



# PACE COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT REPORT 2024-2026



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PACE is the designated Community Action Agency (CAA) for the Greater New Bedford area, serving low-income individuals and families with programs and services that help eliminate and prevent poverty as it is experienced in this region. The organization was first incorporated in 1982, with a start-up grant of \$25,000, and a limited staff of two people and a dozen volunteers. Since then, the agency has grown to manage an \$87 million-dollar budget, with a staff of 175 with over two dozen volunteers. PACE operates 10 programs ranging from education, to housing & energy, to health & food, to economic empowerment. All of PACE programs and services are centered on the needs of the community; as a result, the organization embarks on an in-depth Community Needs Assessment every three years, engaging local key stakeholders, community members, clients, staff, volunteers, etc. to find out what the top needs in the community are.

PACE primarily serves New Bedford. Following national patterns, housing costs have grown significantly in recent years, stretching budgets for residents whose income have not kept up and making it harder to access other essentials such as food and health. In the last decade (2010 to 2020), the population in New Bedford has increased by 6.3% to a total of 101,079; of this number, 18.7% of New Bedford's population is below the poverty level. In the last several years, New Bedford has seen an increase in the number of community members arriving from Central America and Haiti, contributing to this overall increase in the population, however, the number of individuals living in poverty has remained stagnant.

PACE has continued to increase in the number of individuals and families that are served through our programs on a weekly basis. To do this, PACE emphasizes partnerships and collaborations that aim towards eliminating the causes and conditions of poverty in the realms of food, housing, health, education, and job opportunities.

Among the many causes of poverty, concentrated poverty, racial discrimination, unequal educational access, low wage jobs, lack of quality health insurance, and lack of quality opportunities for childhood learning are among the top **causes** of poverty in this region. Below are the results of a thorough investigation of community needs that identify the **conditions** of poverty in Greater New Bedford.

The first step in investigating the needs in the community was forming a Planning Committee to help create a strategy to assess community needs and to distribute information regarding the agency's community needs assessment. Together, the committee, created a Community Needs Assessment survey consisting of several multiple choice and open-ended questions, reviewed and distributed survey marketing material (flyers, business cards, rack cards), identified key stakeholders for interviews, helped create a template of questions for focus groups, and distributed the survey in its various forms (paper and electronic copy).

In total, there were 997 survey responses, 23 interviews with key stakeholders, and 4 focus groups, all aimed at identifying the top needs in the community as a part of the agency's assessment. The survey was shared via social media and through paper-marketing materials and remained open for ten weeks. Interviews with key stakeholders included those from different sectors, such as healthcare, economic development, local government, non-profit and community organizations, law enforcement and education. The focus groups included one in Spanish and K'iche with community members from Central America in partnership with the Community Economic Development Center (CEDC), another was held with the Senior Leadership team at PACE, another with the Massachusetts Community Action Partnership (MASSCAP) Planner's group, and lastly, one focus group was held with the PACE Head Start Policy Council.

Additionally, the Planning Committee conducted and reviewed an internal needs assessment and a customer satisfaction survey. The internal needs assessment was anonymous. 63 staff-members (representative of all programs/departments) responded to the survey and expressed the strengths and needs of the agency internally.

As a result, to the community needs assessment (survey results, key stakeholder interviews, and focus groups), PACE has identified the following top needs.

1. Affordable housing (*and the lack of housing*)
2. Mental Health
3. Access to child care (*and after-school/summer programs for children and youth*)
4. Elder services
5. Access to food

In comparison to the results from the last Community Needs Assessment conducted in (2020) which yielded the following results:

1. Housing
2. Mental Health
3. Training or education to get a job
4. Ability to pay heating or utility bills
5. Access to food

While the order has changed, the needs have remained consistent. Housing affordability remains the top need affecting the community of New Bedford. In addition to the needs identified during the last assessment, there has been a heightened awareness around the need for increased elder services, mental health services, and domestic violence prevention and support. PACE remains committed to the goals outlined during the last Community Assessment Report and Strategic Plan completed in 2020, to increase housing stability and affordability, to reduce food insecurity, to advocate and organize for more access to mental health services (especially for children), and to seek out more workforce opportunities for individuals and families.

Considering that elder services has been highlighted as an emerging top need, PACE is committed to pay additional attention to this population and seek additional partnership opportunities that will support elder services. As well, PACE will look to develop and strengthen partnership(s) with area domestic violence resource centers.

In conjunction with our community needs assessment, our internal needs assessment identified the following needs: increased IT capacity and training, more opportunity for growth within organization and professional development training, improving organizational culture to embrace change, increasing internal awareness and communication between programs/departments, recognition and evaluation, and salary/wage increases. PACE is committed to improving in these areas, recognizing that healthy staff and a thriving work environment will only enhance the services that are provided to community members.

Lastly, PACE also collects information on clients' experiences with programs on an ongoing basis through a Customer Satisfaction Survey. This survey is available online or in-paper and remains open for new responses (year-round). While PACE received an overall rating of 4.46 (out of 5), areas for improvement include: time efficiency (when accessing services), increasing communication between client and program, and expanding food center hours to reach vulnerable populations.

The findings of this report provide a glimpse into the evolving and growing needs of the community. As the designated CAA for Greater New Bedford, PACE remains committed to assessing these needs periodically, and developing a strategy that will provide a solution to the causes and conditions of poverty, especially as they relate to the needs identified in this report.

## AGENCY DESCRIPTION

People Acting in Community Endeavors (PACE), is the designated Community Action Agency for Greater New Bedford, providing a range of services in education, housing, energy, health, food and economic empowerment to low-income individuals and families of this area.

PACE was incorporated in 1982, following the need to provide the community with resources and referrals that would help prevent and eliminate poverty as it is experienced in this region. Since its incorporation, the agency has grown to operate 10 programs, with a staff of over 175 and two dozen volunteers, with over 75 partnerships in the community from all different sectors including public, private, and non-profit sectors.

Below is a description of the services provided by the agency.

Fuel Assistance – assists eligible households with the high costs of home heating during the winter months through financial assistance, discount programs, and financial counseling.

Head Start and Early Head Start – provides family centered child development programming to over 250 children ages 0-5 for income eligible families living in the Greater New Bedford area. The program is at no cost to families who qualify.

Health Access – provides outreach and health insurance application assistance to individuals and families that are applying or renewing a MassHealth or Massachusetts Health Connector plan. This program also assists those applying or seeking assistance in managing Medicare Supplemental Programs, Medicaid, and Retiree Medical Insurance.

Child Care Works – provides a variety of services that promote quality early childhood and school aged care for families in 46 cities and towns in the Southeastern Massachusetts including training and technical assistance for all licensed child care providers, voucher management for EEC and information and referral for families seeking child care.

Lead Program – provides community education and targeted supports for families of children that have or are at risks of having lead poisoning.

PACE Community Food Center – provides Greater New Bedford community members with a week's worth of groceries each week, including fresh food from local farms, supermarkets, and stores.

Housing Opportunity Center – provides limited rental assistance for those individuals and families that are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The program provides referrals to resources, case management, and provides housing search lists for people seeking permanent housing.

YouthBuild – empowers young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who have left school without a diploma by providing academic and vocational education, case management, and development in life skills and financial literacy.

Clemente Course – offers six college courses in the field of Humanities to those who are 17+ and economically disadvantaged (in partnership with MassHumanities).

VITA Tax Preparation – provides free electronic tax preparation for eligible individuals and families.



## MISSION STATEMENT

PACE delivers innovative and effective services to members of the Greater New Bedford Community in their pursuit of brighter futures.

Last Reviewed February 11, 2020

## VISION STATEMENT

It is the vision of PACE to ensure that all members of our community have the ability to achieve their goals and create their own “brighter future”.

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To accomplish this, PACE assesses the needs of the community on a regular basis as a way of knowing what the top needs/barriers affecting our community are and by providing effective programs and services that will dismantle poverty at its earliest stages.

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In the next three years, PACE will address the top needs identified in this report by expanding the services we provide in existing programs and/or partnering with those who provide these services: access to affordable housing; mental health services, child care access, elder services, and food access. Since COVID-19, the need in the community has not returned to pre-pandemic levels and in many ways has increased; yet, with COVID-19 sanctions and supplementary benefits ending, as well as the cost of living increasing at a faster rate than area wages, many individuals and families in the community are left vulnerable in regards to housing, health, finances, education, food access and so much more.

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Equally important, PACE will strive to remove the stigma of receiving services and empower individuals and families to achieve their goals.

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We will accomplish this through empowered staff, volunteers, an engaged Board of Directors, key partners, and critical resources. We are thankful for those who continue to join us in our mission to end poverty and create brighter futures in our community.

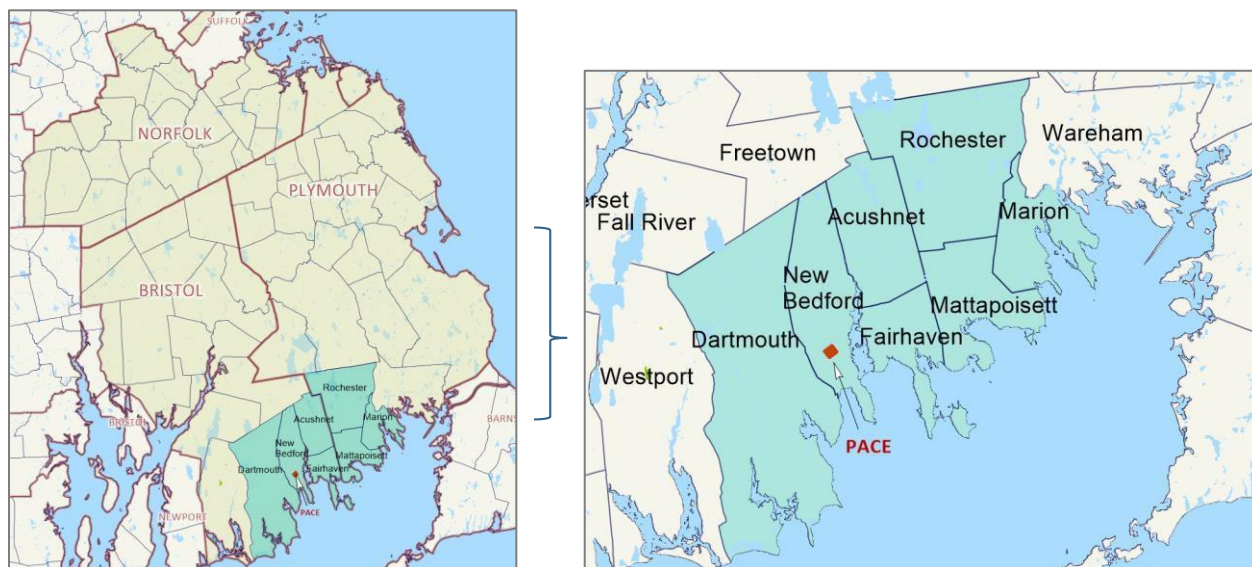


## COMMUNITY PROFILES

### PACE Region

PACE is the Community Action Agency designated to serve the Greater New Bedford area (including Dartmouth, Acushnet, Fairhaven, Marion, Mattapoisett, and Rochester) with a primary focus on the City of New Bedford. As the designated child care voucher management program for the region, Child Care Works serves 40 cities and towns throughout Southeastern Massachusetts (see Appendix A: Cities/Towns served by PACE (Designated/Undesignated CSBG Area)). Similarly, PACE's Housing Opportunity Center serves all of Bristol County. The overwhelming majority of PACE's services are provided in Bristol County, but some programs extend into Plymouth County and Norfolk County.

**Figure 1. PACE Service Area**



## CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

### OVERVIEW

New Bedford, Massachusetts is a coastal city located in the southeastern part of the state with a population of 101,079. The city is known for its rich history and cultural heritage, particularly its association with the whaling industry of the 19th century. In addition to its historical significance, New Bedford is also known for its vibrant arts and culture scene. The city is home to several museums, art galleries, and performance venues as well as the Whaling National Historical Park (NBWNHP), which encompasses 34 acres in downtown New Bedford.

New Bedford is also an important economic center for the region. The city has a diverse economy with a strong manufacturing sector and has recently become a hub for renewable energy. The city's

port is also a major economic driver and is home to one of the country's largest fishing fleets. However, unemployment rate in the city is higher than the state's average.

Despite its rich history and cultural heritage, the city faces significant socioeconomic challenges, particularly in terms of poverty. Nearly nineteen percent of residents (18.7%) are below the poverty level, which is nearly twice the statewide level (9.9%). Additionally, the city has a large number of immigrants and people of color, who are disproportionately affected by poverty; 13.6% of New Bedford residents who identify as White are below the poverty level, while 23.5% of Black or African Americans and 31.3% of Hispanics are below the poverty level. These groups often face discrimination and barriers to economic opportunities making it difficult for them to access good jobs and secure housing.

Poverty goes hand in hand with income and education. New Bedford's median household income is only 57.0% of the statewide median (\$50,581 versus \$89,026). This is partly the result of low education levels. New Bedford has some of the lowest levels of educational attainment levels of any city in Massachusetts, particularly in terms of the percentage of residents 25 years of age and older who have a college degree; 25.7% in New Bedford versus 52.9% statewide.

However, the city has been working to address these challenges through various initiatives, such as education and job training programs, community development, and affordable housing programs. These programs aim to provide residents with the resources and support they need to improve their economic situation and break the cycle of poverty.

**Figure 2. City of New Bedford, Massachusetts**



## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

### Population

New Bedford is the 8<sup>th</sup> largest community in Massachusetts, with a population of 101,079 in 2020. The city's population increased by 6.3% from 2010 to 2020, which compares to an increase of 7.4% statewide. New Bedford is home to a younger population in comparison to Massachusetts; the

city's median is 36.5 years in comparison to 39.6 years statewide. Females account for 50.1% of New Bedford's population compared with 51.2% of the population statewide (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Population Overview**

	New Bedford	Massachusetts
<b>Population</b>		
Total Population 2020	101,079	7,029,917
Population Change 2010-2020	6.3%	7.4%
<b>Median Age</b>		
Median age	36.5	39.6
Under 5 years of age	6.7%	5.3%
Under 20 years of age	25.8%	23.5%
65 years of age and older	15.3%	15.5%
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	50.1%	51.2%
Male	49.9%	48.8%

Source: Population, 2020 U.S. Census; Median Age and Sex, ACS 2017-2021 estimates, Table B01002 and Table DP05 respectively

## Race and Ethnicity

New Bedford residents are more racially diverse than the Commonwealth; 60.8% are White (one race), which compares to 71.5% of residents statewide (see Table 2). Nearly a quarter of New Bedford residents (24.3%) identify as Hispanic, almost double the statewide percentage (12.6%).<sup>1</sup> Overall, the city's minority population increased at a faster rate than the state from 2010-2020; 13.7% versus 8.9% over this period respectively. In addition, the city's White population includes much ethnic and linguistic diversity, particularly among residents of Portuguese descent; New Bedford has one of the largest concentrations of residents with Portuguese ancestry in the country.

New Bedford has been a destination for new arrivals to America since the late 18th century. Nineteen percent (19.9%) of New Bedford residents were born outside the U.S., compared to 17.3% statewide. Portuguese immigrants comprised the majority of the region's foreign-born residents in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century along with immigrants from Cape Verde.<sup>2</sup> However, emigration from Europe to the U.S. has slowed, and now immigrants from Latin America, South America, Africa, and Asia account for increasing shares of the populations in the region.

**Table 2. Racial and Ethnic Overview**

	New Bedford	Massachusetts
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>		
One Race White	60.8%	69.6%

<sup>1</sup> Persons who identify as Hispanic can be of any race and these individuals are accounted for in the various categories. That is, the Census Bureau's data collection and classification treat race and Hispanic origin as two separate and distinct concepts. The 2020 Census allowed persons of Hispanic origin to self-report as Hispanic in a separate racial question.

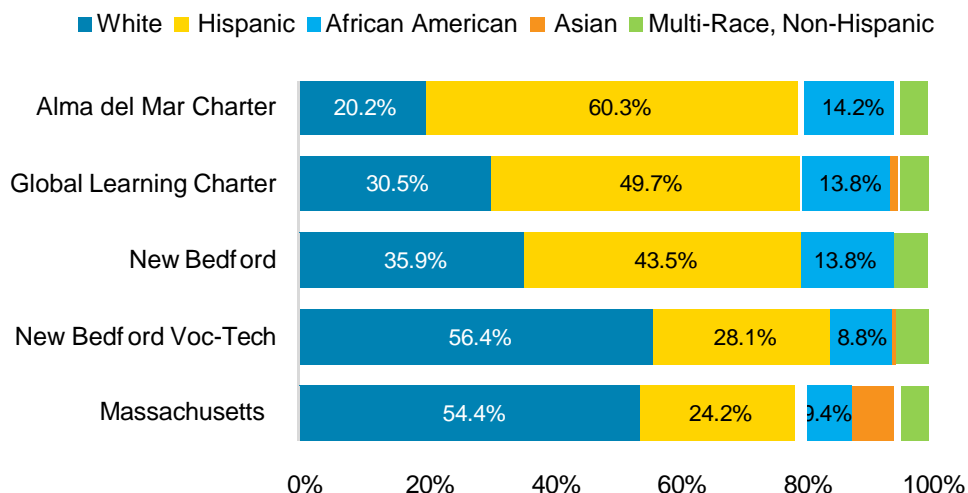
<sup>2</sup> New Bedford still had 21,542 residents of Portuguese ancestry and 7,779 residents of Cape Verdean ancestry living in the city in 2021.

One Race African American	5.8%	7.0%
One Race Asian	1.0%	7.2%
Other Race	16.3%	7.4%
Two or More Races	16.1%	8.7%
Hispanic	24.3%	12.6%
Non-White Change 2010-2020	13.7%	8.9%
<b>Foreign-born residents</b>	<b>19.9%</b>	<b>17.3%</b>
<b>Speak English &lt; "very well"</b>	<b>16.2%</b>	<b>9.5%</b>

Source: Race/Ethnicity, U.S. Census 2010 and 2020; Foreign-born and English ability, ACS 2017-2021 estimates, Table B05012 and Table S1601 respectively

Notably, New Bedford's student population is much more diverse than the city's population as a whole, which portends that New Bedford will become increasingly racially diverse. For example, 64.1% of New Bedford public school students identify as something other than White and 43.5% identify as Hispanic.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 3. Public School Race/Ethnicity, 2021<sup>4</sup>**



Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), October 1, 2021, Enrollment Report

## Income and Wages

Having a job and earning a living wage are critical for achieving economic well-being. However, New Bedford falls below its adjacent communities and the state on most economic metrics. For example, New Bedford's median household income is only 57.0% of the statewide median (\$50,581

<sup>3</sup> Unlike the Census race categories, DESE includes Hispanic as a racial category along with the other race categories.

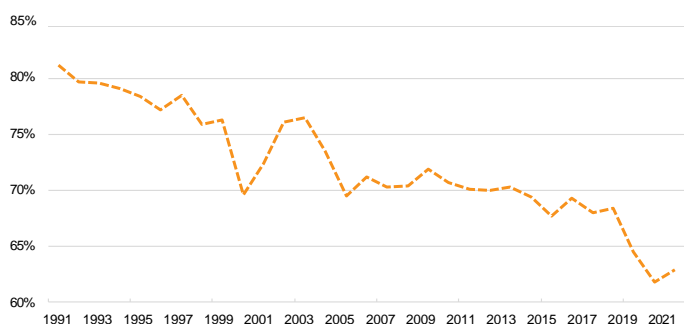
<sup>4</sup> Non-White population is defined as individuals who define their race as other than "One Race White."

versus \$89,026), with low income residents having been hit particularly hard with 2022's inflationary environment (see Table 3).

A primary obstacle to equitable economic opportunity in New Bedford is the low-wage jobs that are pervasive in the city, particularly as its economies have shifted from what were relatively well-paying manufacturing jobs to lower wage service jobs. The issues of affordability and economic opportunity have only grown as the wage gap with the state continues to widen. New Bedford's annual average wage in 2021 was only 62.9% of the state average.<sup>5</sup> Figure 4 tracks this wage gap from 1991 to 2021, which has worsened over time.

While New Bedford's unemployment rate has declined considerably since the pandemic, the rate is still above the state average. Historically, New Bedford's unemployment rate tracks 2%-3% over the state average. The latest unemployment rates available for this report show that New Bedford's unemployment rate was 5.8% in December 2022, which compares to 3.3% statewide.

