

# Maine Equal Justice Community Survey 2024

At Maine Equal Justice, we believe everyone who calls Maine home should have enough income, quality health care, nutritious food to eat, and a safe and affordable place to live.

Here's what you need to know about this survey:

- We're asking these questions to better understand how Maine people are getting by.
- It usually takes 15 minutes to finish this survey.
- You can also save your progress and be emailed a link to finish later.
- We will use your responses to help make change, to inform lawmakers, and to educate the public about what we can do to end poverty in Maine.
- We will not share your name or contact information with anyone. We will only share your comments if you give us permission.
- We are not a government agency.
- Please only respond if you live in Maine and struggle to make ends meet, and please only complete one survey.

You will be entered in a drawing to win \$1,800 (for one month's rent or any other needs your family has) if you complete the survey and provide your contact information. If you support economic security for all but do not struggle to make ends meet, [click here](#) to share your thoughts in the Supporters and Partners Survey.

**Section 1. Basic information about you**

**1. The cost of housing, food, medicine and medical care, child care, utilities and more have gone up a lot in the last few years. Because of this, have you had a hard time paying for these basic needs?**

- Yes
- No

**2. How many total people – adults and children – live in your household, including you? Check one.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6 or more

**3. How many people under 18 years-old live in your household? Check one.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6 or more

**4. What is your household's annual earned income, before taxes and deductions? Check one.**

- \$10,000 or less
- \$10,001 - \$20,000
- \$20,001 - \$30,000
- \$30,001 - \$40,000
- \$40,001-\$50,000
- \$50,001-\$60,000
- \$60,001-\$70,000
- \$70,001-\$80,000
- \$80,000 or more

**5. Have you received any of these benefits in the last year? Check all that apply.**

- Child Care Subsidy
- Child Tax Credit
- Expanded Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- General Assistance
- LIAP
- LIHEAP
- MaineCare
- Other Subsidized Housing
- Pell Grant or Student Loans
- Public Housing
- Rental Assistance
- Section 8 (federal housing assistance)
- SSDI
- SSI
- SNAP (food assistance)
- TANF
- Work-Study
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**6. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? Check one.**

- Less than high school
- Some high school
- High school graduate or equivalent (for example GED)
- Some college, but degree not received or is in progress
- Associate's degree (for example AA, AS)
- Bachelor's degree (for example BA, BS, AB)
- Graduate degree (for example master's, professional, doctorate)

**7. What city/town and county do you live in?**

City/town \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

**8. What is your primary language?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**9. What is your race? Check one.**

- White or Caucasian
- Asian or Asian American
- Black or African American
- Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- More than one race
- Prefer not to answer

**10. What is your ethnicity?**

- Hispanic
- Latino
- Prefer not to answer

**11. What is your gender identity?**

- Woman
- Man
- Non-binary
- Other gender identity \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to answer

**12. Do you identify as transgender?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

**13. What is your date of birth? \_\_\_\_\_**

**14. What is your relationship status? Check one.**

- Single, Never Married
- Divorced, Widowed, Separated
- Married, Re-married
- Living together with a partner, unmarried
- Prefer not to answer

**15. What is your immigration status? Check one.**

*This question is optional and your response will be kept private. Maine Equal Justice works to expand public benefits/economic supports without concern for immigration status.*

- US Citizen
- Green card – more than 5 years
- Green card – less than 5 years
- Asylum Seeker
- Asylee
- Refugee
- Undocumented
- Other

**Section 2: Economic Security**

**1. What are your biggest money worries right now? Please rank them in order by putting a number from one up to 10 next to each.**

- Child care
- Credit card money owed
- School classes for adults and training costs
- Child education costs
- Food
- Health care
- Housing
- Transportation
- Utilities
- Other (optional fill in the blank)

**2. If you had an extra \$1,000 a month, how would you use it? Assume that this extra income would not change other kinds of support you already may have. Write your answer below.**

**3. Could you pay for an unexpected \$400 expense, like a car repair or medical bill?**

**Check one.**

- Yes, I could pay in cash or savings
- I could pay but I'd have to sell something or owe money
- No I couldn't pay it at all

**a. If you said NO to question 3, if you had an unexpected \$400 expense, how would that affect paying for other needs like food, housing, medicine, etc.? Would it depend on what time of year the expense comes up? Write your answer below.**

**4. Have you ever been denied a loan, or received a loan with a high interest rate, because of poor credit (sometimes called a predatory loan)? Check one.**

- Yes
- No

**5. Do you support giving Mainers who are struggling with money a regular cash payment to be spent however they decide will best support themselves and their family (also known as guaranteed or basic income)? Check one.**

- |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Yes<br>(Strongly)        | Yes<br>(Not Strongly)    | Undecided<br>(Lean Yes)  | Undecided                | Undecided<br>(Lean No)   | No<br>(Not Strongly)     | No<br>(Strongly)         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Section 3: Housing and utilities

**1. Where do you live right now? Check one.**

- Own a home or apartment
- Own a mobile home and rent land
- Rent
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**If you RENT or you OWN A MOBILE HOME AND RENT LAND, please answer questions a-c.**

a. How much is your rent per month, including if you rent a lot for a mobile home? \_\_\_\_\_

b. How many bedrooms does your rental have? Check one.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 or more

c. Has your rent been raised in the last 12 months? Check one.

