

Katahdin Region Socioeconomic Indicators

Katahdin Region

Report by
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Photo credit: Lucy Van Hook

Overview

The Katahdin Region* has experienced significant socioeconomic change over the past few years and citizens are actively exploring opportunities to make the region a more resilient and robust place to live, work, and play. Collating and comparing socioeconomic indicators is a well-regarded approach to both developing a ‘snapshot’ of the current state of a community, but also assessing whether an area is making positive strides in terms of social and economic development. This factsheet presents several socioeconomic indicators for the greater Katahdin Region, and compares many of them over time as well as to Penobscot and Aroostook Counties, Maine and the United States. These indicators can help provide insight on where the area may be succeeding as well as opportunities for improvement.

Regional Comparison of Key Indicators

The Katahdin Region has faced significant economic impact in recent years and lags the two counties it is located in, the state, and the country in many key indicators. Between 2000 and 2016, the region has experienced an 11.1% decline in population, and with a median age of 50.9 years, Katahdin’s residents are older than the other areas of comparison. In 2016, the region’s unemployment rate was approximately 9%, and just 49% of the residents aged 16 and older were participating in the labor force. However, the Katahdin Region’s estimated poverty rates are relatively low, which can be partially attributed to low housing values compared to household income, which suggests relatively low costs of living.

Description	Katahdin Region	Penobscot County	Aroostook County	Maine	USA
Change in Population, 2010-2016 (1,2)	-1.8%	-0.6%	-4.2%	0.1%	3.2%
Change in Population, 2000-2016 (1,2)	-11.1%	5.6%	-6.1%	4.3%	13.2%
Median Age (2)	50.9	41.6	46.9	44.0	37.7
Education: high school graduate or higher (2)	90%	91%	87%	92%	87%
Education: bachelor’s degree or higher (2)	11%	25%	18%	29%	30%
Median Household (HH) Income (2)	\$35,265	\$44,738	\$37,613	\$50,193	\$54,633
Labor Force Participation Rate (2)	49%	61%	56%	63%	63%
Unemployment Rate (3)	9.0%	4.4%	5.7%	3.9%	4.9%
Mean work commute (minutes) (2)	21	22	18	24	26
People below poverty level: Total (2)	13.4%	16.3%	17.7%	13.5%	15.1%
People below poverty level: Under 18 (2)	15.0%	19.7%	23.7%	17.9%	21.2%
People below poverty level: 65 and older (2)	9.2%	9.0%	12.1%	8.9%	9.3%
Median house age (2)	1961	1973	1972	1973	1976
Median housing value (2)	\$70,098	\$135,297	\$94,609	\$173,812	\$182,404
Property Tax Rate (4)	29.3	19.1	18.8	15.1	N/A

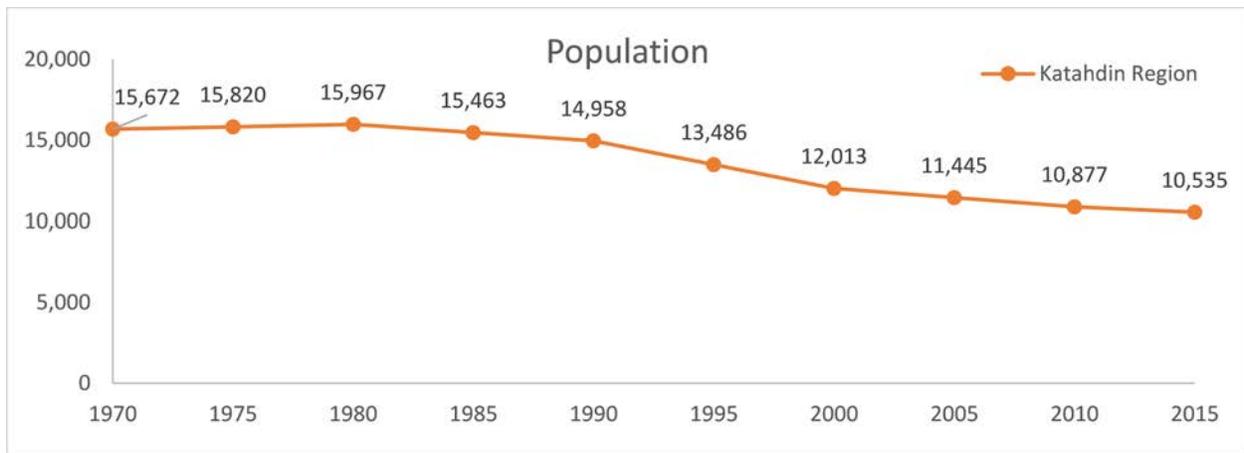
* Region includes Millinocket, East Millinocket, Medway, Stacyville, Sherman, Patten, Mount Chase, and Island Falls

