

**Community Action Agency of Somerville, Inc.**

**2021-2023 Community Assessment Report  
and Strategic Plan**

**Prepared as part of the Community Services Block Grant funding process**

**Submitted to:**

**Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development  
Division of Community Services  
Community Services Unit 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 300  
Boston, MA 02114**

**Submitted by:**

**Community Action Agency of Somerville, Inc.  
66-70 Union Square  
Somerville, MA 02143  
(617) 623-7370**

**Approved for submission to DHCD by the CAAS Board of Directors, June 29, 2021**

**Approved by DHCD, July 14, 2021**

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## 2. Executive Summary

In this Community Assessment Report & Strategic Plan (CARSP), Community Action Agency of Somerville (CAAS) presents the major findings from its 2020 community and internal assessments and outlines a two-year plan for addressing the needs identified. This plan was authorized by our Board of Directors on June 29, 2021.

### Introduction:

The low-income community in Somerville lives in a context of serious change and disruption. As an agency rooted in that community and responsive to it, CAAS is also operating within this context. The COVID-19 pandemic, the effects of decades of worsening income and wealth inequality, and rapid gentrification locally are combining in ways that can only be described as a crisis, calling for systemic change.

Our response to this call is rooted in the belief that solutions can and will arise from the imagination and capacity of the community itself. During our 2020 community assessment process we heard the community's clear desire that we emphasize, in all of our work, the need for fundamental change. Part of our charge is to continue to be aware, as we work with individuals and families, of the ways in which their struggles are rooted in societal problems that ultimately must have societal solutions. Another part is to see ourselves, increasingly, as a convener of many voices across many different conversations, out of which we hope to see community-generated solutions arise.

In September 2019 CAAS began this strategic planning process with the twin goals of better understanding the needs of Somerville's low-income community and updating our vision for the organization's future in light of recent developments affecting that community. An assessment process that would have typically concluded in March 2020 was extended to December 2020 in an effort to incorporate the deep and broad impacts of the pandemic on community needs.

The first step in this planning process was the collection of data from a wide variety of sources, integrated into a Community Assessment Report. Our articulation of these needs drives our strategic refocus on making a systems-level contribution and on the preservation of community resources at scale, rather than only at the household level. The **Top 3 Community Needs** identified by this work are:

- 1) Inadequate supply of safe and affordable housing
- 2) Inadequate access to employment that meets basic needs
- 3) Inadequate supply of affordable, suitable care for children

The planning process continued with several months of analysis of possible solutions to these expressed needs, and the completion of this CARSP in June 2021. We have identified three **Strategic 2-Year Goals** and specific objectives related to each goal.

- 1) Preserve and increase supply of affordable housing and help low-income residents achieve sustainable tenancies

- 2) Maximize incomes and increase access to higher-paying jobs for low-income residents
- 3) Increase the availability of high-quality, affordable care for low-income children

Lest there be any confusion at the outset, with respect to Goal 1, CAAS is not proposing to become a developer or manager of low-income housing. Rather, we are driven by community needs to find community systems to which we can contribute. We will work to increase the supply of safe and affordable housing through community and tenant organizing and policy advocacy initiatives, while simultaneously working to maintain housing and promote sustainable tenancies through rental assistance, eviction prevention (legal and quasi-legal services), landlord negotiations, housing search, income maximization through benefits enrollment, and longitudinal case management.

Similarly, with respect to Goal 2, CAAS is not proposing to develop a freestanding workforce development program. Rather, we will coordinate with other providers to increase success in education and workforce training programs, expand CAAS' VITA program to promote income maximization, maintain our long-standing Head Start Early Childhood Teacher Training program, and, at the same time, organize and advocate for municipal policies that improve the bottom line and increase access to higher-paying jobs for Somerville residents.

Finally, with respect to Goal 3, we will continue to provide and expand high-quality Head Start Programming in Somerville and Cambridge while improving referral systems and advocating for programs and resources for families needing care for school-aged children. This again is an area where our role as a convener will allow us to look for connections and explore the possibility of synergies to affect change.

Together, these core principles, expressed community needs, strategic goals, and specific objectives form the foundation for CAAS' two-year vision, which emphasizes the continued delivery of high-quality services to individuals and families in need with an expanded role as a convener of community-level solutions.

### **Detailed summary of plan components:**

The plan begins with a **description of our agency** and its history and our **mission and vision statement**, followed by a comprehensive **community profile**, which includes relevant demographic information and discusses noteworthy trends. It includes a list of the communities CAAS serves, current quantitative and qualitative data specific to poverty and its prevalence related to **gender, age, and race/ethnicity** for our entire service area (Cambridge and Somerville), and a discussion of the major conditions affecting our community and its members. The community profile highlights Somerville's and Cambridge's racial/ethnic and class diversity and demonstrates that gentrification and growing income inequality are placing the low-income residents of both cities in an increasingly vulnerable position.

The next section of the report is a summary of our **community assessment process**. It outlines our methodology (which included a community survey, multiple stakeholder interviews, Board and staff retreats, and an in-depth review of publicly-available data sources conducted with the assistance of a Nilakshi Chatterji, a Summer Fellow from Tufts University's Department

of Urban and Environmental Planning). The community assessment process summary is followed by a summary of our **internal assessment process**, which was based on a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) retreat conducted our senior management team and board, customer satisfaction data, and our most recent CSBG National Organizational Standards Self-Assessment and Monitoring.

The **key findings of our community assessment** (the Top 3 Community Needs listed above) are then discussed in greater detail. This section discusses our conclusions regarding the existing and emerging causes and conditions of poverty as well as the needs and strengths of our community. The next section of the report provides the **key findings of our internal assessment** with respect to different elements of our internal operations and identifies CAAS' major strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement with respect to each.

Next we outline CAAS's **Strategic 2-Year Goals** (listed above) in greater detail. Within the discussion of each of these broad goals are:

- a brief summary of our **funding strategy** with respect to that goal;
- an overview of our **service delivery system**, including a summary of what our programming will look like during the next two years;
- an outline of our **linkages** with other organizations; and
- a discussion of the **service gaps** we see in the community, and our strategy for using linkages to fill these identified gaps in service.

Within each of the broad goals stated above are several more **specific objectives** and strategies. The following section of the report describes the specific steps CAAS will take in 2022 and 2023 to achieve our overarching goals. The report ends with our **plan monitoring and reporting strategy**, giving detail on how we will monitor and evaluate implementation of this plan.

The challenges facing our community are daunting; they occur in the context of a national crisis of wealth and income inequality that has been unfolding since the mid-1970s and more recently compounded by the economic fallout of a global pandemic. But with creative ideas, collaboration, and hard work, we are confident that CAAS can make a difference and are excited to move forward with this work. We invite all reading this Report to join us; collaboration and community building are key to the success we hope to create.

### **3. Board Authorization**

I, Greg Hagan, Clerk of Community Action Agency of Somerville, Inc. (“CAAS”), hereby certify that the following resolution was unanimously approved by CAAS’ Board of Directors at a regular meeting held on June 29, 2021 at which a quorum of the Board was present and voting throughout:

RESOLVED: That the CAAS 2021-2023 Community Assessment Report and Strategic Plan (“CARSP”) presented to this Board at this meeting be, and it hereby is, approved; and further, that the Executive Director of CAAS be, and he hereby is, authorized and directed to submit the CARSP to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development not later than July 2, 2021.

A true copy.

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Signed: Greg Hagan, Clerk

#### **4. Agency Description**

CAAS has been the federally designated anti-poverty agency serving Somerville, Massachusetts since 1981. Each year we leverage the work of some 70 employees, 300 or more volunteers and roughly \$8 million in federal, state, local and private funding in order to provide four core programs: Head Start, the Housing Advocacy Program (HAP), Community Organizing, and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA). We also provide a robust referral network to help direct our low-income neighbors to other service providers and resources.

Head Start is a comprehensive developmental preschool program that provides a variety of wraparound services to approximately 275 low-income children and their families each year. Components of this wraparound include extensive supports in the economic, social, health, nutritional and psychological domains. Parent and family targeted services include: adult education, such as classes on child development; English as a Second Language (ESL); case management and economic mobility planning; and referrals and assistance coordinating external supports. Head Start serves low-income residents of Somerville and Cambridge.

HAP provides a wide range of services to approximately 450 low-income individuals at risk of homelessness each year, including preventing evictions through advocacy with landlords and in housing court and maximizing income by improving access to public benefits. Case management targeting the root causes of housing insecurity helps prevent future crises. HAP also provides over \$250,000 each year in direct financial assistance to cure rent arrears (eviction prevention) and for move-in costs to safe and affordable housing. HAP serves Somerville residents with incomes at or below 50% of area median income (AMI).

Recognizing that many community needs/issues cannot be solved at the level of direct service, CAAS' Community Organizing program takes a systematic approach to advancing CAAS' mission by engaging low-income residents in collectively pushing for social change. Activities include: 1) creating and cultivating on-going relationships with members of the community; 2) identifying and developing leaders within the low-income community who can speak to and move forward community solutions; and 3) facilitating engagement by low-income leaders and community members in activities that support and promote their own wellbeing and that of their community. This includes assisting with the organization of tenants' unions and engaging with public processes related to issues of municipal concern.

VITA provides free tax preparation services to over 100 low- and moderate-income families, resulting in an average, per-family credit/refund of \$5,000. VITA is a proven vehicle for increasing the net worth of low- and moderate-income families.

CAAS' holistic approach to community work and wrap-around services considers the web of connections between housing, physical and mental health, employment, nutrition, immigration, education, transportation, family composition, civic engagement, and social and economic justice. We support clients in all of these areas through direct services or referral. In order to be effective, CAAS creates and maintains strong and positive relationships with service providers of every description, as well as with elected and municipal officials and local

businesses. Given the multiple barriers that low-income families often face, this seamless web of services is critical to their success.



## **5. Mission Statement**

CAAS helps local families and individuals achieve financial security while working to eliminate the root causes of economic injustice.

This mission statement was reviewed by the Board of Directors on November 26, 2019 to assure that it addresses poverty and that CAAS' programs and services are in alignment with the mission.

## 6. Vision Statement

Since its founding in 1981, CAAS has been a strong advocate for low-income Somerville residents, not only advocating for them individually but also pushing for broader systemic change. CAAS's long-term overarching strategies for accomplishing its mission are to:

- 1) Expand and promote opportunities for all Somerville residents in the fields of education, employment, housing, health, and improved neighborhood life, and
- 2) Serve as a structure for empowering both low-income constituencies and those whose full involvement in the community has been obstructed or discouraged by oppression and discrimination.

These strategies are implemented in the belief that by working together, people achieve more. The three main outcomes that result when CAAS succeeds in its mission are:

- 1) Vulnerable families and individuals realize additional potential through strengthening their families and support networks;
- 2) Low-income people become more economically stable; and
- 3) Local residents understand that they own a stake in the City of Somerville, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the United States of America, and therefore they participate more fully in civic life.

Stable leadership, a strong Board, and an experienced and committed staff ensure CAAS' visibility and credibility in the community. CAAS' staff and board members are committed to ensuring a sustainable future for the organization.

## 7. Community Profile

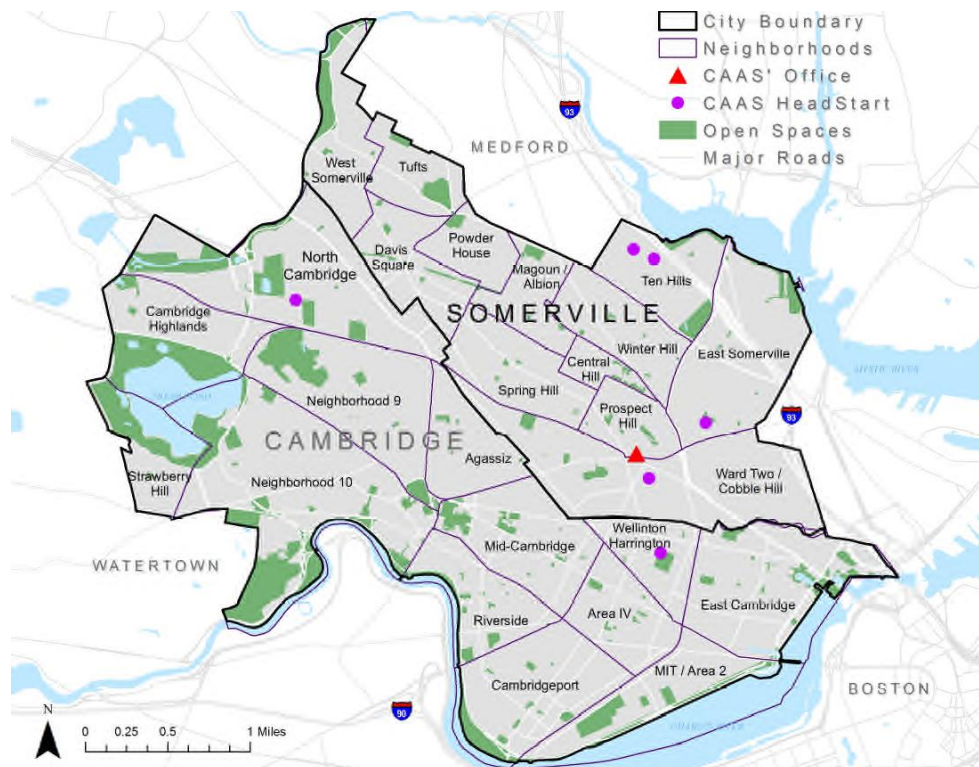
What follows is a statistical profile that describes CAAS' service area and target populations. The profile includes quantitative and qualitative data specific to poverty and prevalence related to gender, age, and race/ethnicity for the agency's entire service area as well as discussion of major conditions affecting the community and its members. Much of the quantitative data contained in this profile are derived from the 2014-2018 American Community Survey (ACS). The last section of the profile is dedicated to discussion of the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic has changed key markers in this profile, with special attention to employment and housing.

### Methodology

Community statistical data, for both Somerville and Cambridge, were collected for the following variables: total population, age, race and Hispanic ethnicity, immigration, language, income, poverty, employment, education, housing, health, crime and early education and childcare access. Data were compared to state averages and/or across time. The American Community Survey 5-year estimates were used to compare across time between 2007- 2011, 2012-2016 and 2014-2018. Qualitative data gathered from surveys and stakeholder interviews are also included.

### Service Area

CAAS serves the cities of Somerville and Cambridge, Massachusetts. The City of Somerville, CAAS' designated Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) service area, is the city wherein CAAS concentrates its services and activities. The agency's programming in the City of Cambridge is limited to Head Start.



Cambridge and Somerville Head Start locations. Sources: MassGIS, CAAS

## Somerville

Somerville is located in Middlesex County, about two miles north of downtown Boston, and is bordered by Arlington, Cambridge, Charlestown (a neighborhood of Boston), Everett, and Medford. Home to immigrants, working-class families, college students, and young middle-class professionals, Somerville prides itself on its diversity. While that diversity is one of the city's unique assets, it also presents challenges. Of particular concern are growing income inequality and rapidly rising housing costs that threaten to displace many of Somerville's lower-income residents.

### Population

After achieving distinction as the densest city in the country in the 1930s with a population of 103,908<sup>1</sup> Somerville saw its population steadily decline between 1950 and 1980. However, since 1980, the city's population has remained relatively constant and appears to be increasing once again. At the time of the 2010 Census, Somerville's population was 75,754.<sup>2</sup> This increase made Somerville the second fastest growing city in the state between 2010 and 2015 (Boston was the fastest).<sup>3</sup> As of 2018, the population of Somerville city reached 80,434<sup>4</sup>. Somerville also remains the most densely populated city in New England with about 19,000 people per square mile.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cambridge Health Alliance, "The Well Being of Somerville Report," 2011, accessed May 19, 2014, <http://www.challiance.org/Resource.ashx?sn=CommunityAffairsSomWellBeingReport2011>.

<sup>2</sup> Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development, "Trends in Somerville: Population Technical Report";

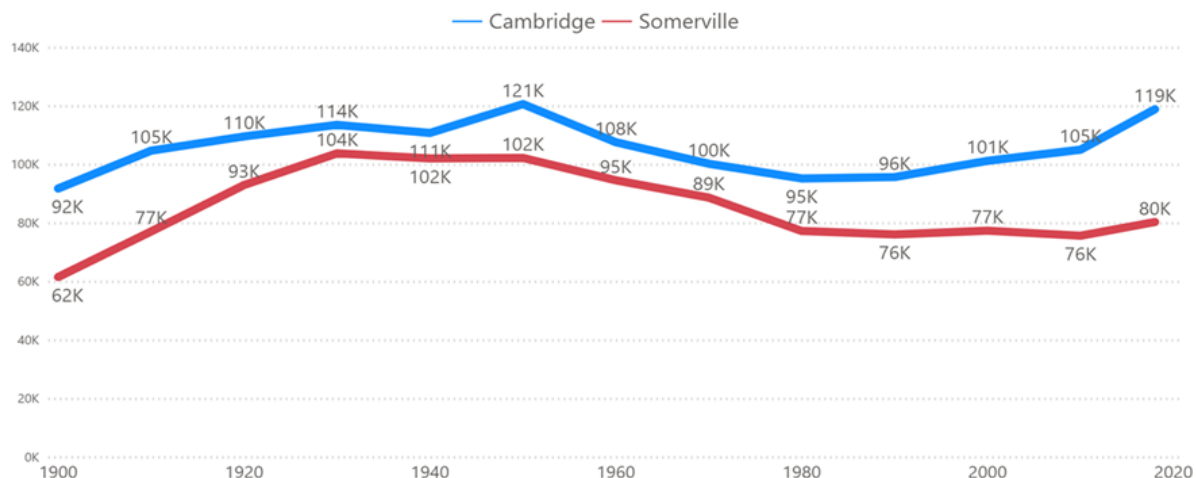
US Census Bureau, "Total Population"; "Population Estimates, July 1, 2017, (V2017)."

<sup>3</sup> "Summary of U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 Population Estimates for Massachusetts Cities and Towns". Prepared by: UMass Donahue Institute Economic and Public Policy Research Population Estimates Program. May 25, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> US Census Bureau, "Total Population"; "Population Estimates, July 1, 2018."

<sup>5</sup> US Census Bureau, "Population Density, 2014-2018."

## Population (1900-2018)



### Age

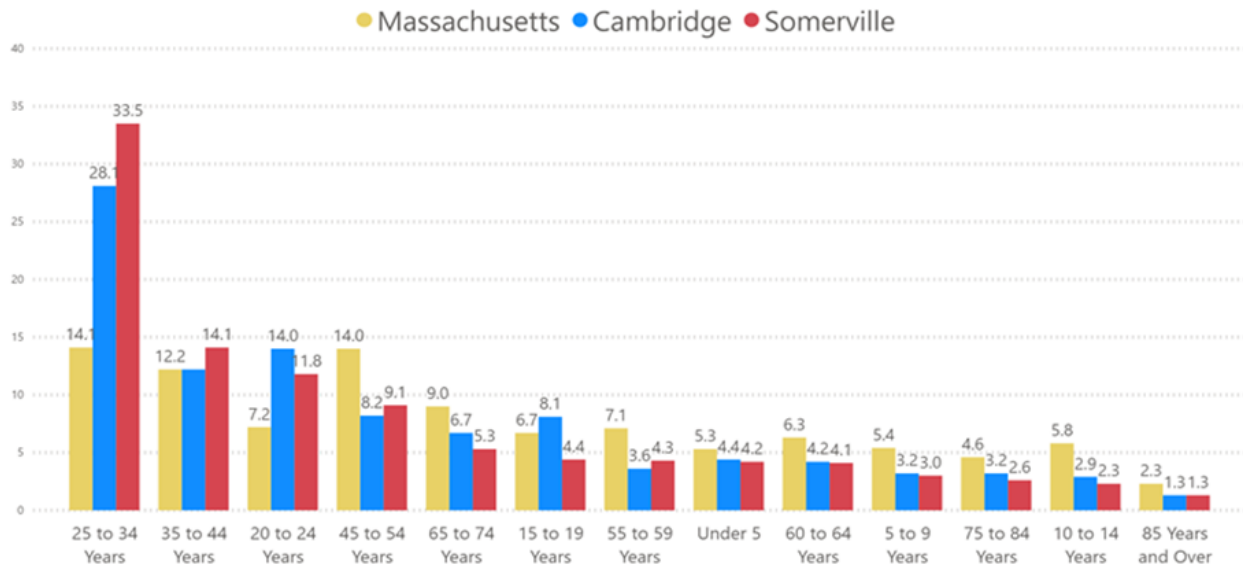
The median age in Somerville is 31.2, which is much lower than the Massachusetts median age of 39.4. Nearly 60% (59.4%) of Somerville residents are between the ages of 20 and 44, and approximately one third (33%) are in the 25 to 34 age group.

While the large concentration of young professionals in Somerville is often considered a good thing for the city, the relatively small percentage of school-age children suggests that many of those young professionals are moving elsewhere once their children reach school age. According to the 2014-2018 American Community Survey, approximately 4.2% of Somerville's population is under the age of 5, just slightly lower than the statewide average of 5.3%. However, only 9.7% of Somerville residents are school-aged (between the ages of 5 and 19), whereas 17.9% of Massachusetts residents fall into that age group. Somerville also has a relatively small elderly population compared with the rest of the state (9.2% vs. 15.9%).

