



Community Progress Indicators – Data Dictionary

SUMMARY

In 2019, the New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA), working with the New Hampshire Fiscal Policy Institute (NHFPI), constructed a set of Community Progress Indicators (CPIs) to assist in measuring the economic well-being and community need at the municipal level in New Hampshire, including Basic Human Needs, Access to Opportunity, and Community Sustainability and Vibrancy. The CPIs also enable towns, cities, and counties across the Granite State to have ready access to up-to-date data and information about their community's needs, issues, strengths, and challenges.

This document provides additional information about the data sources that make up the CPIs. The datasets used in the CPIs include:

Basic Human Needs

1. Enrollment in the Food Stamp Program as a Percentage of Municipal Population
2. Free and Reduced-Price School Meal Eligibility as a Percentage of All Resident Students
3. Rental housing cost burden, by County
4. Rate of Primary Care Physicians per 1,000 People
5. Percentage of Population Without Health Coverage
6. Median Age of Population
7. Percentage of Population Age 65 Years and Over

Access to Opportunity

8. Equalized Taxable Property Value Per Capita
9. Average Weekly Wage of Jobs Based in County
10. Change in Average Annual Employment Based in County
11. Median Household Income Relative to Statewide Median Household Income
12. Percentage of All Tax Returns Reporting More Than \$100,000 in Income

Community Sustainability and Vibrancy

13. Municipal Population Growth

The remainder of this document outlines data details, sources, timelines and other considerations used to collect and refine the 13 CPIs. These indicators are used to populate a [CPI spreadsheet](#) with community-level data based on a “master list” of city and town names, which helps ensure consistent matching and prevent misallocated data.

General Note: Data Presentation for Municipalities with Low or No Population

Generally, where available, data are included for low-population municipalities, but low-population municipalities may not have complete datasets available for comparison.

Across these datasets, municipalities with no population are listed in the dataset for consistency, but the data columns in the spreadsheet are blank or only populated in a limited fashion, and appear on the PolicyMap display as ‘insufficient data’ or ‘-0-’. These municipalities are generally unincorporated areas. Unincorporated municipalities with very low populations (such as Green’s Grant, Cambridge, and Millsfield) also have data listed where available, but some of these data have limited usefulness. For example, while a community may have residents, it may not have resident students, meaning a “0%” free and reduced-price school meal enrollment may not reflect the economic wellbeing of the residents.

Metrics based on survey data, such as median household income, are far less likely to be useful for small-population municipalities, and are not available for some. Zip codes with a small number of tax returns (such as

Easton, New Castle, Waterville Valley in the 2017 data) also do not have reported tax returns in the Internal Revenue Service database, so these data for those municipalities are unavailable for comparative analysis.

COMMUNITY PROGRESS INDICATOR DATA DICTIONARY

The content below provides details for each Community Progress Indicator.

BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

Percent enrolled in SNAP, by municipality

Data Details: Percentage of the municipal population enrolled in the Food Stamp Program, also known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), based on the most the average of the monthly enrollment for twelve months of the most recent federal fiscal year (October through September), averaged to mitigate seasonal effects. Municipal population based on most recent PEP municipal estimates, encompassed by the most recent federal fiscal year.

Data Sources: State of New Hampshire, Department of Health and Human Services (NH DHHS); U.S. Census Bureau, PEP

Data Access: SNAP Enrollment provided by request to the Bureau of Family Assistance, NH DHHS; Population Estimates Program: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest/data/tables.html>

Data Timeframe: Most recent federal fiscal year, twelve months of SNAP Enrollment, available by request in the October following the end of the federal fiscal year (September 30), with delays in request processing time; most recent July 1 population estimate at city and town level, typically available in the Spring of the following year.

Data Considerations: Program data permit a high degree of accuracy, but are only measuring enrollment, requiring action on the part of individuals in response to their circumstances rather than collecting a statistical sample of a cross-section of the population to determine the conditions and needs on the ground. SNAP enrollment data must be obtained from NH DHHS, which can involve significant time delays in retrieving these otherwise unpublished data.

Other Data: SNAP enrollment data estimates are available from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), and are published at the municipal level, but are not nearly as certain (because of sample size limitations) or timely (due to using five-year time windows to enhance certainty) as the SNAP enrollment program data.