Detailed Facts and Figures

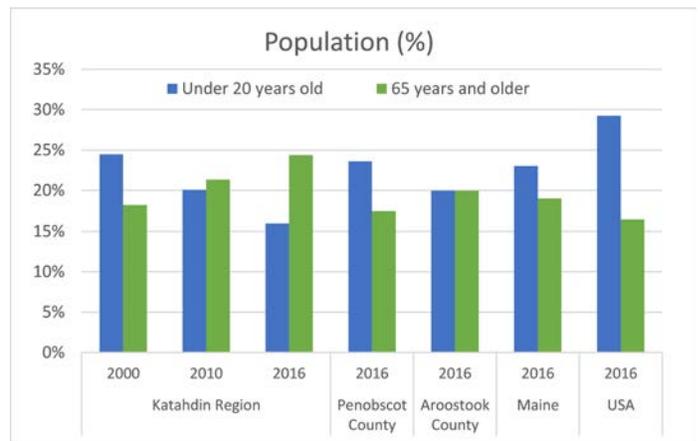
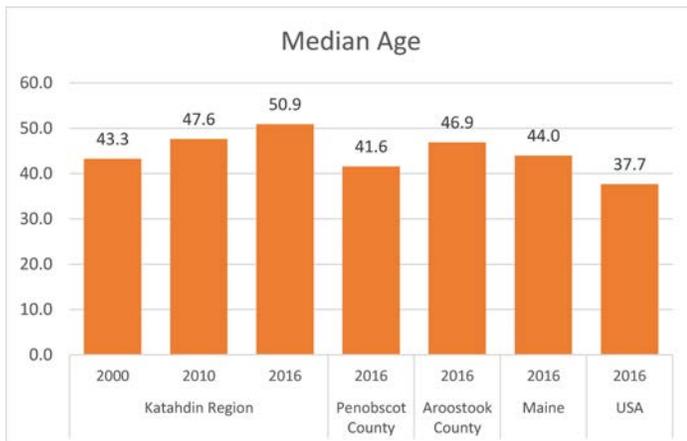
The remaining sections of this factsheet include detailed facts and figures for the study area. Each section includes details on the data sources as well as the level of statistical confidence that the data provides. For example, a statistic with a low statistical confidence may have been constructed using a small sample of the population in the region and thus could differ from the actual value if the entire population was surveyed. On the contrary, figures with high levels of confidence are more likely to be representative of the population living in the region of interest.

Demographics (sources 1,2)

- The population of the Katahdin Region declined by 11.1% over the last 15 years, from 12,013 in 2000 to 10,535 in 2015. This reduction was higher than Aroostook County, which faced a 6.1% decline over the same period, and the opposite of Penobscot County and Maine, which experienced population increases of 5.6% and 4.3%, respectively. (*Med-High confidence*)