**Figure 4. Wage Gap, 1991-2021**



Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Workforce and Labor Development, ES202 data<sup>6</sup>

**Table 3. Income and Wages**

	New Bedford	Massachusetts
<b>Median Household Income</b>		
Median household income	\$50,581	\$89,026
Median household income as % of state median	56.8%	100.0%
<b>Average Annual Wage</b>		
Annual average wage	\$55,172	\$87,672
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>		
Unemployment rate (annual 2021)	8.8%	5.7%
Unemployment rate (Dec 2022)	5.8%	3.3%

Sources: Median household income, ACS 2017-2021 estimates, Table S1903; Average annual wage and unemployment rate, Massachusetts Executive Office of Workforce and Labor Development, ES202 and LAUS datasets respectively<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The wage gap is defined as the average annual wage in the South Coast as a percentage of the state average annual wage.

<sup>6</sup> The ES202 dataset reports employment and wages by place of work, not by the city or town in which employees live.

<sup>7</sup> The ES202 dataset reports wages by place of work, not by the city or town in which employees live. LAUS measures the unemployment rate of residents regardless of where they work.

## Commuting

Examining commuting patterns provides insight into where New Bedford work and who commutes into New Bedford to work.<sup>8</sup> There is a large number of workers moving into and out of new Bedford on a daily basis. Over 20,000 workers (20,387) who work in New Bedford commute from outside the city, while 30,717 New Bedford residents commute to jobs outside the city. More than 15,000 (15,375) both live and work in the city (see Figure 5).

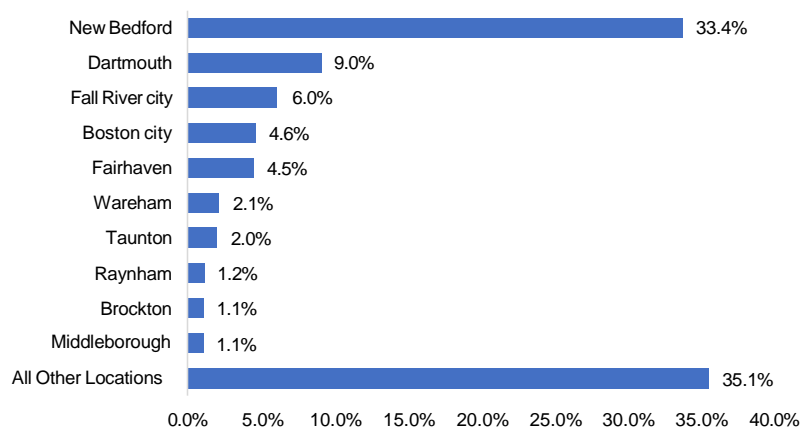
Figure 6 displays the top communities to which New Bedford workers commute, included those who work and live in the city.

**Figure 5. Commuting Patterns, Inflow/Outflow, 2019**



Source: Source: U.S. Census Bureau LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES); Inflow/Outflow Analysis, All Jobs, 2019.

**Figure 6. Communities to Which New Bedford Residents Commute, 2019**



Source: Source: U.S. Census Bureau LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES); Inflow/Outflow Analysis, All Jobs, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> This analysis used data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-House Dynamics (LEHD) Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES) program, which links the community in which an employee resides with the community in which they work.

## Poverty

As detailed below, multigenerational poverty has become a grim, unbreakable cycle for many families in New Bedford over the last decades. Economic, social, and structural barriers prevent some New Bedford residents from achieving their economic potential and an overall state of well-being. These include obstacles such as concentrated poverty, racial discrimination, unequal educational access, low wage jobs, and lack of quality opportunities for childhood learning. Poverty is also a major social determinant of health. Those in poverty often have less opportunity and less access to resources that can assist in improving and maintaining one's health.

Over eighteen percent (18.7%) of New Bedford's population is below the poverty level, which compares to 9.9% statewide. Poverty levels are slightly lower for families but higher for families with children under 18 (15.5% and 22.0% respectively in New Bedford). In addition, a significant portion of female headed households with no spouse present are below the poverty level (28.7%) (see Table 4).

There is a notable disparity between poverty levels and race and ethnicity. While 13.6% of New Bedford residents who identify as White are below the poverty level, 23.5% of Black or African Americans and 31.3% of Hispanics are below the poverty level. Children also have higher poverty levels in comparison to older age groups (see Table 4).

Lastly, an estimated 36.3% of New Bedford residents received SNAP benefits in December 2022, which compares to 15.1% of residents statewide (see Table 4). The percentage of New Bedford residents receiving SNAP benefits increased by 21.9% from February 2020 (pre-COVID pandemic) to July 2022.

**Table 4. Poverty Indicators**

	New Bedford	Massachusetts
<b>Poverty Rate</b>		
Individuals	18.7%	9.9%
All families	15.5%	6.6%
Families with Children <18	22.0%	10.1%
Married couple families	7.3%	2.9%
Female headed households, no spouse	28.7%	19.8%
<b>Federal Poverty Level (Family of Two)</b>	16.3%	6.4%
<b>By Race/Ethnicity</b>		
White alone	13.6%	7.8%
Black or African American	23.5%	16.7%
Hispanic	31.3%	22.5%
<b>By Gender</b>		
Poverty rate among men	17.1%	8.9%
Poverty rate among women	20.2%	10.9%
<b>By Age</b>		
Poverty rate under age 18	24.6%	12.1%



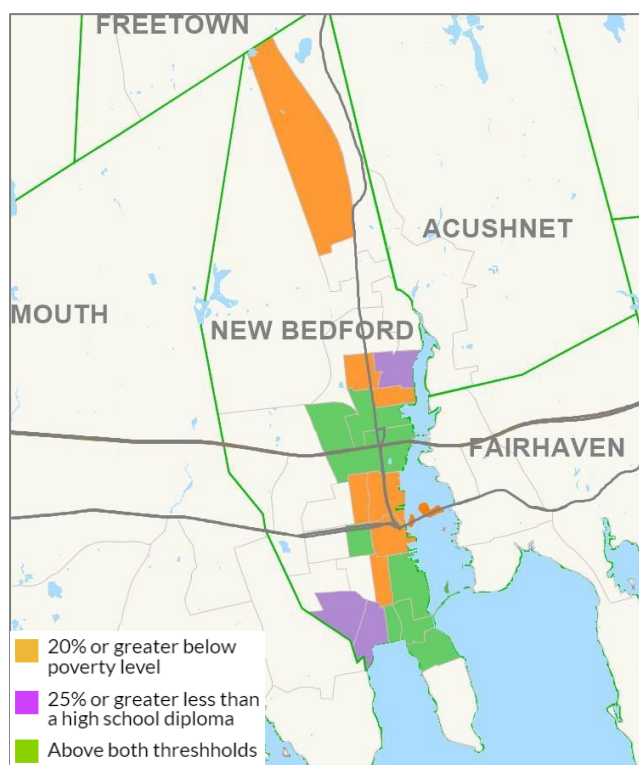
Poverty rate age 18-64	17.2%	9.3%
Poverty rate age 65+	15.4%	9.5%
<b>*Receiving SNAP Benefits</b>	<b>36.3%</b>	<b>15.1%</b>

Source: Poverty, ACS 5-year 2017-2021 estimates (Table S1701); \*July, 2022

## Poverty Is Concentrated in Specific Neighborhoods

Poverty and its interconnected conditions tend to be concentrated in particular neighborhoods. Figure 7 identifies New Bedford's Census tracts with high rates of poverty (20% of residents or greater below poverty level) and low educational attainment (25% of residents or greater with less than a high school diploma), two primary social determinants of health. New Bedford's most vulnerable populations are concentrated just north of downtown and in the south end. Neighborhoods in other areas of the cities are comparatively more well-off, although even most of these areas have much less economic stability compared to the neighboring towns and the state as a whole (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7. Vulnerable Population Footprint, New Bedford, 2016–2020**



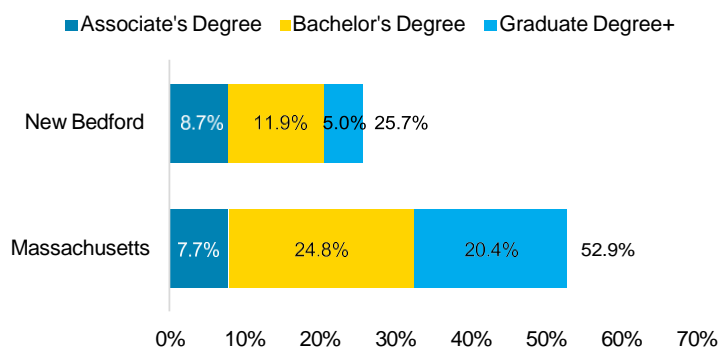
Source: ACS 2016–2020 Estimates. Mapped using data from Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems (CARES)

## Education

### ADULTS

Massachusetts has the second most highly educated population in the country and one of the most well-educated populations in the world. In contrast, New Bedford has some of the lowest levels of educational attainment levels of any city in Massachusetts, particularly in terms of the percentage of residents 25 years of age and older who have a college degree; 25.7% in New Bedford versus 52.9% statewide (see Figure 8).<sup>9</sup>

**Figure 8. Residents Aged 25 and Older with at Least an Associate Degree, 2021**

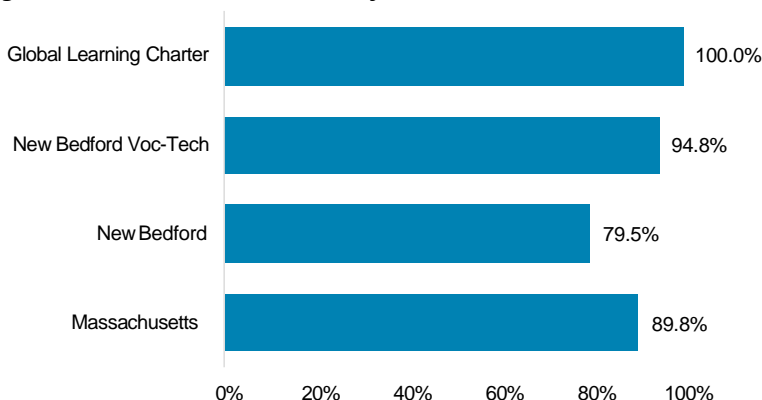


Sources: ACS 2017-2021 estimates, Table S1501. Residents age 25 years and older

### STUDENTS

High school graduation rates in the New Bedford Public Schools are below the state average: 79.5% versus 89.8% respectively. Conversely, graduation rates at the city's two charter schools and at New Bedford Voc-Tech are above the state average (see Figure 9).<sup>10</sup>

**Figure 9. 4-Year Graduation Rate by District, SY 2021**



<sup>9</sup> High margins of error prevent any meaningful analysis of race-based educational attainment data for the region.

<sup>10</sup> The high school graduation rate measures the percentage of students who attain a high school diploma within a four-year period.

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, SY 2021

English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities often face difficulties in school. ELL students may struggle with understanding and processing new information, participating in class discussions, and completing assignments. ELLs also often come from diverse cultural backgrounds, which can make it challenging for them to adjust to a new educational system. Furthermore, lack of proper language support and accommodations can exacerbate these difficulties and lead to lower academic achievement.

Students with disabilities also face difficulties due to a variety of challenges related to their disability. These challenges can impact their ability to learn, participate in class, and complete assignments. For example, students with learning disabilities may struggle with reading, writing, and processing information, while students with physical disabilities may have difficulties with mobility and accessing the physical environment. Both ELLs and students with a disability may feel socially isolated and unable to fully participate in school activities.

Table 5 presents several indicators related to English ability, students with disabilities, and the percentage of students with high needs.<sup>11</sup> The percentage of students in each category in New Bedford is above the state average, especially the percentage of high needs students (87.4% versus 55.7%). Percentages for the city's charter schools and the Voc-Tech vary in comparison to the state averages (see Table 5).

**Table 5. Education, Student Profile**

	Alma del Mar	Global Learning Charter	New Bedford Public Schools	New Bedford Voc-Tech	Alma del Mar	Massachusetts
<b>Student Profile</b>						
First language not English	36.0%	42.5%	42.9%	16.3%	36.0%	25.1%
English language learner	29.8%	9.4%	26.2%	4.9%	29.8%	12.1%
Students with disabilities	16.1%	13.8%	22.1%	11.3%	16.1%	9.6%
High needs	86.2%	79.4%	87.4%	57.6%	86.2%	55.7%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2022-2023 Enrollment Report

## ACUSHNET

### Overview

Acushnet is a town located in the southeastern part of Massachusetts with a population of 10,559. The town is situated in Bristol County and is bordered by the towns of New Bedford and Fairhaven (see Figure 10). Acushnet has a rich history, dating back to its founding in the 1600s when it was part of the Wampanoag tribe's territory. Acushnet was once part of three separate towns:

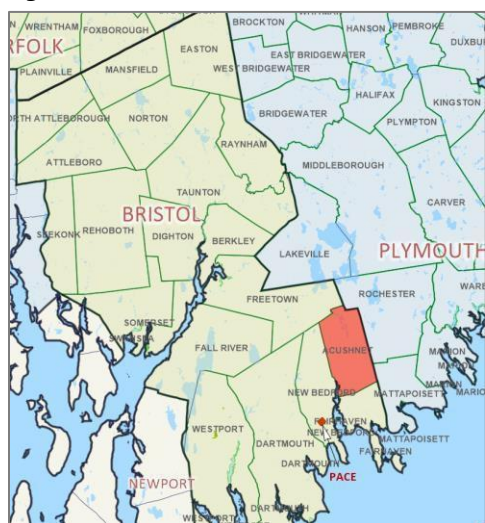
<sup>11</sup> A student is high needs if he or she is designated as either low income (prior to 2015, and from 2022 to present), economically disadvantaged (from 2015 to 2021), English learner/former English learner, or a student with disabilities.

Dartmouth, then New Bedford, and lastly, Fairhaven. In 1812, Acushnet became its own distinct town and incorporated in 1860.

The majority of Acushnet's residents are White and older than the state average. Acushnet's median household income is 88.0% of the state median income (\$78,362 versus \$89,026) and average annual wages are 68.9% of the state average (\$55,172 versus \$86,672). Individual and family poverty rates are below the state average.

Acushnet faces economic challenges such as high housing costs and limited availability of affordable housing. Over sixty percent of renters (60.9%) and 44.5% of homeowners are housing cost burdened, which compares to 44.5% and 29.5% statewide, respectively.

**Figure 10. Town of Acushnet, Massachusetts**



## Demographic Profile

### Population

Acushnet's population was 10,559 in 2020. The town's population increased 6.3% from 2010 to 2020, which compares to a 7.4% increase statewide. Acushnet is home to an older population in comparison to Massachusetts; the town's median is 46.7 years versus 39.6 years statewide. Females account for 52.3% of Acushnet's population, compared with 51.2% of the population statewide (see Table 6).

**Table 6. Population Overview**

	Acushnet	Massachusetts
<b>Population</b>		
Total Population 2020	10,559	7,029,917
Population Change 2010-2020	2.5%	7.4%
<b>Median Age</b>		
Median age	46.7	39.6

Under 5 years of age	3.6%	5.3%
Under 20 years of age	20.4%	23.5%
65 years of age and older	21.8%	15.5%
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	52.3%	51.2%
Male	47.7%	48.8%

Source: Population, 2020 U.S. Census; Median Age and Sex, ACS 2017-2021 estimates, Table B01002 and Table DP05 respectively

## RACE AND ETHNICITY

Acushnet residents are less racially diverse than the Commonwealth; 92.5% are White (one race), which compares to 69.6% of residents statewide. Only 2.4% of Acushnet residents identify as Hispanic, well below the percentage statewide (12.6%).<sup>12</sup> Over ten percent (10.4%) of Acushnet residents were born outside the U.S., compared to 17.3% statewide. Most all residents speak English very well (see Table 7).

**Table 7. Racial and Ethnic Overview**

	Acushnet	Massachusetts
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>		
One Race White	92.5%	69.6%
One Race African American	0.5%	7.0%
One Race Asian	0.6%	7.2%
Other Race	1.6%	7.4%
Two or More Races	4.7%	8.7%
Hispanic	2.4%	12.6%
<b>Foreign-born residents</b>	10.4%	17.3%
<b>Speak English &lt; "very well"</b>	4.0%	9.5%

Source: Race/Ethnicity, U.S. Census 2010 and 2020; Foreign-born and English ability, ACS 2017-2021 estimates, Table B05012 and Table S1601 respectively

## INCOME AND WAGES

Acushnet's median household income is 88.0% of the state median income (\$78,362 versus \$89,026) and average annual wages are 68.9% of the state average (\$55,172 versus \$86,672). Individual and family poverty rates are below the state average. The town's annual unemployment rate was 6.0% in 2021 and 4.1% in December 2022, which compares to 5.7% and 3.3% statewide, respectively (see Table 8).

<sup>12</sup> Persons who identify as Hispanic can be of any race and these individuals are accounted for in the various categories. That is, the Census Bureau's data collection and classification treat race and Hispanic origin as two separate and distinct concepts. The 2020 Census allowed persons of Hispanic origin to self-report as Hispanic in a separate racial question.

**Table 8. Income and Wages**

	Acushnet	Massachusetts
<b>Median Household Income</b>		
Median household income	\$78,362	\$89,026
Median household income as % of state median	88.0%	NA
<b>Average Annual Wage</b>		
Annual average wage	\$55,172	\$87,672
Annual average wage as % of state average	68.9%	NA
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>		
Unemployment rate (annual 2021)	6.0%	5.7%
Unemployment rate (Dec 2022)	4.1%	3.3%

Sources: Median household income, ACS 2017-2021 estimates, Table S1903; Average annual wage and unemployment rate, Massachusetts Executive Office of Workforce and Labor Development, ES202 and LAUS datasets respective<sup>13</sup>

## Poverty

Acushnet's Individual and family poverty rates are below the state average, while the rates for families with children and female headed households are slightly higher.

Over eighteen percent (18.7%) of Acushnet's population is below the poverty level, which compares to 9.9% statewide. Poverty levels are slightly lower for families but higher for families with children under 18 (15.5% and 22.0%, respectively). In addition, a significant portion of female headed households with no spouse present are below the poverty level (28.7%) (see Table 9).

There is a notable disparity between poverty levels and race and ethnicity. While 5.4% of Acushnet residents who identify as White are below the poverty level, 11.3% of Hispanics are below the poverty level. Children also have higher poverty levels in comparison to older age groups (see Table 9). Over eleven percent of residents (11.4%) received SNAP benefits in December 2022, which compares to 15.1% of residents statewide (see Table 9).

**Table 9. Poverty Indicators**

	Acushnet	Massachusetts
<b>Poverty Rate</b>		
Individuals	5.5%	9.9%
All families	5.6%	6.6%
Families with Children <18	12.3%	10.1%
Married couple families	1.7%	2.9%
Female headed households, no spouse	22.4%	19.8%
<b>Federal Poverty Level (Family of Two)</b>	5.4%	6.4%
<b>By Race/Ethnicity</b>		

<sup>13</sup> The ES202 dataset reports wages by place of work, not by the city or town in which employees live. LAUS measures the unemployment rate of residents regardless of where they work.

White alone	5.4%	7.8%
Black or African American	3.6%	16.7%
Hispanic	11.3%	22.5%
<b>By Gender</b>		
Poverty rate among men	5.3%	8.9%
Poverty rate among women	5.8%	10.9%
<b>By Age</b>		
Poverty rate under age 18	8.4%	12.1%
Poverty rate age 18-64	5.3%	9.3%
Poverty rate age 65+	3.8%	9.5%
<b>SNAP Participants of Total Pop (Dec 22)</b>	<b>11.4%</b>	<b>15.1%</b>

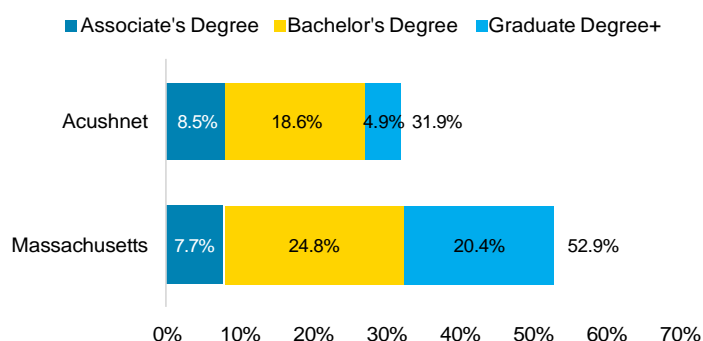
Source: ACS 5-year 2017-2021 estimates (Table S1701)

## Education

### Adults

The percentage of Acushnet residents aged twenty-five and older who have a college degree is below the Massachusetts average; 31.9% in Acushnet versus 52.9% statewide (see Figure 11).<sup>14</sup>

**Figure 11. Residents Aged 25 and Older with at Least an Associate Degree, 2021**



Sources: ACS 2017-2021 estimates, Table S1501. Residents age 25 years and older

### Students

Table 10 presents several indicators related to English ability, students with disabilities, and the percentage of students with high needs.<sup>15</sup> Most all students in Acushnet's public schools have English as their first language and less than one percent are ELLs. Acushnet has a higher percentage

<sup>14</sup> High margins of error prevent any meaningful analysis of race-based educational attainment data.