Compared to Massachusetts, Somerville's population aged 20 to 34 years old is over 24% higher than the state average. This indicates Somerville is attracting many college-aged students and young professionals. However, the 19.4% decrease in residents from the 25-34 age group to 35-44 suggests that these individuals or families are moving out of the city. Furthermore, 13.9% of Somerville's population is under 19.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> 2012-2016 estimates of Somerville, Massachusetts population by age group. Data Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS 5-year estimates.

## % Age by Group



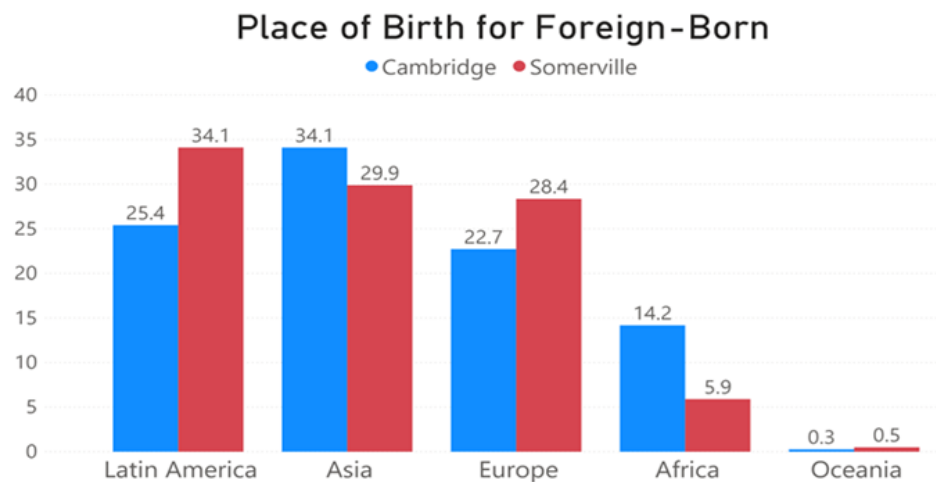
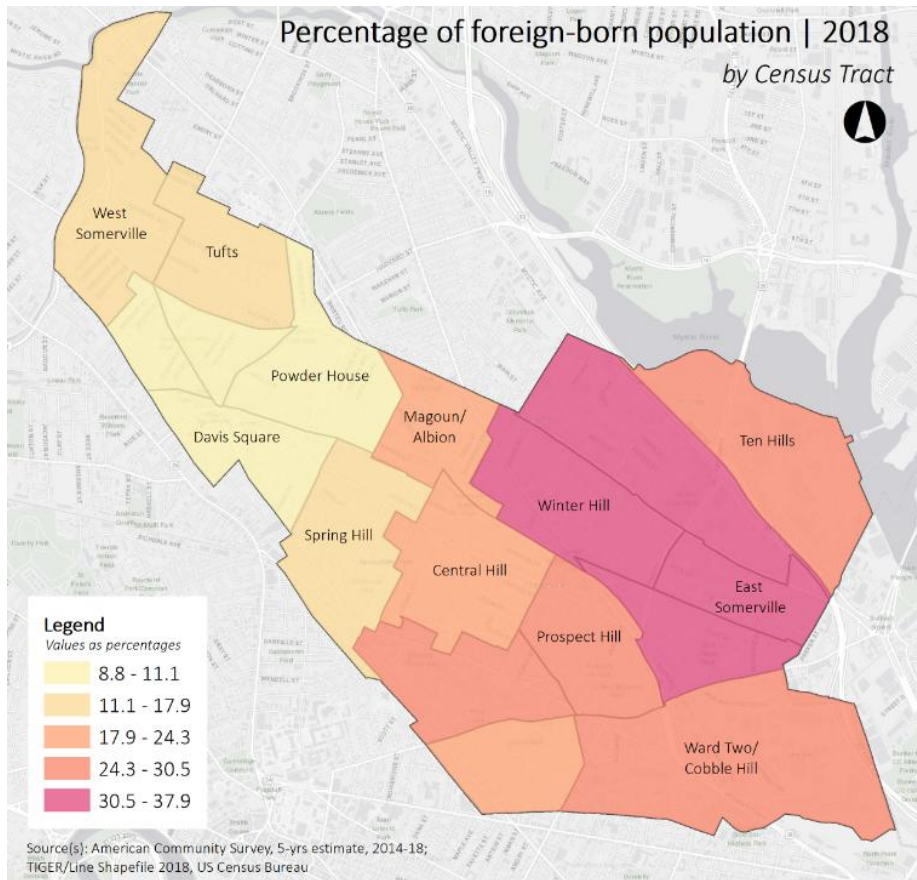
2014-2018 estimates of Somerville, Cambridge and Massachusetts population by age group. Data Source: US Census Bureau, 2014-2018 ACS 5-year estimates.

### Immigration

Somerville has a rich history of immigration, and is considered one of the most diverse cities in New England.<sup>7</sup> It is estimated that from 2011 to 2018, the foreign-born population averaged about a quarter (24.4%) of the population, 7.5% higher than the foreign-born population in Massachusetts (16.9%).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> “About Somerville - City of Somerville.”

<sup>8</sup> US Census Bureau, “Place of Birth for the Foreign-Born Population, 2014-2018.”



Somerville and Cambridge foreign-born population by place of birth. Data Source: US Census, ACS 2014-18 5-year estimates. Place of Birth for the Foreign-Born Population.

There was broad recognition among CAAS survey participants and interviewees that immigration and immigration status operate at the periphery of and exacerbate the challenges faced by low-income Somerville residents. Immigration status can negatively impact a family’s ability to find affordable housing as well as an individual’s ability to acquire a job. Relatedly, language barriers, discussed below, emerged as a significant challenge in the community survey results and are shown in the secondary data to most significantly impact lower-income neighborhoods.

## Languages Spoken by Household

In Somerville, 38 languages are spoken, with 7.6% of households linguistically isolated.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, 11.1% of the population over 5 years of age has limited English proficiency. According to American Survey of 2018, 28.6% of the population of Somerville speaks a language other than English home. This percentage is higher than Massachusetts overall (23.6%).<sup>10</sup>

According to 2017 data from the Somerville Public Schools, children speak the following languages at home (The Wellbeing of Somerville Report 2017):

- Spanish - 26.7%
- Portuguese - 9.3%
- Haitian Creole - 2.8%
- Nepalli - 1.4%
- Arabic - 1.2%
- Punjabi - 1.2%
- Bengali - 0.7 %
- Chinese -0.7%.

Currently, more than 50% of the SPS student population speaks a language other than English at home, and nearly 18% of students receive some form of English language instructional support.

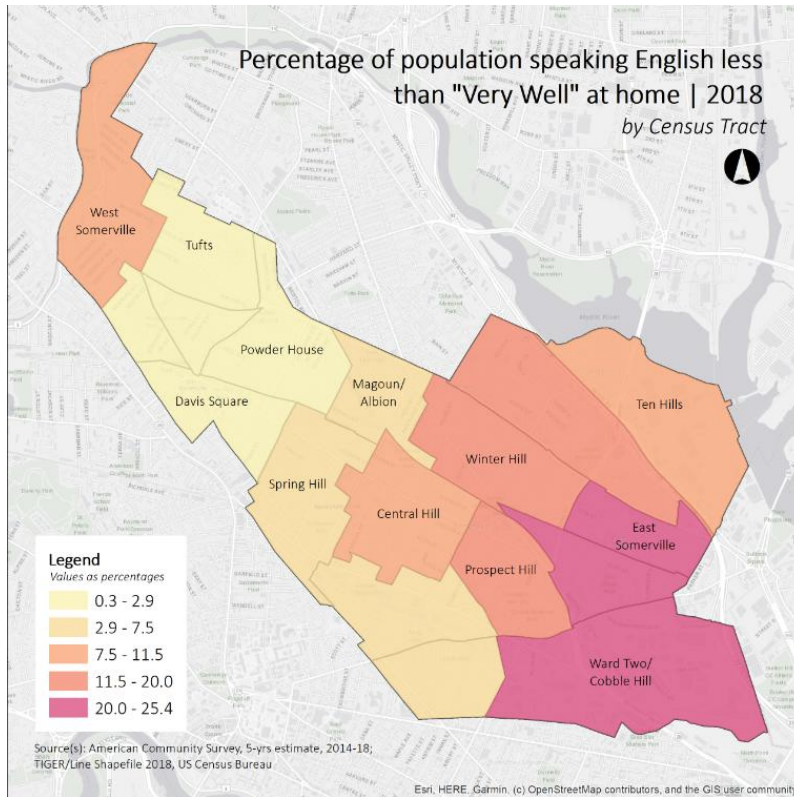
There are a higher percentage of households with limited English located in East Somerville and Ward 2/Cobble Hill.

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<sup>9</sup> US Census Bureau, “Linguistically Isolated, 2014-2018.”

<sup>10</sup> US Census Bureau, “Population with Limited English, 2014-2018.”





Language barriers were identified as a pressing issue by low-income residents surveyed as part of CAAS’ community assessment. 29% of respondents saw language barriers as an area of significant need. These findings found further support and affirmation among key stakeholders.

### Poverty

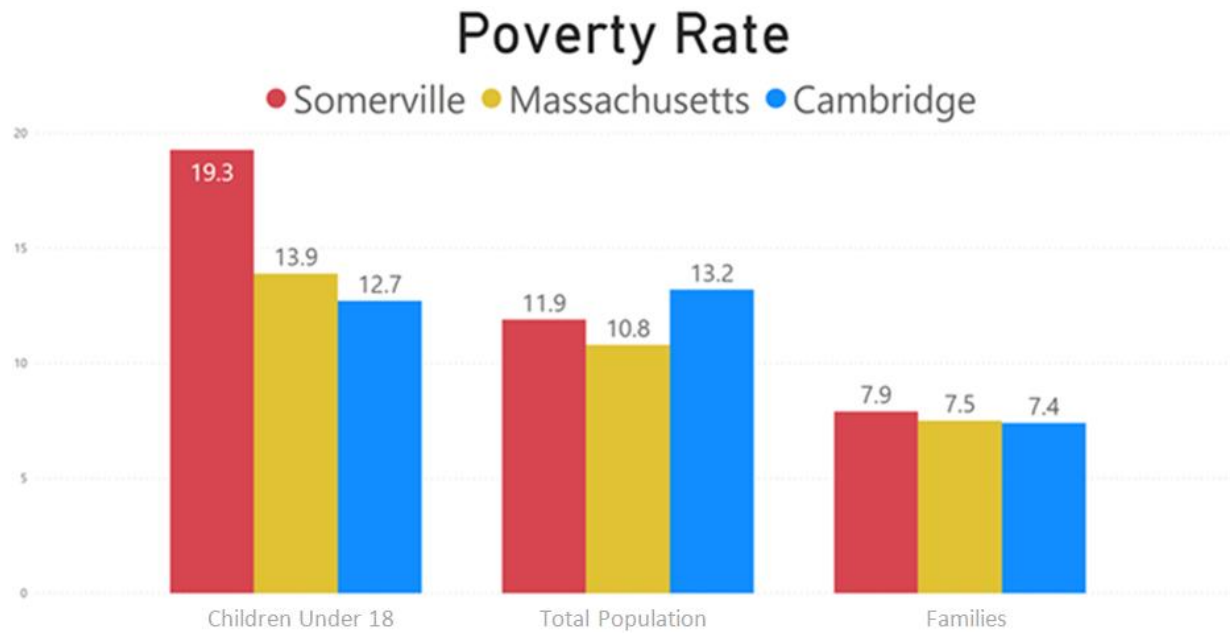
The poverty rate has decreased slightly since the time of our last assessment. The percentage of Somerville residents living below poverty is 11.95%, or 9,612 individuals. However, this still places Somerville’s current poverty rate almost 1.9% higher than the statewide average of 10%. Furthermore, approximately 15.2% of Somerville’s population – a total of 12,397 individuals – lives below 125% of the federal poverty line (which means they meet eligibility criteria for CAAS’ CSBG-funded services). 23.9% – a total of 19,223 individuals – have incomes below 200% of the federal poverty line (eligibility criteria for CSBG CARES Act-funded services)<sup>11</sup>

The poverty rate is above the state’s poverty rate when considering total population and children under 18.<sup>12</sup> The city’s estimated poverty rate for children below 18 from 2011-2015 was 22.7%.

<sup>11</sup> US Census Bureau, Source: 2018 American Community Survey (ACS): 5-year estimates “People at Specified Levels of Poverty in the Past 12 Months”; US Census Bureau, “People at Specified Levels of Poverty in the Past 12 Months (2018).”

<sup>12</sup> US Census Bureau, “Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, 2014-2018”; US Census Bureau, “Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months (2007-2011).”

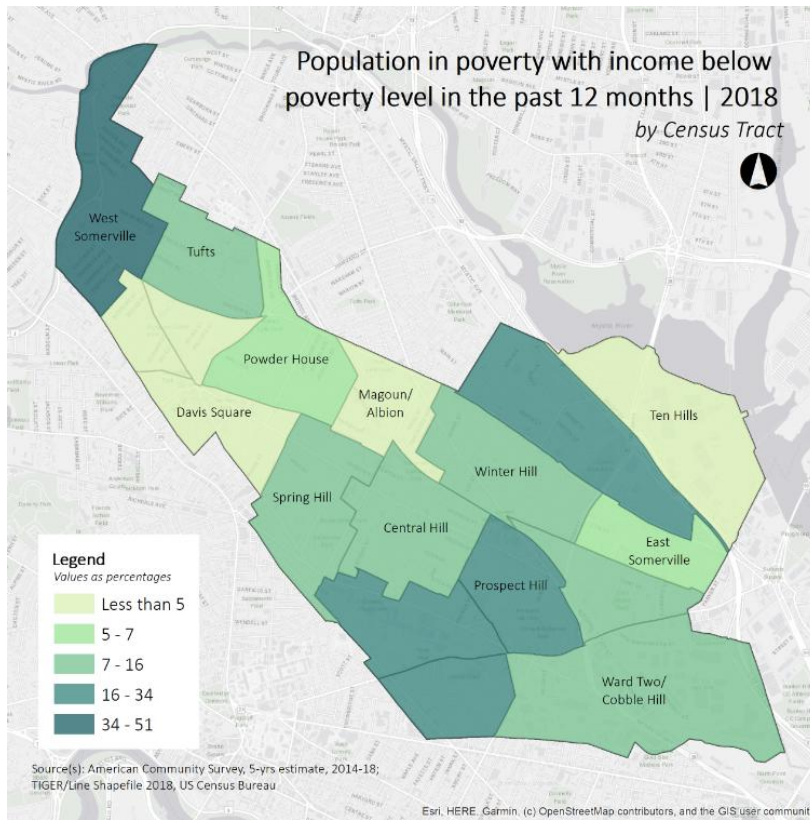
From 2012-2016, the rate fell to 20.6%.<sup>13</sup> The 2014-2018 rate was 19.3%. This is a trend to watch and consider, though the COVID-19 pandemic may reverse it.



Higher percentages of families living below the poverty line are located in West Somerville and Ten Hills (see Figure below). These neighborhoods are also where public housing developments are located, potentially skewing these results.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.



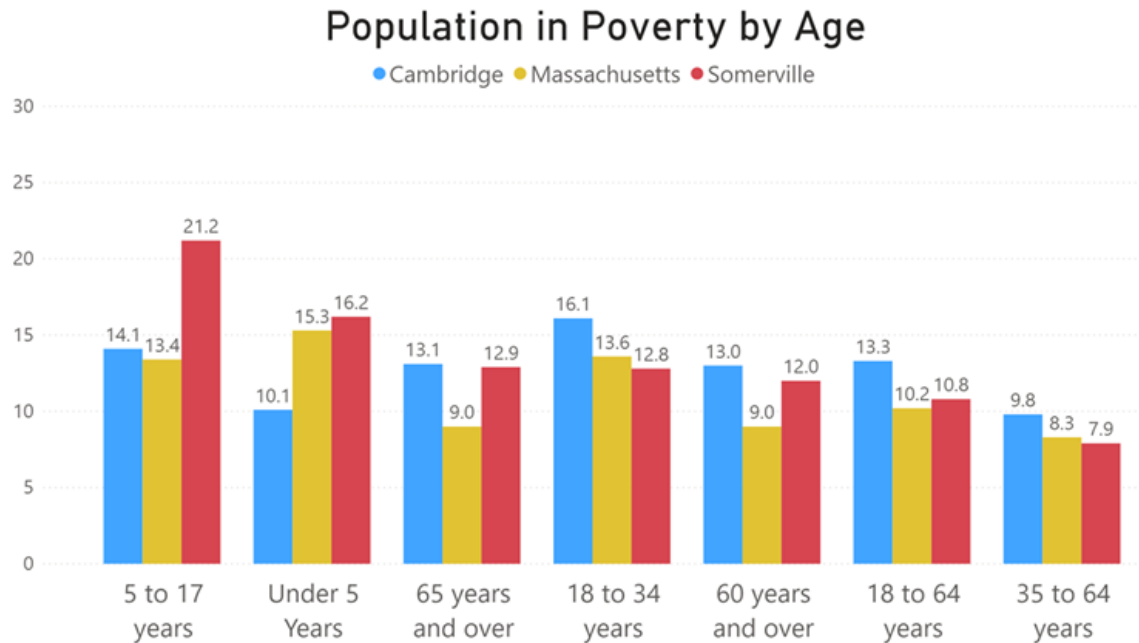
As reflected in the table below, poverty disproportionately impacts Somerville’s female population.

### Population in Poverty by Gender

| Report Area          | Total Male | Total Female | Percent Male | Percent Female |
|----------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| Somerville Estimates | 4,164      | 5,601        | 10.6%        | 13.3%          |
| Cambridge Estimates  | 6,215      | 6,616        | 13.3%        | 13.7%          |
| Massachusetts        | 306,602    | 412,992      | 19.6%        | 11.9%          |
| United States        | 19,737,150 | 25,398,000   | 12.8%        | 15.3%          |

US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2014-2018 via Community Commons

Poverty rates are also disproportionately high among children. In fact, 22.7% or 2,191 children aged 0-17 are living in households with income below the Federal Poverty Level.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2018.

Key stakeholders and low-income residents who were interviewed and surveyed as part of CAAS’ community assessment process also pointed to the disproportionate numbers of and the particular hardships experienced by women and children experiencing poverty in the City of Somerville.

### Income

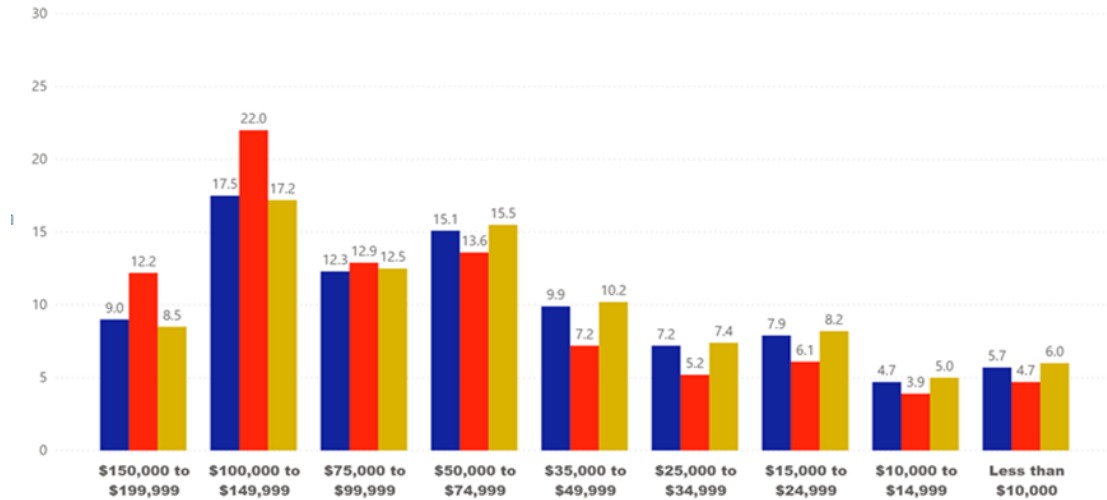
As in many communities, income inequality is stark in Somerville. The 2014-2018 5-year estimates for median household income in Somerville surpassed the Massachusetts median income. It increased to \$91,168 in 2018 representing almost 8% increase in the city’s median income of \$84,722 in 2017, and a 16% increase from the city’s median household income of \$78,673 in 2016.<sup>14</sup> The percentage of Somerville households earning more than \$100,000 appears to be increasing, while the percentage of households earning less than \$75,000 appears to be decreasing.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> US Census Bureau, “Income in the Past 12 Months, 2012-2016”; US Census Bureau, “Income in the Past 12 Months, 2011-2015”; US Census Bureau, “Income in the Past 12 Months, 2007-2011”; US Census Bureau, “Income in the Past 12 Months, 2014-2018”;

<sup>15</sup> US Census Bureau, “Income in the Past 12 Months, 2012-2016”; US Census Bureau, “Income in the Past 12 Months, 2014-2018”;