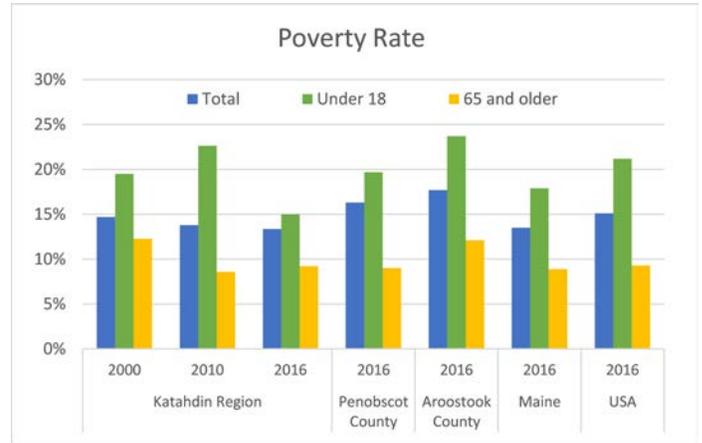
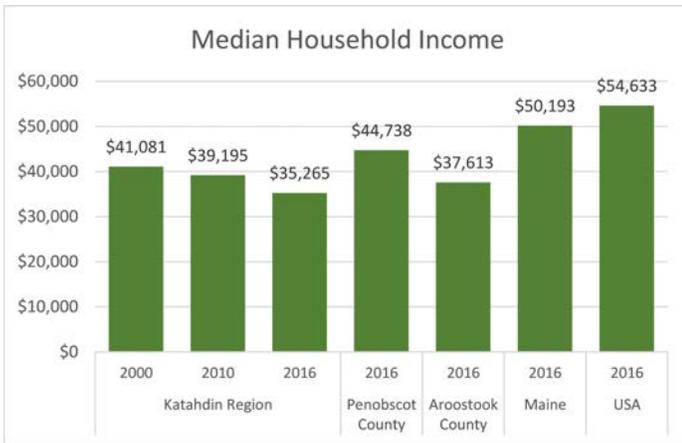


- The median age in Katahdin is almost 51 years old, which is nearly 8 years older than it was in 2000. This estimate is more than 5 years older than the median age for both Penobscot and Aroostook Counties and the State of Maine (*Med*).
- About 16% of the population in the region are under 20 years old, down from 20% in 2010. For comparison, 23% of Maine fall into this age class (*Med-High*).
- Approximately 24% of the region's population are aged 65 and older. In 2000, about 18% of Katahdin's population was in this age cohort. In 2016, 19% of the state were 65 or older, while 17 and 20% of Penobscot and Aroostook County's respective population was in this cohort (*Med-High*).

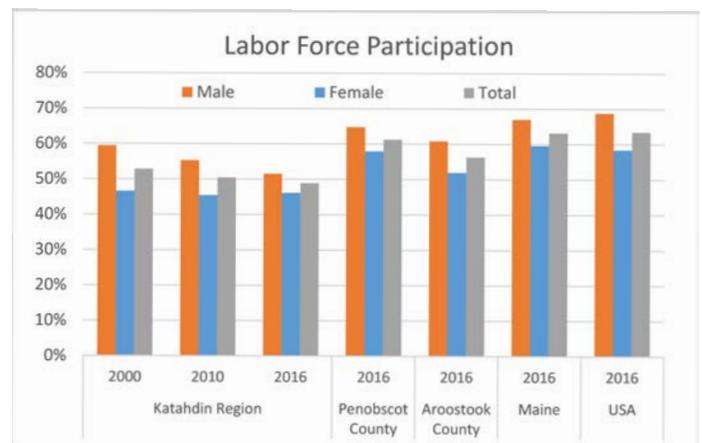
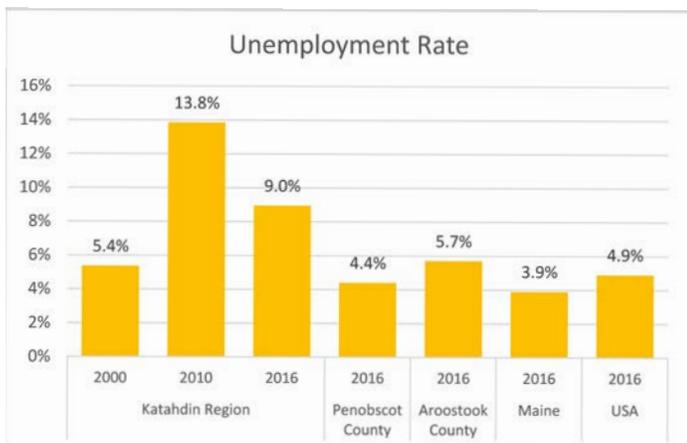


Economy (sources 2,3,4)