<sup>15</sup> A student is high needs if he or she is designated as either low income (prior to 2015, and from 2022 to present), economically disadvantaged (from 2015 to 2021), English learner/former English learner, or a student with disabilities.



of students with disabilities in comparison to the state (15.8% versus 9.6%) but a lower percentage who are categorized as high needs (34.0% versus 55.7%) (see Table 10).<sup>16</sup>

**Table 10. Education, Student Profile**

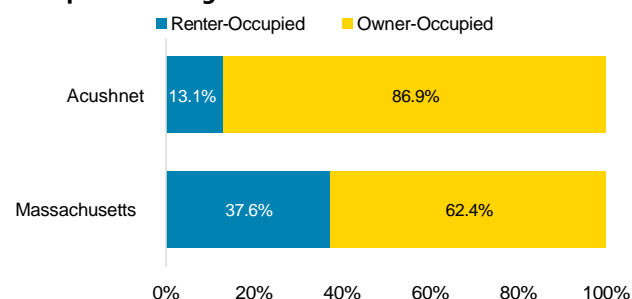
	Acushnet	Massachusetts
Student Profile		
First language not English	1.8%	25.1%
English language learner	0.6%	12.1%
Students with disabilities	15.8%	9.6%
High needs	34.0%	55.7%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2022-2023 Enrollment Report

## Housing

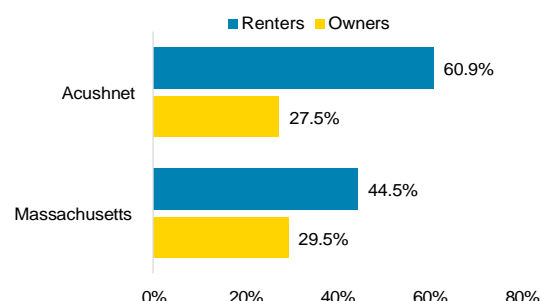
The majority of housing units in Acushnet are owner-occupied (see Figure 12). Over sixty percent of renters (60.9%) and 27.5% of homeowners are housing cost burdened, which compares to 44.5% and 29.5% statewide, respectively (see Figure 13).

**Figure 12. Percentage of Owner-Occupied and Renter-Occupied Housing**



Source: ACS 2017-2021 estimate, Table DP04

**Figure 13. Housing Cost Burdened Households, 2021**



## Town of Dartmouth

### Overview

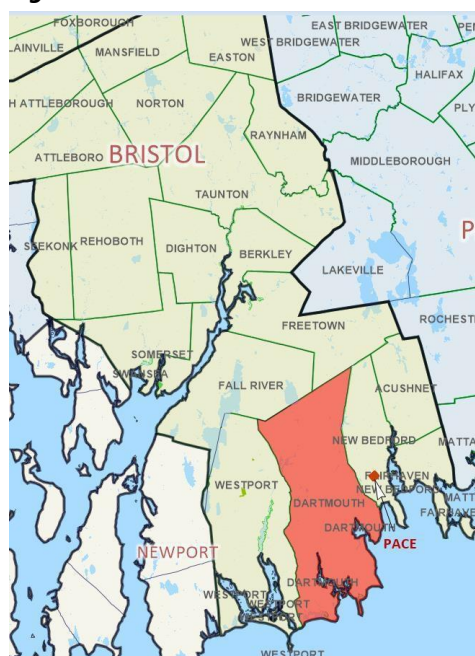
Dartmouth is a coastal town located in the southeastern part of Massachusetts with a population of 33,783 (see Figure 14). The town has a rich history, dating back to its founding in 1664 when it was established as a part of the Plymouth Colony. In the centuries that followed, Dartmouth played an important role in the development of the region, serving as a center for trade, agriculture, and commerce. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Dartmouth experienced rapid growth and development, with the construction of new homes, businesses, and transportation infrastructure.

<sup>16</sup> Acushnet does not have a high school.

The town has a diverse ethnic makeup, with a large Portuguese American population, and is home to a significant number of university students who attend the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. As a whole, the town is relatively affluent, and this is reflected in the data that follow.

The majority of Dartmouth's residents are White: 85.6% for the town versus 69.6% statewide. Median household income is 107.2% of the state median income (\$95,404 versus \$89,026) and average annual wages are 67.6% of the state average (\$59,228 versus \$86,672), which is primarily the result of a large number of retail and service jobs in the town. Poverty rates are slightly above the state average, with 11.0% of Dartmouth's residents living below the poverty level in comparison to 9.9% of residents statewide. Adults are highly educated, with 45.0% having a college degree, compared to 52.9% of residents statewide.

**Figure 14. Town of Dartmouth, Massachusetts**



## Demographic Profile

### Population

Dartmouth's population was 33,783 in 2020. The town's population declined by 0.7% from 2010 to 2020, which compares to a 7.4% increase statewide. Dartmouth's median age is slightly higher than the state; the town's median age is 40.8 years versus 39.6 years statewide. Females comprise 51.2% of Dartmouth's population (see Table 11).

**Table 11. Population Overview**

	Dartmouth	Massachusetts
<b>Population</b>		
Total Population 2020	33,783	7,029,917

Population Change 2010-2020	-0.7%	7.4%
<b>Median Age</b>		
Median age	40.8	39.6
Under 5 years of age	3.4%	5.3%
Under 20 years of age	22.7%	23.5%
65 years of age and older	19.4%	15.5%
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	51.2%	51.2%
Male	48.8%	48.8%

Source: Population, 2020 U.S. Census; Median Age and Sex, ACS 2017-2021 estimates, Table B01002 and Table DP05 respectively

## Race and Ethnicity

Dartmouth residents are less racially diverse than the Commonwealth; 85.6% are White (one race), which compares to 69.6% of residents statewide. Only 4.0% of Dartmouth residents identify as Hispanic, well below the statewide percentage (12.6%).<sup>17</sup> Over eleven percent (11.2%) of Dartmouth residents were born outside the U.S., and as noted, many of these are of Portuguese descent (see Table 12).

**Table 12. Racial and Ethnic Overview**

	Dartmouth	Massachusetts
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>		
One Race White	85.6%	69.6%
One Race African American	3.1%	7.0%
One Race Asian	2.5%	7.2%
Other Race	2.8%	7.4%
Two or More Races	6.0%	8.7%
Hispanic	4.0%	12.6%
<b>Foreign-born residents</b>	11.2%	17.3%
<b>Speak English &lt; "very well"</b>	4.3%	9.5%

Source: Race/Ethnicity, U.S. Census 2010 and 2020; Foreign-born and English ability, ACS 2017-2021 estimates, Table B05012 and Table S1601 respectively

## INCOME AND WAGES

Median household income is 107.2% of the state median income (\$95,404 versus \$89,026) and average annual wages are 67.6% of the state average (\$59,228 versus \$86,672). Individual and family poverty rates are below the state average. The town's annual unemployment rate was 5.6%

<sup>17</sup> Persons who identify as Hispanic can be of any race and these individuals are accounted for in the various categories. That is, the Census Bureau's data collection and classification treat race and Hispanic origin as two separate and distinct concepts. The 2020 Census allowed persons of Hispanic origin to self-report as Hispanic in a separate racial question.

in 2021 and 4.0% in December 2022, which compares to 5.7% and 3.3% statewide, respectively (see Table 13).

**Table 13. Income and Wages**

	Dartmouth	Massachusetts
<b>Median Household Income</b>		
Median household income	\$95,404	\$89,026
Median household income as % of state median	107.2%	NA
<b>Average Annual Wage</b>		
Annual average wage	\$56,576	\$87,672
Annual average wage as % of state average	64.5%	NA
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>		
Unemployment rate (annual 2021)	5.6%	5.7%
Unemployment rate (Dec 2022)	4.0%	3.3%

Sources: Median household income, ACS 2017-2021 estimates, Table S1903; Average annual wage and unemployment rate, Massachusetts Executive Office of Workforce and Labor Development, ES202 and LAUS datasets respectively<sup>18</sup>

## Poverty

Dartmouth's Individual and family poverty rates are below the state average. There is little disparity between poverty levels and race and ethnicity, although this conclusion should be interpreted with caution due to the low sample size and resulting high margin of error. Unlike the previous communities included in this analysis, adults over the age of sixty-five have higher poverty levels in comparison to younger age groups. Ten percent of Dartmouth residents received SNAP benefits in December 2022, which compares to 15.1% of residents statewide (see Table 14).

**Table 14. Poverty Indicators**

	Dartmouth	Massachusetts
<b>Poverty Rate</b>		
Individuals	5.4%	9.9%
All families	3.0%	6.6%
Families with Children <18	4.3%	10.1%
Married couple families	1.9%	2.9%
Female headed households, no spouse	7.8%	19.8%
<b>Federal Poverty Level (Family of Two)</b>	4.4%	6.4%
<b>By Race/Ethnicity</b>		
White alone	5.5%	7.8%
Black or African American	0.0%	16.7%
Hispanic	1.7%	22.5%
<b>By Gender</b>		

<sup>18</sup> The ES202 dataset reports wages by place of work, not by the city or town in which employees live. LAUS measures the unemployment rate of residents regardless of where they work.

Poverty rate among men	4.0%	8.9%
Poverty rate among women	6.6%	10.9%
<b>By Age</b>		
Poverty rate under age 18	3.6%	12.1%
Poverty rate age 18-64	3.7%	9.3%
Poverty rate age 65+	11.3%	9.5%
<b>SNAP Participants of Total Pop (Dec 22)</b>	10.0%	15.1%

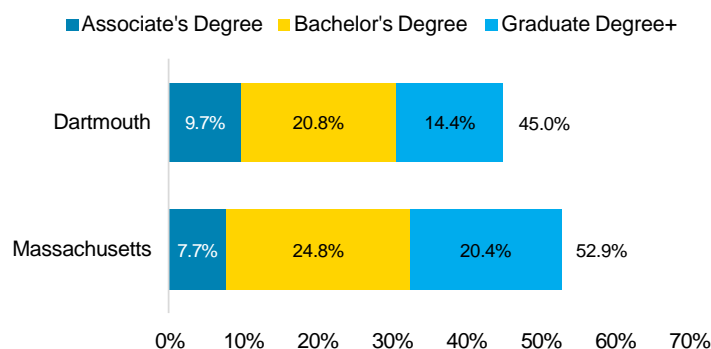
Source: ACS 5-year 2017-2021 estimates (Table S1701)

## Education

### Adults

The percentage of Dartmouth residents aged twenty-five and older who have a college degree is below the Massachusetts average, although higher than most communities in Bristol County; 45.0% in Dartmouth versus 52.9% statewide (see Figure 15).<sup>19</sup>

**Figure 15. Residents Aged 25 and Older with at Least an Associate Degree, 2021**



Source: ACS 2017-2021 estimates, Table S1501. Residents age 25 years and older

### Students

Table 15 presents several indicators related to graduation rates, English ability, students with disabilities, and the percentage of students with high needs.<sup>20</sup> High school graduation rates in the Dartmouth Public Schools are above the state average: 92.3% versus 89.8%, respectively. Most all students in Dartmouth's public schools have English as their first language and less than two percent are ELLs. Dartmouth has twice the percentage of students with disabilities in comparison

<sup>19</sup> High margins of error prevent any meaningful analysis of race-based educational attainment data.

<sup>20</sup> A student is high needs if he or she is designated as either low income (prior to 2015, and from 2022 to present), economically disadvantaged (from 2015 to 2021), English learner/former English learner, or a student with disabilities.

to the state (19.2% versus 9.6%) but a lower percentage who are categorized as high needs (31.1% versus 55.7%).

**Table 15. Education, Student Profile**

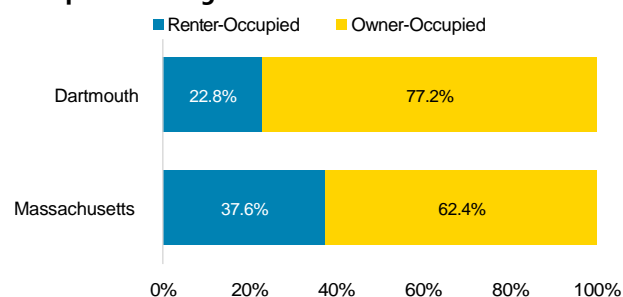
	Dartmouth	Massachusetts
Student Profile		
4-Year Graduation Rate	92.3%	89.8%
First language not English	3.7%	25.1%
English language learner	1.9%	12.1%
Students with disabilities	19.2%	9.6%
High needs	31.1%	55.7%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2022-2023 Enrollment Report

## HOUSING

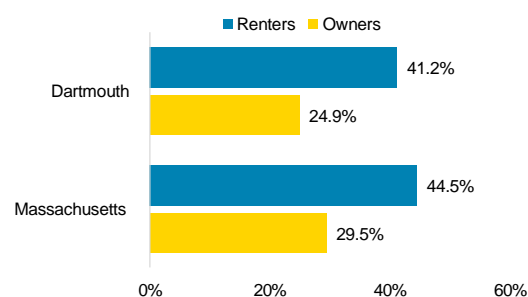
The majority of housing units in Dartmouth are owner-occupied (see Figure 16). Over forty-one percent of renters (41.2%) and 24.9% of homeowners are housing cost burdened, which compares to 44.5% and 29.5% statewide, respectively (see Figure 17).

**Figure 16. Percentage of Owner-Occupied and Renter-Occupied Housing**



Source: ACS 2017-2021 estimate, Table DP04

**Figure 17. Housing Cost Burdened Households, 2021**



## Town of FAIRHAVEN

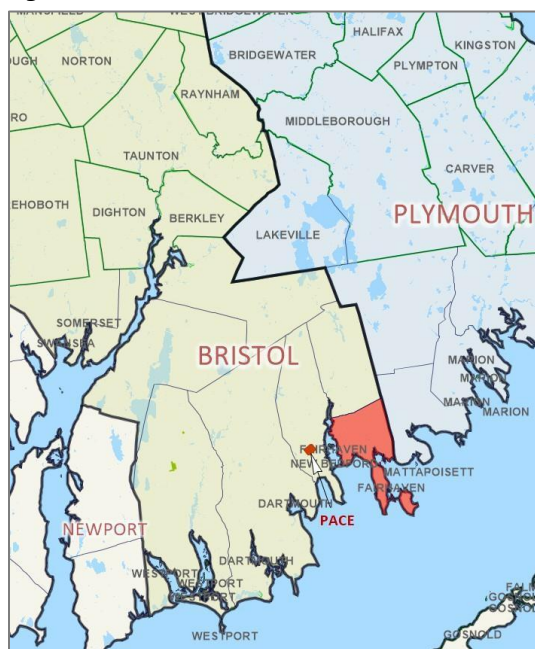
### OVERVIEW

Fairhaven is a coastal town located in the southeastern part of Massachusetts with a population of 15,924 (See figure 18). The town has a rich history, dating back to its founding in 1659 when it was established as a part of the Plymouth Colony. In the centuries that followed, Fairhaven played an important role in the development of the region, serving as a center for trade, agriculture, and commerce. The town was also home to several significant events during the American Revolution, including the burning of the Fairhaven Village by British troops in 1778. In the 19th century, Fairhaven experienced rapid growth and development, with the construction of new homes,

businesses, and transportation infrastructure. Today, the town continues to have a strong maritime history and is home to several shipyards and maritime-related businesses.

The majority Fairhaven's residents are White: 90.9% for the town versus 69.6% statewide. Median household income is 89.2% of the state median income (\$79,432 versus \$89,026) and average annual wages are 79.4% of the state average (\$69,628 versus \$86,672). Poverty rates are below the state average, with 6.6% of Fairhaven's residents living below the poverty level in comparison to 9.9% of residents statewide.

**Figure 18. Town of Fairhaven, Massachusetts**



## Demographic Profile

### Population

Fairhaven's population was 15,924 in 2020. The town's population increased by 0.3% from 2010 to 2020, which compares to a 7.4% increase statewide. Fairhaven's median age is higher than the state; 47.8 years versus 39.6 years statewide. Females comprise 53.4% of Fairhaven's population (see Table 16).

**Table 16. Population Overview**

	Fairhaven	Massachusetts
<b>Population</b>		
Total Population 2020	15,924	7,029,917
Population Change 2010-2020	0.3%	7.4%
<b>Median Age</b>		



Median age	47.8	39.6
Under 5 years of age	3.0%	5.3%
Under 20 years of age	19.6%	23.5%
65 years of age and older	21.8%	15.5%
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	53.4%	51.2%
Male	46.6%	48.8%

Source: Population, 2020 U.S. Census; Median Age and Sex, ACS 2017-2021 estimates, Table B01002 and Table DP05 respectively

## RACE AND ETHNICITY

Fairhaven residents are less racially diverse than the Commonwealth as a whole; 90.9% are White (one race), which compares to 69.6% of residents statewide. Only 3.1% of Fairhaven residents identify as Hispanic, well below the statewide percentage (12.6%).<sup>21</sup> Most all residents were born in the United States and speak English very well. (see Table 17).

**Table 17. Racial and Ethnic Overview**

	Fairhaven	Massachusetts
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>		
One Race White	90.9%	69.6%
One Race African American	0.8%	7.0%
One Race Asian	1.3%	7.2%
Other Race	1.8%	7.4%
Two or More Races	5.3%	8.7%
Hispanic	3.1%	12.6%
<b>Foreign-born residents</b>	6.1%	17.3%
<b>Speak English &lt; “very well”</b>	3.1%	9.5%

Source: Race/Ethnicity, U.S. Census 2010 and 2020; Foreign-born and English ability, ACS 2017-2021 estimates, Table B05012 and Table S1601 respectively

## INCOME AND WAGES

Median household income is 89.2% of the state median income (\$79,432 versus \$89,026) and average annual wages are 79.4% of the state average (\$69,628 versus \$86,672). Individual and family poverty rates are below the state average. The town’s annual unemployment rate was 5.7% in 2021 and 4.2% in December 2022, which compares to 5.7% and 3.3% statewide, respectively (see Table 18).

<sup>21</sup> Persons who identify as Hispanic can be of any race and these individuals are accounted for in the various categories. That is, the Census Bureau’s data collection and classification treat race and Hispanic origin as two separate and distinct concepts. The 2020 Census allowed persons of Hispanic origin to self-report as Hispanic in a separate racial question.

**Table 18. Income and Wages**

	Fairhaven	Massachusetts
<b>Median Household Income</b>		
Median household income	\$79,432	\$89,026
Median household income as % of state median	89.2%	NA
<b>Average Annual Wage</b>		
Annual average wage	\$69,628	\$87,672
Annual average wage as % of state average	79.4%	NA
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>		
Unemployment rate (annual 2021)	5.7%	5.7%
Unemployment rate (Dec 2022)	4.2%	3.3%

Sources: Median household income, ACS 2017-2021 estimates, Table S1903; Average annual wage and unemployment rate, Massachusetts Executive Office of Workforce and Labor Development, ES202 and LAUS datasets respectively<sup>22</sup>

## Poverty

Fairhaven's Individual and family poverty rates are below the state average. There is a notable disparity between poverty levels and race and ethnicity. While 6.2% of Fairhaven residents who identify as White are below the poverty level, 14.0% of Hispanics are below the poverty level, although this conclusion should be interpreted with caution due to the low sample size and resulting high margin of error. Poverty levels across age groups are fairly similar. Fourteen percent of Fairhaven residents received SNAP benefits in December 2022, which compares to 15.1% of residents statewide (see Table 19).

**Table 19. Poverty Indicators**

	Fairhaven	Massachusetts
<b>Poverty Rate</b>		
Individuals	6.6%	9.9%
All families	3.2%	6.6%
Families with Children <18	5.2%	10.1%
Married couple families	1.0%	2.9%
Female headed households, no spouse	10.3%	19.8%
<b>Federal Poverty Level (Family of Two)</b>	2.7%	6.4%
<b>By Race/Ethnicity</b>		
White alone	6.2%	7.8%
Black or African American	0.0%	16.7%
Hispanic	14.0%	22.5%
<b>By Gender</b>		
Poverty rate among men	6.5%	8.9%
Poverty rate among women	6.7%	10.9%

<sup>22</sup> The ES202 dataset reports wages by place of work, not by the city or town in which employees live. LAUS measures the unemployment rate of residents regardless of where they work.