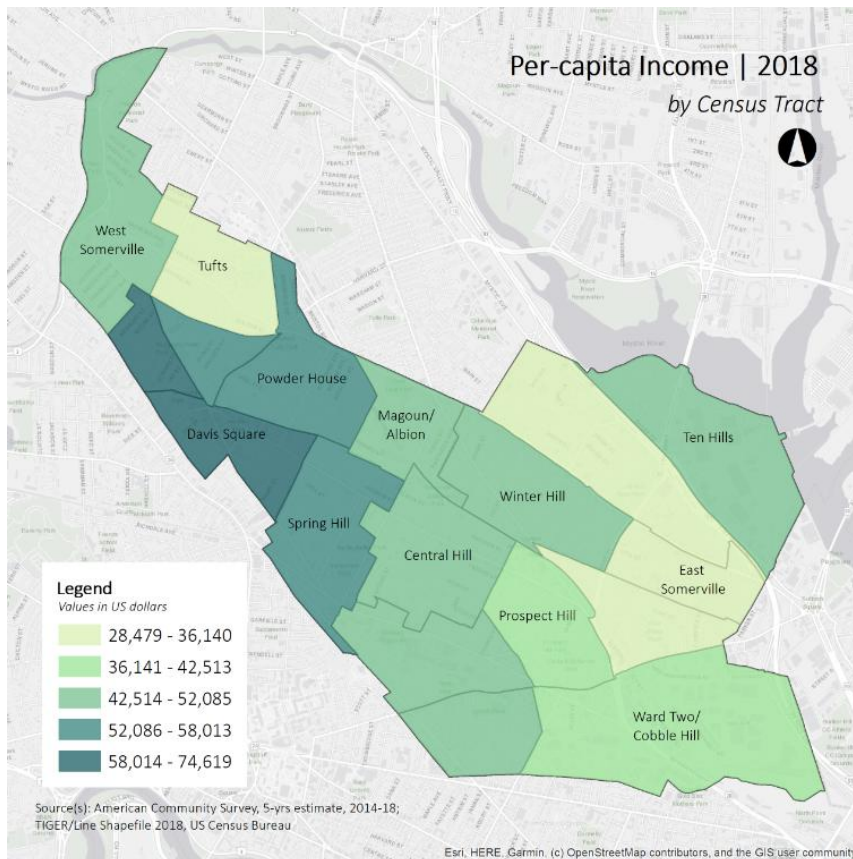
# Somerville Income Distribution

● 2017 ● 2018 ● 2016



Income distribution in Somerville. Data Source: US Census, 2014 -2018 ACS 5-year estimates

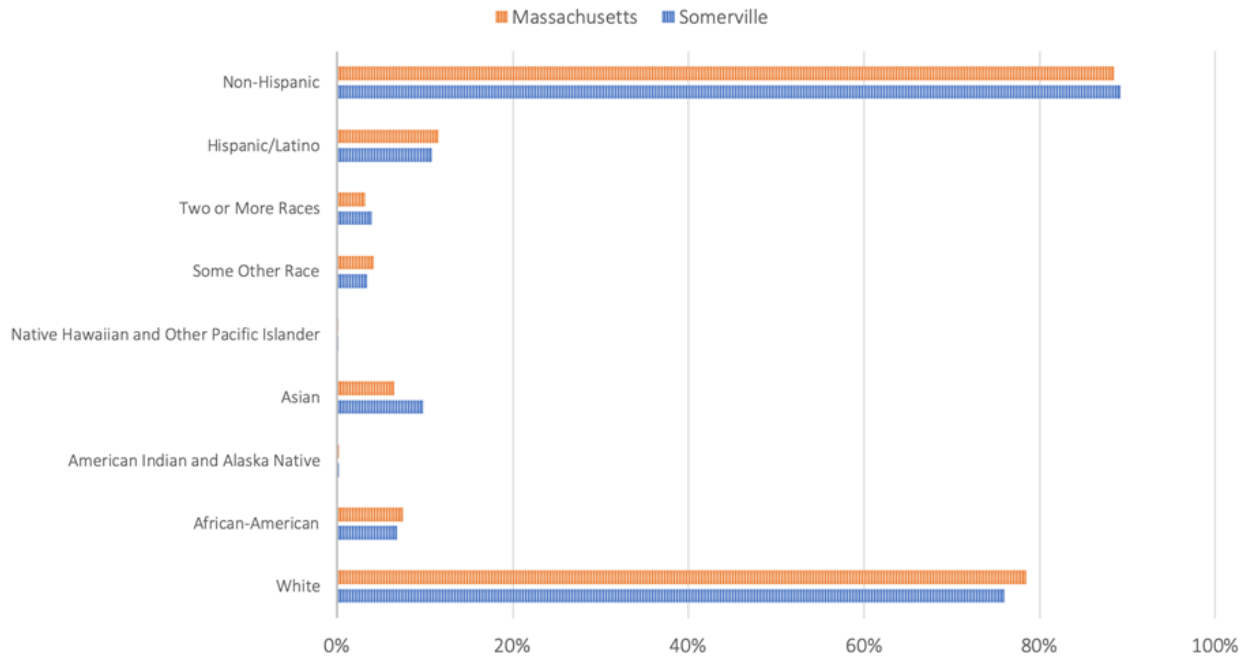
The neighborhood with the highest per capita household income in Somerville is around the Tufts and Davis Square area (see Figure below). This may be because the nearby MBTA “Red Line” stop at Davis Square pushes property costs higher in this area, requiring tenants or homeowners to have a higher income base.



## Race and Hispanic Ethnicity in Somerville

Overall, Somerville is more racially diverse than Massachusetts, with a 27.3% minority population compared with the state's minority population of 19.7%.<sup>16</sup>

The ACS 2014-2018 estimates indicate that Asian residents are the largest racial minority group, 9.4% of the population, followed by Black residents at 6.8%.<sup>17</sup>

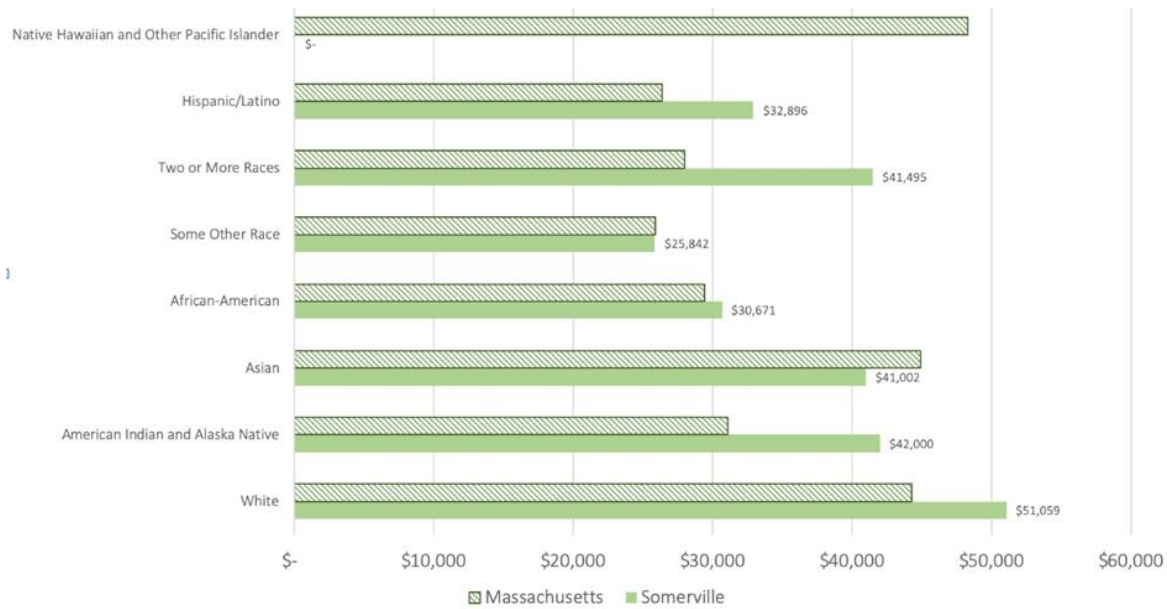


The median income across race is skewed for Somerville, and also points to an inequitable distribution.

<sup>16</sup> US Census Bureau, "Race, 2018."

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.





Sources: US Census, 2018 - ACS 5-year estimates

Poverty rates across race are similarly skewed, as reflected in the table below.

### Population in Poverty by Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin

| Race/Ethnicity                          | Somerville Estimate | Below 100% of the poverty level |
|---|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| White                                   | 61,130              | 10%                             |
| Black or African American               | 5,470               | 28.7%                           |
| American Indian or Alaska Native        | 127                 | 0%                              |
| Asian                                   | 7,835               | 16.7%                           |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander     | 9                   | 0%                              |
| Some other race                         | 2,762               | 11.1%                           |
| Two or more races                       | 3,112               | 9.4%                            |
| Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race) | 8,667               | 17%                             |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2018

### Employment

Somerville’s key industries include health services, retail, business services and creative design.<sup>18</sup> The economic makeup is influenced by the dense residential population’s ability to

<sup>18</sup> “OSPCD - Economic Development - City of Somerville.”

support retail and numerous eateries in proximity to Boston and Cambridge and current building stock. Over 80% of the establishments in Somerville are considered small businesses and employ fewer than 10 people; accounting for only 24% of total employment. Compared to the large residential population, Somerville has a very small base of local employment.<sup>19</sup>

According to the ACS 2018, Somerville’s unemployment rate was 1.7 compared with 5.4% statewide.

| <b><u>Report Area</u></b> | <b><u>Size of Labor</u></b> | <b><u>Employed</u></b> | <b><u>Unemployed</u></b> | <b><u>Unemployment rate</u></b> |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Somerville                | 54,233                      | 53,331                 | 902                      | 1.7%                            |
| Cambridge                 | 70,480                      | 69,385                 | 1095                     | 1.6%                            |

Data Source: ACS 2018: Employment Status Table

Looking at the same unemployment numbers by race, we see an inequitable distribution of hardship.<sup>20</sup>

| <b>Race/Ethnicity</b>                   | <b>Somerville Estimate</b> | <b>% Unemployed</b> |
|---|----------------------------|---------------------|
| White                                   | 61,130                     | 3.3%                |
| Black or African American               | 5,470                      | 15.6%               |
| American Indian or Alaska Native        | 127                        | 0%                  |
| Asian                                   | 7,835                      | 4.0%                |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander     | 9                          | 0%                  |
| Some other race                         | 2,762                      | 2.9%                |
| Two or more races                       | 3,112                      | 2.9%                |
| Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race) | 8,667                      | 3.6%                |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2018

Despite relatively low unemployment, CAAS’ community survey respondents and interviewees all identified the supply of and access to jobs that pay enough to cover basic living expenses as significant challenges. A number of interviewees also suggested that older age and minority

<sup>19</sup> Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development, “Trends in Somerville: Population Technical Report.”

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.; US Census Bureau, “Unemployment Rates, 2018, TableID: DP03”



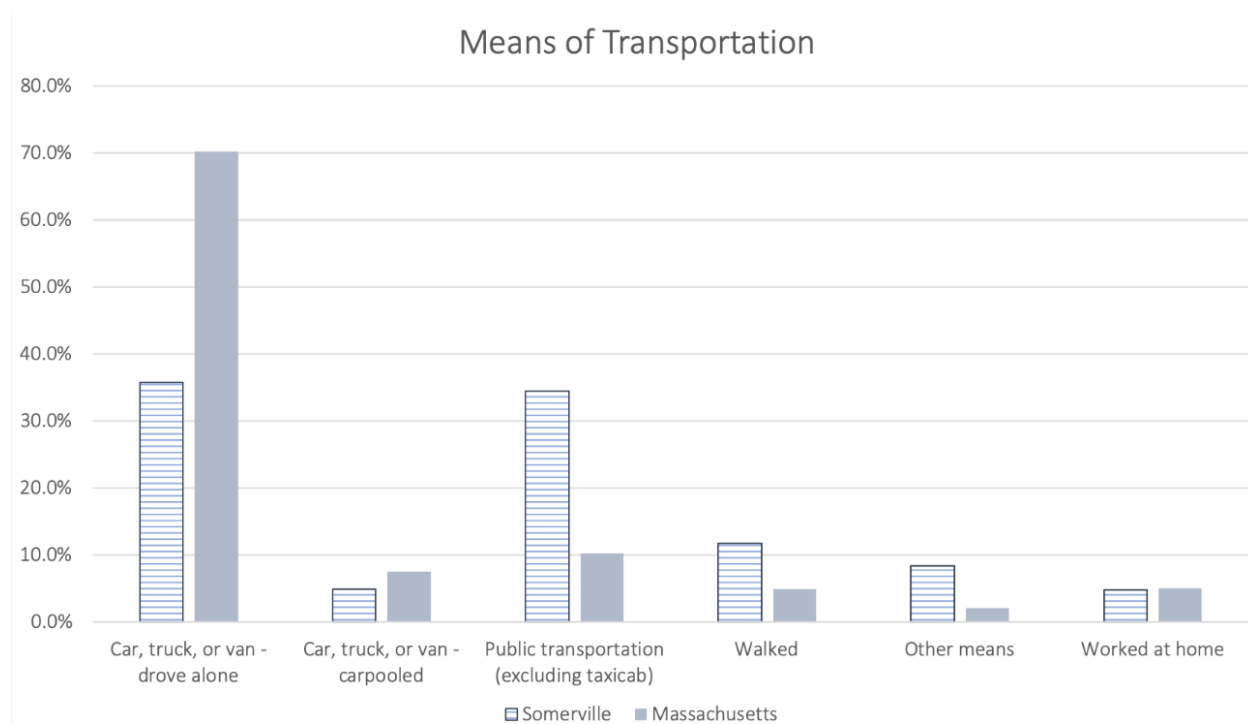
status may negatively impact employment outcomes. Employment issues are discussed in greater detail later in this report. Unemployment is an area of need where the COVID-19 pandemic has had a particularly pronounced impact.

Transportation

The average time travel to work for Somerville residents is 32 minutes and for the state this number is 29.7 minutes.

The second highest mode of transportation to work for workers in Somerville is public transportation (35.0%), which is over 25% higher than the state average.<sup>21</sup>

The higher percentage of workers taking public transportation may reflect the over 34% fewer workers in Somerville who drive alone to work, compared to the state. This is supported the fact that 24.4% Somerville residents don’t have any vehicles. This number is almost two times higher in comparison to state (12%).<sup>22</sup>



Data Source: US Census, 2018 ACS 5-year estimates.

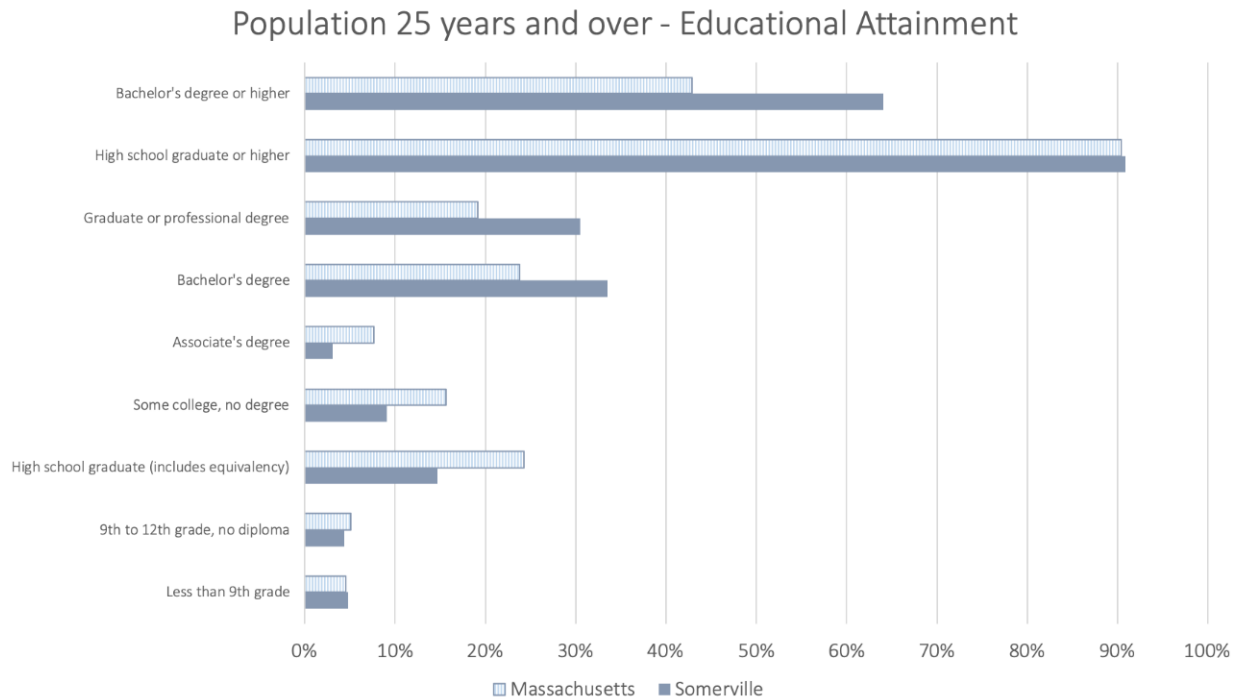
Educational Attainment

<sup>21</sup> US Census Bureau, “Selected Economic Characteristics, 2018.”

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.; US Census Bureau, “Selected Economic Characteristics, 2018.”

The highest percentage of education attained in Somerville among the options noted is a Bachelor’s degree, followed by a Master’s degree, and High School diploma (see Figure below).<sup>23</sup>

The percentage of Somerville residents that have attained Some Colleges or Associate’s Degrees is below the state’s average, while the percentage of Somerville’s population who have attained less than High School is almost the same as the state average.<sup>24</sup>



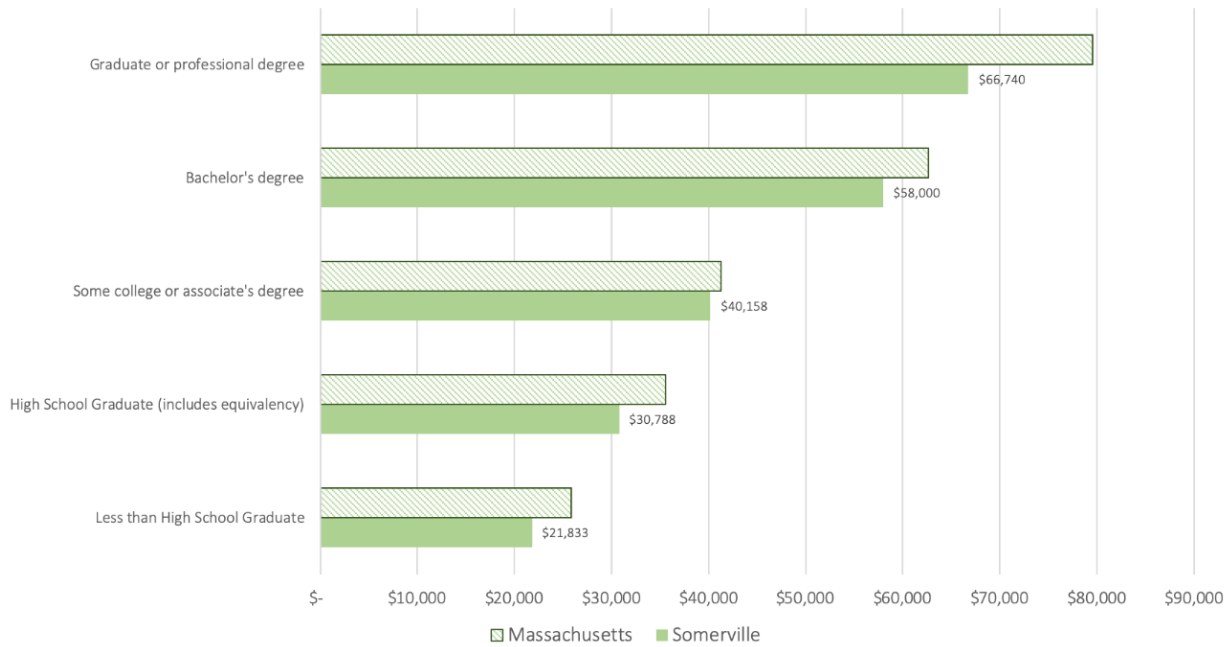
Data Source: US Census: Education Attainment 2018 ACS 5-year estimates.

The impact of educational attainment on income is evident:

<sup>23</sup> US Census Bureau, “Table 25: Educational Attainment for Population 25 Years and Over, 2014-2018.”

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.; US Census Bureau, “Table 25: Educational Attainment for Population 25 Years and Over, 2014-2018.”