Percent of students eligible for Free and Reduced-Price School Meals, by municipality

Data Details: Number of students living in a municipality, measured by average daily membership in residence, that are found eligible for free and reduced-price school meals, as a percentage of all average daily membership in residence students living in a municipality.

Data Source: New Hampshire Department of Education (NH DOE), State Adequate Education Aid

Data Access: NH DOE: <https://www.education.nh.gov/who-we-are/division-of-educator-and-analytic-resources/bureau-of-education-statistics/state-adequate-education-aid>

Data Timeframe: Most recent school year published, typically either a previous school year or the school year prior to that, with the final data typically published in the spring following the end of the previous school year.

Data Considerations: While one of the chief indicators of local economic well-being, these data reflect children from households with incomes less than 185 percent of the federal poverty guidelines that have indicated their

eligibility to a school district. These data are precise, as they are program data, but their implementation may vary across school districts. While school districts have an incentive to find eligible students to receive additional State aid in the education funding formula, school districts in the state may qualify uniformly for federal free and reduced-price school meal aid, or may opt to not participate in the federal free and reduced-price school meal program; these variations and decisions could complicate comparisons. These data also have a time lag of about one school year, meaning sudden changes in the economy may not be detected.

Other Data: The NH DOE also provides free and reduced-price school meal enrollment as a percentage of school enrollment. These figures are published in more timely fashion than the Average Daily Membership figures used to calculate State Adequate Education Aid, but are based on either the individual school or the school district, not the municipality. As such, geographic matching would be difficult and less accurate with the more-timely data. The NH DOE also published Average Daily Membership in Attendance figures at the school district level, but those data do not necessarily apply to municipal geographies.

Rental housing cost burden, by county

Data Details: Percentage reflecting the median cost of rent and utilities for a two-bedroom apartment, as calculated through data collected by the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority's (NHHFA) most recent annual survey of rental costs (usually conducted in the Spring), at the county level relative to 30 percent of median income calculated for renter households at the county level by the most recent five-year ACS data, adjusted for inflation to the most recent year by NHHFA.

Data Source: NHHFA, Annual Residential Rental Cost Survey, Five-Year ACS with adjustments by the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority

Data Access: New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority, Residential Rental Cost Survey Report:
<https://www.nhhfa.org/publications-data/publications-reports/>

Data Timeframe: The rental cost data reflect the Spring of a calendar year and are typically published by the NHHFA in the late spring or early summer of each year. The income data are based on the most recent available five-year data published by the ACS, usually published in the December in the calendar year following the most recent year of data collection in the five-year period.

Data Considerations: Although the inflation-adjustments conducted by both the ACS and the NHHFA mitigate some of the time lag impacts, the renter household income data reflects a previous five-year period. Changes in renter household income that occur more rapidly may not be reflected, whereas the rental unit cost survey will respond more quickly. Also, these data are county-level data, which limits their usefulness to comparing rental costs within regions or communities.

Other Data: The ACS offers a measure of the percentage of renter households that owe more than 30 percent of their income in rent and utilities. While calculated by the U.S. Census Bureau and not reliant on a comparison of medians, these data are not as timely and likely do not measure costs as comprehensively as the NHHFA's data.

Rate of primary care physicians per 1,000 people, by county

This data set is provided by PolicyMap. Please refer to the [PM Data Dictionary](#) for further information.

Percent of all people without health insurance, by county

This data set is provided by PolicyMap. Please refer to the [PM Data Dictionary](#) for further information.

Median age, by municipality

Data Details: The age of the individual for whom half of the individuals counted in a community by the Decennial Census are older, and half are younger (with the average between the middle two individuals used if there are an even number of individuals). These data are based on the April 1 population count.

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census

Data Access: Available on the U.S. Census Bureau's main data website for the 2010 Census and forward, in the DEC Summary Files P13: <http://data.census.gov>.

Data Timeframe: These data are collected and published once every ten years in the U.S. Census Bureau's Decennial Census.

Data Considerations: While updated estimates exist, the uncertainty of survey data and modeling at the local level make the Decennial Census counts the most reliable source for measures of a detailed metric at the local level. However, a potentially ten-year time lag is significant, relative to actual conditions in the community in a given year.

