio of Dentists	1,210:1	1,480:1	2,840:1
<b>Chronic Disease Prevalence (per 100,000)</b>			
Adults with Heart Disease	26.81%	22.48%	24.91%
High Blood Pressure	57.20%	48.71%	46.74%
Adults with Asthma	4.97%	4.68%	4.82%
Diagnosed Diabetes	26.95%	22.55%	22.20%
<b>Leading Causes of Death (deaths per 100,000)<sup>3</sup></b>			
Heart Disease	166.0	147.9	167.2
Cancer	155.5	169.2	163.4
Unintentional Injury	45.7	59.1	58.4
Diabetes	21.2	22.3	20.2
Alzheimer's	29.4	27.6	22.0
Suicide Rates (Age-Adjusted Rate per 100,000)	14.5	18	22
Adult Obesity Prevalence (Age-Adjusted Rate per 100,000)	42.2	31.7	29.8
Maine Adults Past Month Binge Drinking	25.8%	17.9%	15.5%
Percent Adults Current Smokers	16.1%	22.6%	28.3%
COVID-19 Confirmed Cumulative Cases (as of 9/12/21)	41.3M	57,752	1,293
COVID-19 Deaths (as of 7/5/21)	662K	897	24

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

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

## Qualitative Research Findings

	Number of Participants
Focus Group Participants	18
Stakeholders Interviewed	8
Community Survey Respondents	227

### Key Stakeholder Interview Quotes

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

- “It’s a beautiful location providing access to nature.”
- “Willingness to get together with different groups and share perspective. There’s a willingness to develop relationships with other entities to make sure clients have access to all services.”
- “It’s hard to find a job [that pays] \$15-\$18 an hour with benefits that provides a meaningful life occupation. I wish there were more upper level jobs with people with master degrees and more.”
- “Hard to get employees to show up. Some young kids lack soft skills.”
- “There is public transportation with WCAP and MMCA, but there’s not equity with covering the whole county. There’s not much coverage in the rural areas.”
- “Primarily need to have your own or know someone with a vehicle.”
- “Right now, people coming to Maine from our-of-state buying houses very quickly. Mainers can’t compete with out-of-state interest and money. Locals are having a hard time finding affordable houses.”
- “It’s impossible to find rentals and it’s extremely high.”
- “It’s so vastly different depending on the area. Unity is very different than Belfast and very rural areas. Belfast is a little bit more maintainable, but in small town then need to leave it. We have a lot of people leave the county due to not finding housing.”
- “There’s no homeless shelter in Waldo County.”
- “Couchsurfing is huge. We don’t have a homeless shelter in Waldo. Lots of families have to leave the community and their family supports may be here.”
- “Not a lot of affordable childcare for one income families or ‘on the cusp’ families who aren’t eligible for services.”
- “The people that are seeking and actively receiving services will help spread the word.”
- “We have one dental provider that accepts MaineCare for kids.”
- “There’s a real need for medication management. Very few prescribing providers and long wait lists.”
- “Mental health will always be an issue. There’s a stigma around mental health. There’s not a lot of knowledge on how the mental health referral process works.”
- “Social isolation in the more rural areas have intensified. There’s a lack of broadband in certain areas.”