### Median Income by Educational Attainment



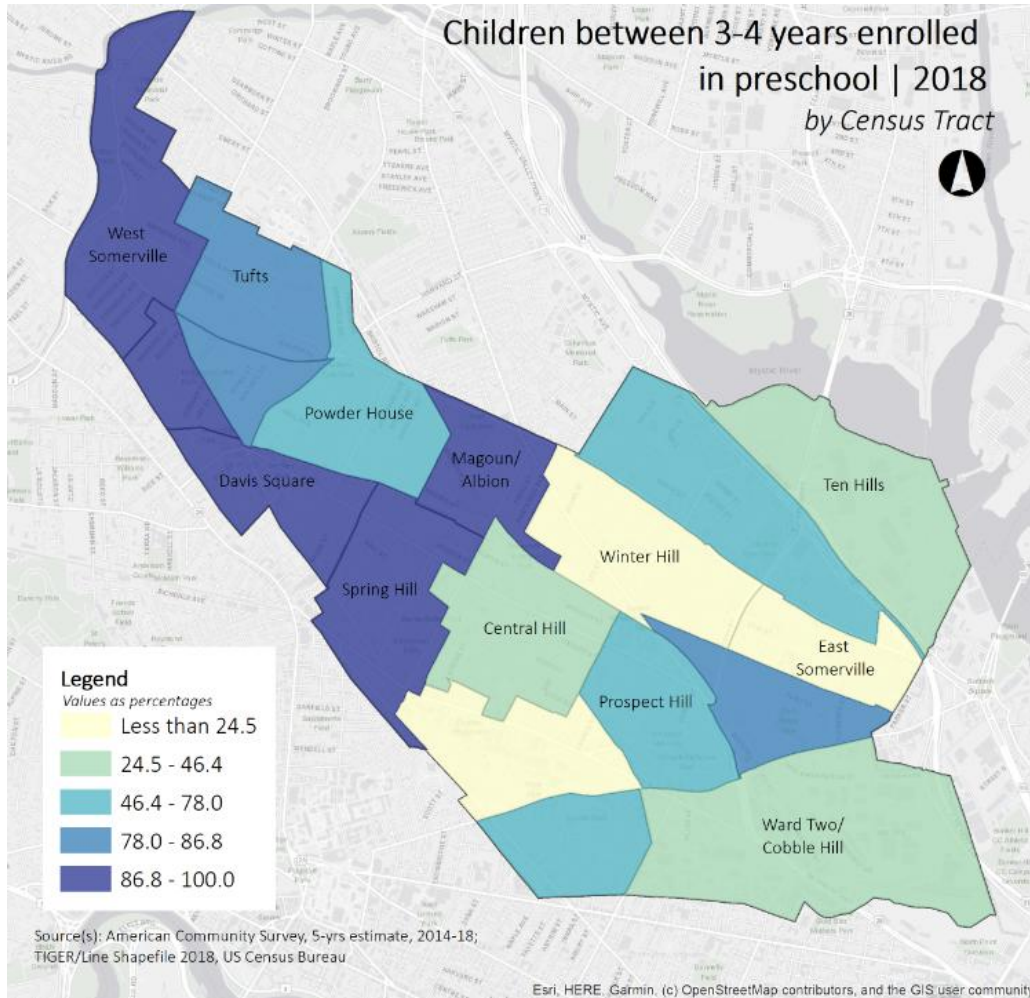
### Preschool and Head Start in Somerville

According to ACS 2018, the Somerville community has 3,408 children under 5 years or 4.2%. This is lower than in Cambridge at 4.4% and Massachusetts at 5.2%. The percentage of households with children under 18 years is 15.2%. The population of 3 to 4 years is 1,330. The estimate shows that only 66% of them are enrolled in preschool.<sup>25</sup>

The percentages of children age 3 and 4 who are unenrolled in preschool are concentrated in East Somerville, Winter Hill, Spring Hill, and west of Prospect Hill (see Figure below).<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Percentage of children 3 to 4 years enrolled in preschool, ACS 2018:1-year estimates, TableID: S1401

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.



Percentage of children 3 to 4 years enrolled in preschool by Census Tract. Data Source: US Census, 2014-2018 ACS 5-year estimates

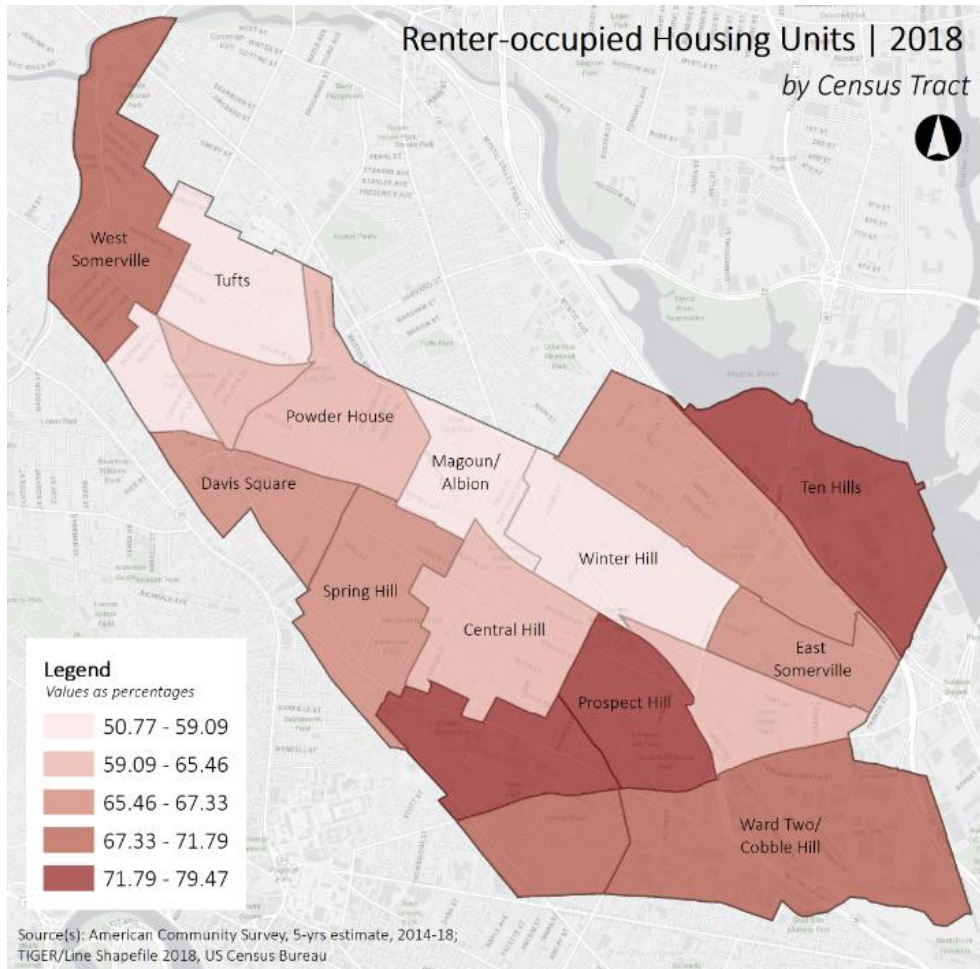
According to ACS 2018, there are approximately 550 children under the age of 5 living in poverty, 219 of which are 3 and 4 year olds.

Survey respondents and interviewees all identified access to high-quality, affordable preschool and childcare as significant challenges. These issues are discussed in greater detail later in this report.

## Housing

Like much of the Greater Boston Area, Somerville residents are facing affordable housing challenges associated with gentrification. Overall, household incomes in Somerville have increased, but at a slower rate compared to the increase of housing prices. The Somerville Housing Needs Assessment lists housing concerns for the future to be displacement of people belonging to minority groups, who are disabled, or are who elderly.

In addition, the trend showing a shift in housing stock from ownership to rentals and the rise in rental market prices may change the social fabric of the community to be less diverse and inclusive.<sup>27</sup>



The median monthly housing cost in Somerville is estimated to be \$1,835 in 2018. This is higher than the estimated state’s median monthly cost of \$1,486.<sup>28</sup> The median monthly cost was steadily increasing over the last few years. In 2016, the median monthly housing in Somerville was \$1,630 vs. \$1,389 of the state’s median.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Sweet, Lynne D. “Somerville Housing Needs Assessment.” Newton, MA: LDS Consulting Group, LLC, December 2015.

<sup>28</sup> US Census, “Housing Characteristics, ACS: 2018 - 5 Year Estimates”, TableID: DP04

<sup>29</sup> US Census Bureau, “Financial Characteristics, 2014-2018”; US Census Bureau, “Financial Characteristics, 2014-2018.”

### Monthly Housing Costs by Percentage of Occupied Housing Units

| Monthly Housing Cost | Somerville | Cambridge |
|----------------------|------------|-----------|
| Less than \$1,000    | 17.5%      | 17.7%     |
| \$1,000 to \$1,499   | 16.9%      | 11.6%     |
| \$1,500 to \$1,999   | 17.69%     | 29.6%     |
| \$2,000 to \$2,499   | 19%        | 21.6%     |
| \$2,500 to \$2,999   | 10.1%      | 15.3%     |
| \$3,000 or more      | 6.9%       | 16.2%     |

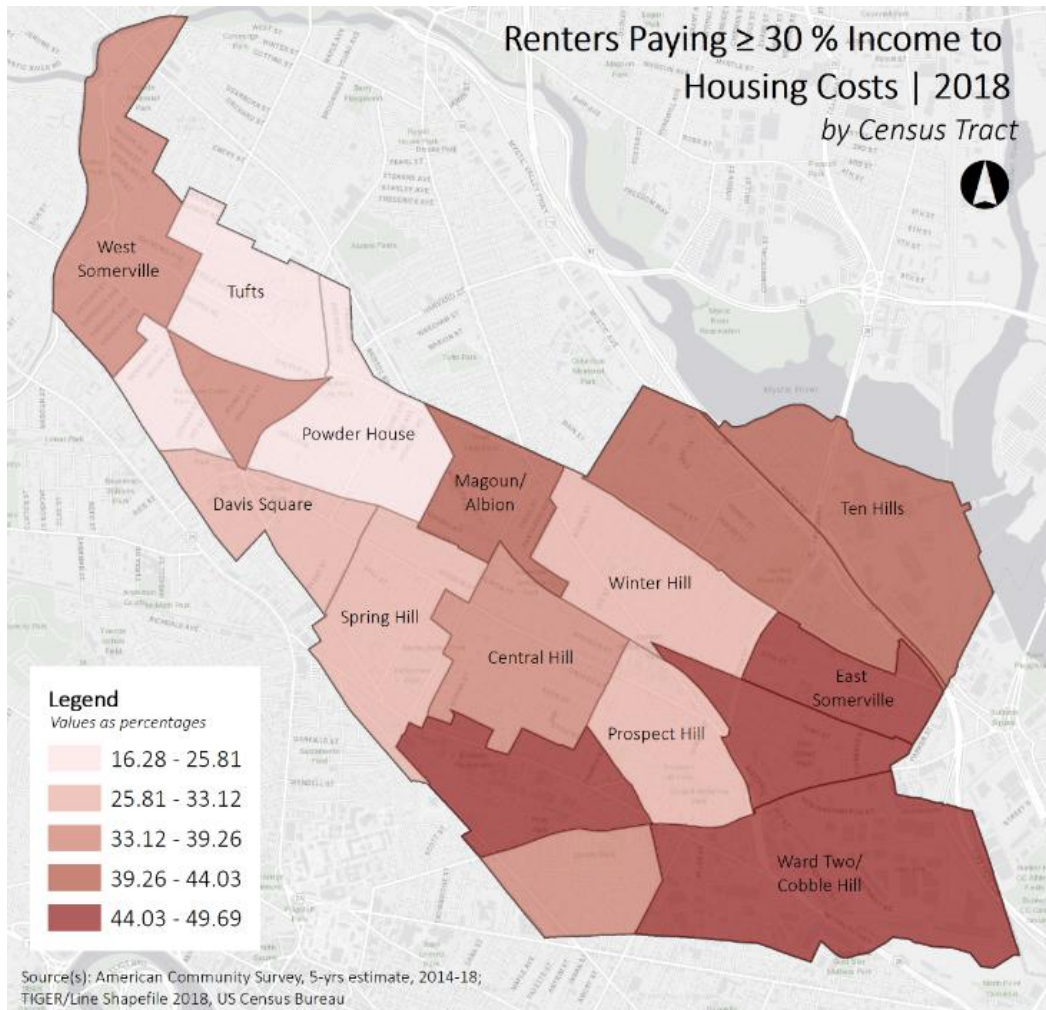
Data Source: US Census, 2018 ACS 5-year estimates, Monthly Housing Costs

Cost-burdened households, meaning that their housing costs exceed 30% of their total household income, make up 37% of households in Somerville, and 49.9% in Massachusetts.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Town Core Level Data Set”





Households that are spending a higher percentage of their household income on gross rent are located in the eastern tracts of the City as well as in West Somerville.

The spatial pattern follows that of percentage of households occupied by renters. There is a high percentage of households occupied by renters in West and East Somerville.

Unlike most cities and towns in Massachusetts, Somerville is a city of renters. In 2018, approximately two thirds (66.4%) of the housing units in Somerville were renter-occupied, while the remaining one third (33.6%) were owner-occupied.<sup>31</sup>

Somerville has historically been an affordable place to live, but, as in many other communities in the greater Boston area, the cost of housing is increasing rapidly. As of 2018, the median value of owner-occupied housing units was \$616,100, while the median rent was \$2,071. Meanwhile, vacancy rates are very low. The homeowner vacancy rate was just 0.7% in 2018, and the rental vacancy rate was 2.7%.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, “Selected Housing Characteristics, 2018”, TableID: DP04

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

The inadequate supply of affordable housing was identified as the most significant area of need by low-income residents surveyed as part of CAAS' community assessment. This finding and the statistical data set forth above found further support and affirmation among individual interviewees. Housing issues are discussed in greater detail later in this report.



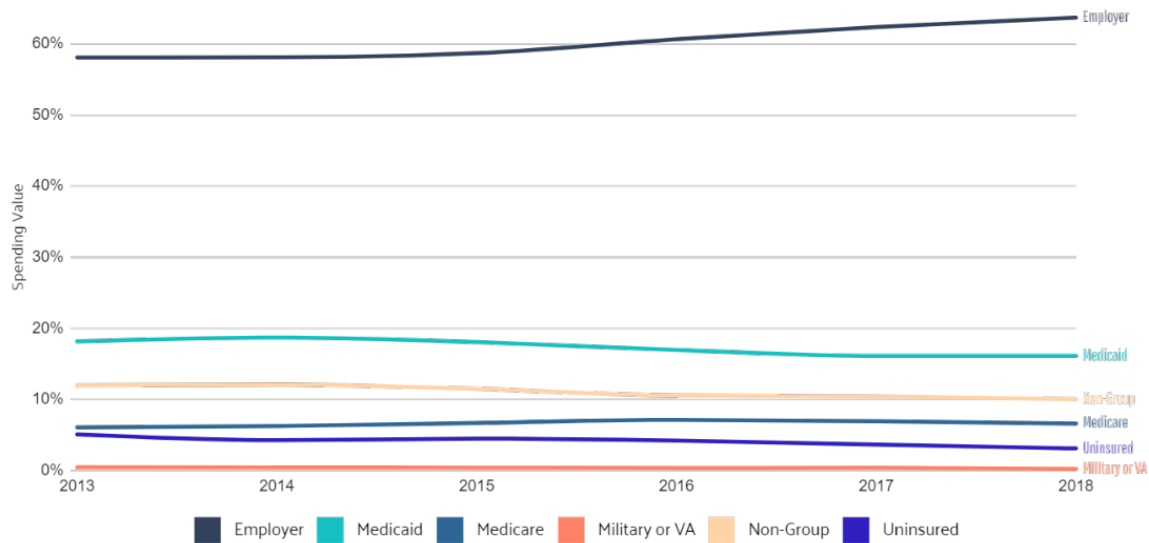
## Health

The most recent available health data for Somerville is from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health for 2010. Fertility rates, infant mortality rates, teenage pregnancy rates, and suicide and homicide rates in Somerville are lower than those of Massachusetts overall. However, HIV/AIDS prevalence in Somerville is almost twice the rate compared to that of the state, and the number of lead poisoning cases per 1,000 children is more than two times the number in Massachusetts. Mortality and cancer deaths may be associated with particulate emissions from Route 93 and McGrath Highway.

| 2010   | Somerville | Cambridge | Massachusetts |
|--|------------|-----------|---------------|
| Fertility rate   | 39.5       | 36.8      | 53.8          |
| Infant mortality rate  | 2.1        | 1.6       | 4.4           |
| Births to adolescent mothers   | 3.3        | 1.2       | 5.4           |
| Low birth weight   | 8.0        | 7.3       | 7.8           |
| Lead poisoning cases<br>(blood lead levels greater than or equal to 25 µg/dL in children ages 6 mos - 5 yrs) per 1,000 children (per | 0.8        | 0.0       | 0.3           |
| HIV/AIDS prevalence  | 421.9      | 394.0     | 261.0         |
| Mortality rate (per 100,000 people)  | 753.9      | 575.3     | 667.8         |
| Cancer deaths (per 100,000 people)   | 213.2      | 146.7     | 170.3         |
| Lung cancer deaths (per 100,000 people)  | 65.8       | 31.9      | 47.2          |
| Suicide (per 100,000 people)   | 5.3        | 6.7       | 9.0           |
| Homicide (per 100,000 people)  | 1.3        | 0.0       | 3.1           |

2010 Health data for Somerville, Cambridge and Massachusetts. Data Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health. 2010. "Health Status Indicators Report for Somerville." MassCHIP: Massachusetts Community Health Information Profile.

The following chart shows how the percent of uninsured individuals in Somerville, MA changed over time compared with the percent of individuals enrolled in various types of health insurance.

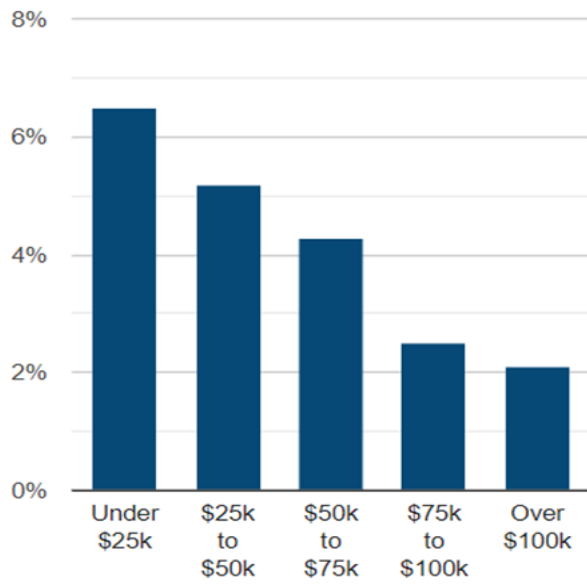


Between 2017 and 2018, the percent of uninsured citizens in Somerville, MA decreased slightly from 3.7% to 3.2%.

According to the 2019 ACS Survey, 96.9% of the population of Somerville, MA has health coverage, with 63.7% on employee plans, 16.2% on Medicaid, 6.7% on Medicare, 10.1% on non-group plans, and 0.3% on military or VA plans. The likelihood of having insurance decreases as income decreases.

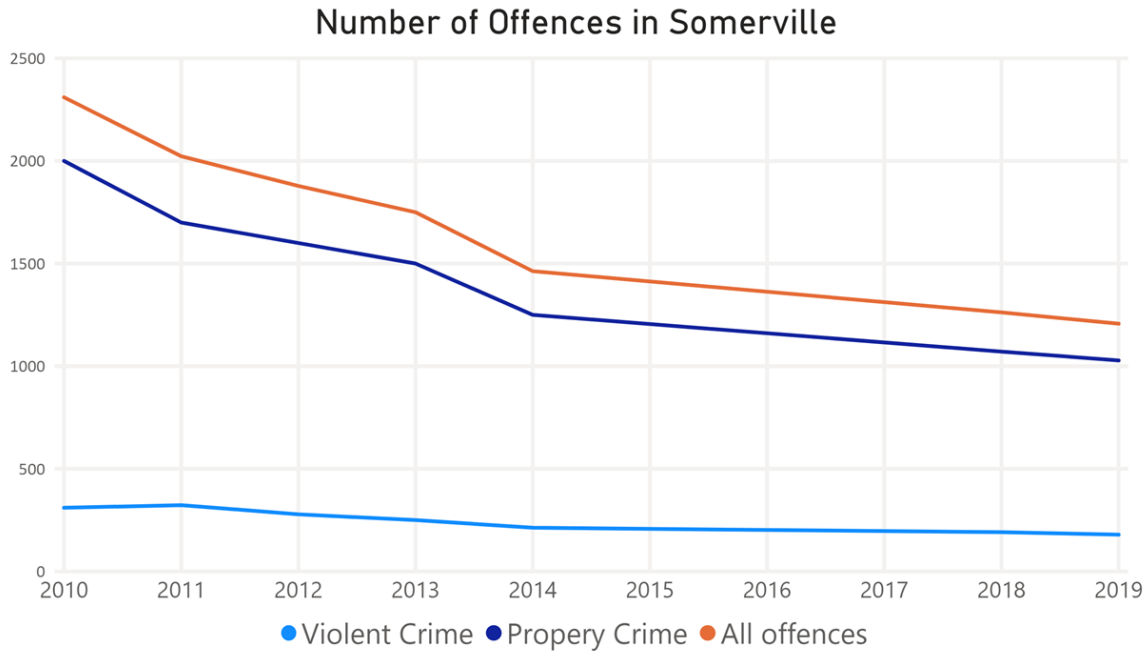
Of respondents to CAAS' community survey, nearly half struggled to afford health insurance premiums or prescription drug costs. 35% of respondents cited access to mental health services as an area of significant need. Similarly, key stakeholders discussed the costs associated with healthcare as a significant challenge.

Percent of People with No Insurance by Income Group



## Crime

Crime in Somerville decreased by about 48% from 2010 to 2019.<sup>33</sup> During this period, the number of violent crimes dropped by 42% and the number of property crimes dropped by 51%.<sup>34</sup>



Number of offenses in Somerville from 2010 to 2019. Data Source: Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics

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<sup>33</sup> “Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics,” 2019. Ucrdatatool.Gov. <http://www.ucrdatatool.gov/>.