- Yes
- No

i. If your rent was raised, how much did it increase (per month)?

\$\_\_\_\_\_

ii. How many days of notice were you given that your rent was increasing? \_\_\_\_\_ days

**If you RENT, please answer questions d-h. If not, please skip to question 2.**

d. Do you use a voucher to pay for housing? Check one.

- Yes
- No

**Skip to question e if you DO NOT use a VOUCHER.**

i. Which type of voucher do you use? Check one.

- Shelter Plus
- Housing Choice Voucher
- Section 811 PRA Program
- STEP
- Unsure

ii. **If you've ever been on a waiting list for your housing voucher, how long did you wait? \_\_\_\_\_ days**

iii. **Did you struggle to find a landlord who would accept a voucher?**

**Check one.**

Yes

No

I prefer not to answer

iv. **Please tell us about your experience using a voucher. This question is optional.**

e. **Have you ever experienced unfair treatment (discrimination) , unwanted attention, or harassment from your landlord?**

Yes

No

I prefer not to answer

i. **What happened when you experienced that unfair treatment (discrimination)? Why do you believe it happened? This question is optional. If you would like to be contacted for legal support, please reach out to us at: [www.maineequaljustice.org](http://www.maineequaljustice.org).**

f. **Does your building have a management company?**

Yes

No

I prefer not to answer



i. **If yes, what is the name of your management company? This question is optional.**

g. **Have you asked your landlord to fix (choose all that apply):**

- Heat
- Appliances
- Mold
- Lead Paint
- I have not reported these kinds of issues because of fear of retaliation\* or eviction
- I have not needed to report these kinds of issues
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- I prefer not to answer

\*If a landlord evicts a tenant within 6 months of a tenant: complaining about a code violation, asking for necessary repairs, filing a fair housing complaint, is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, etc. or has started a tenant's union it's assumed the landlord is retaliating against the tenant.

h. **The law says you should hear back from your landlord within 14 days of submitting a request in writing about unfit conditions. Do you find your landlord or management company responded within this time frame?**

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to answer

2. **Have you been asked or forced to leave your apartment or home (eviction) in the last five years, while living in Maine?**

- Yes
- No

**If you answered YES to having had an EVICTION, please answer questions a-c. If not, please skip to question 3.**

**a. What was the reason given for the eviction?**

- Non-payment of rent
- Lease violation
- Nonrenewal
- Landlord selling building
- Rent increase
- Retaliation\*
- Unknown
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- I prefer not to answer

\*If a landlord evicts a tenant within 6 months of a tenant: complaining about a code violation, asking for necessary repairs, filing a fair housing complaint, is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, etc. or has started a tenant's union it's assumed the landlord is retaliating against the tenant.

**b. How long did it take you to find housing? Check one.**

- Less than 6 months
- 6 months-1 year
- More than 1 year
- I am still searching for housing
- I prefer not to answer

**c. Where did you stay when you were evicted? Check all that apply.**

- At a shelter
- With a friend
- With family
- Were unsheltered (including living in your car or outside)
- Lived in a motorhome/camping trailer
- I prefer not to answer

**3. Do you believe you have been denied or lost a housing opportunity because (check all that apply):**

- You did not have enough income
- Unfair treatment based on family size
- You did not have the right credit score
- Unfair treatment based on race

- Unfair treatment based on sexual orientation/gender identity
- Unfair treatment based on income type
- Couldn't afford the deposit
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- I prefer not to answer

**4. Maine has created an Eviction Prevention Program, a two-year pilot program to provide rent for people in Maine with low income. Would you support expanding this program? Check one.**

- |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Yes<br>(Strongly)        | Yes<br>(Not Strongly)    | Undecided<br>(Lean Yes)  | Undecided                | Undecided<br>(Lean No)   | No<br>(Not Strongly)     | No<br>(Strongly)         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**5. Have you applied for the new Eviction Prevention Program launched in October?**

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to answer

**6. How well do you feel your town/community is dealing with the housing crisis? Please tell us what you think (optional).**

**7. If you've tried to buy a home, what problems have you faced? Please tell us what you think.**

**8. If you have children between 6 and 18, have they had to move schools because of (select all that apply):**

- An eviction
- Rent increase
- Cost of living where you were was too expensive

- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- I don't have school age children/does not apply