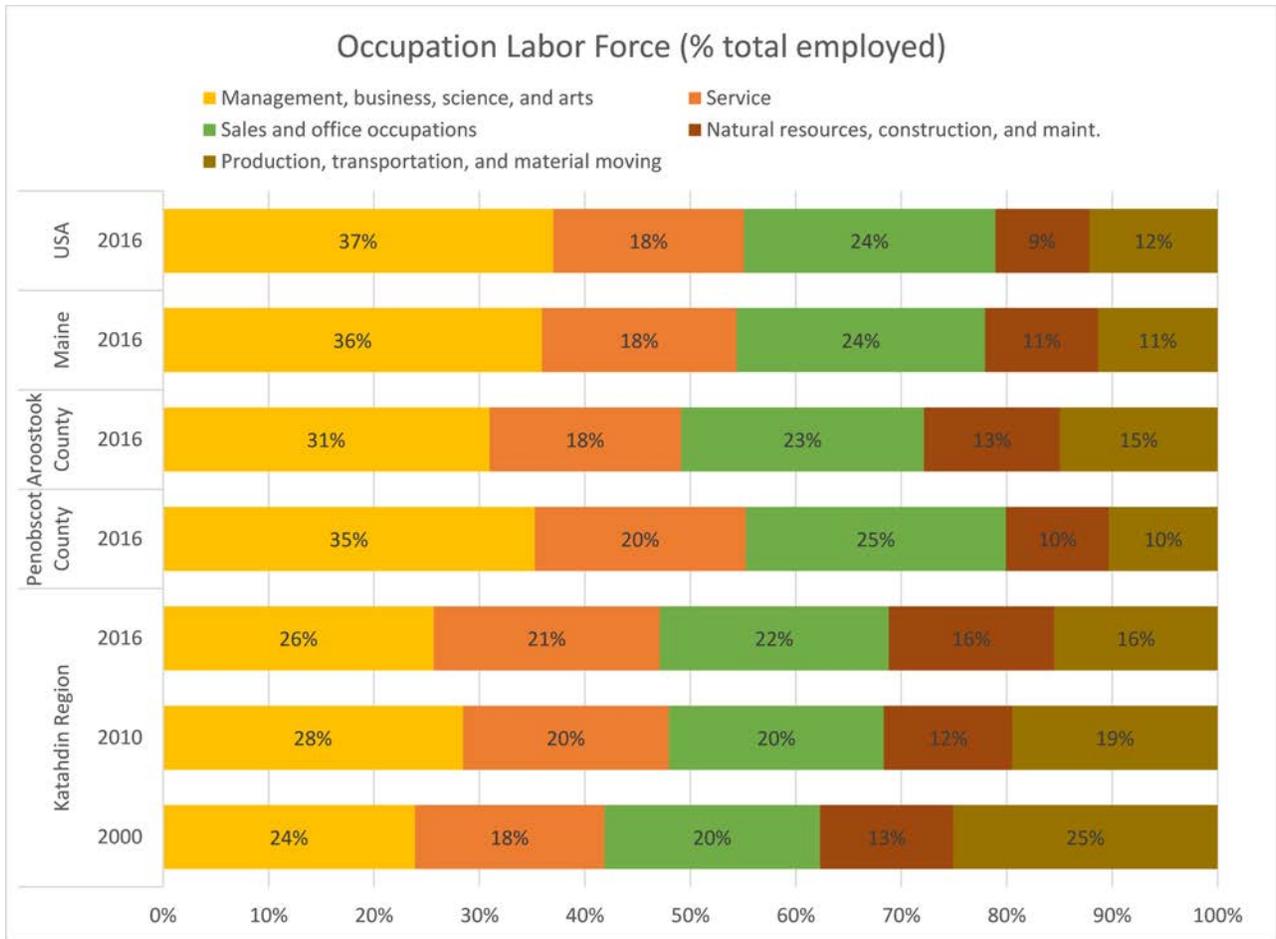
- The median household income for the Katahdin Region is \$35,265. Real income in the region has declined by about 14% since 2000. For comparison, median real income in both counties has decreased by 5% over the same timeframe, while it has decreased by about 2% in Maine (*Med-High*).
- Katahdin’s poverty rate for the entire population decreased from 14.7% in 2000 to 13.4% in 2016. In addition, the poverty rate for children under 18 decreased from 19.5% to 15% over the same time frame. In Maine, the poverty rate is about 14%, which is up from an estimate of 10.9% in 2000 (*Medium*).