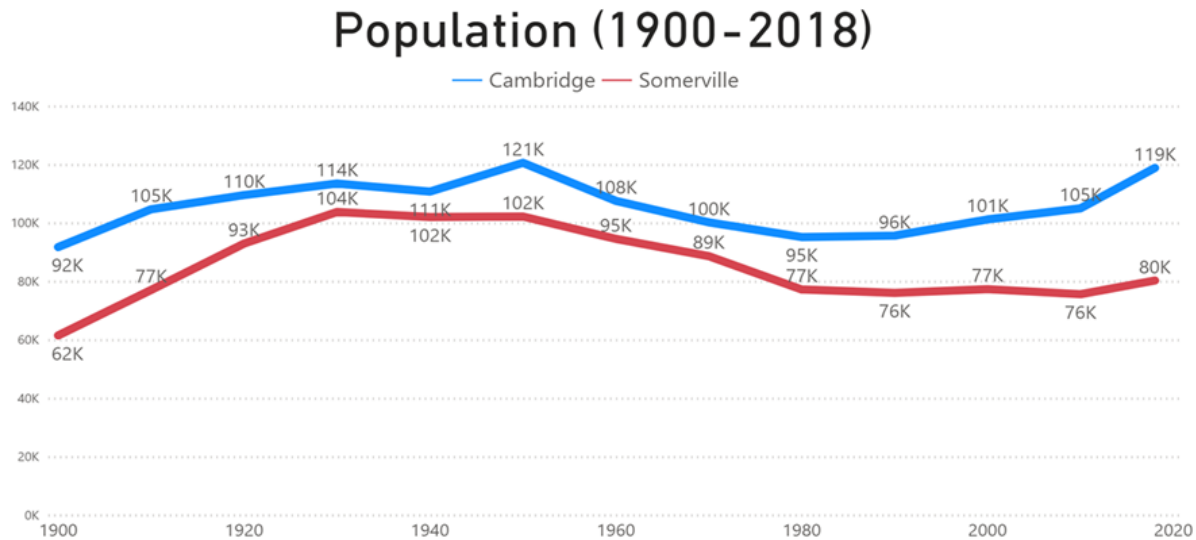
<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

## Cambridge

The City of Cambridge is situated south of Somerville and north of Boston across the Charles River; it is home to a culturally diverse population, along with world-renowned universities and software and biotechnology research centers.<sup>35</sup> First settled in 1630, Cambridge was initially known as Newtowne, and by 1638 it had developed a school, marketplace, and meetinghouse.<sup>36</sup> In 1636, Harvard University was founded as one of the first colleges in America. By 1846, Cambridge was officially a city, bringing together Old Cambridge, Cambridgeport, and East Cambridge. Around the 1900s, European immigrants from Italy, Portugal, and Poland started to arrive in the city.<sup>37</sup>

### Population

Today Cambridge is the fourth most populous city in the state, behind Boston, Worcester, Springfield.<sup>38</sup> From 1950 to 1980, the population in Cambridge decreased, but that trend turned about after 1990.<sup>39</sup> According to the ACS 2018, Cambridge had a population of 118,977. Population increased by 11.6% since 2010 (see Figure below).



Somerville and Cambridge Population from 1950 to 2018 Data Source: US Census Bureau, 2014-2018 ACS 5-year estimates.

### Age

<sup>35</sup> Cambridge Historical Commission, “Brief History of Cambridge, Mass. -.”

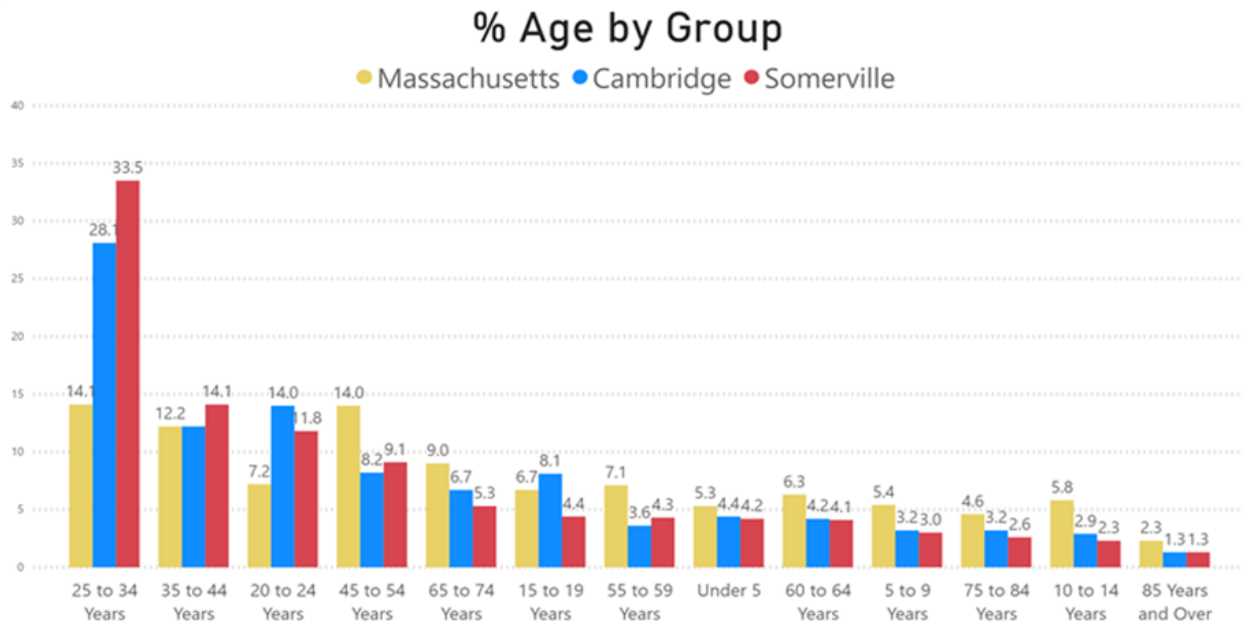
<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> “Population Estimates, July 1, 2018”

<sup>39</sup> Cambridge Community Development Department, “City of Cambridge, Massachusetts: Statistical Profile”; US Census Bureau, “Table 1: Total Population.”

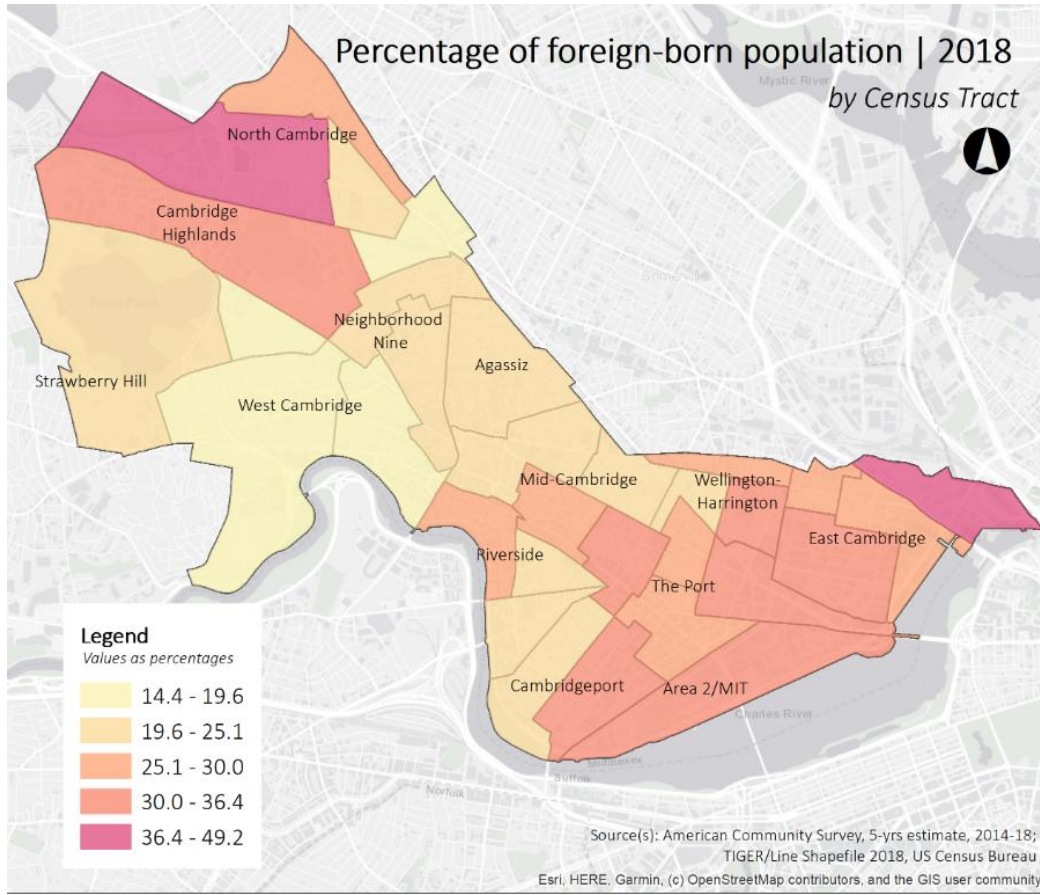
The density of universities in Cambridge is reflected in its age demographics. In 2018, the estimated median age of the Cambridge population was 30.4 years, with 42.1% of the population between the ages of 20 and 34 years, compared to Massachusetts with only 21.3% falling into this age category (see Figure below).<sup>40</sup> This suggests that Cambridge mainly consists of students and young professionals. There are 16% fewer residents in the age group 35-44 years compared to the 25-34 year age group, suggesting that more than half of individuals or families are moving out as they age. The population under 18 years old comprises 12.4% of the city’s total population.<sup>41</sup>



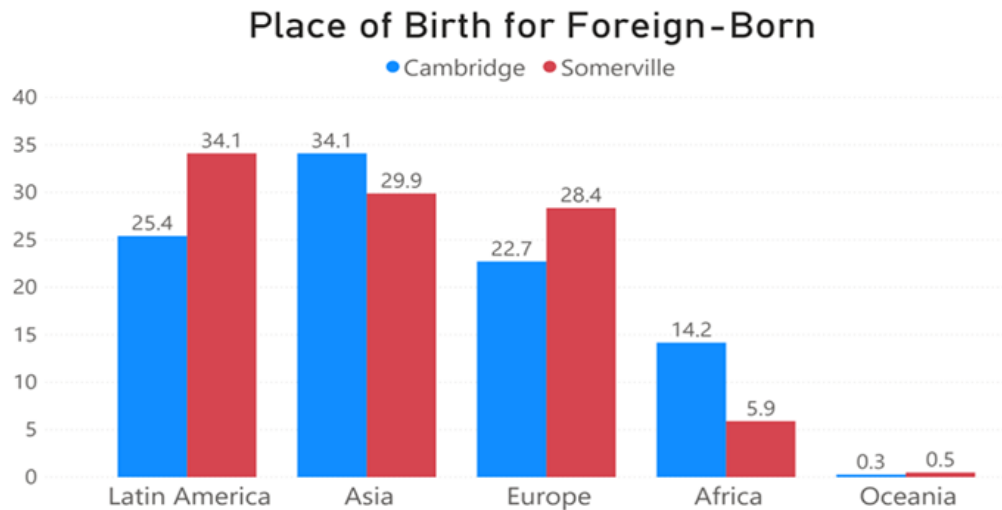
Immigration

<sup>40</sup> QuickFacts Cambridge city, Massachusetts, US Census Bureau, ACS: Age, 2018.”

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.



It is estimated that 24% of the Cambridge population is the foreign-born, which is higher than the foreign-born population proportion in Massachusetts (15.7%).<sup>42</sup> The period of entry with the highest percentage of incoming foreign-born residents was before 2000 at 36.4%.<sup>43</sup>



<sup>42</sup> US Census Bureau, “Table 134: Year of Entry for the Foreign-Born Population, 2014-2018.”

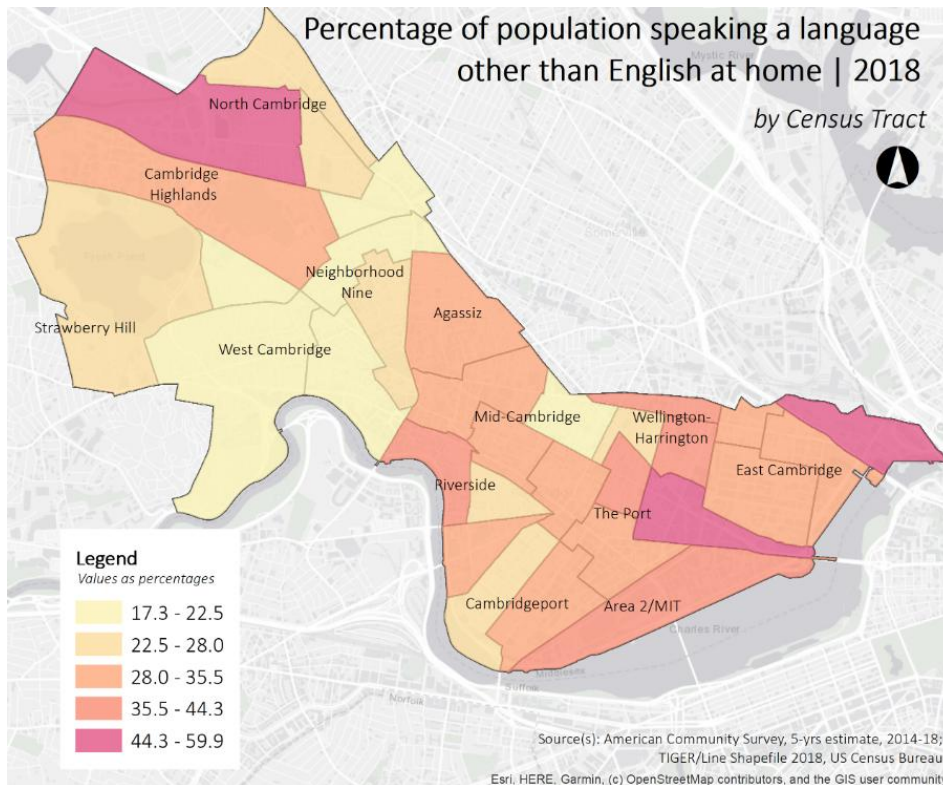
<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

Somerville and Cambridge foreign-born population by place of birth. Data Source: US Census, ACS 2007-11 and 2014-18 5-year estimates. Place of Birth for the Foreign-Born Population.

### Languages Spoken by Household

With a foreign-born population of 24%, Cambridge hosts 34 languages spoken at home.<sup>44</sup>

The top 3 languages spoken in households other than English are Spanish (6.7%), Chinese (5.0%), and African languages (2.3%).<sup>45</sup>



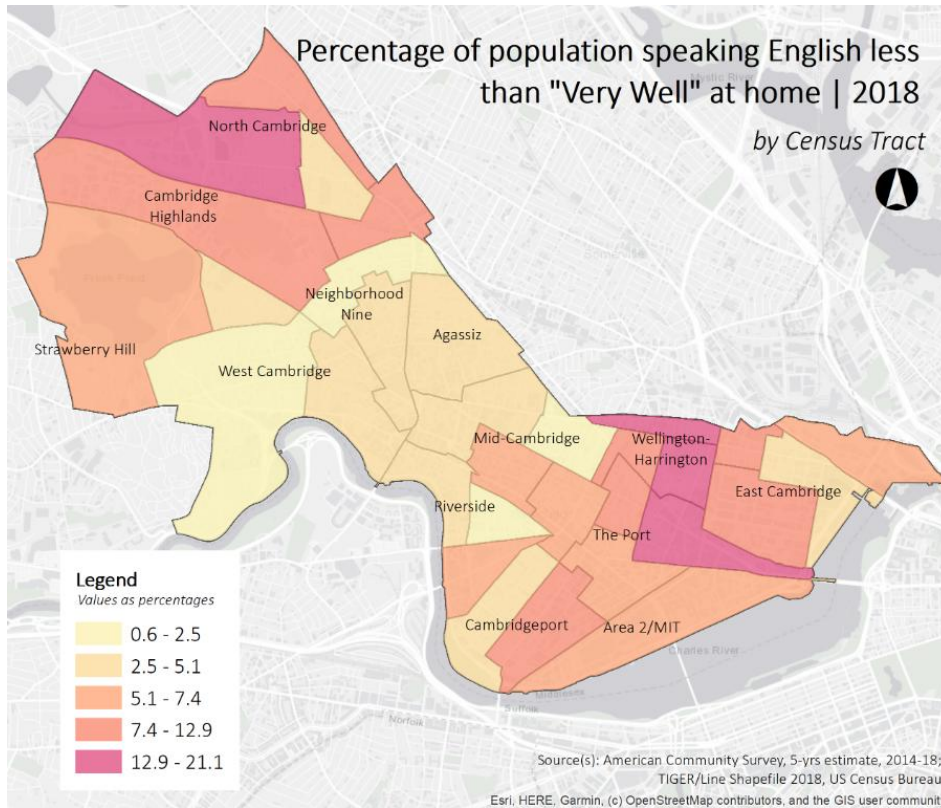
There is a higher percentage of households with limited English located in North Cambridge and East Cambridge than elsewhere in the city (see Figure below).<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> US Census Bureau, “Table 134: Year of Entry for the Foreign-Born Population, 2014-2018.”

<sup>45</sup> US Census Bureau, “Linguistically Isolated, 2014-2018.”

<sup>46</sup> US Census Bureau, “Population with Limited English, 2014-2018.”





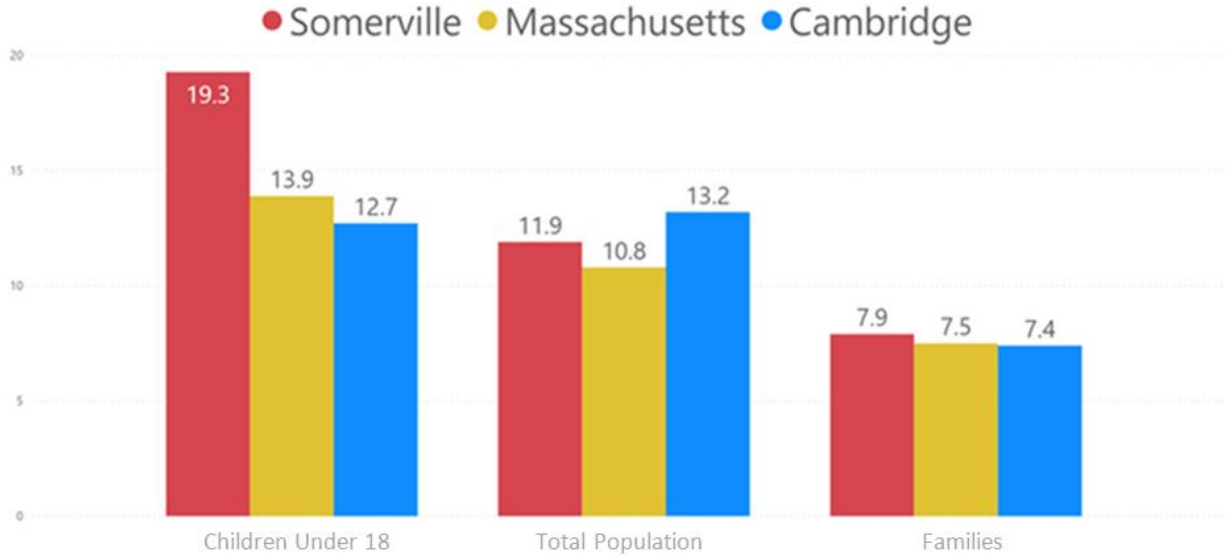
## Poverty

According to the 2014-2018 American Community Survey 13.0% of all persons and 7.4% of all families had incomes below the poverty line. The estimated poverty rate from 2014-2018 for children in Cambridge is 12.7%.<sup>47</sup> The poverty rate in Cambridge is below the state's poverty rate when considering total population and children under 18.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> US Census Bureau, "Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, 2014-2018."

# Poverty Rate



The poverty rate has slightly decreased for families and children in Cambridge when analyzing the estimated change between 2012-2016 compared to 2014-2018. The change at this time could be negligible (1-3%), nevertheless it is a trend to watch and consider.<sup>49</sup>

As reflected in the table below, poverty disproportionately impacts Cambridge’s female population.

## Population in Poverty by Gender

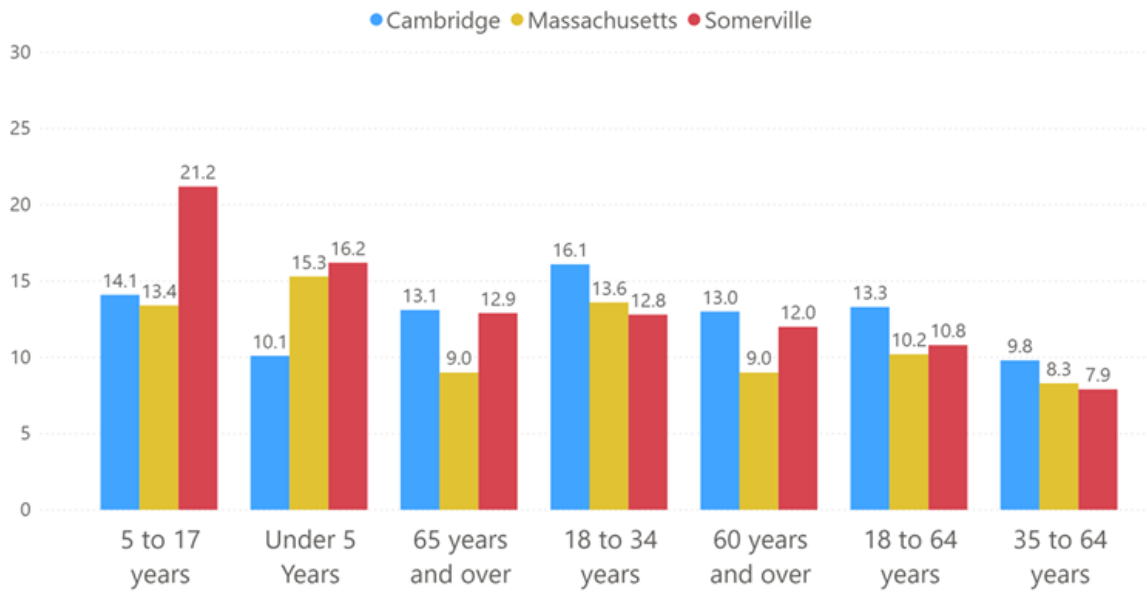
| Report Area          | Total Male | Total Female | Percent Male | Percent Female |
|----------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| Somerville Estimates | 4,164      | 5,601        | 10.6%        | 13.3%          |
| Cambridge Estimates  | 6,215      | 6,616        | 13.3%        | 13.7%          |
| Massachusetts        | 306,602    | 412,992      | 19.6%        | 11.9%          |
| United States        | 19,737,150 | 25,398,000   | 12.8%        | 15.3%          |

US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2014-2018 via Community Commons

Poverty rates are also disproportionately high among children. In fact, 13% of children aged 0-17 are living in households with income below the Federal Poverty Level.