By Age		
Poverty rate under age 18	6.0%	12.1%
Poverty rate age 18-64	6.1%	9.3%
Poverty rate age 65+	8.5%	9.5%
<b>SNAP Participants of Total Pop (Dec 22)</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>15.1%</b>

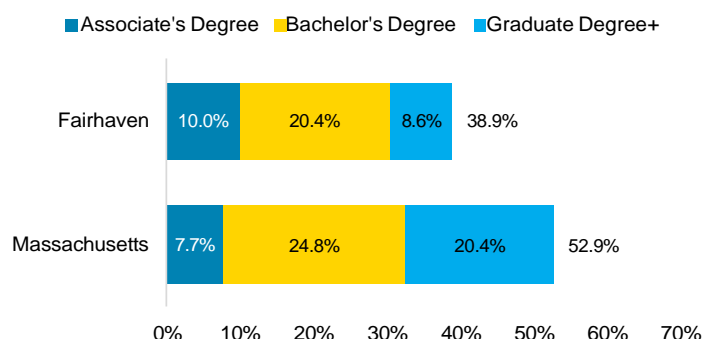
Source: ACS 5-year 2017-2021 estimates (Table S1701)

## Education

### Adults

The percentage of Fairhaven residents aged twenty-five and older who have a college degree is below the Massachusetts average, although higher than many communities in Bristol County; 38.9% in Fairhaven versus 52.9% statewide (see Figure 19).<sup>23</sup>

**Figure 19. Residents Aged 25 and Older with at Least an Associate Degree, 2021**



Source: ACS 2017-2021 estimates, Table S1501. Residents age 25 years and older

### Students

Table 20 presents several indicators related to graduation rates, English ability, students with disabilities, and the percentage of students with high needs.<sup>24</sup> High school graduation rates in the Fairhaven Public Schools are above the state average: 93.0% versus 89.8%, respectively. Most all students in Fairhaven's public schools have English as their first language and less than two percent are ELLs. Fairhaven has nearly twice the percentage of students with disabilities in comparison to the state (18.1% versus 9.6%) but a lower percentage who are categorized as high needs (39.7% versus 55.7%) (see Table 20).

<sup>23</sup> High margins of error prevent any meaningful analysis of race-based educational attainment data.

<sup>24</sup> A student is high needs if he or she is designated as either low income (prior to 2015, and from 2022 to present), economically disadvantaged (from 2015 to 2021), English learner/former English learner, or a student with disabilities.

**Table 20. Education, Student Profile**

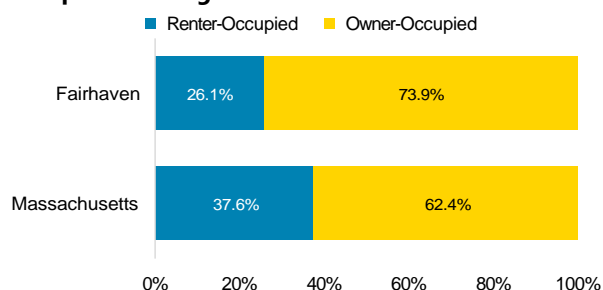
	Fairhaven	Massachusetts
<b>Student Profile</b>		
4-Year Graduation Rate	93.0%	89.8%
First language not English	3.6%	25.1%
English language learner	1.4%	12.1%
Students with disabilities	18.1%	9.6%
High needs	39.7%	55.7%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2022-2023 Enrollment Report

## HOUSING

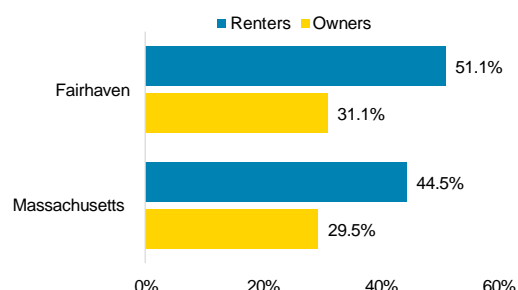
The majority of housing units in Fairhaven are owner-occupied (see Figure 20). Over forty-one percent of renters (41.2%) and 24.9% of homeowners are housing cost burdened, which compares to 44.5% and 29.5% statewide, respectively (see Figure 21).

**Figure 20. Percentage of Owner-Occupied and Renter-Occupied Housing**



Source: ACS 2017-2021 estimate, Table DP04

**Figure 21. Housing Cost Burdened Households, 2021**



## Marion, Mattapoisett, and Rochester

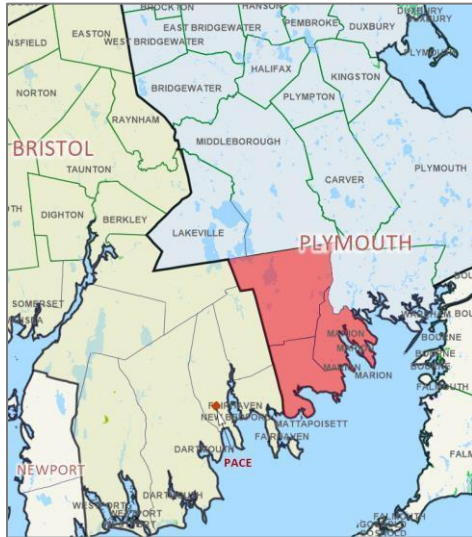
### OVERVIEW

As noted, PACE's Fuel Assistance Program serves homeowners and renters located in Marion, Mattapoisett, and Rochester. These three small communities are located in the southeastern part of Bristol County, Massachusetts (see Figure ). Each of these areas was originally inhabited by the Wampanoag people, with the first European settlers arriving in the area in the 1640s. Marion and Mattapoisett are located on Buzzards Bay and were centers of shipbuilding and maritime commerce in the early days of the colony. Rochester is more known for its strong agricultural heritage.

These three communities are the wealthiest in the South Coast, with incomes well above the state average and low unemployment rates. Not surprisingly, poverty rates are low and educational

attainment levels are high. However, these communities do face some economic challenges such as high housing costs. Because most residents are homeowners, the housing issue is most focused on the significant increase in single-family home prices and rising taxes. This dynamic is creating issues for seniors who want to remain in their homes but who are “house rich, cash poor” and for younger families who leave the region because they cannot afford homes in the area.

**Figure 22. Towns of Marion, Mattapoisett, and Rochester, Massachusetts**



## Demographic Profile

### Population

Mattapoisett has the largest population of the three towns: 6,508 in 2020 compared to 5,717 and 5,347 for Rochester and Marion respectively. The population changes from 2010-2020 are all above the state average. Each of the towns has an older population in comparison to the state as a whole, while each has a slightly lower percentage of females compared to the state (see Table 21).

**Table 21. Population Overview**

	Marion	Mattapoisett	Rochester	Massachusetts
<b>Population</b>				
Total Population 2020	5,347	6,508	5,717	7,029,917
Population Change 2010-2020	9.0%	7.7%	9.3%	7.4%
<b>Median Age</b>				
Median age	49.6	56.6	42.7	39.6
Under 5 years of age	3.7%	3.1%	5.7%	5.3%
Under 20 years of age	24.1%	18.7%	24.7%	23.5%
65 years of age and older	24.7%	27.4%	17.2%	15.5%
<b>Sex</b>				
Female	50.1%	47.1%	49.4%	51.2%
Male	49.9%	52.9%	50.6%	48.8%

Source: Population, 2020 U.S. Census; Median Age and Sex, ACS 2017-2021 estimates, Table B01002 and Table DP05 respectively

## RACE AND ETHNICITY

Residents in each town are significantly less racially diverse than the state as a whole. Most are US-born and speak English very well (see Table 22).

**Table 22. Racial and Ethnic Overview**

	Marion	Mattapoissett	Rochester	Massachusetts
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>				
One Race White	86.0%	91.9%	93.0%	69.6%
One Race African American	1.6%	0.4%	0.7%	7.0%
One Race Asian	1.4%	0.9%	0.5%	7.2%
Other Race	2.8%	1.6%	1.2%	7.4%
Two or More Races	8.3%	5.3%	4.6%	8.7%
Hispanic	4.2%	2.3%	1.6%	12.6%
<b>Foreign-born residents</b>	4.0%	3.5%	4.4%	17.3%
<b>Speak English &lt; "very well"</b>	2.2%	0.0%	0.5%	9.5%

Source: Race/Ethnicity, U.S. Census 2010 and 2020; Foreign-born and English ability, ACS 2017-2021 estimates, Table B05012 and Table S1601 respectively

## INCOME AND WAGES

Median household incomes in each town are well above the state average, although annual average wages are below the state average. Unemployment rates are at or below the state average unemployment rate (see Table 23).

**Table 23. Income and Wages**

	Marion	Mattapoissett	Rochester	Massachusetts
<b>Median Household Income</b>				
Median household income	\$105,813	\$101,487	\$110,736	\$89,026
Median household income as % of state median	118.9%	114.0%	124.4%	NA
<b>Average Annual Wage</b>				
Annual average wage	\$64,272	\$49,348	\$55,796	\$87,672
Annual average wage as % of state average	73.3%	56.3%	63.6%	NA
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>				
Unemployment rate (annual 2021)	4.8%	5.6%	4.9%	5.7%
Unemployment rate (Dec 2022)	2.9%	3.3%	2.7%	3.3%

## POVERTY

Poverty rates are very low in each town. While there is income disparity between poverty levels and race and ethnicity, this conclusion should be interpreted with caution due to the low sample

size and resulting high margin of error. Residents in each town received SNAP benefits in December 2022, although the percentage who received these benefits is below the state average (see Table 24).

**Table 24. Poverty Indicators**

	Marion	Mattapoisett	Rochester	Massachusetts
<b>Poverty Rate</b>				
Individuals	2.2%	2.1%	1.8%	9.9%
All families	0.0%	0.4%	0.6%	6.6%
Families with Children <18	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.1%
Married couple families	0.0%	0.4%	0.7%	2.9%
Female headed households, no spouse	0.0%	6.1%	0.0%	19.8%
<b>Federal Poverty Level (Family of Two)</b>	0.0%	0.6%	1.4%	6.4%
<b>By Race/Ethnicity</b>				
White alone	2.1%	1.5%	1.7%	7.8%
Black or African American	15.3%	-	33.3%	16.7%
Hispanic	7.3%	0.0%	0.0%	22.5%
<b>By Gender</b>				
Poverty rate among men	2.7%	0.9%	1.6%	8.9%
Poverty rate among women	1.7%	3.3%	1.9%	10.9%
<b>By Age</b>				
Poverty rate under age 18	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	12.1%
Poverty rate age 18-64	3.0%	2.0%	1.4%	9.3%
Poverty rate age 65+	2.5%	3.3%	2.1%	9.5%
<b>SNAP Participants of Total Pop (Dec 22)</b>	7.6%	4.7%	5.2%	15.1%

Source: ACS 5-year 2017-2021 estimates (Table S1701)

## Education

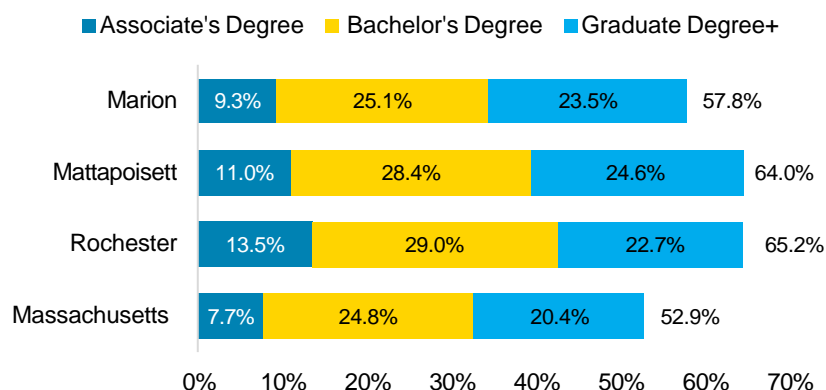
### Adults

Adults aged twenty-five and older in each town are very educated in comparison to the state average (see Figure 23).<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> High margins of error prevent any meaningful analysis of race-based educational attainment data.



**Figure 7. Residents Aged 25 and Older with at Least an Associate Degree, 2021**



Source: ACS 2017-2021 estimates, Table S1501. Residents age 25 years and older

## Students

Table 25 presents several indicators related to graduation rates, English ability, students with disabilities, and the percentage of students with high needs.<sup>26</sup> Each town belongs to the Old Rochester regional school district. High school graduation rates at Old Rochester are above the state average: 94.8% versus 89.8%, respectively. Most all students in each town's public schools have English as their first language and less than two percent are ELLs. All three towns have a higher percentage of students with disabilities in comparison to the state, but much lower percentages of students who are categorized as high needs.

**Table 25. Education, Student Profile**

	Marion	Mattapoisett	Rochester	Massachusetts
Student Profile				
4-Year Graduation Rate	NA	NA	NA	89.8%
First language not English	1.7%	0.7%	2.0%	25.1%
English language learner	1.2%	0.2%	1.2%	12.1%
Students with disabilities	21.5%	19.5%	19.5%	9.6%
High needs	28.8%	24.7%	22.0%	55.7%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2022-2023 Enrollment Report OR94.8%

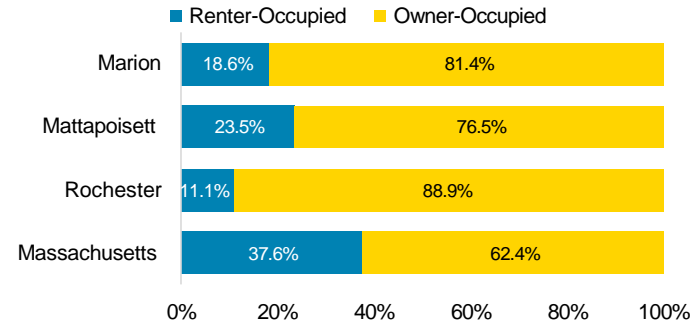
## HOUSING

The majority of housing units among all three towns are owner-occupied (see Figure 24). Households in Marion are more housing cost burdened in comparison to the state, although

<sup>26</sup> A student is high needs if he or she is designated as either low income (prior to 2015, and from 2022 to present), economically disadvantaged (from 2015 to 2021), English learner/former English learner, or a student with disabilities.

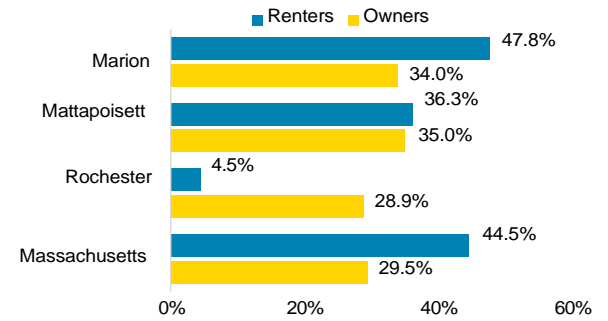
conclusions on this data should be interpreted with caution due to the high margin of error in the results (see Figure 25).

**Figure 24. Percentage of Owner-Occupied and Renter-Occupied Housing**



Source: ACS 2017-2021 estimate, Table DP04

**Figure 25. Housing Cost Burdened Households, 2021**

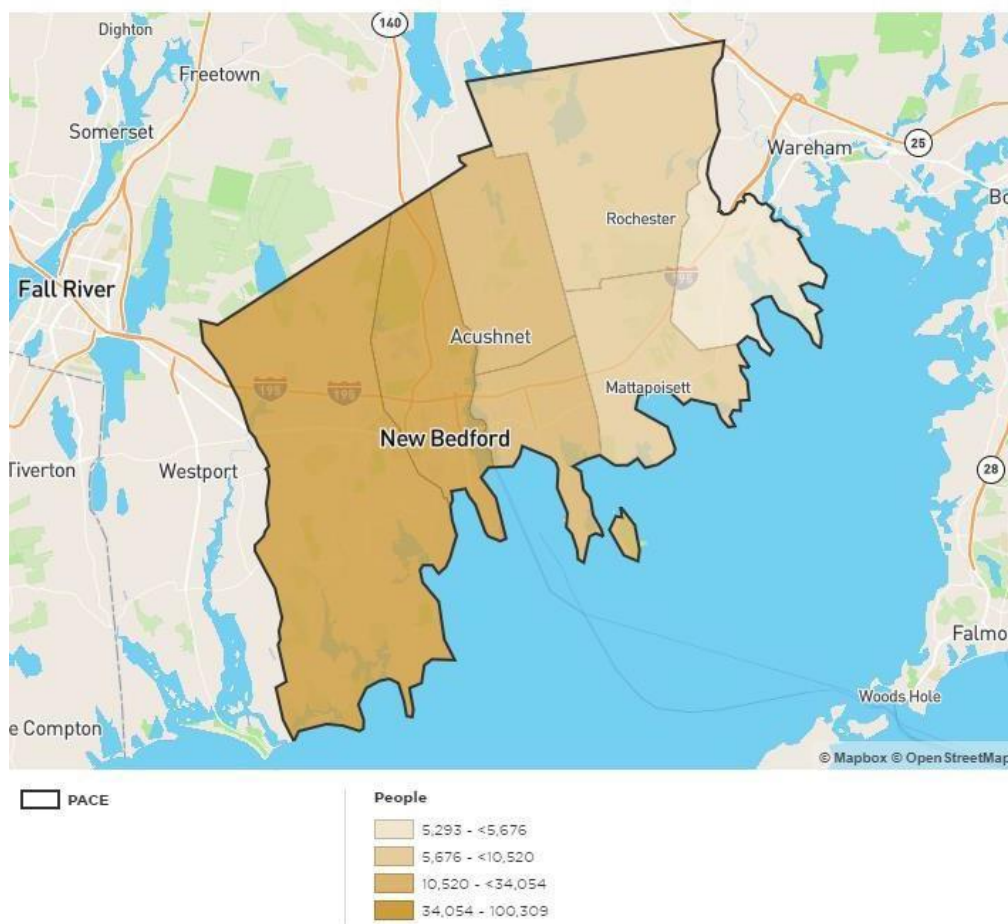


## CSBG SERVICE AREA: mySIDEWALK

The following general and poverty-related data was retrieved from *mySidewalk* and combines the agency's CSBG service area of New Bedford, Dartmouth, Acushnet, Fairhaven, Marion, Mattapoisett, and Rochester (see Figure 25). The combined service area has a population of 177,860 people, with more than 56% of this total coming from the City of New Bedford.