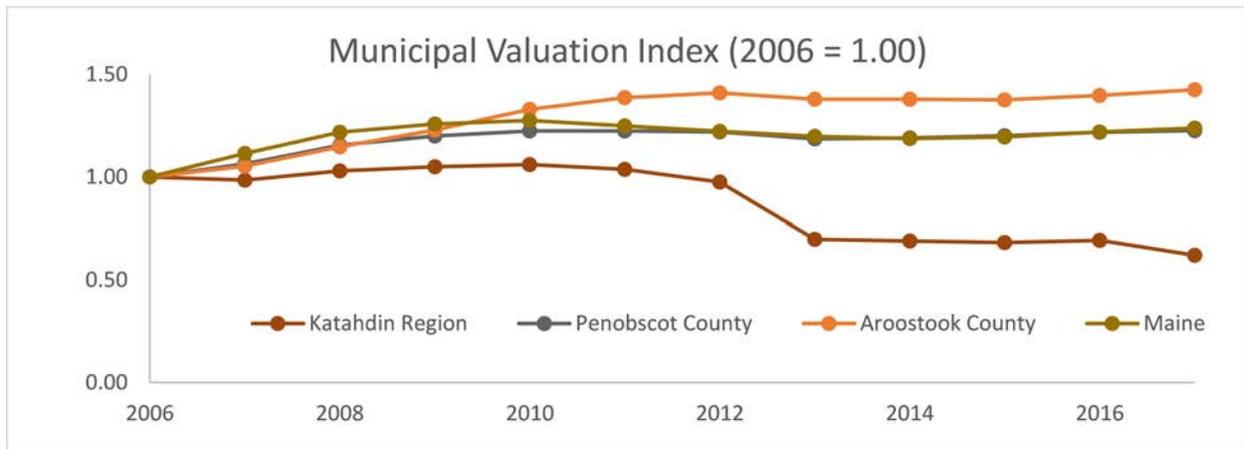
- The 2016 unemployment rate in the Katahdin Region was 9.0%, up from 5.4% in 2000. In contrast, unemployment rates in Penobscot County, Aroostook County and Maine are 4.4%, 5.7%, and 3.9%, respectively (*Med-High*).
- Total labor force participation for the region is about 49%, slightly lower than the 53% rate for the region in 2000. Labor force participation in Katahdin is well below the state and national rates of 63% (*Med-High*).



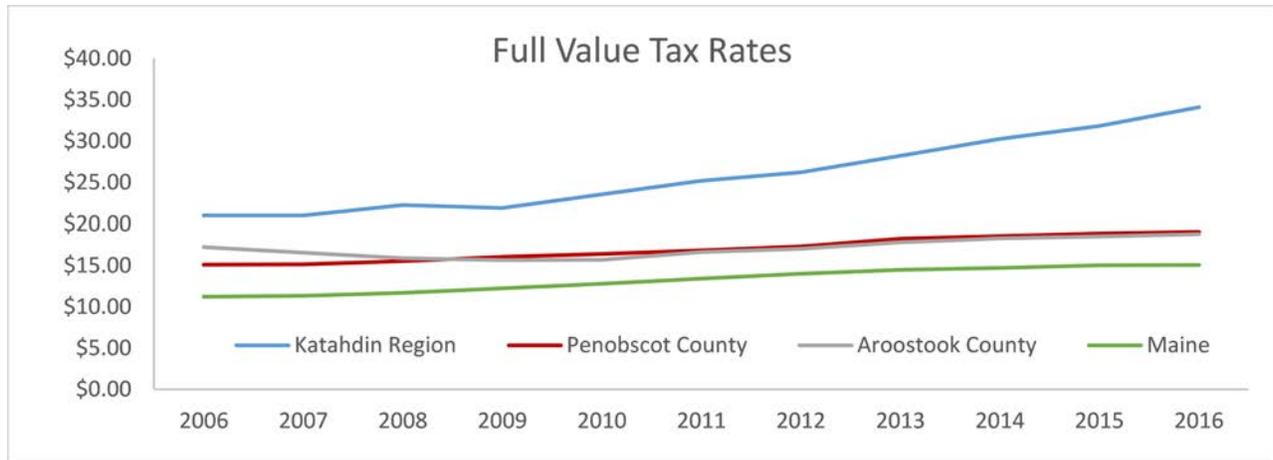
- 46% of females aged 16 and older in the region are currently in the labor force, which is almost the same as in 2000. For comparison, about 58% of females in Penobscot County and 60% in Maine are active in the labor force (*Medium*).
- The proportion of Katahdin’s labor force employed in production and transport in 2016 was about 16%, down from 25% in 2000. Today, the sales and office occupations are the highest proportion in the region (26%). State, and country-wide, about one-third of the work force is in management, business, science, and arts, while nearly one-fourth are in sales and office occupations (*Medium*).