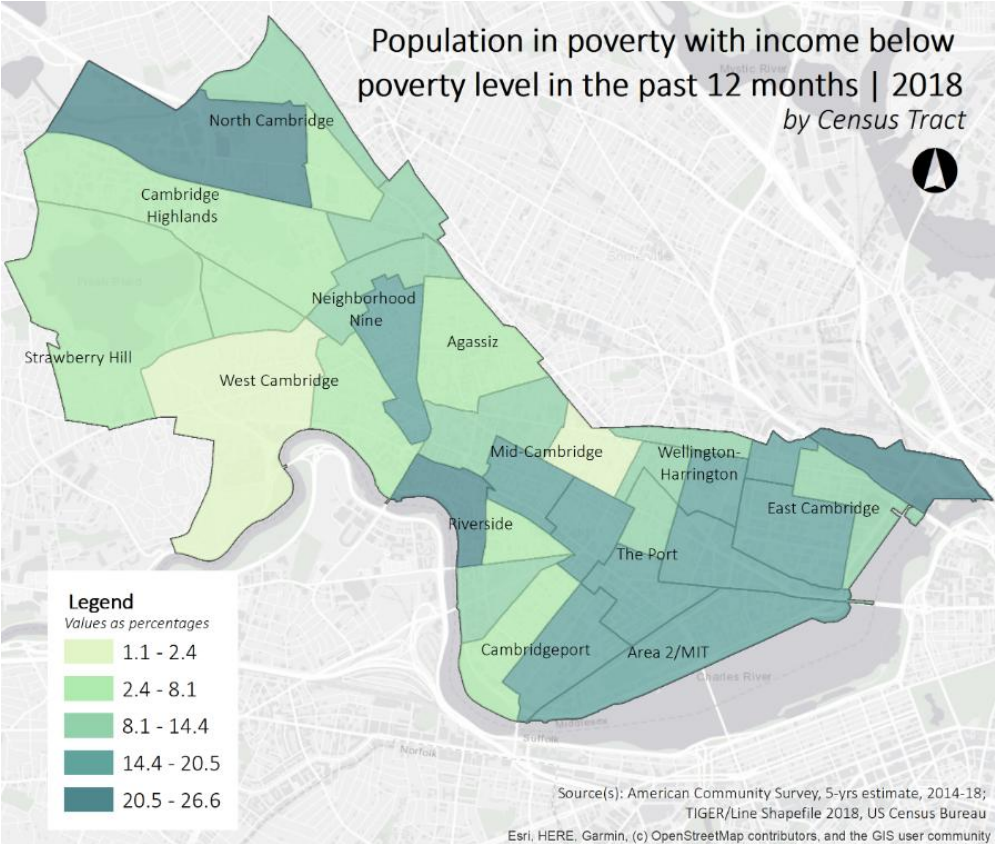
<sup>49</sup> Ibid.; US Census Bureau, “Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, 2014-2018.”

# Population in Poverty by Age



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2018.

There are higher percentages of families living below the poverty line located in North Cambridge, and the tracts of the City furthest to the south and east (see Figure below).

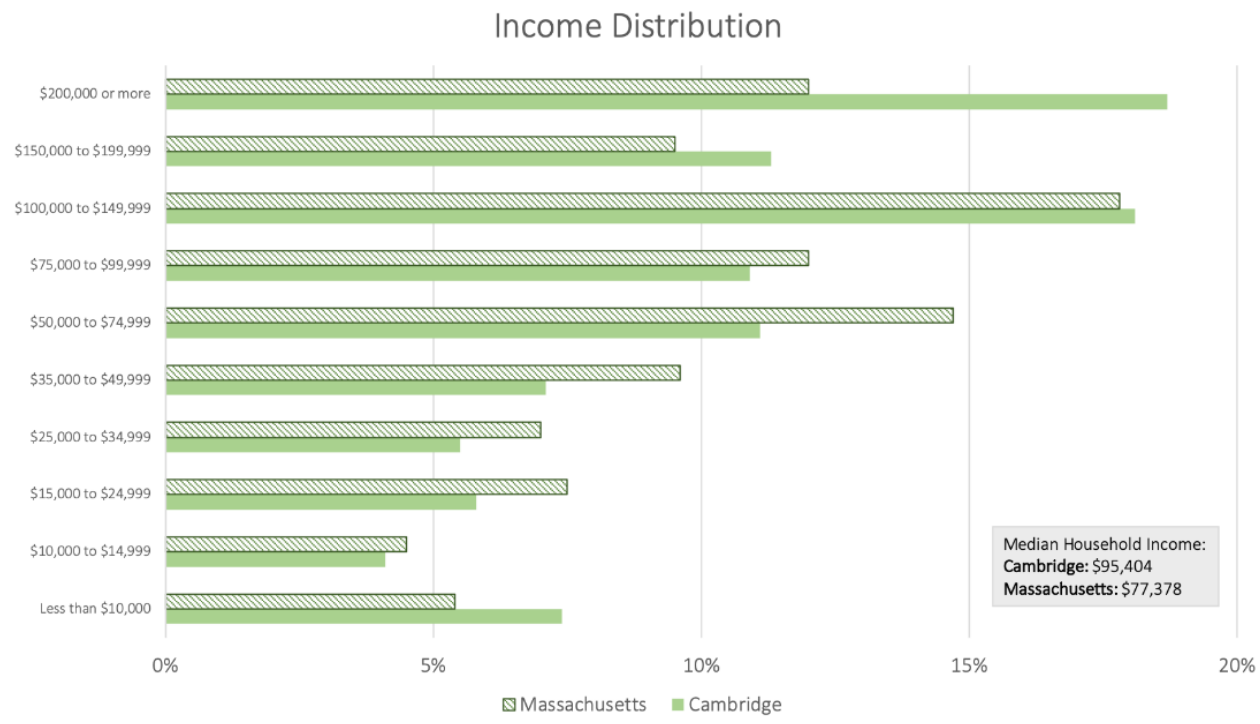


## Income

Compared to Massachusetts, the estimated median household income for Cambridge from 2007-2011, 2012-2016 and 2014-2018 was higher than the estimated state median income for the respective years.<sup>50</sup>

From 2012-2016 to 2014-2018, the estimated median household income in Cambridge increased by 14.7%, from \$83,122 to \$95,404.<sup>51</sup>

The percentage of households earning more than \$75,000 increased, with the largest increase in the highest income bracket of over \$200,000. The percentage of households earning income in the other brackets decreased, except for households earning \$10,000-\$15,000 which remained about the same.

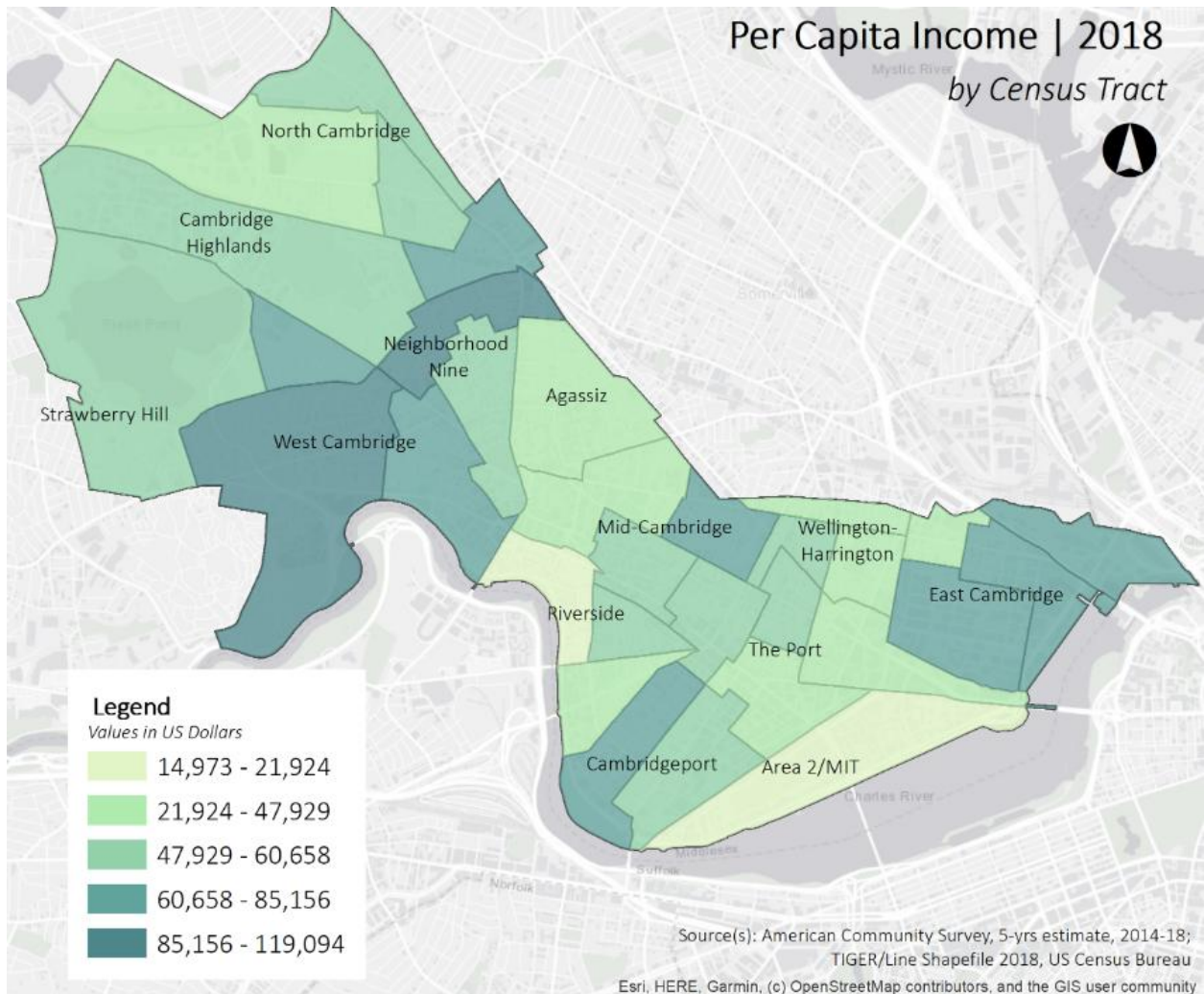


Income distribution in Cambridge. Data Source: US Census, 2007-2011, 2012-2016, 2014-2018 ACS 5-year estimates.

<sup>50</sup> US Census Bureau, “Income in the Past 12 Months, 2012-2016”; US Census Bureau, “Income in the Past 12 Months, 2014-2018.”

<sup>51</sup> US Census Bureau, “Income in the Past 12 Months, 2014-2018.”

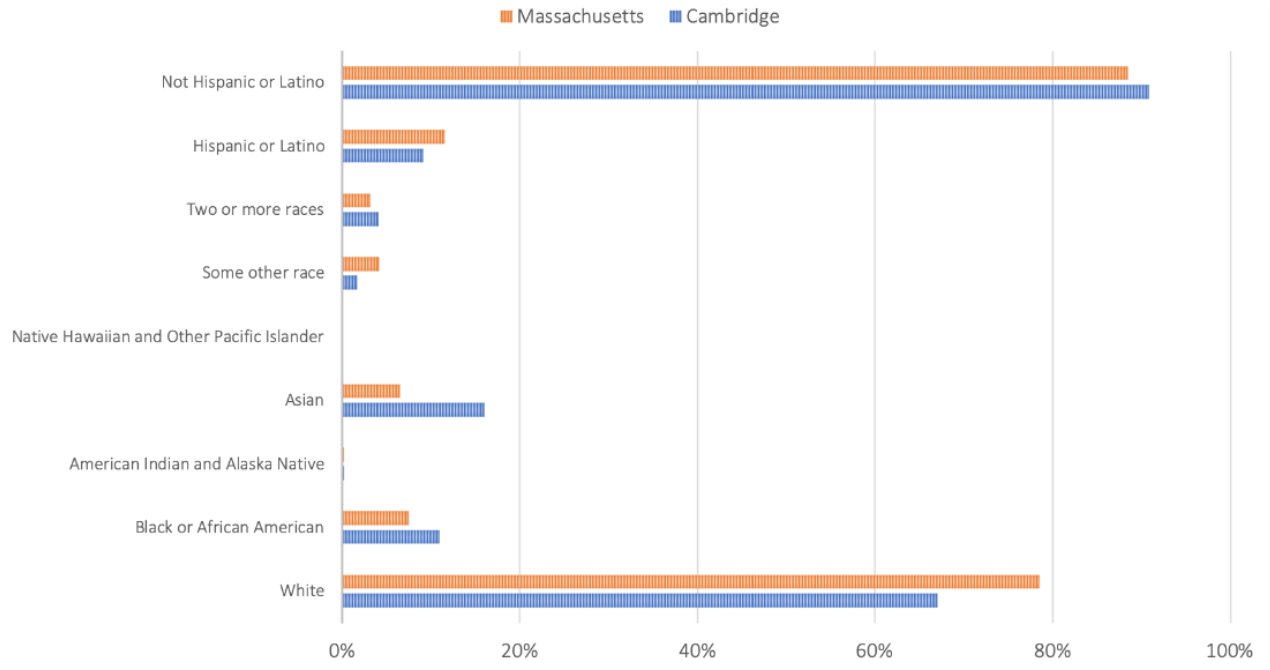
# Per Capita Income | 2018 by Census Tract





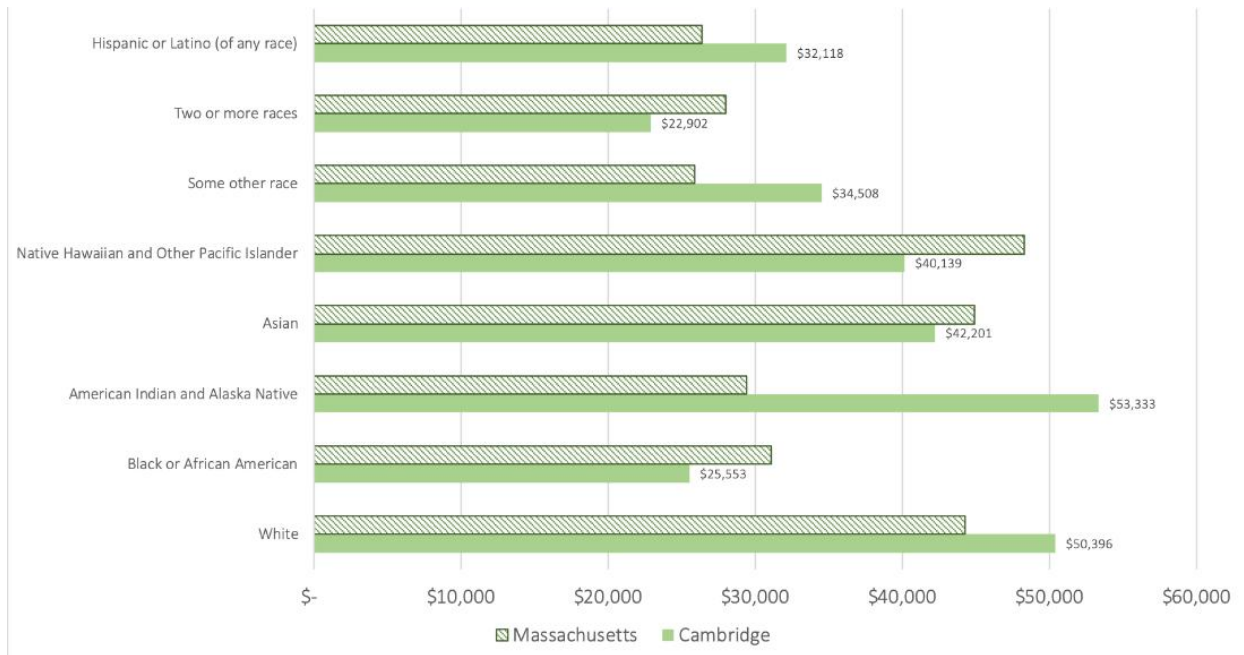
## Race and Hispanic Ethnicity

The ACS 2014-2018 estimates indicate that Asian residents comprised the highest percentage of minority residents (16%), followed closely by the Black population making up 11% of Cambridge's population (see Figure below).<sup>52</sup>



The distribution of income across race is skewed, and also points to an inequitable distribution of income.

<sup>52</sup> US Census Bureau, "Race, 2014-2018."



Sources: US Census, 2014-2018 ACS 5-year estimates

Poverty rates across race are similarly skewed, as reflected the over representation of minority groups in the figure below.

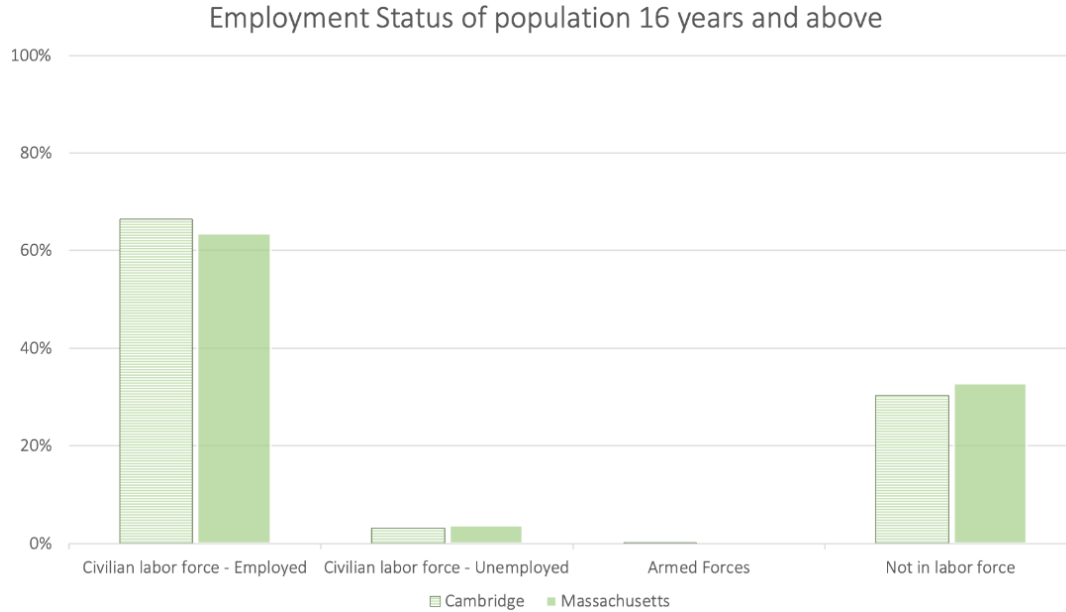
### Population in Poverty by Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin

| Race/Ethnicity                          | Cambridge Estimate | Below 100% of the poverty level |
|---|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| White                                   | 77,487             | 10.3%                           |
| Black or African American               | 12,697             | 24.3%                           |
| American Indian or Alaska Native        | 187                | 17.2%                           |
| Asian                                   | 18,466             | 16.6%                           |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander     | 90                 | 0%                              |
| Some other race                         | 2,024              | 24.2%                           |
| Two or more races                       | 3,415              | 12.2%                           |
| Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race) | 10,672             | 26.4%                           |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2018

## Employment

Cambridge’s leading industries include higher education, software development and technology, biotechnology and healthcare.<sup>53</sup> These industries require a higher percentage of professionals with advanced degrees. The most common jobs available are educational services and professional and technical services.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, it may not be so easy for residents without access to higher education to find local jobs within Cambridge.



| <u>Report Area</u> | <u>Size of Labor</u> | <u>Employed</u> | <u>Unemployed</u> | <u>Unemployment rate</u> |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Somerville         | 54,233               | 53,331          | 902               | 1.7%                     |
| Cambridge          | 70,480               | 69,385          | 1095              | 1.6%                     |

Looking at the same unemployment numbers by race, we see an inequitable distribution of hardship

| <u>Race/Ethnicity</u> | <u>Cambridge Estimate</u> | <u>% Unemployed</u> |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| White                 | 77,487                    | 3.1%                |

<sup>53</sup> Cambridge Community Development Department, “City of Cambridge, Massachusetts: Statistical Profile.”