**Figure 26. PACE CSBG Area: NB, Dartmouth, Acushnet, Fairhaven, Marion, Mattapoisett, Rochester**

### Total Population



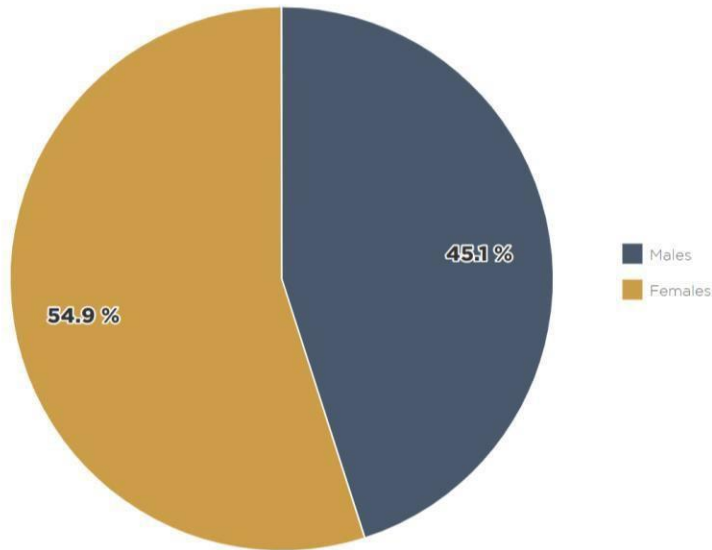
Of the total of 177,860 people, 21,694 (or 12.3%) are below the poverty level. The following graphs display poverty by sex, age, and race/ethnicity and demonstrates that:

- By sex, 54.9% of those in poverty are females and 45.1% are males (see Figure 26)
- By age, the highest level of poverty is demonstrated by those between the ages of 25-34 years old (14.9%), with the lowest level of poverty being among children 5 years old (1.5%) (see Figure 27)

- By race/ethnicity, the highest level of poverty is among community members that are Native American (46.7%) or Hispanic/Latino (29.6%), with the lowest level of poverty among White community members (8.9%) (see Figure 28)

**Figure 27. PACE CSBG Area: People below Poverty Level by Sex**

**People Below Poverty Level by Sex**

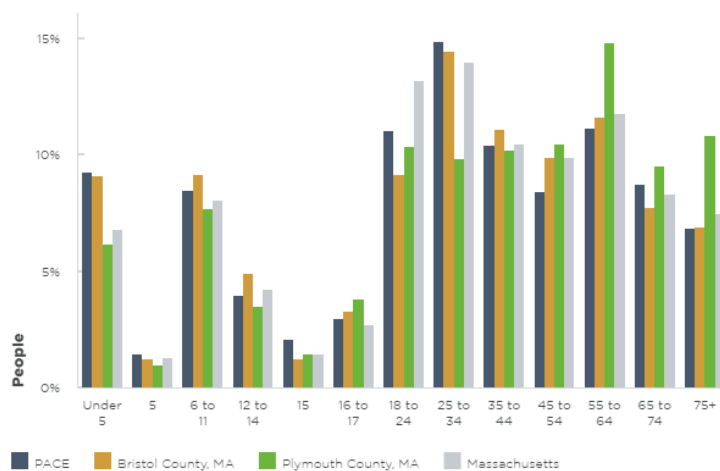


PACE

Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2017-2021

**Figure 28. PACE CSBG Area: People below Poverty Level by Age**

**People Below Poverty Level by Age**



Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2017-2021

**Table 26. PACE CSBG Area: People below Poverty Level by Race/Ethnicity**

Data Sources	PACE	Bristol County, MA	Plymouth County, MA	Massachusetts
Asian	21.50%	13%	3.90%	11.40%
Black or African American	22.10%	19.20%	12.20%	16.70%
Hispanic or Latino	29.60%	29.10%	14.30%	22.50%
Multiracial	17.30%	17.70%	9.60%	16.30%
Native American	46.70%	32.20%	2.30%	24%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	No data	0%	44.80%	18.30%
Other	29.50%	28.60%	12.50%	21.10%
White	8.90%	8.70%	5.50%	7.80%

Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2017-2021

## Additional Service Area: BRISTOL, NORFOLK, AND PLYMOUTH COUNTIES

Over 70% of PACE's clients are New Bedford residents, with an additional 11% coming from the abutting communities Dartmouth, Fairhaven, and Acushnet that make up Greater New Bedford. Aside from neighboring towns, the largest percentage of clients come from municipalities not typically associated with PACE's Greater New Bedford service area, such as Brockton, Fall River, and Taunton (12%). The other 34 communities listed make up less than 7% of PACE's total client population. The vast majority of the clients served outside of Greater New Bedford are served through the agency's Child Care Works program, which by state contract serves 40 cities and towns throughout Bristol, Norfolk, and Plymouth counties. PACE's Housing Opportunity Center serves all of Bristol County. Most of the other programs only service New Bedford or Greater New Bedford. Some clients listed are New Bedford residents when served but have identification listing previous addresses or mailing addresses in other communities that are entered into the agency's database software.

**Figure 29. Additional Service Areas: Bristol, Norfolk, and Plymouth Counties**



## COMMUNITY & INTERNAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

To initiate the 2024-2026 Community Assessment Process, PACE formed a Planning Committee that formally met for the first time on Tuesday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023. This Planning Committee included PACE Admin and staff-members, PACE Board of Directors, and community partners from other organizations and key sectors. The Committee was lead by Director of Community Impact Genesis Galan, who also authored this report. Executive Director Pam Kuechler, Director of Development and Marketing Kathy Golden, and Director of Human Resources and ROMA Implementer Lorraine Khazan also made significant contributions throughout this process.

During this initial meeting, the Planning Committee discussed the Community Assessment process and reviewed and approved data sources including information retrieved by Springline Research Group<sup>1</sup> and mySidewalk. The Planning Committee also approved the following tools/methods: a community survey<sup>2</sup>, the use of focus groups, and a list of key-stakeholders to interview that included members from community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, the private sector, the public sector, and educational institutions). Marketing materials and a distribution list for these materials were approved during this meeting and it was also determined that the community survey would be available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, as well as Haitian Creole and Cape Verdean Creole to reflect some of the main languages spoken in Greater New Bedford. The Planning Committee then determined a timeline for the rest of the Community Assessment Report process. Throughout the entire process, committee members discussed the progress and results of the survey, focus group, and key stakeholder interviews and determined the top needs of the community as a result to these methods. Progress and updates from the assessment were also shared with the PACE Board of Directors and Senior Leadership.

The community survey was key in assessing and identifying the top needs in the community. This survey was made available to the community electronically and by paper. As mentioned above, the survey was available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, and Cape Verdean Creole and was open for ten weeks. In order to market this survey to the community, PACE shared the survey electronically via email, the agency's website, and social media. Additionally, the agency created flyers, posters, business cards, and rack cards, with QR codes that invited community members to participate in the survey. There was a total of 997 responses to this survey. PACE Staff, PACE Board of Directors, and the Community Assessment Report Planning Committee members all helped in distributing the marketing materials and survey link with community members and their networks. A series of survey questions were included to assess the participation of low-income individuals in the agency's community survey, including question #5 ("Do you currently have at least \$500 set aside for emergencies"), as well as questions regarding annual household income; staff also engaged clients to take the survey while providing services.

*Springline Research Group<sup>1</sup> is a multidisciplinary applied research firm that specializes in projects that contribute to economic development, workforce development, public health, and community building. This research firm has experience in assisting public, private, and nonprofit organizations with research, technical assistance, and analytical services designed to help improve the state, region, and community.*

*The community survey<sup>2</sup> approved by the Planning Committee includes the common network-wide survey questions developed in conjunction with MASSCAP and the consultants.*

In addition to the community survey, a series of focus groups and key stakeholder interviews were conducted as a part of the community assessment. Another major language spoken in New Bedford is K'iche' Mayan, one of the most common indigenous languages spoken by Guatemalan community members; as a result, it was determined that PACE would partner with the Community Economic Development Center (CEDC) to host a focus group in Spanish and K'iche to assess the needs of this growing community. An optional questionnaire was given to focus group participants that indicates the participation of low-income community members in its focus groups through questions regarding annual household income vs. household size. Other focus groups included the Senior Leadership team at PACE, the Massachusetts Community Action Partnership (MASSCAP) Planner's group, and the PACE Head Start Policy Council. Interviews with key stakeholders included those from different sectors, such as community and faith-based organizations, the private and public sector, and educational institutions (i.e. local healthcare, economic development, local government, non-profit, law enforcement and etc. see appendix for full list). All qualitative information gathered through focus groups and key stakeholder interviews were cross-referenced with results from the survey and used to explain in more detail the cause and conditions of poverty as it is experienced in Greater New Bedford.

Results from the survey, focus groups, and key stakeholder interviews were compiled with data received from the PACE Customer Satisfaction Survey; this survey went live on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and has remained open with constant monitoring and discussion during Senior Leadership meetings to identify ways for the agency to continue growing in its efforts against poverty in the community.

Additionally, an Internal Needs Assessment was conducted in conjunction with the Community Needs Assessment. This included a survey sent out to employees to assess the agency's success in organizational culture, communications, staff development, agency administration, technology, facilities and equipment, as well as program specifics, as it relates to the agency's ability to provide effective services to the community. This survey was launched on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 and remained open for two weeks; all staff-members and regular volunteers were invited to participate in this survey and share their perspective on internal needs and successes.

The compilation of data retrieved from the community survey, focus groups, key stakeholder interviews, customer satisfaction survey, and internal needs assessment were used to determine the following key findings.



## KEY FINDINGS: COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Based on the quantitative and qualitative data compiled through survey results, key stakeholder interviews, focus groups, PACE service trends, and feedback from the PACE Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and Planning Committee, all as a part of the community needs assessment, PACE has identified the following top needs.

1. Affordable housing (*and the lack of housing*)
2. Mental Health
3. Access to child care (*and after-school/summer programs for children and youth*)
4. Elder services
5. Access to food

### Need 1: Affordable housing (and the lack of housing available)

Domain	Level	Need Statement
Housing	Indiv./Family	Low-income individuals and families are at risk of losing their apartment/housing due to low wages, fixed incomes, etc. and rising rents.
Housing	Community	There is not enough housing that is affordable to support the need in the community.

***“Rents in our area have ‘skyrocketed’ and do not align with the income of the folks in this community.”***

Housing instability is both a cause and condition of poverty in the Greater New Bedford area. In every interview and focus group, affordable housing was mentioned as the top need in the community. In some instances, affordable housing was regarded as low-income/subsidized housing, in other cases, it was described in the context of housing that was affordable (across all income levels); in any instance, both are a part of the equation and solution to the housing crisis in the community. In addition to interviews and focus groups, the community survey supported this as the top need; affordable housing was selected more than any other need and by nearly 50% of survey respondents.

### The cost

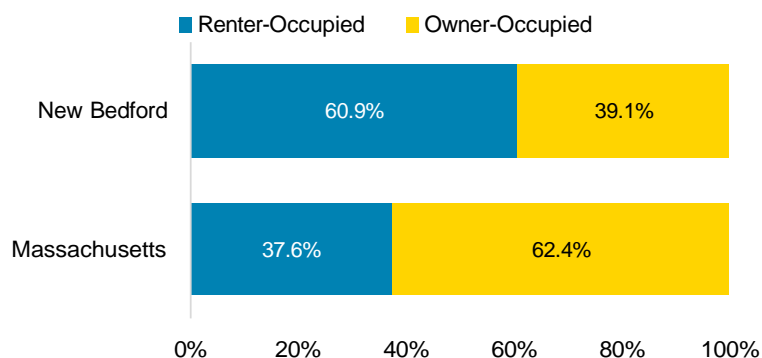
Since 2020, rent in New Bedford is suspected to have increased by 31% following online apartment listings. There are a variety of causes behind the increasing rents including a confluence of improving economic conditions, household formation<sup>1</sup>, renters being priced out of the Greater Boston market and moving south, and older homeowners selling out to investors.

*Household formation<sup>1</sup> “refers to the change in the number of households (persons living under one roof or occupying a separate housing unit) from one year to the next”.*

Additionally, the arrival of the Southcoast Rail is suspected to play a role in this rental increase.

The majority of housing units in New Bedford are renter-occupied (see Figure 30). Accordingly, affordability issues are primarily related to rising rents.

**Figure 30. Percentage of Renter-Occupied vs. Owner-Occupied Housing**



Source: ACS 2017-2021 estimate, Table DP04

This past spring, there were efforts by the City Council to include a non-binding ballot question: “Should the city adopt an ordinance stabilizing rents?” for the November election. The intention was to cap how much rent can increase from one year to the next, by first starting a non-binding conversation among renters, landlords, and other community members. A large debate took place over this among community members, many arguing that something had to be done about the increase in rent and the risk of displacement for low-income NB residents and especially senior citizens. Others argued that this would discourage developers from making investments in New Bedford and/or push landlords to raise rents higher (and quickly) before the ordinance went into effect. While the question will not be on the ballot this year, the conversation continues; some area landlords argue that the cost in rent is reflective of their mortgage, interest rate, and increasing city taxes for their property.

Additionally, a host of requirements *often* imposed by landlords, including wages three times the rental rate, CORI background checks, and credit-score reports, have made it increasingly difficult for community members searching for apartments. Previous evictions add to the challenges of seeking housing as well.

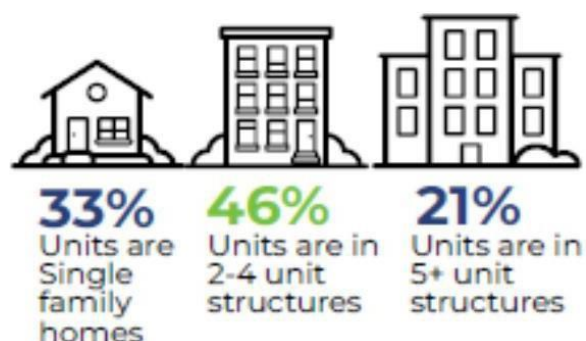
Furthermore, beyond rising rents, homeownership remains out of reach for a large portion of New Bedford residents. In February 2023, the City of New Bedford released a plan, “Building New Bedford: Strategies to Promote Attainable Housing for All in a Thriving New Bedford” detailing the city’s approach to the housing challenges in the community. Included in this plan is the strategy to promote home ownership, recognizing the barriers that exist for those looking to buy. In the last two years following the the pandemic, home value has increased by 38% making it harder for the average family. As cited, “A typical family of 3 can afford a mortgage for a house that costs \$256,000. The median sale price for houses in New Bedford is currently \$349,000. Thus a gap of \$93,000 exists.” The city will target this issue by making new land available for residential

development, thus increasing the supply of single-family homes available, in order to meet the demand. Additionally, this plan emphasizes the city's goal to increase units across all income levels and increase affordability and supports; the city plans to achieve this through various measures including the establishment of a regional approach on housing issues in Greater New Bedford and through a call to all community partners in housing development and redevelopment, including non-profits and other organizations whose mission is to address housing in the community. This plan provides insight for the agency's community needs assessment and gives opportunity for PACE to continue to have a seat at the table addressing housing needs in the community.

### The stock

Because of the boom in population early in the twentieth century, New Bedford's multifamily stock was considerably built out by the middle of the century. Indeed, approximately two-thirds of all multifamily housing in New Bedford was constructed before 1940. The age of multifamily buildings often means they currently lack certain required features in common areas, such as adequate fire alarm systems, unobstructed exit points, or sufficient emergency exits.

Figure 31. Housing Stock in New Bedford



Source: Building New Bedford: Strategies to Promote Attainable Housing for All in a Thriving New Bedford

In the last three years, there has been an uptick in multi-family housing fires in the community. Some community partners say that this may be a result of overcrowding into unsafe housing conditions. In many cases, there are families that are doubling or tripling up in order to keep up with the cost of housing in this area, as a result of low wages, especially among immigrant community members (as learned during the agency's focus group with the CEDC and central American community members).

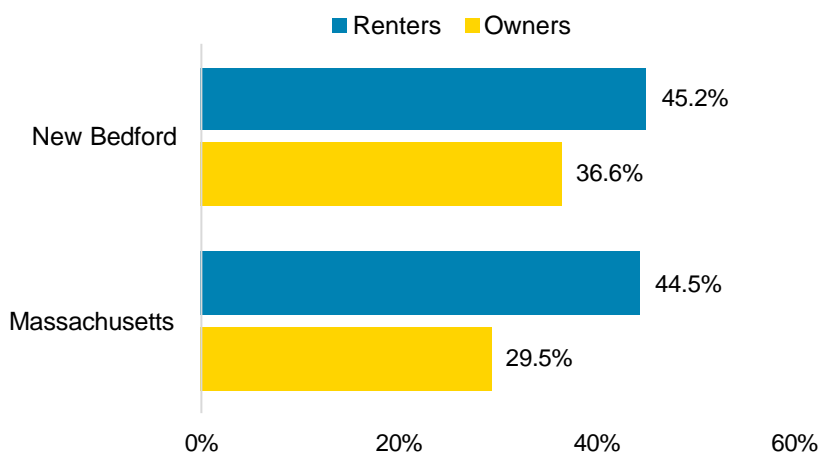
### New Bedford rents are rising sharply, wages are stagnant

While New Bedford rents are rising rapidly, they remain a relative bargain compared to the rents in Greater Boston. However, the city's income and wages are significantly lower than most of Massachusetts, so while rents are relatively inexpensive for outsiders and commuters to Greater Boston or Providence, they remain considerably high for many local residents, particularly among

the working poor who generally do not qualify for housing subsidies; even among those who do qualify, there are often long waitlists for those subsidized units, therefore creating a need for more affordable housing that is subsidized/income restricted, as well as rental units that are affordable to working community members.

This dynamic results in many households paying housing costs that are above their means, which in turn leaves less household income available for other basic needs. As housing costs rise faster than income, households must increasingly rent or buy above their means. During the 2017–2021 period, 45.6% of renters and 33.6% of homeowners in New Bedford were housing cost burdened (see Figure 32). Housing insecurity disproportionately affects low-income households, people of color, and seniors. This trend is evident in New Bedford, where White households are less likely to be housing cost burdened in comparison to their neighbors.

**Figure 32. Housing Cost Burdened Households, 2021**



Source: ACS 5-2017-2021 estimates, Table DP04

## Homelessness

Homelessness is a significant issue in New Bedford, which is partly an outcome of the affordable housing shortage. During a conversation with a staff-person at a local labor and staffing agency, she shared that from her perspective, housing and homelessness are among the top needs in the community, sharing that in many cases, there are community members that are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless that are visiting the agency looking for work.

Mental health and substance abuse disorder, which are highly prevalent among the homeless population, are also key factors in the homelessness equation.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Point-in-Time (PIT) Count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January in a given service area, called a Continuum of Care (CoC). New Bedford is its own single-community CoC. The Housing Inventory Count (HIC) is an inventory of the number of beds and units available at a defined point

during the last ten days in January. HIC includes beds dedicated to serve persons who are homeless as well as persons in Permanent Supportive Housing.

There were 370 homeless people counted in New Bedford during the 2022 PIT Count, with the vast majority housed in emergency shelters (see Figure 33)<sup>1</sup>. The city's homeless population is about the same as it was in 2007. The number of beds increased by 24 in New Bedford from 2007-2021.<sup>27</sup> Importantly, the PIT count provides a snapshot of homelessness on one night of the year and does not necessarily reflect the nuances of the homelessness issue throughout the year. In addition, a community leader noted that the number of homeless is artificially lower than the actual number of residents having housing issues because of the number of persons and families that are doubling and tripling up. While speaking to members of the community, some expressed that added barriers to the existing shelter system include: limits on their stay, and the additional challenge for women to find shelter homes if they do not have a history of domestic violence or substance abuse.

**Figure 33. New Bedford Point-in-Time and Housing Inventory Count**



Source: US Department of Housing and Urban Development

Among the key stakeholders interviewed, there was a general consensus that there needs to be more wraparound services included in housing approaches. In an effort to respond to this mixed-level need, a local area church has purchased a two-family home with the intention to provide (free) housing for a year, in addition to supportive services to two families in need. Recently, the church was able to temporarily place a family who was victim to a local fire in one of the units, suggesting that local churches can have a role in addressing housing challenges in the community.

As Josh Amaral, the Director of the City's Office of Housing and Community Development, shared in his department's report, there has to be a combined approach that includes regional awareness and efforts, non-profits getting involved in housing development, reconsidering zoning

<sup>1</sup>An emergency shelter is typically defined as temporary shelter for the general homeless population or specific subpopulation, such as women with children.

laws and allowing for mixed-use approaches for properties in New Bedford (i.e. allowing office buildings to be transformed into housing in addition to offices); he says:

Adding more housing units to provide more choices for New Bedford residents at all income levels is the key to solving our housing shortage. Every city resident should have quality housing they can afford. The Office of Housing and Community Development and the City as a whole is working hard to achieve that goal by attracting development projects large and small, and filling gaps in the short term with increased financial assistance and program offerings.

Key/strong partners in housing and homelessness services includes: The City of New Bedford's Housing and Community Development (OHCD), PACE Housing Opportunity Center, NeighborWorks, Catholic Social Services (CSS), South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Coastline Elderly, and Stepping Stone.

As mentioned earlier, housing instability is a key cause and condition of poverty, and the stressors experienced by this instability can often be linked to health and mental health challenges, as it will be explored further in the next section of this report.

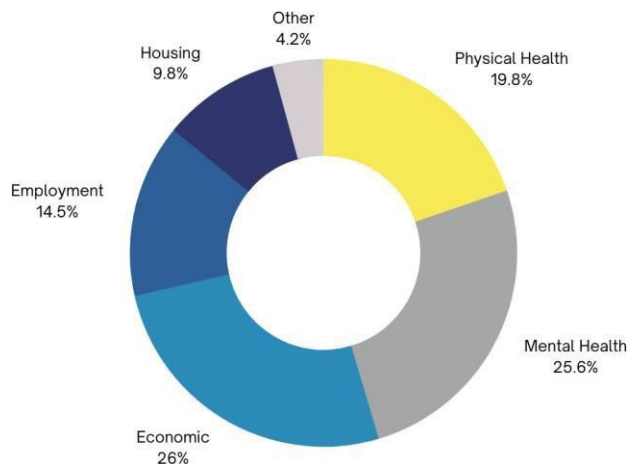
## Need 2: Mental Health

Domain	Level	Need Statement
Health	Indiv./Family	Individuals and families are struggling with their mental health, often, as it results to other factors in their life (i.e. physical health, finances, environment, etc.).
Health	Community	There are not enough mental health services providers to accommodate the needs, culture, and languages of the community.