- The Katahdin Region’s total valuation has decreased by 38% between 2006 and 2017, and is currently valued at \$430 million, largely due to the declines in Millinocket and East Millinocket. For comparison, Penobscot and Aroostook County valuations have increased by 23% and 43%, respectively, since 2006. Maine has experienced a 24% increase in its total valuation over the same timeframe (*High*).

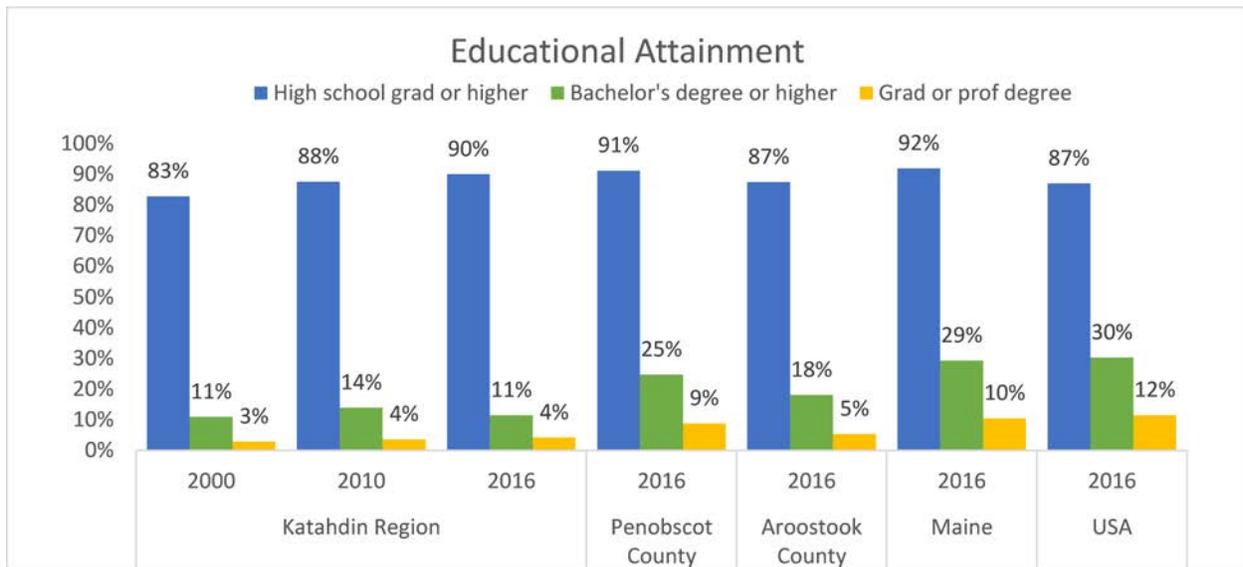


- The weighted-average property tax rate in the Katahdin Region in 2016 was \$29.30 per \$1,000 of valuation, up 51% from a rate of \$21.30 in 2006. The large increase is primarily attributed to changes in the Millinocket and East Millinocket tax base. The weighted average property tax rate for Maine is about \$15.00, while both Penobscot and Aroostook Counties are around \$19.00 (*High*).