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.



|   |        |       |
|---|--------|-------|
| Black or African American               | 12,697 | 11.7% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native        | 187    | 0%    |
| Asian                                   | 18,466 | 4.8%  |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander     | 90     | 12.9% |
| Some other race                         | 2,024  | 5.0%  |
| Two or more races                       | 3,415  | 8.7%  |
| Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race) | 10,672 | 4.3%  |

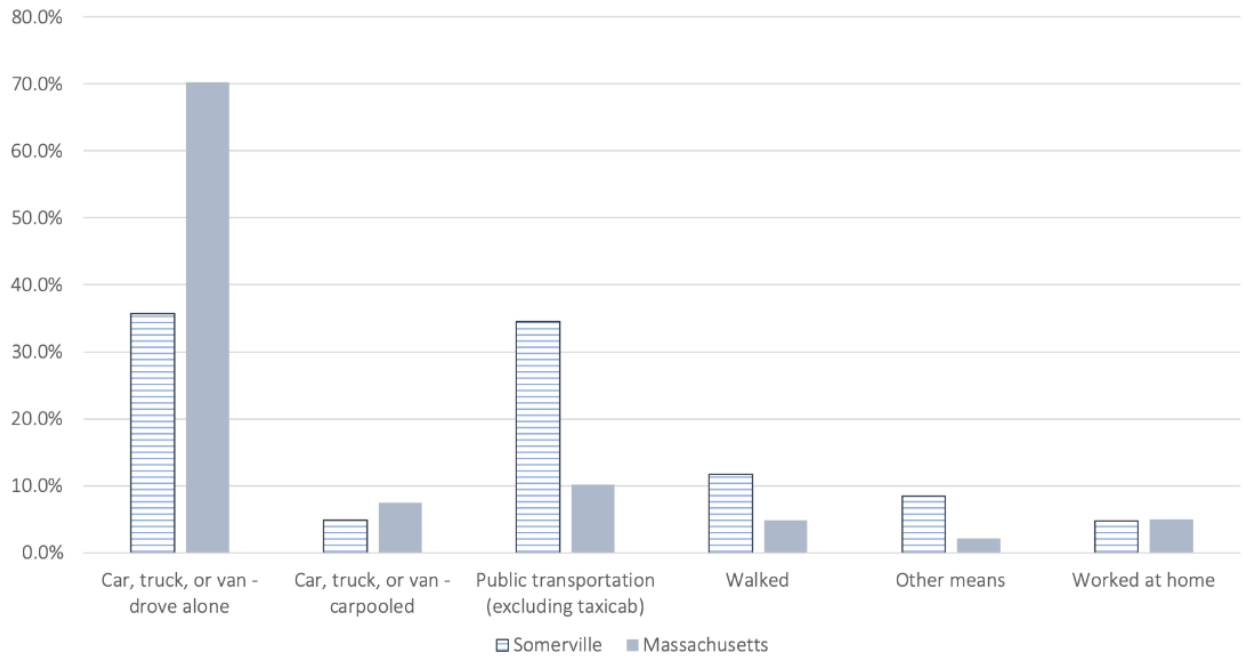
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2018

Despite relatively low unemployment, Cambridge residents interviewed as part of CAAS' community assessment process also identified poor access to jobs that pay enough to cover expenses an area significant need. Interviewees also suggested that minority status may negatively impact employment outcomes.

### Transportation

29.4% of workers over 16 years old in Cambridge take public transportation to work, which is about 18% higher than the state average. There are about 35% fewer workers in Cambridge who drive alone to work, less than half the state average, and does not differ significantly from the percentage taking public transportation. There are 20% more workers who walk to work compared to the state average. A much higher percentage of workers in Cambridge also bike to work compared to Massachusetts as a whole.

## Means of Transportation

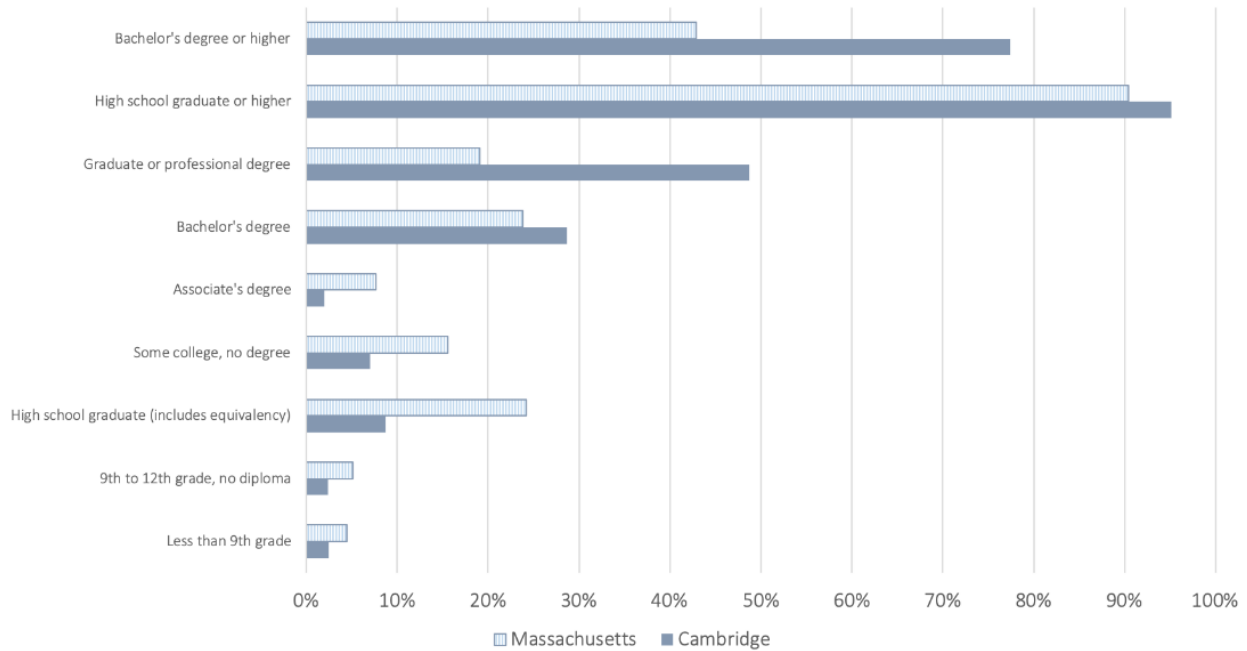


Data Source: US Census, 2014-2018 ACS 5-year estimates.

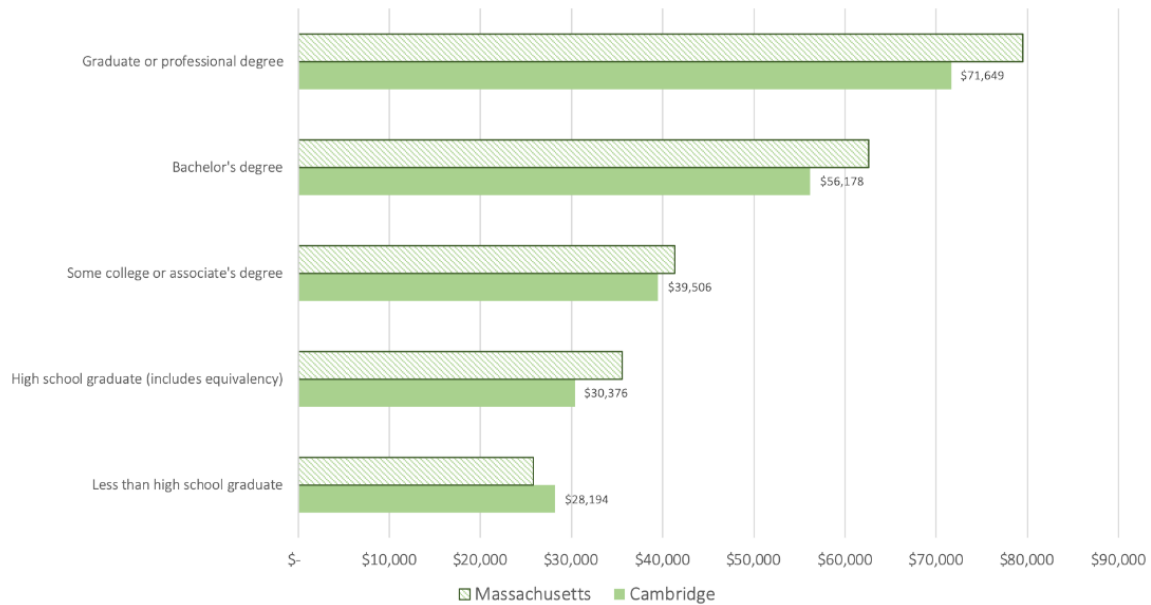
## Educational Attainment

The highest percentage of education attained in Cambridge is a Bachelor's degree, followed by a Master's degree, and then Doctoral degree (see Figure below). The percentage of Cambridge residents over the age of 25 and have attained a Bachelor's or Master's, Professional or Doctoral degree is higher than the state average.

Population 25 years and over - Educational Attainment



Median Income by Educational Attainment

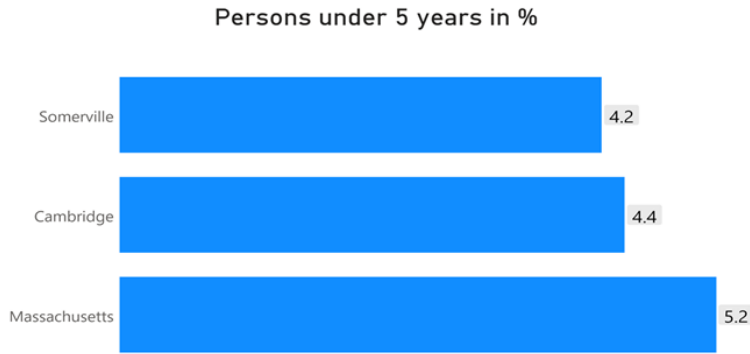


Data Source: US Census, 2014-2018 ACS 5-year estimates.

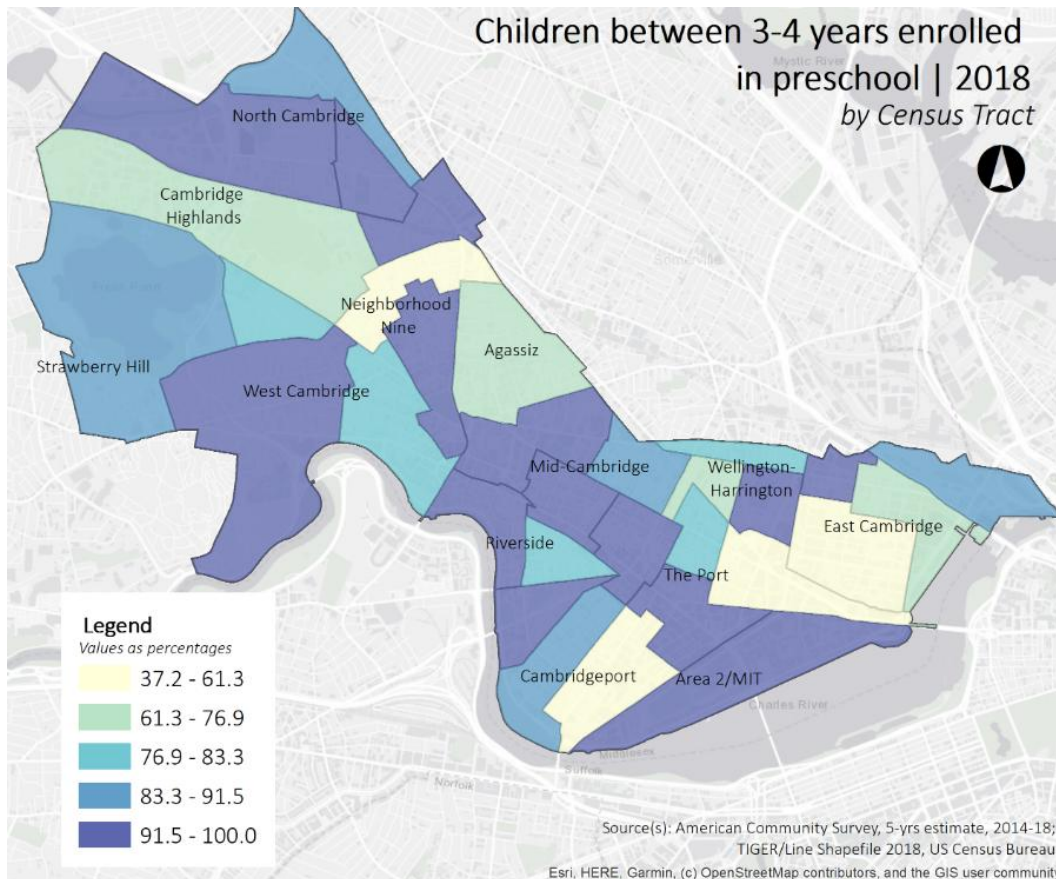
Preschool and Head Start

Percentage of households with children 3-5 years: 12.4%.<sup>55</sup>

Percentage of unenrolled children 3-5 years: 27.6%.<sup>56</sup>



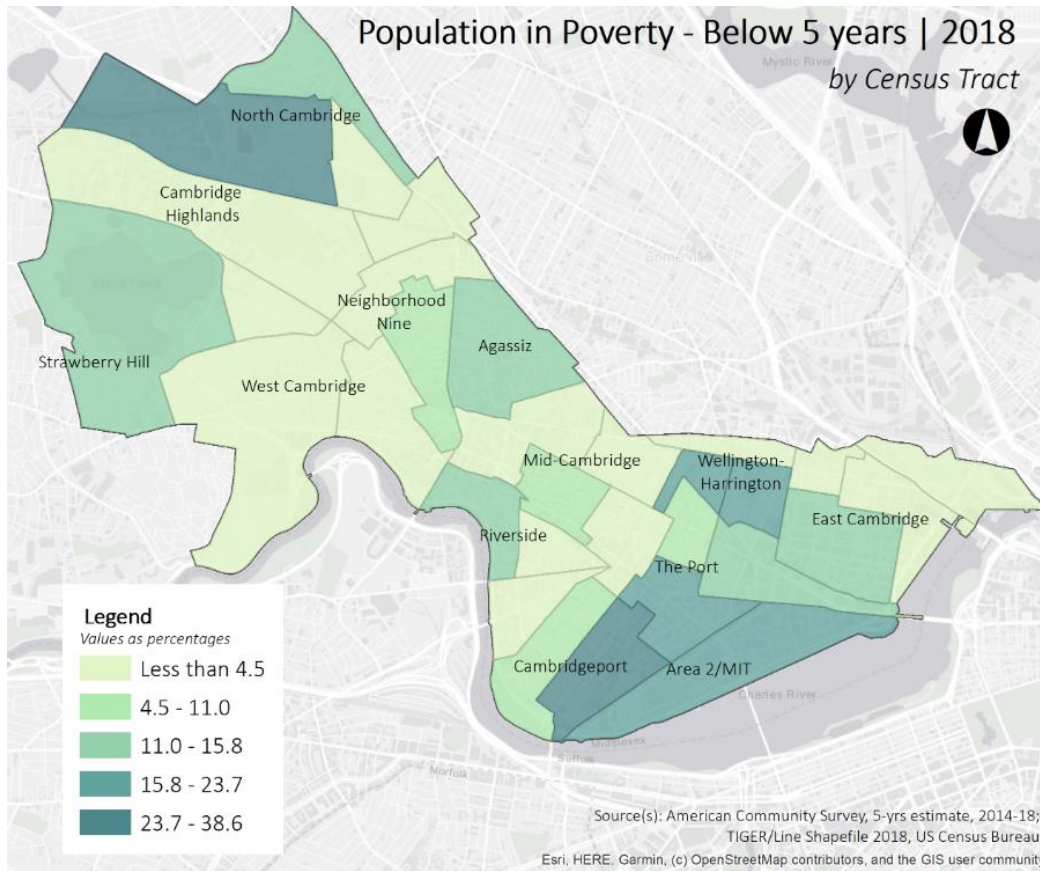
The percentage of children below five who are unenrolled in preschool is concentrated near Cambridge Highlands, Agassiz, East Cambridge and next to Cambridgeport (see Figure below).



<sup>55</sup> US Census Bureau, “Own Children Under 18 Years by Family Type and Age, 2014-2018.”

<sup>56</sup> US Census Bureau, “School Enrollment, 2014-2018.”





## Housing

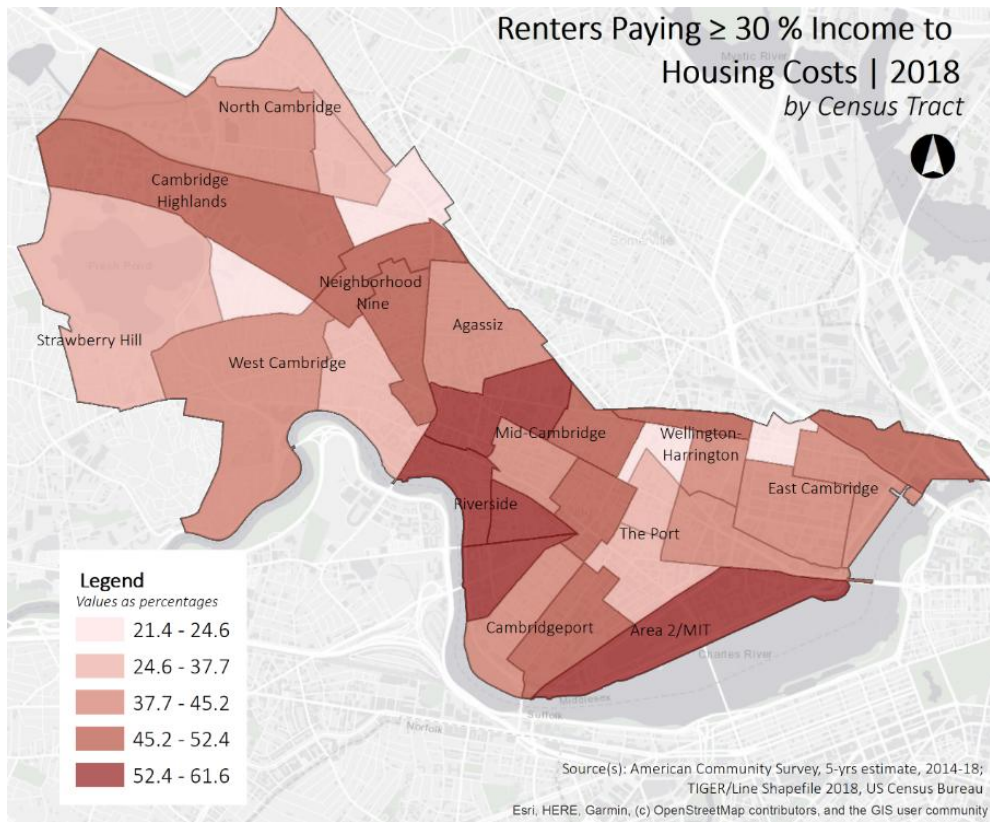
Housing is one of the most pressing issues for Cambridge residents, and has increased in importance over the years. Citizen surveys conducted for the Cambridge Community Needs Assessment in 2016 showed that housing has outrun education as the most important need. In 2016, 30% of surveyed residents identified housing as the single most pressing issue they face, which is an increase from 18% in 2014 and 8% in 2012.<sup>57</sup>

In 2018, the median monthly housing cost in Cambridge was estimated at \$ 2,056.00; this is higher than the estimated Somerville median monthly housing cost of \$1,486.00.<sup>58</sup> The percentage of cost-burdened households in Cambridge and Massachusetts are about the same, at around 46%. Households that are spending a higher percentage of their household income on gross rent are located in Mid- Cambridge, the MIT area, and north of East Cambridge.

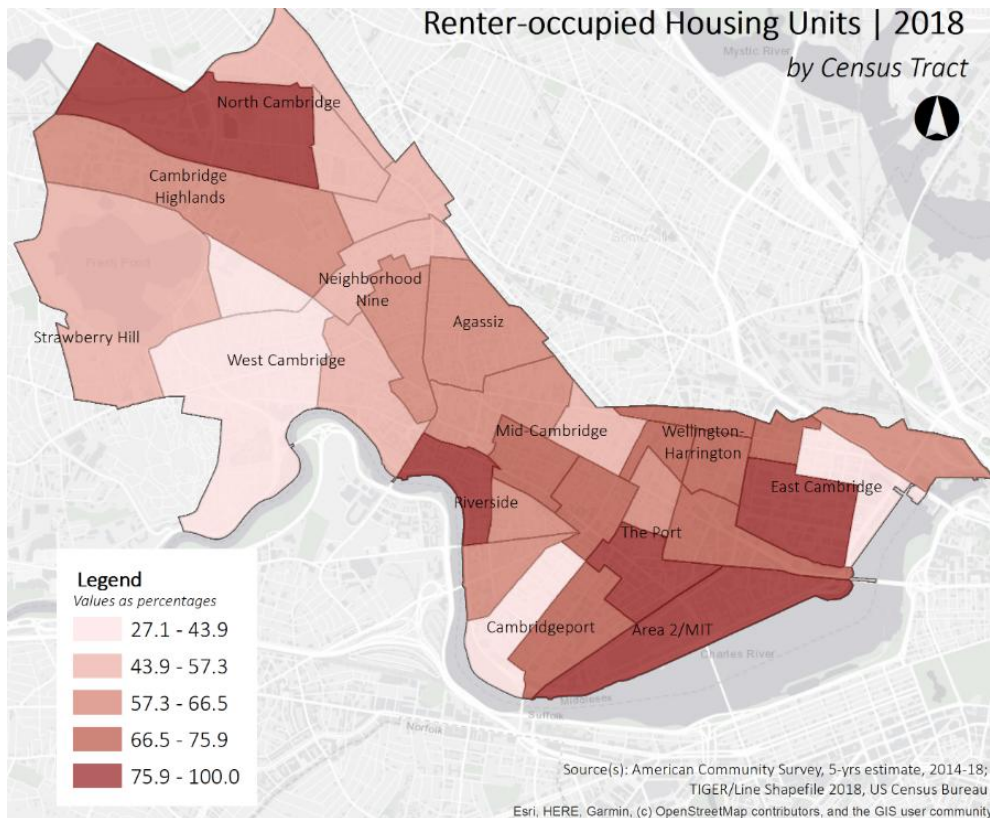
<sup>57</sup> Technical Development Corporation, “City of Cambridge: Community Needs Assessment.”