## Key Focus Group Quotes

Comments and Ideas	
<b>Top Challenges Mentioned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet access</li> <li>• Affordable housing</li> </ul>
<b>Unique Strength or Challenge Mentioned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The back to the land movement, the self-reliance of people here.</li> <li>• There's a great sense of community in Waldo county, it's a great place to raise a family.</li> <li>• There's Belfast and then the rest of Waldo County, which is very rural.</li> </ul>
<b>Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a landlord it's easy to rent. And I would love to buy/build more, but that industry is out of control. I own one property, I posted it for rent, and I had 200 applications, people offering to pay the entire rent up front.</li> <li>• I feel I've experienced housing discrimination when people find out I am a single parent family. I know others who have as well.</li> </ul>
<b>Mental Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SUD treatment providers are not readily available. Someone I know has tried 3 times to get a rehab bed and been turned away; people who are ready can't get the help they want and need; there are some AA/NA/support groups, but no or very limited services; have to leave the county for MAT services.</li> </ul>
<b>Childcare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Childcare is not affordable, and unfortunately for the childcare provider it's not an affordable lifestyle. Semi-skilled employees don't make enough to afford the services themselves.</li> <li>• And when we're able to provide 0-3 help, then what happens before they are school aged? There's nothing for that gap after the age of 3.</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When it comes to low income people, the wages do not support the cost of owning, maintaining, and insuring a vehicle. They are a breakdown away from financial disaster.</li> <li>• In areas where public transit is common or good, there is great investment via taxation, etc. We simply do not have the support for that, so it falls to us, a CAP agency to figure out how to finance the cost.</li> </ul>
<b>Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All businesses (manufacturing, retail, clerical, services) are desperate for workers. There are Waldo Counties – the rural interior with farming, and unskilled jobs and the coastal with sea building, hospital, nursing home, skilled work jobs. It's made it hard for people in interior Waldo County to stay in the area and we're losing the young working population.</li> </ul>
<b>Basic Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food insecurity</li> <li>• Utility and heating assistance</li> </ul>
<b>Magic Wand Highlight</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think we are absolutely in a housing emergency – we have to change some zoning issues</li> </ul>



	which people are not going to like.
<b>Noted Policy Area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Infrastructure: connect rural Waldo to the major cities (highways) and reliable internet</li></ul>

## Community Survey Results

Figure 6: Top Needs Identified in the Community Survey

Waldo Community Action Partners		
	Need	Percent
1	Providing more flexible and affordable childcare options for working parent(s)	68.7%
2	Increasing the number of affordable apartments	66.8%
3	Improving access to high-speed internet and technology	65.3%
4	Developing more livable-wage jobs	65.3%
5	Increasing the number of mental health providers in rural communities	64.5%
6	Making dental care more affordable	61.8%
7	Expanding crisis services for mental health and substance use disorders	60.7%
8	Increasing the number of affordable childcare providers	60.7%
9	Reducing the amount of opioid misuse	60.3%
10	Increasing the number of affordable houses for sale	58.8%
11	Reducing the amount of other drug misuse (heroin, cocaine, etc.)	58.4%
12	Making public transportation available in rural communities	56.9%
13	Increasing programs for major housing repairs (roofs, windows, etc.)	56.9%
14	Increasing the number of dentists who serve MaineCare patients	56.5%
15	Creating technical school, trade school, or other job training options	56.1%
16	Developing rental and mortgage assistance programs	56.1%
17	Increasing the number of substance use disorder providers and services	55.3%
18	Increasing the number of childcare providers who offer age-appropriate education	55.3%
19	Increasing the number of high quality licensed childcare providers	54.2%
20	Creating more emergency shelter beds for people who are homeless	54.2%
21	Reducing the amount of childhood obesity	53.4%
22	Providing job growth opportunities	53.1%
23	Creating higher quality rental apartments and houses	52.3%
24	Providing more senior housing options	51.9%
25	Reducing stigma associated with mental health and substance misuse	51.5%
26	Providing more after-school programs for school-aged children	51.5%
27	Creating more shelter beds for certain populations (children, women, families, LGBTQ, veterans, etc.)	51.1%
28	Reducing stigma associated with the housing voucher program	51.1%
29	Creating more affordable public transportation options	49.2%
30	Reducing building costs of new affordable housing units	48.9%
31	Reducing the amount of smoking and vaping	48.5%
32	Providing more recreational opportunities for youth	48.5%
33	Providing help with weatherization	48.5%
34	Increasing the number of detox facilities	46.9%
35	Reducing the amount of alcohol misuse	46.6%
36	Providing more transportation options to childcare services	45.8%
37	Providing soft skills education (customer service, showing up on time, etc.)	45.4%
38	Increasing the number of landlords who accept housing vouchers	45.4%
39	Reducing the amount of adult obesity	45.0%
40	Providing help with utility assistance (heating fuel, electricity, etc.)	43.5%
41	Adding better routes and time schedules to current public transportation system	42.4%
42	Increasing the availability of prepared foods for seniors (Meals on Wheels, etc.)	41.2%