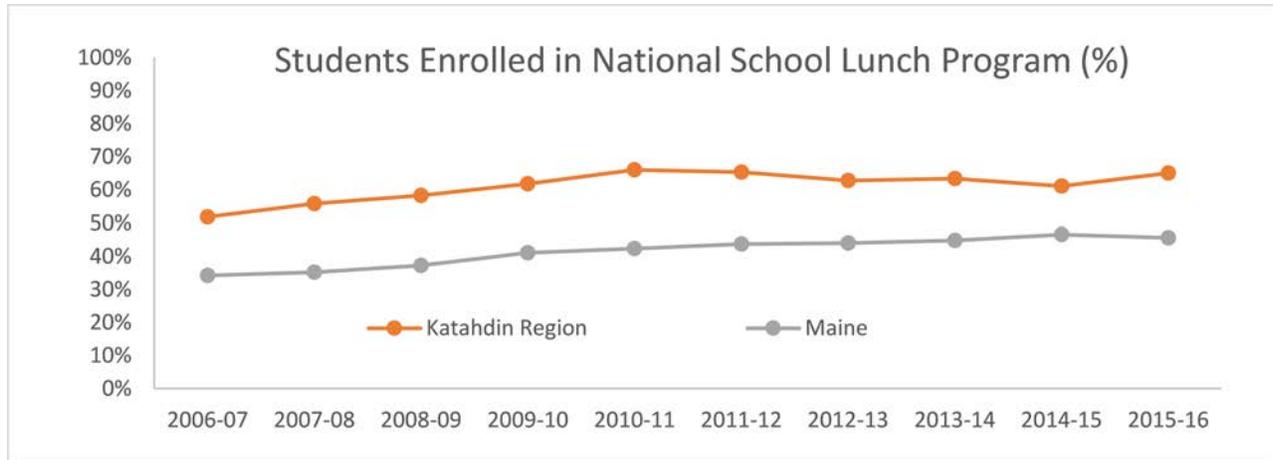
Education (sources 2,5)

- About 90% of the Katahdin Region’s population aged 25 and older had at least a high school graduate degree in 2016, which is 7 percentage points higher than the rate in 2000. The proportion of the residents with at least a bachelor’s degree held steady at around 11% across the two time periods. This estimate is lower than both Penobscot and Aroostook County rates of 25% and 18%, respectively. About 30% of Maine’s residents had a bachelor’s degree or higher in 2016 (*Med-High*).



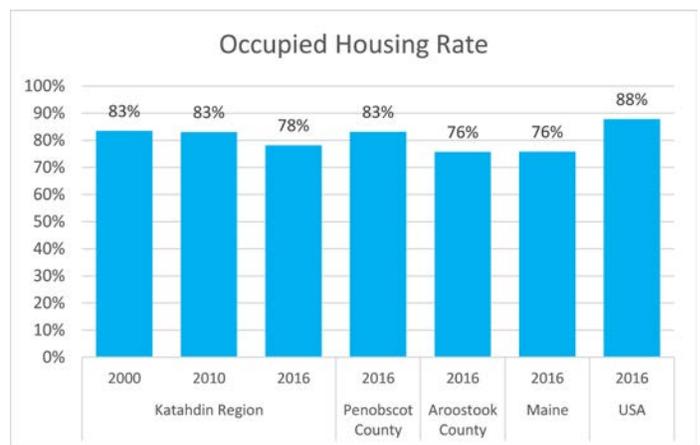
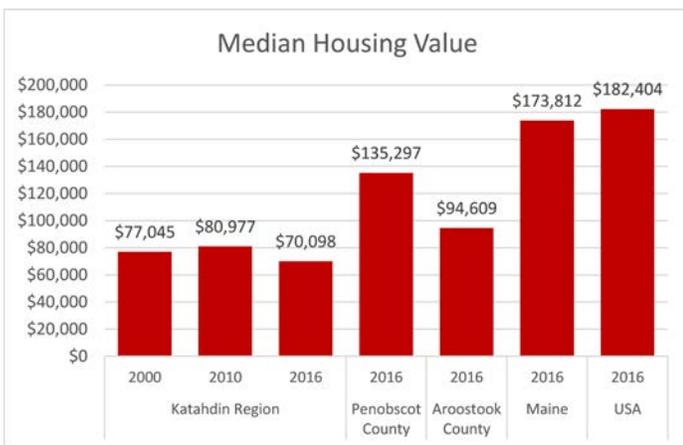
- Total K-12 enrollment in the Katahdin Region is down by about 28% between 2006 and 2016, while public school enrollment in Maine is down about 11%. (*High*)