Other Data: Updated estimates of the population's median age are available through the ACS. However, as those calculations are based on survey data, they are less accurate and subject to greater uncertainty from sampling. Those data permit only very limited comparisons between communities, with only high-population communities able to have updated age estimates with suitable levels of certainty for meaningful comparisons.

Percent of population age 65+ relative to state average, by municipality

Data Details: The total number of people identified in the most recent completed Decennial Census living in a community that are age 65 years or older divided by the total number of people counted as living in the community.

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census

Data Access: Available on the U.S. Census Bureau's main data website for the 2010 Census and forward, in the DEC Summary Files P12: <http://data.census.gov>.

Data Timeframe: These data are collected and published once every ten years in the U.S. Census Bureau's Decennial Census.

Data Considerations: While updated estimates exist, the uncertainty of survey data and modeling at the local level make the Decennial Census counts the most reliable source for measures of a detailed metric at the local level. However, a potentially ten-year time lag is significant, relative to actual conditions in the community in a given year, especially as key population groups approach age 65. For example, with key, high-population cohorts of the state's population born between 1946 and 1964 approaching age 65, the percentages may shift quickly, especially in low population communities, in a relatively short window of time.

Other Data: Updated estimates of the population's age distribution are available through the ACS. However, as those calculations are based on survey data, they are less accurate and subject to greater uncertainty from sampling. Those data permit only very limited comparisons between communities, with only high-population communities able to have updated age estimates with suitable levels of certainty for meaningful comparisons.

ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY

Taxable property value per capita, as a percentage of state median, by municipality

Data Details: The total property value taxable by local governments, adjusted by estimates of changes in property value on an annual basis by the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration (NH DRA) and including railroad and utility value, divided by the number of municipal residents in the closest-matching year (both may be the most recent year). This figure is then expressed as a percentage of the median municipalities equalized valuation per capita.

Data Sources: NH DRA; PEP

Data Access: Published by the NH DRA, accessible by altering the URL's listed year: <https://www.revenue.nh.gov/mun-prop/property/equalization-2019/index.htm>; also, PEP population estimate data (see "Municipal Population Estimates") from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Data Timeframe: Published May 1, covering the prior year, based on market activity from October 1 to September 30.

Data Considerations: Local governments may make decisions affecting the local property tax base, including local optional credits and choices regarding assessments. These alterations may be relatively limited in both scope and importance to this measure, but still involve changes to the tax base and amount to a small caveat on the comparisons of the tax bases between different towns and cities. Local governments also receive revenue from other sources, although more than 60 percent come from local property taxes in aggregate.

Other Data: There are many other datasets available from the State of New Hampshire and local governments relative to property tax bases. The most commonly employed is "Equalized Valuation Per Pupil," a published measure that identifies the amount of taxable property value per resident student. While these data are readily available, they only reflect resident students on the population side; the taxable property value per capita is a measure that reflects more of the potential needs of the population, including and beyond education. Equalized valuation measurements may also appear slightly different from different sources, including whether railroads and utilities are included or not (for reasons related to other forms of property taxes). Municipalities also publish their own assessed values that do not necessarily include the annual value equalization updates reflecting changes in the market.

Weekly wage of jobs (\$ per person), by county

Data Details: The average amount of wages paid, as reported by public and private-sector employers, per job based in the county. The location is determined by the site identified as the work location by the employer, rather than the employee's home. This average wage is determined using the data collected through State-administered unemployment insurance system.

Data Source(s): New Hampshire Employment Security, Covered Employment and Wages

Data Access: Data available through the New Hampshire Employment Security website: <https://www.nhes.nh.gov/elmi/statistics/qcew-data.htm>

Data Timeframe: Determined for the most recent year with an annual average or with four quarterly averages. Data publishing usually has a lag time of approximately two quarters, with the previous year's four quarters available in the Summer and the previous year's calculated annual average available by early Fall.