<b>43</b>	Helping more people who are homeless to find their missing identification documents (driver's license, social security number, etc.)	39.7%
<b>44</b>	Increasing programs for minor housing repairs (paint, upgrades, etc.)	39.7%
<b>45</b>	Providing help with the cost of vehicle repairs	37.8%
<b>46</b>	Expanding food options for people with dietary restrictions or allergies at food banks	37.0%
<b>47</b>	Reducing MaineCare transportation limitations (i.e., limited to one parent and child)	36.6%
<b>48</b>	Providing help with the cost of vehicle insurance and regular maintenance	33.2%
<b>49</b>	Expanding open hours at food banks	32.4%

Figure 7: Top 5 Needs by Household Income - WCAP

Need							
	Under \$15,000	Between \$15,000 and \$29,999	Between \$30,000 and \$49,999	Between \$50,000 and \$74,999	Between \$75,000 and \$99,999	Between \$100,000 and \$150,000	Over \$150,000
1	Increasing the number of mental health providers in rural communities	Making dental care more affordable	Expanding crisis services for mental health and substance use disorders	Providing more flexible and affordable childcare options for working parent(s)	Developing more livable-wage jobs	Providing more flexible and affordable childcare options for working parent(s)	Increasing the number of mental health providers in rural communities
2	Increasing the number of dentists who serve MaineCare patients	Providing more recreational opportunities for youth	Providing more flexible and affordable childcare options for working parent(s)	Improving access to high-speed internet and technology	Making public transportation available in rural communities	Creating technical school, trade school, or other job training options	Developing more livable-wage jobs
3	Making dental care more affordable	Providing more after-school programs for school-aged children	Reducing the amount of opioid misuse	Reducing the amount of other drug misuse (heroin, cocaine, etc.)	Increasing the number of dentists who serve MaineCare patients	Expanding crisis services for mental health and substance use disorders	Reducing stigma associated with mental health and substance misuse
4	Developing more livable-wage jobs	Providing more flexible and affordable childcare options for working parent(s)	Making dental care more affordable	Reducing the amount of opioid misuse	Providing more flexible and affordable childcare options for working parent(s)	Expanding food options for people with dietary restrictions or allergies at food banks	Increasing the number of substance use disorder providers and services
5	Improving access to high-speed internet and technology	Developing rental and mortgage assistance programs	Improving access to high-speed internet and technology	Increasing the number of mental health providers in rural communities	Reducing the amount of opioid misuse	Providing more senior housing options	Providing soft skills education (customer service, showing up on time, etc.)

## Needs Prioritization

Survey Rank	Need	Survey Score	Locus of Control	Timeline
3	<b>Childcare</b> Providing more flexible and affordable childcare options for working parent(s) Model: Partnership/Agency Time frame: 1-3 years	6.8	Partnership / Agency	1-3 years
2	<b>Housing</b> Increasing the number of affordable housing units Model: Partnership/Community Time frame: 3-5 years	6.8	Partnership / Community	3-5 years
4	<b>Labor / Workforce</b> Developing more livable-wage jobs Model: Agency separately /partnerships/Community Time frame: 1-3 years	6.6	Agency / Partnership / Community	1-3 years (A) 3-5 years
14	<b>Culture / Capacity building</b> Increasing community awareness of Community Action Agencies and the services they provide Model: Agency / Partnerships Time frame: 1-3 years	6.2	Agency / Partnership	1-3 years

## Stakeholder Interview Participants

Name	Organization
Denise Pendleton	Belfast Adult Education
Ralee Heath	Calvary Church
Melanie Bryan	Maine Families
Ralph Harvey	Searsport Food Pantry
Carrie Horne	Sweester
Kevin Michaud	Waldo County Technical Center
Sumner Bayer	Mid-Coast Maine Community Action
Sheila Muldoon	Workforce Solutions