**9. While living in Maine, have you been unhoused (without a place to live) in the last five years? Check one.**

- Yes
- No

**a. If yes, how long did it take for you to find housing? Check one.**

- Less than 6 months
- 6 months-1 year
- More than 1 year
- I am still searching for housing
- I prefer not to answer

**9. In the last year, have you struggled to pay a utility bill or unable to pay the full bill amount? Check one.**

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to answer

**a. In the last 12 months, has your electricity, internet, phone, cable, or water been disconnected? Check one.**

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to answer

**10. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with housing in Maine?**

#### **Section 4: Healthcare**

**1. What are your biggest problems with health care? Check all that apply.**

- No health insurance
- Cost of insurance (paying for premiums)
- Cost of care / cost-sharing (including co-pays and costs of procedures)
- Cost of prescription medications or medical equipment
- Transportation
- Distance to a provider
- Finding a provider
- Fear of unfair treatment based on my identity (race, gender, disability etc.)
- Medical Condition prevents you from using care
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- None - I can access the health care I need

**2. Where do you usually go to receive your health care? Check all that apply.**

- Community health center or federally qualified health center
- Doctor's office or health center
- Hospital
- Mobile health clinic
- Urgent care center
- I don't have a health care provider

**3. What type of health care coverage or insurance do you have? Check all that apply.**

- MaineCare
- Medicare
- Veterans Administration (VA)
- Employer-sponsored insurance (through your job)
- Private insurance bought on the Marketplace (CoverMe.gov)
- Private insurance bought outside the Marketplace (CoverMe.gov)
- Emergency MaineCare (just for emergencies / I don't qualify for MaineCare)
- I use Free Care through a hospital
- I don't have health insurance
- I don't know
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**4. In general, how easy or difficult is it for you to afford your health care costs?**

**Check one.**

- Very Easy
- Easy
- Somewhat difficult
- Very difficult
- I prefer not to answer

**5. Do you have medical debt right now? Check one.**

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to answer

**6. Is there anything else you want to tell us about your health care?**

### **Section 5: Food Security**

**1. In the last 12 months, how often did you worry about your food running out before you got money to buy more? Check one.**

- Almost every day
- Once or twice a week
- Once or twice a month
- Once or twice a year
- Never
- I prefer not to answer

**2. In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less or skip a meal because there wasn't enough money for food? Check one.**

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to answer

**3. How do you get food for your household? Check all that apply.**

- Buy at a grocery store with cash or credit card
- SNAP benefits (EBT card)
- Food bank or food pantry
- Help from family or friends
- Buy prepared meals from restaurants or fast food chains
- I grow my own food
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Is there anything else you want to tell us about food security in your community?**

### Section 6: Community Livability

**1. Because of a lack of transportation, do you have difficulty getting from where you live to other places like work, the grocery store, the doctor, etc.? Check one.**

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to answer

**a. If yes, what are your transportation problems? Check all that apply.**

- I don't have enough money to pay for gas
- I depend on public transportation but it's not useful/available
- I don't have a car
- I need car repairs I can't afford
- I need a new car because current one is beyond repair/too old
- I have trouble paying for insurance/registration costs
- License suspended due to unpaid fines
- Prefer not to answer/I have no transportation problems

**2. Do you work right now? Check one.**

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to answer

**If you are WORKING, please answer questions a-d. If you are NOT WORKING, please skip to question 3.**

**a. How do you usually get to work? Check one.**

- Walk
- Car
- Public transportation
- I work from home
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**b. How long does it take you to travel from where you live to where you work, whether you walk, drive, or take public transportation? Check one.**

- 15 minutes or less
- 31-45 minutes
- 45 minutes to an hour
- More than an hour

**c. Would you live closer to where you work, if it were affordable? Check one.**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

**d. Do you feel like your current job matches your career goals? Check one.**

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to answer

**3. What are your career goals and what would help you reach them?**

**4. If you had the opportunity and money, would more education help you accomplish your career goals?**

- Yes
- No



I prefer not to answer

**5. If yes, what's getting in the way of your education and training?**

**6. What do you most want lawmakers to understand about how Maine people are getting by?**

**Section 7: Contact information and permission to share**

**Please complete this section in order to be contacted if you win the drawing. None of your personal information will be shared.**

First and Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street address \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to receive SMS (text messages) from Maine Equal Justice (optional)

**MEJ may use my written answers / comments in the following ways (check any that apply):**

- on the maineequaljustice.org website
- on social media
- with MEJ funders
- in any publications or written material MEJ distributes
- DO NOT share my story outside of MEJ staff and board members

**Please share any comments, questions, or concerns here:**