Data Considerations: These data cover approximately 95 percent of workers, making these data very comprehensive relative to survey data. Quarterly data permit examination of both seasonal impacts and faster changes in the economy. However, these wage data do not necessarily reflect individual incomes, as they are reported by employers and not employees. Employees working a part-time job may have another part-time job from a different employer. The figures presented here are also averages, which are disproportionately impacted

by outliers relative to medians; the largest impacts here may be outliers or clusters of employment on the high end, which likely disproportionately increases the averages relative to the medians in certain counties. Many employees also cross county lines for employment, which limits the ability of these data to provide an indication of local incomes as well as opportunities for high-wage employment regionally.

Other Data: Municipal-level wage data are available; however, given a high likelihood that many workers are crossing municipal borders for employment, county-level wages likely represent a better indicator of the overall health of the regional economy than city- or town-level wages. Other measures of income from work are available at the county level, including personal income data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and Occupational Employment Statistics data. However, methodology complicates the comparison of Occupational Employment Statistics data over time, there is a noteworthy time delay, and the figures are based on sampling rather than more complete programmatic data. U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis data are informative, but do only provide averages, and the granularity provided by the median household income comparisons from the ACS at the municipal level allow for more understanding of differentiation within counties.

Percent change in average annual employment, by county

Data Details: The percentage increase or decrease in average annual number of jobs, as reported by employers, based in the county relative to the prior year.

Data Source(s): New Hampshire Employment Security, Covered Employment and Wages

Data Access: Data available through the New Hampshire Employment Security website:
<https://www.nhes.nh.gov/elmi/statistics/qcew-data.htm>

Data Timeframe: Determined for the most recent year with an annual average or with four quarterly averages. Data publishing usually has a lag time of approximately two quarters, with the previous year's four quarters available in the Summer and the previous year's calculated annual average available by early Fall.

Data Considerations: These data cover approximately 95 percent of workers, making these data very comprehensive relative to survey data. Quarterly data permit examination of both seasonal impacts and faster changes in the economy. However, these data do not necessarily reflect the number of employed persons within a county, as an individual may work multiple jobs that are counted separately in these employer-provided data. Many employees also cross county lines for employment, which limits the ability of these data to provide an indication of local incomes as well as opportunities for high-wage employment regionally.

Other Data: Data from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics program provide monthly estimates of the number of people employed by county in a timely manner. However, these data are based on surveys and offer less certainty prior to benchmarking and revision (which are informed by Covered Employment and Wages data). Occupational Employment Statistics data also provide estimated employment by county, but have more significant time lags, are based on less data, and are more difficult to compare consistently over time.

Median Household Income above/below state median, by county

Data Details: Comparisons of the estimated median household incomes for a municipality, averaged over the most recent five-year period available, to the statewide median household income for the same five-year period, using statistical testing to determine and measure the likelihood that median household income is above, below, or statistically indistinguishable from the statewide median. The presented measure is that relative direction.

Data Source(s): U.S. Census Bureau, ACS, five-year data

Data Access: Available on the U.S. Census Bureau's main data website in table S1901 for "County Subdivisions":
<http://data.census.gov>.

Data Timeframe: Based on the most recent available five-year data published by the ACS, usually published in the December in the calendar year following the most recent year of data collection in the five-year period.

Data Considerations: This measure is very important for understanding household wellbeing. However, these data provide only limited information, particularly for low-population municipalities. Even when employing five years of data, sample sizes can be small, especially for communities with fewer than 1,000 residents, leading to less data certainty. As a result, statistical testing based on the published margins of error bracketing the median household income estimates at the community level provides a higher degree of certainty (90 percent confidence) that the estimated median household income is higher or lower than the statewide median, or is statistically indistinguishable (i.e., a greater than one-in-ten chance the statewide median household income and the municipal median household income are not different). The comparisons between median household incomes at the municipal level are made relative to the same measure at the statewide level because of the higher level of certainty in the statewide data; relatively few municipalities would be statistically distinguishable from one another if measured directly against each other, but the greater amount of survey data available through statewide collections provides more certainty as to the actual median household income of the state as a whole. To mitigate the chances that a municipality's median household income is measured incorrectly, especially for small municipalities, while still preserving the value provided by this measure to inform Index-users about household wellbeing at the municipal level, a coded output of higher income =1, lower income = -1, and statistically indistinguishable = 0 provides information while minimizing the risk of pitfalls from statistical uncertainty.