Throughout the last two Community Assessment Reports completed by the agency (2020 and 2023), mental health has remained a top need in the community. Prior to COVID-19 and especially after, mental health challenges and the need for more services has continued to grow in Greater New Bedford; when respondents were asked if they were feeling the impact of COVID-19 in any areas of their life, physical health, mental health, economic, employment, housing, or other, the two top answers were economic and mental health (see Figure 34). This present need affects individuals and families in the different areas of life that are often considered poverty indicators, such as housing, education, and job opportunity. In every single one of the agency's interviews with key stakeholders ranging from the Mayor's office to the police and other city departments, to schools, and to other community partners, mental health was brought up as a first or secondary concern for the community. According to The Recovery Village, "People at or below the poverty line are about twice as likely as others to experience depression". With 18.7% of New Bedford's population living in poverty, this causes great alarm.

**Figure 34. Impact of COVID-19 survey question**

Are you feeling the impact of COVID-19 in any areas of your life?



Source: PACE Community Needs Survey

As discussed in the previous section, there is a strong correlation between housing instability and mental health disorders. Other major contributors to mental health challenges include finances, environmental conditions, and physical health. Additionally, the relationship between household members can have a direct influence on mental health, especially when domestic violence is present. Interviews conducted as a part of this assessment indicate that there has been a recent increase in domestic violence cases, therefore it will be briefly covered during this section of the report as it may interfere with someone's mental health. Furthermore, substance abuse is

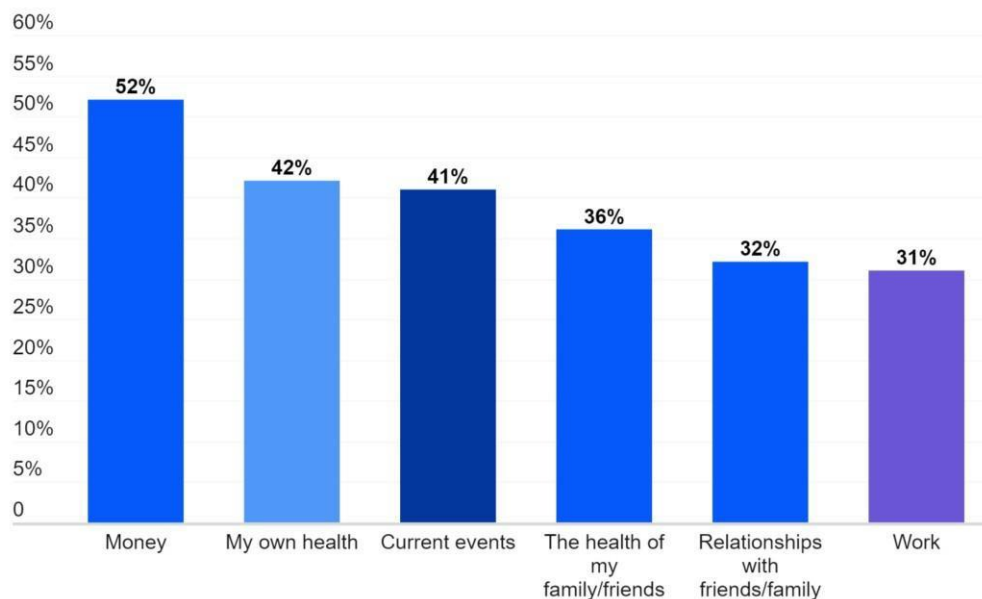
covered as a part of someone’s overall health. Some of the barriers to accessing mental health services include health insurance and financial barriers, language/culture barriers, a lack of services and long waitlists, and a lack of awareness or understanding in how to navigate these services.

## Mental Health and Finances

As captured by one survey respondent, “Families are struggling with mental health and making ends meet.” Studies shows that financial circumstances are directly related to mental health.

A survey conducted by [Bankrate](#) (April 2023), reveals that, “Money is the most cited factor that has a negative impact on U.S. adults’ mental health (52%), ahead of one’s own health (42%), current events (41%), the health of family and friends (36%), relationships with friends/family (32%) and work (31%) (see Figure 35).

**Figure 35. Bankrate Survey Question: Negative Impact on Mental Health** health (e.g., anxiety, stress, worrisome thoughts, loss of sleep, depression, etc.), at least occasionally?



Source: Bankrate survey April 12-14, 2023

Furthermore, this study reveals that, “Among those who say money has a negative impact on their mental health, more than 4 in 5 (82%) say feelings of stress, anxiety, worrisome thoughts, loss of sleep, depression, etc., are caused by economic factors, which include inflation/rising prices (68%), rising interest rates (38%) and not having a stable income or job security (29%).”

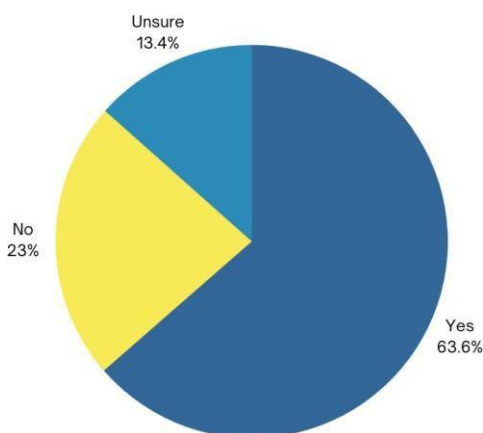
Questions regarding respondents’ financial circumstances were included in the PACE Community Assessment Survey (2023) and revealed the following:



- 23% of survey respondents indicated that they were unable to pay their bills on time each month, while 13.4% said they were unsure (see Figure 36)
- 37.5% of survey respondents shared that they did not have at least \$500 set aside for emergencies, while 7.9% shared that they were unsure (see Figure 37)

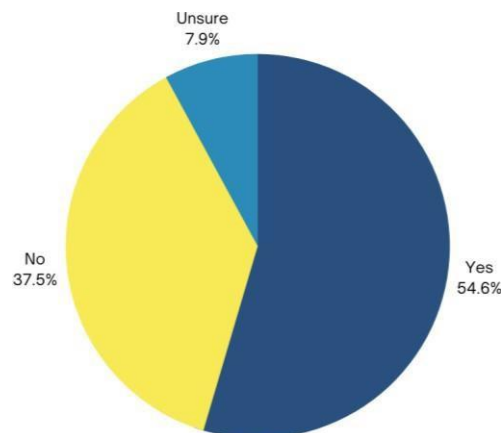
**Figure 36. PACE Community Assessment Survey Question #4**

Are you able to pay your bills on time each month?



**Figure 37. PACE Community Assessment Survey Question #5**

Do you currently have at least \$500 set aside for emergencies?

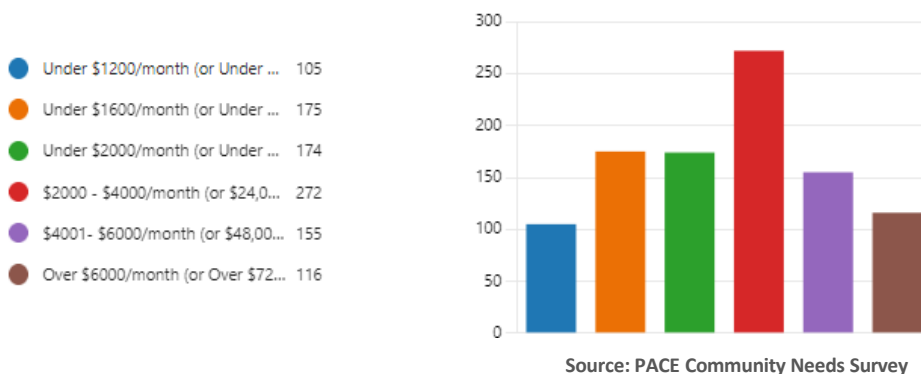


Source: PACE Community Needs Survey

Additionally, respondents were asked to share their household's monthly income (see Figure 37). Nearly half of survey respondents reported making under \$2,000 a month (45%), with 27% reporting a household income of \$2000-\$4000 and some survey respondents reporting as low as \$1200 per month for the household, keeping in mind that the average rent for one bedroom is \$1300.

**Figure 38. PACE Community Assessment Survey Question #16**

16. What is your household's monthly income before taxes?



Source: PACE Community Needs Survey

While many would like to save or change their financial circumstances, many feel that they are trapped in a cycle; as captured by one survey respondent, “Vicious cycle of people struggling to find housing, but need a job to pay for rent, but need a car to get to the job, need the money to pay for the car.”

In an interview with representatives from the City’s Department of Community Services, one rep from the department shared that in most cases, the people accessing their office seeking help are the ones who were one situation away and lacked enough resources to plan for said emergency. In her words, “People are not prepared to live and they’re not prepared to die.”

## Mental Health and Environmental indicators

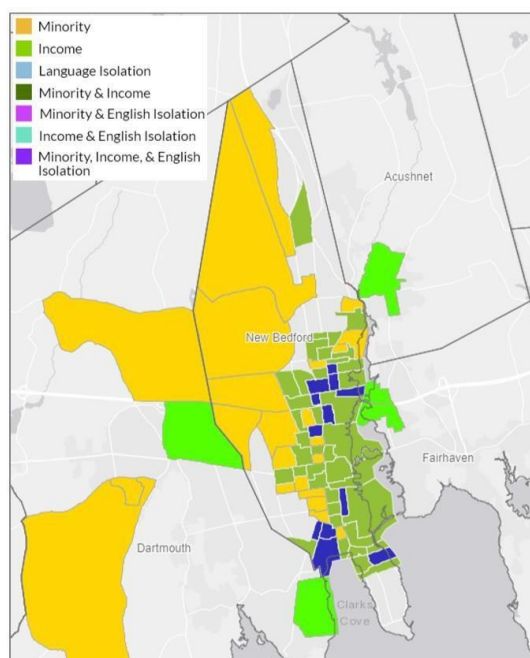
### *New Bedford is Home to Many Neighborhoods That Meet Environmental Justice Criteria*

Communities of color and low-income communities bear unequal environmental and economic burdens such as poor air and water quality, limited access to healthy food, substandard housing, and environmental contamination. The principle of environmental justice (EJ) states that all people, regardless of income or race, have the right to fair treatment and equal involvement in environmental issues, and the right to live in environmentally healthy neighborhoods. The environment one lives in is directly connected to one’s physical health and mental health.

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) defines EJ neighborhoods as Census block groups where at least one of the following is true:

- 1) 25% or more of the residents are a minority;
- 2) 25% or more of the households have median income 65% or less than the statewide median;
- or 3) 25% or more of the households do not include anyone older than 14 years of age who speaks English very well. By these criteria, 78.3% of New Bedford residents reside in an EJ neighborhood (see Figure 39).

**Figure 39. Environmental Justice Populations  
By Census Tract, 2020**



Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

## **Mental Health and Physical Health**

Additionally, physical health and mental health are intrinsically connected. Many survey respondents indicated that there was a lack of area pediatricians or doctors to service their needs, and that waitlists for new patients were extremely long unless scheduling an appointment for vaccinations.

## **Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse**

In an interview with two representatives from SouthCoast Health, domestic violence was highlighted as a top concern affecting the community of Greater New Bedford. Both reps shared that the hospital has increased their focus on this matter as a result. Additionally, a representative from South Coastal Counties Legal Services shared that, “Domestic Violence spiked like crazy during the pandemic and has not slowed down.”

While mental illness and abuse can happen at the same time, The National Domestic Violence Hotline emphasizes that it is a wide misconception that abuse happens as a result of an underlying mental illness. However, domestic violence does have an affect on the mental health of the person experiencing it.

In an interview with the Chief of Police, he explained that domestic violence cases have always been prevalent, yet the conviction rate is lower. In a focus group held in partnership with the CEDC, domestic violence was mentioned as a growing challenge in the community; indicating that poverty conditions and the stressors attached were leading to higher levels of domestic violence, alcoholism, and substance abuse, as many individuals (or sometimes multiple families) crowded themselves into one household.

The Women’s Center<sup>1</sup> plays a major role in advocating and providing services to victims of sexual and domestic violence. An in-depth analysis of poverty and domestic violence in the community would be key to supporting the mission and service of the Women’s Center. Additionally, increased awareness and resource referrals would be a way to join them in their efforts.

### **Barriers to accessing mental health services include:**

- Financial barriers
- Language barriers
- Not enough services to accommodate the need, especially for children who are being placed on waitlists for more than 1 ½ years
- Inconsistent services and high turnover rates
- Awareness of services and understanding how to navigate service directories, especially among outlier towns
- Dismantling stigma around mental health and mental health services

The Women’s Center<sup>1</sup> is located in New Bedford and provides services to victims of sexual and domestic violence.  
<https://thewomenscentersc.com/how-we-help/> - 24-hour hotline: 508-999-6636

The Chief of Police discussed mental health as one of the top concerns in the community throughout his interview. The Chief mentioned that in some cases, homelessness is connected to mental health. In an effort to combat the needs that rise as a result to mental health, the Chief highlighted key initiatives, such as clinician ride-alongs, and crucial partnerships such as those with Child and Family Services, The Department of Mental Health (DMH), Stepping stone, and etc. The Chief also highlighted that as newer officers join the department, they are doing so under the expectation to work in cooperation with those providing mental health intervention services; initiatives, partnerships, and changing the conception of mental health and mental health services all play a role in helping the community progress through this challenge.

### Need 3: Access to child care (and after-school/summer programs for children and youth)

Domain	Level	Need Statement
Child Care	Indiv./Family	Individuals and families are having a hard time affording or accessing child care services in the community.

***“Daycare is expensive even for part time & for working families it’s impossible to get any assistance!”***

Access to child care and after-school/summer programs for children and youth has been identified as one of the top needs in the community. During the last community assessment report conducted by the agency in 2020, access to child care came up as the sixth top need in the community. During this report, it is now the third top need following housing and mental health services. One of the largest issues is the scarcity in child care slots available.

#### **Scarcity – There are more children than there are child care slots available.**

While there are 852 providers across Southeastern Massachusetts, including child care centers, family child care providers, preschool programs, and school age programs, the number of slots available are directly influenced by the number of staff available to work and cover those classrooms. The Director of PACE Child Care Works, Cyndi Couto, shared that there are times where the financial assistance is available, but the slot is not, therefore causing the child to go on a waitlist.

Recruiting and retaining qualified staff for a field of work that pays low and demands a lot physically and emotionally, has been extremely difficult for service area providers; many indicate that the level of need that children are demonstrating as they enter early ed and child care facilities is a lot higher than years previous to COVID-19 (this includes a lack of potty training and social-emotional skills). As captured in the following report, “Raising staff salaries is a priority for providers, but it’s also financially challenging. Even with today’s low standard for pay, salary and benefit costs eat up 60 to 80 percent of the typical provider’s budget. Given that financial reality, the only way to substantially raise worker pay is to increase tuition costs for parents or vastly expand state and federal support” (Expanding Early Education and Child Care Opportunities, SCCF).

In other instances, a child may go on a waitlist to receive financial assistance (i.e. a subsidy). When accessing child care services, priority is given to caregivers who are experiencing homelessness, have a DTA referral, who are providing care for children involved in the Department of Child and Family (DCF), or who work in early education, immediately limiting the pool of vouchers and/or slots available. Cyndi shared that in one month alone, 500 vouchers related to DCF were distributed in Worcester, Massachusetts. As of June 2023, Cyndi reported that the agency was servicing 6,606 children throughout Southeastern Massachusetts with subsidies, including 1,143 that were DCF involved, 2,146 that were DTA, and 3,335 that were

income eligible. In order to be considered income eligible, a family must meet the following requirements (see Table 27).

**Table 27. Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Early Education and Care: Income Eligibility Table**



**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE**  
**INCOME ELIGIBILITY TABLE**

**Use This Form to Determine Family Eligibility:**

1. Find the column with the family's size written at the top.
2. Read down the column until you come to the correct income (either annual or monthly).
3. Then read directly across to the left to determine "Percent of State Median Income."
4. Please refer to relevant SMI Percentage (i.e. initial vs. reassessment - OR - special needs) to determine the family's eligibility.

% of State Median Income (SMI)	Family of Two		Family of Three		Family of Four		Family of Five		Family of Six		Family of Seven	
	Annual	Monthly*	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly
50% SMI	\$46,218	\$3,852	\$57,093	\$4,758	\$67,968	\$5,664	\$78,843	\$6,570	\$89,718	\$7,477	\$91,757	\$7,646
85% SMI	\$78,571	\$6,548	\$97,058	\$8,088	\$115,546	\$9,629	\$134,033	\$11,169	\$152,521	\$12,710	\$155,987	\$12,999

% of State Median Income (SMI)	Family of Eight		Family of Nine		Family of Ten		Family of Eleven		Family of Twelve	
	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly
50% SMI	\$93,796	\$7,816	\$95,835	\$7,986	\$97,874	\$8,156	\$99,913	\$8,326	\$101,952	\$8,496
85% SMI	\$159,453	\$13,288	\$162,920	\$13,577	\$166,386	\$13,866	\$169,852	\$14,154	\$173,318	\$14,443

\*To calculate a monthly income from a weekly income multiply by 4.33.  
\*To calculate a monthly income from a bi-weekly income multiply by 2.17.

Effective October 1, 2022

Families that do not meet the criteria listed above or these income guidelines are forced to search for alternatives. In some cases, this has led families to quit their job or deny a bonus/raise to acquire or maintain their child care subsidy. As one respondent shared, "Daycare is expensive even for part time & for working families it's impossible to get any assistance! I know a few people who quit their jobs just to get a voucher." During a focus group with the Head Start Policy Council, Family Engagement Supervisor, Ann Macedo, expressed the guilt that she felt in encouraging and building up a parent to return to the workforce after learning that she lost her benefits while doing so, and is now working more than she ever has to *just* be making it—sacrificing weekends with her kids just to stay afloat. Another participant of this same focus group shared that she often hears from colleagues that will reject a raise, promotion, or the offer to work more hours, simply because they do not want to lose their benefits, sharing that if they accept any of those offers, their food stamps will go down or their child care assistance will be taken away.

In addition to the high cost in child care, all families, especially low-income families, struggle to provide diapers, wipes, and formula to daycare providers. According to the [National Diaper Bank Network](#), "Among families with diaper need, 66% were categorized as low income, 28% as middle

income, and 6% as high income.” The network further reports that, “More than a quarter of respondents (28%) who reported diaper need said that they skipped meals so that they could afford more diapers.” In some cases, families have learned to manage on one household members income in order to skip the cost of child care, indicating that the cost, specifically for an infant, on top of other baby needs is too expensive.

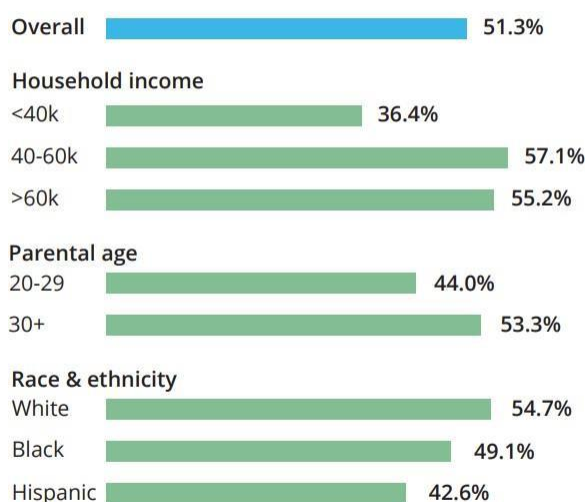
The impact of this need in child care access is felt within the PACE Child Care Works program which has increased staff to three receptionists in the last year to meet the demand of those seeking information and assistance. Furthermore, the PACE Diaper N’ Things program that is a sub-program of PACE Child Care Works, has sought more funding sources in the last year to keep up with the growing demand for diapers, wipes, and other baby needs.

Additionally, access to child care raises a question of racial and economic injustice. Early education and child care opportunities are directly connected to a parent’s ability to work and/or pursue a career, yet, “Partly because of the outsize costs, low-income families, younger parents, less-educated parents, and Hispanic households are all less likely to have their 3- and 4-year-old kids in early education programs (generally referred to as preschool for that age group)” (Expanding Early Education and Child Care Opportunities, SCCF). Furthermore, a crisis in child care access and the low pay that comes with working in this field, affects women the most; aside from limiting school and job opportunities for those who do not have adequate child care, “women comprise well over 90 percent of child care workers and early education teachers” demonstrating who is being paid these low rates.