- The percent of students enrolled in the National School Lunch Program to receive free or reduced lunch in the Katahdin Region was 66% in the 2015-16 school year. This is up 6 percentage points over the past decade. This figure is high compared to the entire state, where about 46% are enrolled in the program (*Med-High*).



Housing (source 2)

- Housing unit occupancy in the Katahdin Region as of 2016 was 78%, down from 83% in 2000. Similarly, 83% of the homes in Penobscot are occupied, while Aroostook County and Maine both have a 76% occupancy rate (*Medium*).
- The median house value in the region has declined by 9% between 2000 and 2016, from \$77,045 to \$70,098. In contrast, house values in the comparative counties have increased by 14-19%. The median house value in Maine is about \$136,000, up 28% since 2000 (*Medium*).



- The real median value of gross monthly rents in the Katahdin Region have declined from \$530/month in 2000 to \$500/month in 2016, a reduction of about 6%. For comparison, the median rent in Aroostook County is \$562. 2016 rents in the Penobscot County and Maine are \$741 and \$780, respectively, and both up by about 15% over the same timeframe (*Medium-Low*).

For More Information

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Sources

1. US Census Bureau, Decennial Census
2. US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-year estimates
3. Maine Department of Labor, Center for Workforce Research and Information
4. Maine Revenue Service, Property Tax Division
5. Maine Department of Education Data Center

Definitions of Key Indicators

Indicator	Definition	Why is this important?
Median Age	The age which divides the population into two numerically equal groups; i.e., half the people are younger than this age and half are older.	Different geographies can have different age distributions and thus different needs and wants from the community. For example, areas with a large number of retirees may require different resources and services than a relatively younger community.
Educational Attainment	The percent of adults aged 25 and over who have achieved at least a certain level of schooling or degree, including G.E.D.	Indicator for human capital or the collective capacity of a population to participate in the economy, engage in civic behavior, and maintain social institutions. Education can be used in part to measure the knowledge and skill level of the workforce and overall community.
Household Income	Total income and earnings a household obtained from working, investing (dividends, interest), pensions, and government transfer payments (e.g., Social Security)	Metric specifies the relative wealth and purchasing power of a community. Higher median income indicates that an area is more affluent and could potentially weather economic shocks better than lower income communities.
Labor Force Participation	The number of labor force members 16 years or older, either unemployed or unemployed but looking for work, divided by total number of persons age 16 and over.	Indicator that signifies the ability and willingness for a region's citizens to work. Communities with lower labor participation can signal potential vulnerabilities such as an aging or discouraged community.
Unemployment Rate	The proportion of civilians age 16 or older who did not have a job, but were looking for work during the past 4 weeks, and were available to accept a job if offered one.	Quantifies the willingness for persons wanting to work but unable to find suitable employment. Higher rates can indicate economic hardship and other potential social strains within the community.
Public Assistance	Percent of total households in region who have received general assistance, temporary assistance, and/or food stamps (SNAP) from government in previous 12 months.	Indicator can highlight the percent of community that may be low income, have a disability, or special needs. Areas where a relatively high proportion of its citizens receive public assistance may be more socially or economically stressed relative to the general public.
Poverty Level	The percent of individuals whose total annual income falls below the relevant poverty threshold, as determined by the US Census Bureau. In 2016, this was \$11,880 for an individual and \$24,300 for a family of 4	Indicates proportion of community with limited income that may have different needs, values, and attitudes than those in higher income brackets. Community development projects to be analyzed in the context of whether people who are economically disadvantaged could experience disproportionately high and/or adverse impacts.
Property Tax Rate	Tax per \$1,000 of property value, adjusted for homestead, BETE and TIF state property tax relief programs	Indicator of valuation of a given area's taxable property. Reflects their ability to meet current budgetary needs and attract economic development.