Other Data: Measurements of income per capita are also available from the ACS, but are likely disproportionately impacted by outliers at the top end of the income spectrum, as they represent averages. They may also be disproportionately impacted by households with more children relative to the median household income metric, making per capita incomes for municipalities with a greater number of older adults look higher in a manner that may be disproportionate to living expenses.

Percent of tax returns above \$100K in AGI, by municipality

Data Details: The counts of all Federal tax returns with adjusted gross incomes (AGI) reported above \$100,000 for the most recent tax year available divided by the number of tax returns filed total within a Zip code. Zip codes are then combined and divided into municipalities manually, based on available map estimations for Zip codes, estimated Zip Code Tabulation Area (ZCTA) populations, and satellite images.

Data Source(s): U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Statistics of Income Division; U.S. Census Bureau; various sources for zip code area estimations (see "Data Access").

Data Access: IRS data: <https://www.irs.gov/statistics/soi-tax-stats-individual-income-tax-statistics-zip-code-data-soi>; U.S. Census Bureau population data: <http://data.census.gov>; Zip Code Maps and Satellite Images: <https://www.unitedstateszipcodes.org/>, <http://maps.google.com>; <https://www.zip-codes.com/state/nh.asp>; Other References: <http://www.directorynh.com/NHReferenceDesk/ZipCodes.html>, <https://www.wikipedia.org/>, www.google.com

Data Timeframe: Data for the tax year based on the calendar year from two years prior are typically released in the late summer, and the tax year includes returns filed and processed during the subsequent calendar year (even if they are for previous tax years).

Data Considerations: These data offer a high degree of granularity, and providing information and insight at the local level using program data involves significantly less uncertainty than survey data. However, that certainty is compromised by the need to estimate based on mismatched geographies. Municipal boundaries do not necessarily match Zip codes, which are based on postal routes. Relying on IRS data and Zip codes means that some towns are not measured independently from other towns, including communities that may have different economic circumstances, while estimates for other communities that required splitting Zip codes to obtain municipal-level measures may be inaccurate. These data are also based on Adjusted Gross Income on tax returns, but are blind to whether the filers are single filers or joint filers and whether a filer has dependents or not. The IRS also suppresses data for Zip codes that have fewer than 100 filers (affecting three Zip codes in 2017), and rounds to the nearest 10 filers in most circumstances, which may impact the percentages compared between low-population communities. Setting a cutoff at \$100,000 is designed to help provide insight into which communities have a higher percentage of high-income households. However, variations in cost of living and

household size may materially change the extent to which a filer with more than \$100,000 in Adjusted Gross Income may be considered “high income;” lower cutoffs would increase the risk of potential misinterpretation. Tax filer data also may not include significant portions of the population, particularly individuals with very low incomes.

Other Data: The tax return data complement the survey data for median household income, reaffirming which municipalities have more high-income households. However, while the tax return data are more detailed, the survey data potentially capture a broader range of household incomes, including households with very low incomes that do not file returns.

COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY & VIBRANCY

Municipal Population Growth

Data Details: Municipal population comparing the estimates for the most recent July 1 available from the U.S. Census Bureau’s Population Estimates Program (PEP) with the July 1 estimates immediately following the most recent Decennial Census count.

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program

Data Access: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest/data/tables.html>

Data Timeframe: Most recent July 1 population estimate at city and town level, typically released in the spring of the following year; also, July 1 estimate in the year of the most recent April 1 Decennial Census count, which is released once every ten years.

Data Considerations: PEP estimates may be revised and updated in subsequent years. As a result, data updates should be comprehensive. Additionally, these data are based on a composite of other datasets, so they may not smoothly transition to the next Decennial Count (i.e., comparisons of 2019 to 2020 may lead to a larger change in figures than previous one-year changes). PEP estimates also may refine geographic locations for populations over time, leading to noteworthy changes in low-population areas if subsequent data suggests additional revision of the actual physical locations of populations are warranted. Learn more about these data here: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest.html>

Other Data: The New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives also publishes annual municipal population estimates as part of the U.S. Census Bureau’s Federal-State Cooperative Program for Population Estimates. Population estimates are separately developed through the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS), but the U.S. Census Bureau recommends using the PEP estimates, which are informed by ACS data, for population counts.