**Figure 40. Access to early education (income, parental age, race)**

### Access to early education varies by income, parental age, race

Share of 3- and 4-year olds in preschool in South Coast region



**SOURCE:** cSPA tabulation of data from IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota

Additionally, wraparound services including transportation and flexible hours create a barrier for caregivers accessing child care services. Survey respondents, focus groups, and interviews with key stakeholders confirmed that in many cases, those who enter work as early as 5 or 6am, are limited with child care and before-school child care options, with transportation in-between being an issue.

In limited cases, child care service providers do not accept vouchers and/or lack the experience with children with special needs, also creating another barrier.

Potential improvements to the state voucher care system includes supplying more vouchers and assisting more working and middle-class caregivers.

### After-school and summer programs/Youth services



When interviewing a worker at a local business in downtown New Bedford, immediately after expressing the challenges in his work (i.e. the tickets and parking meters), he jumped to the dire need for more outlets for the youth, sharing that sports play a role in saving kids, building team comradery, and providing them with a connection through team work.

The Director of Child Care Works also shared that the number of caregivers calling the agency spikes during the month of May, as parents begin requesting camp vouchers. Still, a lot of parents and families would like to enroll their children in camp or after-school/summer programs, but cannot afford to; however, most community members are in agreement that this is a huge deterrent to later crises that may arise in adolescence including youth violence.

In an interview with the Chief of Police, he made mention of the long-standing rivalries in the city's south-end vs. west-end and how this affects the youth; Executive Director, Pam Kuechler mentioned how these concerns pour over into the agency's YouthBuild program and creates issues for kids who must walk to a certain place without crossing a certain boundary.

The New Bedford Shannon program and Youth CCIT were mentioned as strong allies in support of youth services. Other major allies include Boys and Girls Club, YOUth Opportunies Unlimited, and the NB Star Kids Scholarship Program.

A suggested resolution to this is to have a grassroots effort supported by members of the community with street credibility. When asked what may lead to youth involvement in violence, Chief Oliveira mentioned how parental relationships and/or lack of supervision may play a role, and emphasized that there needs to be a driving source encouraging children and youth to participate in after-school/summer programs; referencing an initiative led out of New York's Police Department where youth receive monetary incentives to participate in certain programs that will derail them from street violence. This led to a brief discussion on the importance of identifying needs early on and providing preventative services.



#### Need 4: Elder Services

Domain	Level	Need Statement
Health & Social	Indiv./Family	There is a need for additional supportive services for elderly community members and their families.

***“housing rents are absurd right now, elderly worked all [their] lives and are financially hurting to pay for food, utilities, medication.”***

About 5% of survey respondents indicated that they were 65 and older, yet (38%) of the respondents of this survey identified elder services as a top need. Among the qualitative data collected from the open-response survey questions, key stakeholder interviews, and focus groups, the following themes surrounding elder services emerged.

In many instances, adult children assume the role as caregivers for their elder parents or loved one(s) as a result to not being able to afford or access elder services, such as nursing homes. According to Caregiver Statistics, “Nearly 17% of the U.S. adult population provides unpaid care to an adult over the age of 50”; it is estimated that \$470 billion in free labor is provided by caregivers each year ([Caregiver Statistics](#)). While some elderly community members are fortunate enough to lean on the support of a family member or loved one for their needs, there are many senior citizens who are not fortunate enough to find the same care (for free). Even then, some survey respondents expressed their concern for elderly that are left unattended at home while care-providers are working. In addition to cost and accessibility, several survey respondents explained that it is hard to navigate services due to the amount of paperwork that is required and the challenge to understand certain requirements.

Additionally, health insurance often creates an added barrier, rather than a solution. As one survey respondent shared, “Personally I’ve struggled to get elder services for my dad. Because he has Medicare, but not MassHealth the available programs won’t help. And all they say is ohh sorry we can’t help UNLESS you have MassHealth. Obviously if we could get it then we would! He’s at the end stages of his life now and I’m struggling to care for him and would be great if I had some extra help.” During a key stakeholder interview with State Representative Chris Hendricks, he mentioned that supplemental health insurance and the cost of health insurance came up as a top concern among the elderly as they were approaching his office for assistance. Additionally, as it relates to health, mental health concerns come in addition to the physical health problems that one may experience as they are aging; some survey respondents shared that there is a lack of mental health services available for senior citizens, especially those experiencing depression. As it is captured by Grisworld, “According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 15% of adults aged 60 and older suffer from mental disorders.” Access to adequate health insurance and mental health professionals is critical for diagnosis and treatment.

Other major challenges for senior citizens in the community include fixed incomes and the limitation it places on accessing food, transportation, and especially, affordable housing. In New Bedford, the poverty rate among individuals 65+ is 15.4% (compared to 9.5% for Massachusetts). According to the National Council on Aging (NCOA), “Roughly 1 in 3 older adults over age 65 are economically insecure, with incomes below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL); the NCOA also reports that “61% of households headed by those 65 or older had debt in 2016. The median debt of senior-led households was \$31,050”. As cost continues to increase, senior citizens on fixed incomes are among the most vulnerable. As one respondent expressed, “housing rents are absurd right now, elderly worked all [their] lives and are financially hurting to pay for food, utilities, medication.” With senior citizens working late into their sixties and beyond, one survey respondent expressed the difficulty in competing with younger workers when applying for jobs.

Furthermore, while housing affordability presents itself as a problem for the entire community, elders are particularly vulnerable to becoming homeless. State Representative Chris Hendricks shared that of those community members reaching out to his office for assistance, elderly are most likely to reach out as a result to rent increase and to express difficulty in navigating, looking, or researching available apartments in the community which comes as a result of having less access to internet/technology.

One senior citizen responded to the survey and shared the following:

I drove up and down the street spoke to every mailman, and every person that sat out on the porch. I handed out flyers every single day people would see me all the time and ask if I had still not found an apartment. 1 landlady was selling the 2 family we were living in and the new owners wanted the building empty so they could move in.

Senior citizens are particularly vulnerable to displacement with limited incomes and lack of access to online resources that would help them in their housing search. “[How to find an apartment guides](#)” like the one listed on Apartment List, indicates that, “The fastest way to find an apartment is to look online. Use Apartment List’s filters to narrow your focus to specific neighborhoods, amenities, and price points”, yet there is a significant gap for anyone, and especially elderly community members who are not online. Consistent with responses to the survey and feedback received during key stakeholder interviews, senior citizens are experiencing a lack of access to information as a result to having less access to the internet. While the number of senior citizens who own a smartphone, use social media, or own a tablet computer continues to grow, studies indicate that there is still a significant gap. A study completed by Pew Research Center found that, “96% of those ages 18 to 29 own a smartphone compared with 61% of those 65 and older, a 35-percentage point difference”, a gap that has decreased by 53 points since 2012, yet indicates a struggle in finding housing/affordable housing through online platforms. Long waitlists also create a barrier and indicate that there is not enough housing to accommodate the needs of the community. In all instances, language barriers creates an even greater issue for those 65 and older who are seeking assistance, especially with regard to housing.

Key leaders in elderly services include: Coastline Elderly, The local Council on Aging (COA), Bristol Elderly Services, and the PACE SHRINE Counselor.

Additionally, food access was mentioned as a concern among senior citizens in the community, especially those belonging to minority groups. “In 2020, 5.2 million older Americans faced the threat of hunger, with Black, Hispanic, Native American, lower-income, and disabled populations being the most likely to experience hunger in the United States” ([Griswold](#)). Unfortunately, the lack of access to food does not begin or end with senior citizens. While the challenges that the elderly face are particular and unique, the lack of access to food continues to be a community level issue as it will be explored further in the next section of this report.

## Need 5: Access to Food

Domain	Level	Need Statement
Health & Social	Indiv./ Family	Individuals and families are struggling to afford food and groceries amidst inflation, housing costs, and other utility and household costs.

***“Need food and clothes because the income in the household is only enough for rent”***

Residents of New Bedford are struggling to pay for food amidst other households’ necessities, housing costs, and other basic needs.

### Food Insecurity

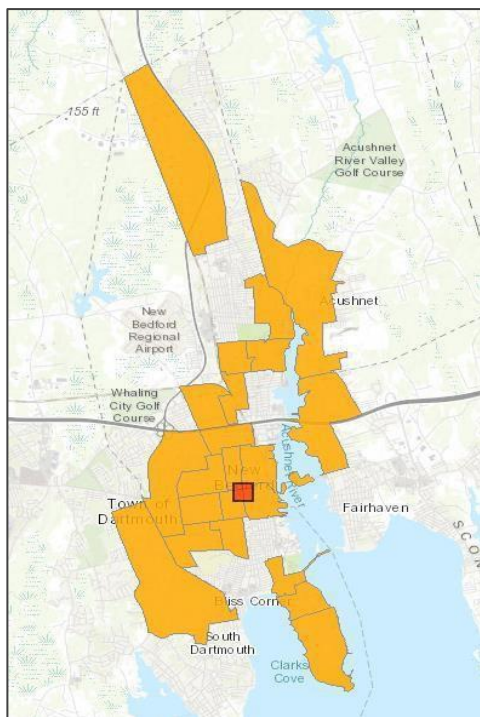
The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life.<sup>28</sup> The USDA estimates that in 2021, 33.8 million Americans lived in food insecure households and 8.6 million adults lived in households with very low food security.<sup>29</sup> These rates are higher for people of African American or Hispanic descent. While food insecurity is closely linked to poverty, people above the poverty line can experience food insecurity, which was especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Highlighted areas in Figure 41 display the city’s low-income Census tracts where a significant share of residents is more than ½ mile (urban) or ten miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket. Instead, these areas tend to have more convenience stores, which generally offer more expensive and unhealthy food options.

<sup>28</sup> US Department of Agriculture, (2019). Definitions of Food Security. Available online at: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security.aspx>

<sup>29</sup> Coleman-Jensen, A., et al. (2019). Household Food Security in the United States in 2018. U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service. Available online at: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/94849/err-270.pdf?v=963.1>

**Figure 41. Low Income, Low Access Food Areas in New Bedford, 2019**



Source: US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service

36.3% of New Bedford residents receive SNAP benefits, compared to 15.1% of Massachusetts residents. Since opening the new PACE Community Food Center in March 2023, PACE has served over 10,000 bags of groceries. Despite efforts by local, state, and federal agencies and the government, the number of those accessing food pantries has not returned to pre-pandemic levels and instead has risen in numbers. Some of the challenges in accessing food include inflation, especially at the heels of low paying jobs, federal funding decreases, restricting guidelines on who can receive SNAP Benefits, an aging population, and etc.

According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), “Last year, U.S. consumers saw the largest annual increase in food prices since the 1980s. While food prices generally increased about 2% in prior years, they increased about 11% from 2021 to 2022. Inflation contributed to the increase.” The GAO also points to the “global disruptions to the food supply chain” as a major and perhaps larger

contributor to the increased costs in food. Global disruptions can include weather events, animal and plant diseases, war, as well as higher labor and transportation costs ([GAO](#)). The GAO suggests that there are four major ways that federal agencies can play a role in “maintaining a resilient food supply chain that includes investing in the food supply chain, providing technical assistance and guidance to entities involved, conducting research and sharing information with stakeholders involved in the food supply chain, and setting policy and issuing and enforcing regulations that ensures food safety.

In addition to inflation and global disruptions, low wages keep individuals and families struggling to afford food amidst other bills and household necessities that contribute to the cost of living. According to the Economic Research Institute (ERI), the cost of living in New Bedford is 11% higher than the national average. While everyone experiences the increase in the cost of groceries, not everyone qualifies for SNAP benefits; those who do, are fearful of the extra benefits ending at the same time that school is out and children and youth are home.

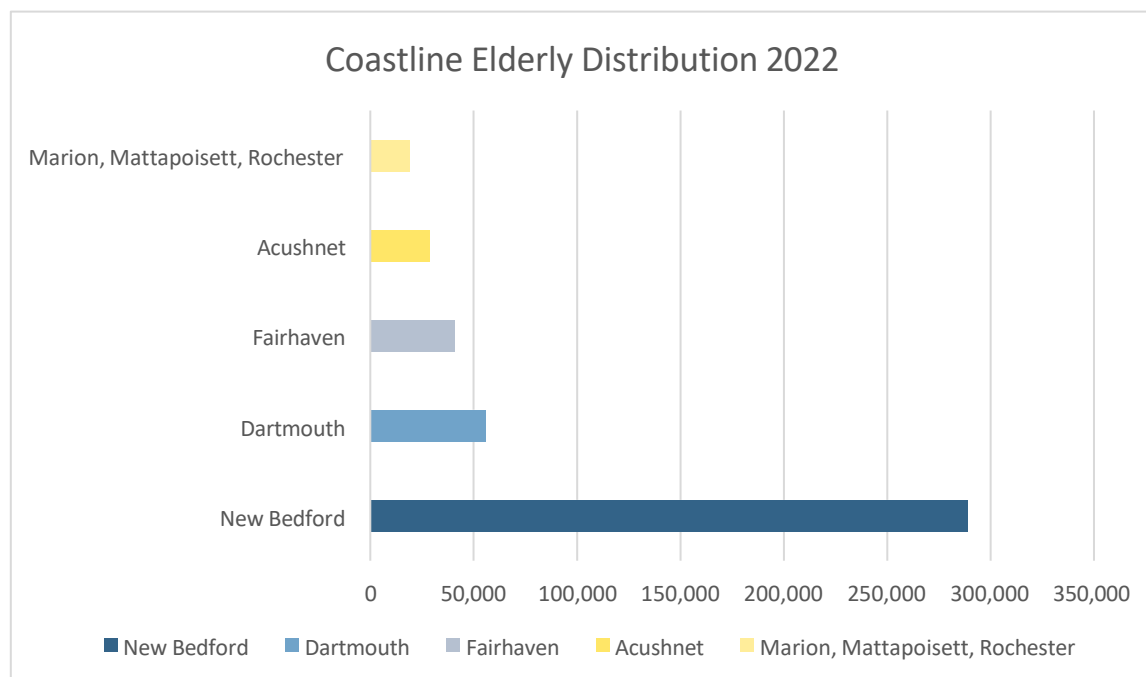
The PACE Director of Health and Food Access shared her suspicion that as extra SNAP benefits end starting July 1, the number of individuals served at the PACE Community Food Center will increase even higher (currently 100 families per day).

In an effort to increase food access for those individuals and families struggling between the cost of living and low wages, the PACE Community Food Center is one of many area food pantries that provide weekly groceries and/or meals to community members.

- The PACE Community Food Center serves roughly 500 families every week. The Director of Health and Food Access shared, “We are trying hard to gain new contacts for food to keep a high supply for the demand,” sharing that a recent shortage from the center’s main distributor, The Greater Boston Food Bank, had forced them to adjust their allotment of food (based on family size), in order to continue distributing food.
- Other community partners include –Mo-Life, The Salvation Army, the Dartmouth YMCA, New Life South Coast, the United Way, etc.

While food access is a community level issue, there are unique challenges for each age group. In an interview with the Standard Times, Justin Lees, CEO of Coastline Elderly Services shared that due to the growing number of meals that are delivered among the elderly community in New Bedford, he has turned to the community for donations. In 2022, Coastline served 434,000 meals in seven South Coast communities; the highest number of meals was provided to older adults in New Bedford.

**Figure 42. Coastline Elderly Distribution 2022**



Lee attributes this increase in food deliveries to the growing population of elderly in the community, as well as the high number of senior citizens who are MassHealth-eligible, automatically qualifying them for meals. Coastline reports that 61% of people receiving their home-delivered meals consider it their main meal of the day, meanwhile, federal decreases in funding have agencies like Coastline Elderly scattering for additional sources of food/funding. As

reported in the Standard Times, “Lees said the continued deadlock in Congress over the past decade has resulted in level-funding for the federal portion of Coastline’s funding which comes through the Older Americans Act. Ironically, that is the funding that establishes the framework and regulations they operate the meals programs under.” Participation in national and state advocacy groups, as well as hosting legislative breakfasts are potential ways to aid this need.

Furthermore, children and youth are particularly vulnerable to the challenges that come with food insecurity. Proper nutrition is critical to the growth and development of children and to reducing the risk of chronic diseases ([Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC](#)). Food and health outcomes are closely related. In an interview with the Assistant Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club, Jonathan Felix, he shared that from his perspective, children and youth that are currently accessing the club demonstrate the need for better diet and sleep. An interview with the Supervisor of Clinical and Behavioral Services for New Bedford Public Schools, Kathleen Mackenzie, supports this claim; she shared that oxygen, water, sleep, and food are critical to one’s health, and emphasized the way it affects students in their learning experience when one or more is absent (i.e. food or sleep). She shared that a lack in these critical needs can be attributed to a 40% reduction in school performance, which is the difference between an A and an F. Kathleen also mentioned that nutrition and trauma have always been present needs in the community of New Bedford.

Overall, as indicated by the CDC, “People in low-income communities and some racial and ethnic groups often lack access to convenient places that offer affordable, healthier foods. Most people in the United States don’t eat a healthy diet and consume too much sodium, saturated fat, and sugar, increasing their risk of chronic diseases.” Beyond increasing access to food, there needs to be an increase to *healthier* food options for individuals and families. State initiatives like the EBT – Farmers Market has made a dent in this problem, but it is worth considering in the approach to responding to food insecurity in the community, as it is connected to positive health and other outcomes. Every solution should be explored when discussing the goal to eliminate the struggle individuals and families face as they are forced to choose between food and paying for rent or other bills.

## KEY FINDINGS: INTERNAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In the last three years, the agency has grown in significant ways. The pressures of the pandemic forced the agency to provide programs and services remotely and at a greater capacity. As a result, the agency expanded its operations through the purchase and renovation of a new food bank facility, by purchasing a third multifamily home with another 6 units, and increasing funding and partnership opportunities to grow in areas such as job development, especially as it pertains to the incoming Offshore Wind Industry. As the capacity of the agency grows, it is equally important to assess the agency's internal needs and ensure that staff and volunteers have what they need to provide innovative and effective services to community members at large.

Our most recent Internal Needs Assessment (2023) revealed the following needs and strengths:

### Needs

- Increased IT capacity and training
- More opportunity for growth within organization and professional development training
- Improving organizational culture to embrace change
- Increasing internal awareness and communication between programs/departments
- Increased recognition and evaluation
- Salary/wage increases

### Strengths

- Staff feel encouraged by the mission of the agency and programs ability to meet top priorities in the community
- Positive reputation in the community
- Being able to access statistics and information regarding agency outcomes
- Staff-day and other agency-wide events that bring programs closer
- Improved facilities

The Internal Needs Assessment revealed that staff are interested in learning more about IT Capacity and training; specifically, staff would like to learn more about Office365 and tools that can be used to be more effective in their work, such as organization tools. This assessment also revealed that staff and volunteers would like to receive professional development training in the following areas: increasing language capacity, CPR/Narcan-training, financial literacy (to then help others), information and technology (as mentioned above), and etc. There is also a desire for the culture of the agency to shift towards embracing change as it pertains to improvements in the following areas: technology and back-up software, improved and digital document-intake, embracing new ideas, and etc. Additionally, several staff/volunteer-members shared that they would like to see more information sharing and collaboration among different programs and more



recognition agency-wide and within programs/departments. Salary/wage increases also came up as an ongoing need.

Additionally, the most recent results of the PACE Customer Satisfaction Survey were reviewed with the PACE Board of Directors and staff and is summarized below. These results are collected as a part of the Internal Needs Assessment and Strategic Planning Process.

PACE received a 4.5 or higher rating on the following prompts:

- “I received helpful assistance or information”
- “PACE staff were responsive to my concerns”
- “I was treated with courtesy and professionalism”
- “I would recommend PACE to others”

PACE received a 4.46 on the following prompts:

- “My visit was worth my time”
- “On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 worst, 5 best), please rate your overall experience with your recent visit”

92% of survey respondents said they consider PACE a main source of communication for community events, news, information, and etc.

Areas for improvement include:

- Increasing the number of staff
- Time efficiency
- Increasing channels of communication in certain programs
- Expanding hours in programs such as the food bank

As an anti-poverty Community Action Agency, we are motivated by the mission and work of our agency, and we intend to mobilize on our strengths and improve where it is needed in order to continue providing programs and services that make a difference in the lives of our community members, staff, and volunteers.

## **BOARD ACCEPTANCE OF THE COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

On Tuesday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, during the PACE Board Meeting, the Board of Directors unanimously approved the Community Assessment Report and its submission to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) with a quorum present. This authorization is made evident in the minutes for this meeting.

## Strategic Plan Update

In the previous [CARSP 21-23](#), the agency outlined the following focus points and goals: 1. Housing Affordability, 2. Reduce Food Insecurity, 3. Mental Health Access, and 4. Employment Skills and Resource Management. Since completing the last Community Assessment Report for 24-26, the agency learned that the top needs in the community remained the same, especially needs around housing, mental health access, and food insecurity, while the needs around child care access and elder services increased, making them additional top needs; as a result, the agency has updated its Strategic Plan to include these two goals with previous goals outlined in CARSP 21-23. Below is a summary of how our agency plans to incorporate child care access and elder services in its goals for the next three years.

Insufficient child care access is a barrier for community members and can increase poverty conditions among struggling families. Caregivers are struggling to find child care and to afford it. PACE is committed to continue to work in expanding capacity for child care across the region. As the designated coordinator for Child Care Resource and Referral and Voucher Management program for all of Southeastern Massachusetts (Region 5), we are partnered with over 600 early childhood providers. Additionally, the agency participates in a local initiative, the Birth to Third partnership, that is also aimed at increasing partnership and awareness of challenges in the community. PACE will continue to be a resource of information for community members and partners, as well as an advocate among local and federal lawmakers to increase capacity around childcare access. Additionally, PACE is committed to supporting work-force development efforts that would increase wages and therefore, access to child care and is monitoring internal efforts in our Child Care Works and Head Start programs, to shift programs and services as needs emerge or develop (such as increasing staffing or increasing slots in an infant-toddler classroom to meet the demand for child care). In addition to child care, the agency has updated its Strategic Plan to reflect the need for increased elder services and supports. PACE is committed to enhance our existing services to support the needs of elders in our community; this includes increasing awareness and capacity in programs to address the increased demand. PACE currently partners with service providers such as Coastline through existing programs such as Fuel Assistance, the Housing Opportunity Center, and the Health Access and the SHRINE program, with a particular focus on senior citizens. PACE is committed to increasing awareness internally, as well as externally through new and existing partnerships with service providers in Greater New Bedford to ensure that there is an increased awareness among senior citizens who are looking for assistance as it relates to food, housing, and health. Additionally, PACE has entered a partnership with Citizens for Citizens (CFC) to support the Foster Grandparent Program and will apply for the grant when it is available to house the program and ensure that senior citizens are placed in suitable work places. These two goals are in addition to the goals outlined in CARSP 21-23 around housing, mental health, food security, and workforce development. Updates to the strategic plan around previous goals includes increasing funding sources for housing assistance and expanding to tenant certifications that will help community members secure housing; increasing staff awareness, support, and training, to better equip them to work with community members struggling with mental health needs at the time that they are accessing services, increasing consistent food sources (i.e.

identifying and establishing partnerships with additional farms, meat houses, groceries and etc.) and enhancing our workforce development program to include a READY program that will prepare individuals in our community for better work opportunities through pre-workforce readiness training and preparation to enter into a variety of training and work opportunities, beginning in the wind industry.

## APPENDIX

### APPENDIX A: COMMUNITIES SERVED BY PACE

#### Cities/Towns served by PACE (Designated/Undesignated CSBG Area)

Designated CSBG Area	Undesignated CSBG Area
New Bedford, Acushnet, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Marion, Mattapoisett, Rochester	Brockton, Fall River, Taunton, Attleboro, Stoughton, Middleboro, Holbrook, Walpole, Bridgewater, North Attleboro, Easton, Westport, Foxboro, Raynham, Mansfield, Lakeville, Norton, Somerset, Swansea, Abington, Freetown, Plainville, East Bridgewater, Dighton, Whitman, Seekonk, Wrentham, Avon, Berkley, Wareham, Sharon, Rehoboth, Plymouth, Norwood

### Bristol County

Table 26. Bristol County Overview

Community	Median Household Income	Median Income % State Median	Total Pop	White Alone	Black or African American Alone	Asian alone	Some Other Race Alone	Two or More Races
Acushnet	\$ 78,362	88%	10,559	93%	1%	1%	2%	5%
Attleboro	\$ 81,627	92%	46,461	77%	6%	5%	5%	7%
Berkley	\$ 110,518	124%	6,764	92%	1%	1%	1%	5%
Dartmouth	\$ 95,404	107%	33,783	86%	3%	3%	3%	6%
Dighton	\$ 100,307	113%	8,101	90%	2%	1%	2%	6%
Easton	\$ 112,116	126%	25,058	84%	5%	3%	2%	5%
Fairhaven	\$ 79,432	89%	15,924	91%	1%	1%	2%	5%
Fall River	\$ 49,613	56%	94,000	73%	6%	3%	7%	11%
Freetown	\$ 109,821	123%	9,206	92%	1%	1%	1%	5%
Mansfield	\$ 122,274	137%	23,860	84%	4%	6%	1%	5%
New Bedford	\$ 50,581	57%	101,079	61%	6%	1%	16%	16%
North Attleborough	\$ 97,967	110%	30,834	84%	3%	6%	2%	5%
Norton	\$ 109,375	123%	19,202	89%	3%	2%	2%	5%
Raynham	\$ 96,830	109%	15,142	85%	5%	3%	1%	6%
Rehoboth	\$ 115,156	129%	12,502	92%	1%	2%	1%	5%
Seekonk	\$ 100,041	112%	15,531	88%	1%	3%	2%	6%
Somerset	\$ 96,967	109%	18,303	93%	1%	1%	1%	4%
Swansea	\$ 101,703	114%	17,144	93%	1%	1%	1%	5%
Taunton	\$ 66,787	75%	59,408	75%	9%	1%	5%	10%
Westport	\$ 85,019	95%	16,339	94%	1%	1%	1%	4%

## Plymouth County

**Table 27. Plymouth County Overview**

Community	Median Household Income	Median Income % State Median	Total Pop	White Alone	Black or African American Alone	Asian alone	Some Other Race Alone	Two or More Races
Bridgewater	\$ 107,757	121%	28,633	83%	7%	2%	2%	6%
Brockton	\$ 68,067	76%	105,643	29%	35%	2%	13%	21%
Carver	\$ 61,811	69%	11,645	91%	1%	1%	2%	5%
Duxbury	\$ 130,260	146%	16,090	93%	0%	1%	1%	4%
East Bridgewater	\$ 110,842	125%	14,440	89%	3%	1%	2%	6%
Halifax	\$ 98,264	110%	7,749	93%	1%	0%	1%	4%
Hanover	\$ 149,048	167%	14,833	92%	1%	2%	1%	4%
Hanson	\$ 112,315	126%	10,639	92%	1%	1%	2%	4%
Hingham	\$ 154,300	173%	24,284	92%	1%	2%	1%	4%
Hull	\$ 117,120	132%	10,072	92%	1%	1%	1%	5%
Kingston	\$ 103,945	117%	13,708	92%	1%	1%	1%	4%
Lakeville	\$ 112,240	126%	11,523	92%	1%	1%	1%	5%
Marion	\$ 105,813	119%	5,347	86%	2%	1%	3%	8%
Marshfield	\$ 109,841	123%	25,825	94%	1%	1%	1%	4%
Mattapoisett	\$ 101,487	114%	6,508	92%	0%	1%	2%	5%
Middleborough	\$ 81,809	92%	24,245	90%	2%	1%	2%	6%
Norwell	\$ 172,022	193%	11,351	92%	1%	2%	1%	4%
Pembroke	\$ 130,015	146%	18,361	93%	1%	1%	1%	4%
Plymouth	\$ 97,956	110%	61,217	89%	2%	1%	2%	6%
Plympton	\$ 118,098	133%	2,930	94%	1%	0%	1%	3%
Rochester	\$ 110,736	124%	5,717	93%	1%	1%	1%	5%
Rockland	\$ 90,315	101%	17,803	83%	4%	2%	3%	8%
Scituate	\$ 129,132	145%	19,063	94%	0%	1%	1%	4%
Wareham	\$ 68,274	77%	23,303	83%	2%	1%	4%	10%
West Bridgewater	\$ 111,964	126%	7,707	87%	3%	1%	2%	6%
Whitman	\$ 94,919	107%	15,121	87%	3%	1%	2%	6%

## Norfolk County

Table 28. Norfolk County Overview

Community	Median Household Income	Median Income % State Median	Total Pop	White Alone	Black or African American Alone	Asian alone	Some Other Race Alone	Two or More Races
Avon	\$ 127,953	144%	4,777	65%	19%	4%	5%	7%
Bellingham	\$ 109,042	122%	16,945	87%	2%	3%	2%	6%
Braintree	\$ 114,916	129%	39,143	71%	3%	17%	3%	6%
Brookline	\$ 122,356	137%	63,191	67%	3%	19%	2%	8%
Canton	\$ 118,814	133%	24,370	74%	9%	9%	2%	6%
Cohasset	\$ 156,689	176%	8,381	94%	0%	1%	1%	4%
Dedham	\$ 108,047	121%	25,364	79%	6%	4%	4%	6%
Dover	\$ 250,000	281%	5,923	81%	1%	10%	1%	7%
Foxborough	\$ 95,410	107%	18,618	84%	4%	5%	2%	5%
Franklin	\$ 127,608	143%	33,261	86%	2%	6%	2%	5%
Holbrook	\$ 89,763	101%	11,405	67%	15%	5%	5%	8%
Medfield	\$ 196,820	221%	12,799	88%	1%	4%	1%	6%
Medway	\$ 147,257	165%	13,115	89%	1%	3%	2%	5%
Millis	\$ 131,138	147%	8,460	89%	1%	3%	1%	6%
Milton	\$ 153,971	173%	28,630	72%	13%	6%	2%	7%
Needham	\$ 182,813	205%	32,091	82%	2%	9%	1%	6%
Norfolk	\$ 168,281	189%	11,662	85%	5%	3%	1%	6%
Norwood	\$ 96,414	108%	31,611	74%	8%	7%	4%	7%
Plainville	\$ 96,932	109%	9,945	87%	3%	4%	2%	5%
Quincy	\$ 85,041	96%	101,636	55%	6%	31%	3%	6%
Randolph	\$ 87,869	99%	34,984	28%	43%	13%	8%	9%
Sharon	\$ 157,928	177%	18,575	68%	4%	21%	1%	6%
Stoughton	\$ 94,823	107%	29,281	62%	18%	5%	5%	9%
Walpole	\$ 138,821	156%	26,383	84%	3%	5%	2%	6%
Wellesley	\$ 226,250	254%	29,550	75%	2%	15%	2%	6%
Westwood	\$ 171,071	192%	16,266	83%	2%	9%	1%	5%
Weymouth	\$ 91,592	103%	57,437	78%	5%	7%	3%	7%
Wrentham	\$ 147,201	165%	12,178	90%	1%	3%	1%	5%

Table 29. Summary Indicators, All Geographies

	Acushnet	Dartmouth	Fairhaven	Marion	Mattapoisett	New Bedford	Rochester	Bristol County	Norfolk County	Plymouth County	State
<b>Demographic Background</b>											
<b>Population</b>											
Total Population 2020	10,559	33,783	15,924	5,347	6,508	101,079	5,717	566,765	709,409	523,738	7,029,917
Population Change 2010-2020	2.5%	-0.7%	0.3%	9.0%	7.7%	6.3%	9.3%	3.2%	5.4%	5.6%	7.4%
<b>Median Age</b>											
Median Age	46.7	40.8	47.8	49.6	56.6	36.5	42.7	40.9	40.7	42.6	39.6
Under 5 years of age	3.6%	3.4%	3.0%	3.7%	3.1%	6.7%	5.7%	5.2%	5.3%	5.2%	5.3%
Under 20 years of age	20.4%	22.7%	19.6%	24.1%	18.7%	25.8%	24.7%	23.4%	23.5%	23.9%	23.5%
65 years of age and older	21.8%	19.4%	21.8%	24.7%	27.4%	15.3%	17.2%	16.8%	16.7%	18.1%	15.5%
<b>Sex</b>											
Female	52.3%	51.2%	53.4%	50.1%	47.1%	50.1%	49.4%	51.3%	51.5%	51.1%	51.2%
Male	47.7%	48.8%	46.6%	49.9%	52.9%	49.9%	50.6%	48.7%	48.5%	48.9%	48.8%
<b>Race</b>											
One Race White	92.5%	85.6%	90.9%	86.0%	91.9%	60.8%	93.0%	80.4%	73.2%	78.6%	69.6%
One Race African American	0.5%	3.1%	0.8%	1.6%	0.4%	5.8%	0.7%	4.5%	7.2%	8.6%	7.0%
One Race Asian	0.6%	2.5%	1.3%	1.4%	0.9%	1.0%	0.5%	2.4%	12.5%	1.5%	7.2%
Other Race	1.6%	2.8%	1.8%	2.8%	1.6%	16.3%	1.2%	4.5%	0.9%	3.2%	7.4%
Two or More Races	4.7%	6.0%	5.3%	8.3%	5.3%	16.1%	4.6%	8.1%	6.2%	8.1%	8.7%
Hispanic	2.4%	4.0%	3.1%	4.2%	2.3%	24.3%	1.6%	9.7%	5.4%	4.6%	12.6%
Foreign-born	10.4%	11.2%	6.1%	4.0%	3.5%	19.9%	4.4%	13.2%	19.2%	10.2%	17.3%
Speak English Less Than Very Well	4.0%	4.3%	3.1%	2.2%	0.0%	16.2%	0.5%	8.1%	8.4%	5.5%	9.5%

	Acushnet	Dartmouth	Fairhaven	Marion	Mattapoisett	New Bedford	Rochester	Bristol County	Norfolk County	Plymouth County	State
<b>Economic Profile</b>											
<b>Median household income</b>											
Median household income	\$78,362	\$95,404	\$79,432	\$105,813	\$101,487	\$50,581	\$110,736	\$74,290	\$112,089	\$98,190	\$89,026
Median household income as % of state median	88.0%	107.2%	89.2%	118.9%	114.0%	56.8%	124.4%	83.4%	125.9%	110.3%	100.0%
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>											
Unemployment rate (annual 2021)	6.0%	5.6%	5.7%	4.8%	5.6%	8.8%	4.9%	6.5%	6.1%	5.1%	5.7%
Unemployment rate (Dec 2022)	4.1%	4.0%	4.2%	2.9%	3.3%	5.8%	2.7%	4.1%	3.4%	2.7%	3.3%
<b>Average Annual Wage</b>											
Annual average wage	\$ 60,424	\$ 56,576	\$ 69,628	\$ 64,272	\$ 49,348	\$ 55,172	\$ 55,796	\$ 59,228	\$ 76,700	\$ 62,556	\$ 87,672
Annual average wage as % of state average	68.9%	64.5%	79.4%	73.3%	56.3%	62.9%	63.6%	67.6%	87.5%	71.4%	NA

	Acushnet	Dartmouth	Fairhaven	Marion	Mattapoisett	New Bedford	Rochester	Bristol County	Norfolk County	Plymouth County	State
<b>Poverty</b>											
Individuals in poverty	5.5%	5.4%	6.6%	2.2%	2.1%	18.7%	1.8%	11.0%	6.3%	6.5%	9.9%
All families	5.6%	3.0%	3.2%	0.0%	0.4%	15.5%	0.6%	8.5%	4.0%	4.2%	6.6%
Families with children <18	12.3%	4.3%	5.2%	0.0%	0.0%	22.0%	0.0%	13.3%	5.5%	6.3%	10.1%
Married couple families	1.7%	1.9%	1.0%	0.0%	0.4%	7.3%	0.7%	3.4%	2.1%	1.8%	2.9%
Female headed households, no spouse	22.4%	7.8%	10.3%	0.0%	6.1%	28.7%	0.0%	23.4%	13.4%	13.2%	19.8%
Federal poverty level (family of two)	5.4%	4.4%	2.7%	0.0%	0.6%	16.3%	1.4%	8.9%	4.2%	4.7%	6.4%
<b>By gender</b>											
Poverty rate among men	5.3%	4.0%	6.5%	2.7%	0.9%	17.1%	1.6%	9.9%	5.5%	5.5%	8.90%
Poverty rate among women	5.8%	6.6%	6.7%	1.7%	3.3%	20.2%	1.9%	12.0%	7.0%	7.6%	10.90%
<b>By age</b>											
Poverty rate under age 18	8.4%	3.6%	6.0%	0.0%	0.0%	24.6%	2.3%	15.2%	5.8%	7.2%	12.1%
Poverty rate 18-64	5.3%	3.7%	6.1%	3.0%	2.0%	17.2%	1.4%	9.9%	6.0%	6.0%	9.3%
Poverty rate 65+	3.8%	11.3%	8.5%	2.5%	3.3%	15.4%	2.1%	9.7%	7.8%	7.4%	9.5%
<b>By race</b>											
Poverty rate by race—White alone	5.4%	5.5%	6.2%	2.1%	1.5%	13.6%	1.7%	8.7%	5.3%	5.5%	7.8%
Poverty rate by race—Black or African American	3.6%	0.0%	0.0%	15.3%	-	23.5%	33.3%	19.2%	12.0%	12.2%	16.7%
By Ethnicity—Hispanic	11.3%	1.7%	14.0%	7.3%	0.0%	31.3%	0.0%	29.1%	11.0%	14.3%	22.5%
<b>SNAP Participants of total pop (Dec 22)</b>	11.4%	10.0%	14.0%	7.6%	4.7%	36.3%	5.2%	23.4%	10.1%	15.2%	15.1%

	Acushnet	Dartmouth	Fairhaven	Marion	Mattapoisett	New Bedford	Rochester	Bristol County	Norfolk County	Plymouth County	State
<b>Education</b>											
<b>Adult Profile</b>											
High school graduate	88.4%	86.2%	91.1%	95.8%	97.0%	76.4%	97.2%	85.8%	94.2%	93.0%	91.2%
College degree (associate's and higher)	31.9%	45.0%	38.9%	57.8%	64.0%	25.7%	65.2%	38.5%	62.7%	49.0%	52.9%
<b>Housing</b>											
Rental occupied units as % of total	13.1%	22.8%	26.1%	18.6%	23.5%	60.9%	11.1%	37.8%	31.7%	22.5%	37.6%
Median gross rent	\$ 952	\$ 1,157	\$ 953	\$ 1,326	\$ 1,546	\$ 936	\$ 1,347	\$ 1,006	\$ 1,781	\$ 1,406	\$ 1,429
Median gross ownership costs	\$ 1,902	\$ 2,120	\$ 1,962	\$ 2,272	\$ 2,433	\$ 1,764	\$ 2,276	\$ 2,082	\$ 2,765	\$ 2,397	\$ 2,365



## APPENDIX B: LIST OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Sector	Organization	Person Interviewed
Public Sector	Mayor Jon Mitchell's Office	Christina Connelly
Public Sector	City Councilor	Ryan Pereira
Public Sector	State Representative	Tony Cabral
Public Sector	State Representative	Chris Hendricks
Public Sector	Senator's Mark Montigny's Office	Audra Riding
Public Sector	Congressman Bill Keating's Office	Liz Teves
Public Sector	City of New Bedford Police Department	Chief Paul Oliveira
Public Sector	City of New Bedford Community Services Department	Cynthia Wallquist, Marcelina Pina-Christian, and Geovanny Sequeira
Public Sector	City of New Bedford Office of Housing and Community Development	Josh Amaral
Public Sector	City of New Bedford Housing Authority	Steve Beauregard
Private Sector	NoticiasNB	Gerardo Beltrán Salinas
Private Sector/Funder	Carney Family Foundation	Darlene Spencer
Private Sector/Legal Services	South Coastal Counties Legal Services	Gavin Bates
Faith-based	New Life South Coast	Adriana Sanchez
Educational	New Bedford Public Schools	Julie Mador, Jen Ferland
Educational	New Bedford Public Schools	Kathleen Mackenzi
Social Sector/Healthcare	SouthCoast Health	Alison LeBert, Lisa Alves
Social Sector	YWCA, Southeastern Massachusetts	David Guadalupe
Social Sector/Funder	United Way of Greater New Bedford	Michelle Hantman
Social Sector	Community Economic Development Council (CEDC)	Corinn Williams
Social Sector	Immigration Assistance Center (IAC)	Maria Jose Morales
Social Sector	Boys and Girls Club	Jonathan Felix
Social Sector	YMCA	Jim Scherer
Social Sector	Coastline Elderly	Zachary Boyer
Social Sector/Workforce Development	MassHire, Greater New Bedford Career Center	Lindsey Rocha