<sup>58</sup> US Census Bureau, “Financial Characteristics, 2014-2018.”





The spatial patterns rent burden is similar to the percentage of households occupied by renters.



### Monthly Housing Costs by Percentage of Occupied Housing Units

| Monthly Housing Cost | Somerville | Cambridge |
|----------------------|------------|-----------|
| Less than \$1,000    | 17.5%      | 17.7%     |
| \$1,000 to \$1,499   | 16.9%      | 11.6%     |
| \$1,500 to \$1,999   | 17.69%     | 29.6%     |
| \$2,000 to \$2,499   | 19%        | 21.6%     |
| \$2,500 to \$2,999   | 10.1%      | 15.3%     |
| \$3,000 or more      | 6.9%       | 16.2%     |



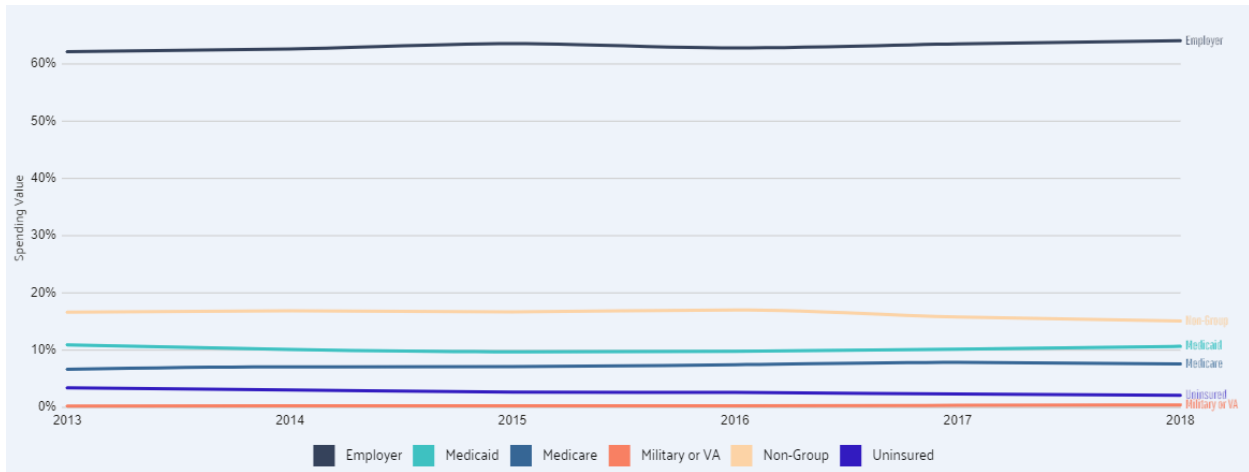
## Health

The most recent available health data for Cambridge is from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health for 2010. Overall, Cambridge's health variables are lower than Massachusetts. The exception is that the HIV/AIDS prevalence in Cambridge is almost twice that of the state's.

| 2010   | Somerville | Cambridge | Massachusetts |
|--|------------|-----------|---------------|
| Fertility rate   | 39.5       | 36.8      | 53.8          |
| Infant mortality rate  | 2.1        | 1.6       | 4.4           |
| Births to adolescent mothers   | 3.3        | 1.2       | 5.4           |
| Low birth weight   | 8.0        | 7.3       | 7.8           |
| Lead poisoning cases<br>(blood lead levels greater than or equal to 25 µg/dL in children ages 6 mos - 5 yrs) per 1,000 children (per | 0.8        | 0.0       | 0.3           |
| HIV/AIDS prevalence  | 421.9      | 394.0     | 261.0         |
| Mortality rate (per 100,000 people)  | 753.9      | 575.3     | 667.8         |
| Cancer deaths (per 100,000 people)   | 213.2      | 146.7     | 170.3         |
| Lung cancer deaths (per 100,000 people)  | 65.8       | 31.9      | 47.2          |
| Suicide (per 100,000 people)   | 5.3        | 6.7       | 9.0           |
| Homicide (per 100,000 people)  | 1.3        | 0.0       | 3.1           |

2010 Health data for Somerville, Cambridge and Massachusetts. Data Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health. 2010. "Health Status Indicators Report for Somerville." MassCHIP: Massachusetts Community Health Information Profile.

The following chart shows how the percent of uninsured individuals in Cambridge, MA changed over time compared with the percent of individuals enrolled in various types of health insurance.

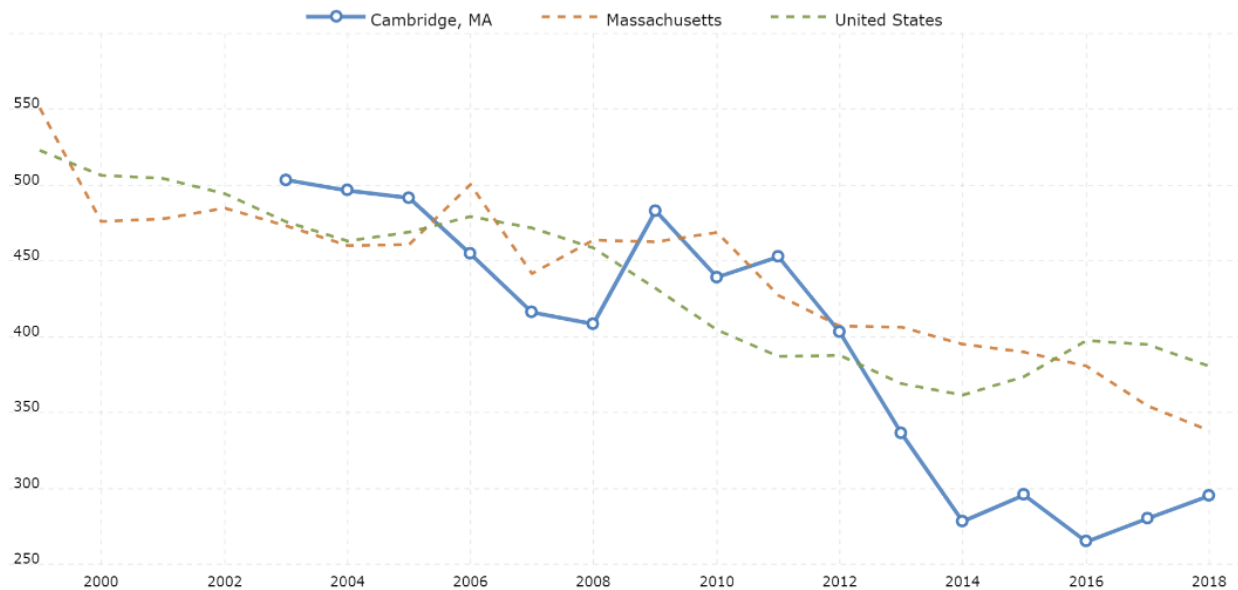


Between 2017 and 2018, the percent of uninsured citizens in Cambridge, MA declined by 8.97% from 2.32% to 2.11%.

According to 2019 ACS data, 97.9% of the population of Cambridge, MA has health coverage, with 64.1% on employee plans, 10.7% on Medicaid, 7.6% on Medicare, 15.1% on non-group plans, and 0.435% on military or VA plans.

## Crime

Crime in Cambridge has decreased almost 40% from 2004 to 2018. During this period, the number of violent crimes dropped by almost 30% and the number of property crimes dropped by almost 17%.



Number and types of offenses in Cambridge from 1999-2018. Data Source: Uniform Crime Reporting Statistic

Despite the decrease in crime, focus groups conducted by the City of Cambridge for the Cambridge Needs Assessment revealed that residents were still very concerned about safety and violence, particularly sexual harassment and violence.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Technical Development Corporation, “City of Cambridge: Community Needs Assessment.”

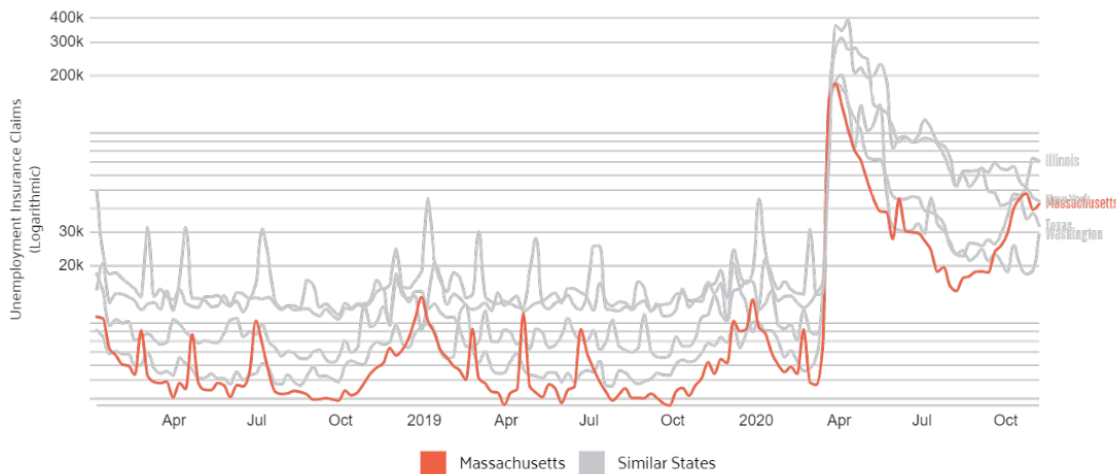
## Community Profile Update

What follows is in response to a global health pandemic that has not only affected every community in the United States, but has also led to the most significant economic disruption since the Great Depression. Understanding that COVID-19 impacts have been broad, this update focuses on employment and housing as key drivers of other economic conditions. The statistical data are preliminary. Unfortunately, it is difficult to understand the scope of impending crises in what remains a new and rapidly evolving situation.

This update shows community-level conditions, where possible, but city-level data is frequently unavailable. Qualitative data gathered from surveys and stakeholder interviews are also included.

### Employment

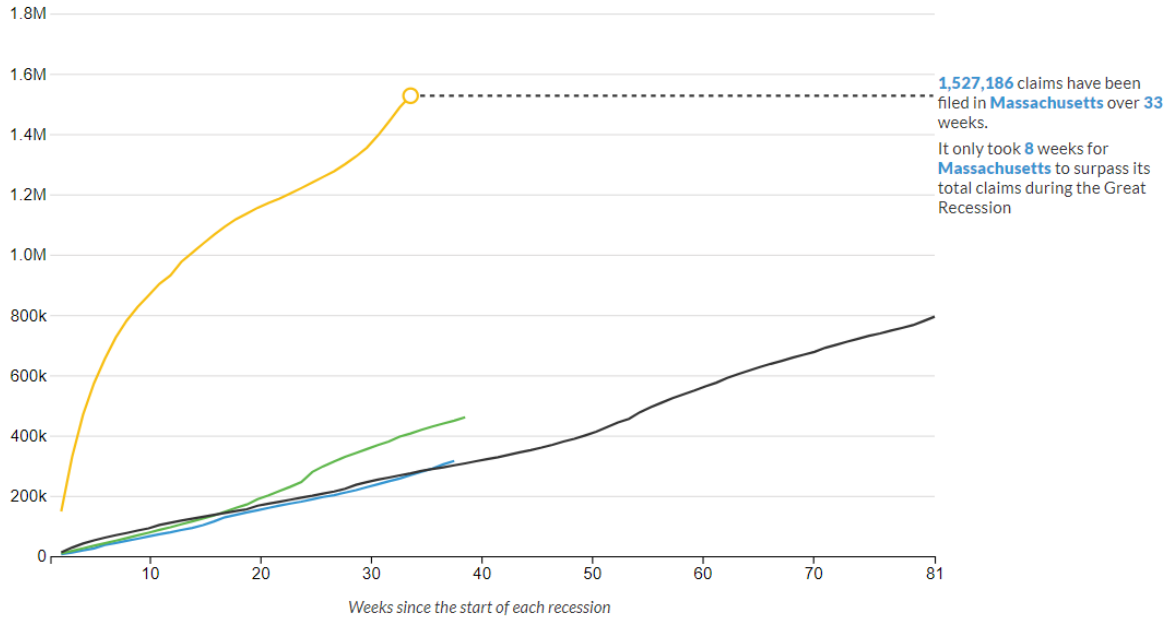
The chart below shows weekly unemployment insurance claims in Massachusetts (not-seasonally adjusted) compared with the four states with the most similar impact. As of November 7, 2020 the number of weekly claims was 43,900. Since April 2020, over 1,527,186 claims have been filed in Massachusetts.



Data from the DOL Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims Data Unemployment insurance weekly claims by state.

— 1990 recession Beginning 7/14/1990   
 — 2001 recession Beginning 3/17/2001   
 — Great Recession Beginning 12/15/2007   
 — COVID-19 pandemic Beginning 3/14/2020

Total Unemployment Insurance claims

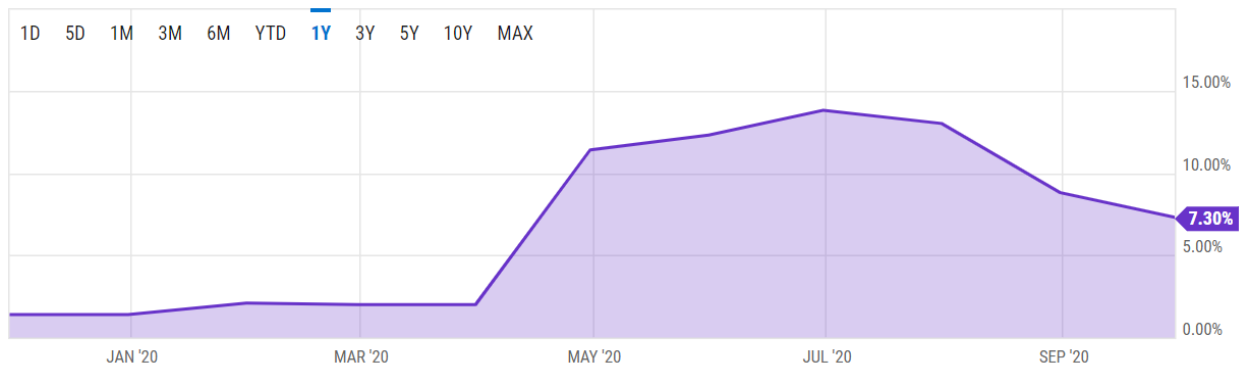


Source: US Department of Labor.

Notes: Data are not seasonally adjusted. The start and end dates of Unemployment Insurance claims for prior recessions correspond to the economic downturn dates defined by the National Bureau of Economic Research.

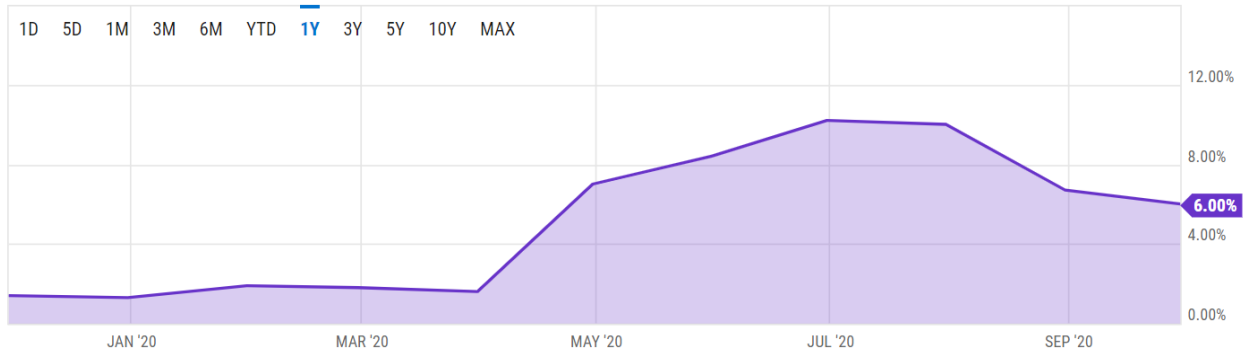
As noted above, it took only 8 weeks for Massachusetts to surpass its total claims during the Great Recession.

In Somerville, unemployment as of October 28, 2020 was 7.3%, up from 1.8% at the same time in 2019.



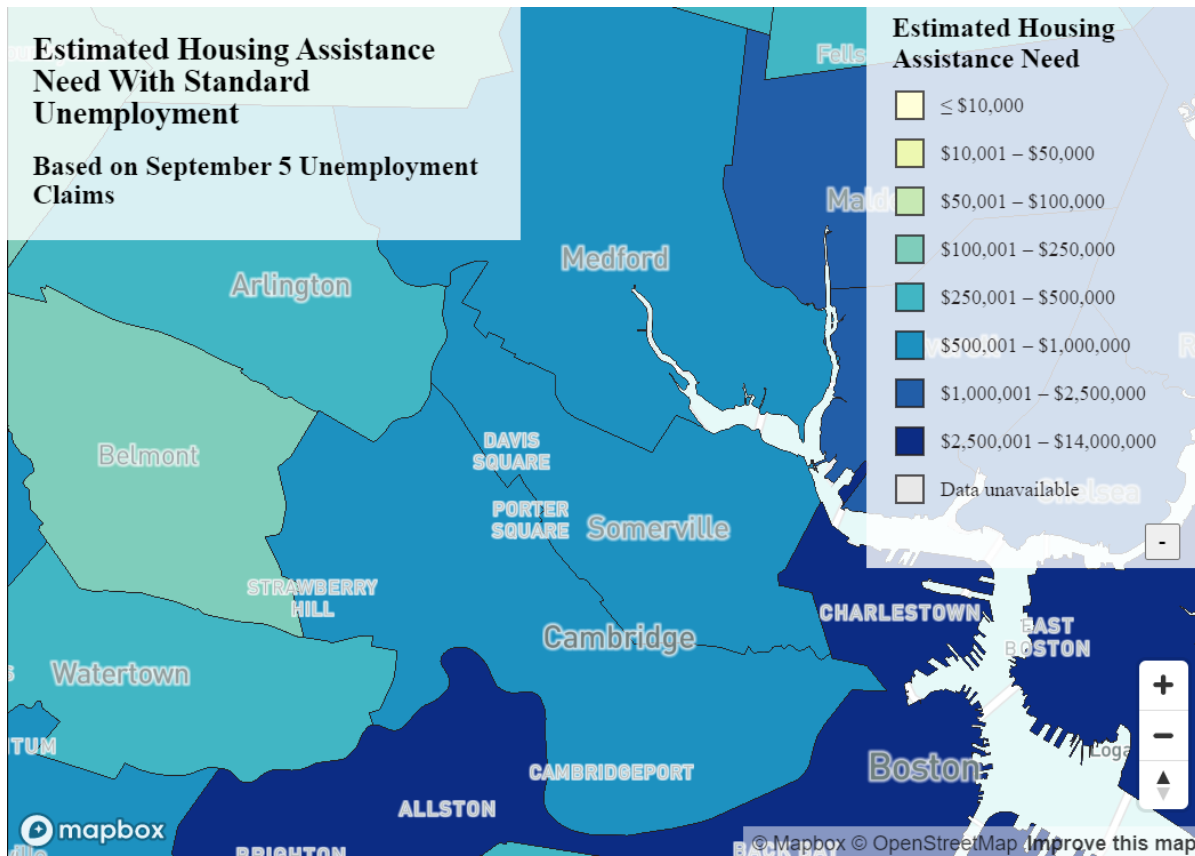
[https://ycharts.com/indicators/somerville\\_ma\\_unemployment\\_rate](https://ycharts.com/indicators/somerville_ma_unemployment_rate), Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In Cambridge, unemployment as of October 28, 2020 was 6.0%, up from 1.8% at the same time in 2019.



[https://ycharts.com/indicators/cambridge\\_ma\\_unemployment\\_rate](https://ycharts.com/indicators/cambridge_ma_unemployment_rate), Bureau of Labor Statistics

### Housing



| City       | Housing Assistance Need | Unemployment Claims | # of Households Need Assistance |
|------------|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Somerville | \$950,485               | 3,556               | 854                             |
| Cambridge  | \$885,342               | 3,382               | 808                             |

<https://www.mapc.org/covid19-layoffs/>

The above numbers are based on September unemployment claims, so these figures represent the housing gap for renter households in October alone. We know that thousands of other households are also in trouble, although their numbers are more difficult to estimate. This includes people receiving Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), undocumented workers who can't apply for unemployment at all, workers with reduced hours and wages, and households who are working again but owe back rent.

While comprehensive estimates aren't feasible due to lack of data, there is other evidence that unemployment claim-based estimates are just a fraction of the total need. The U.S. Census Bureau's Pulse survey, administered over the internet since late April, provides almost real-time information about how residents are handling the COVID crisis.<sup>60</sup> For the period from September 2 to September 14, the Pulse survey reports that 16% of renters reported not being "currently caught up on rent payments," and 6% of renters thought it was "somewhat" or "very" likely they would "have to leave this home in the next two months because of eviction." With approximately one million renter households in Massachusetts, this suggests that approximately 160,000 renter households currently owe back rent, and 60,000 of those fear imminent eviction.<sup>61</sup> Many renters also said that they anticipate having trouble paying rent in the coming months: 8% said they had "no confidence" they would be able to pay October rent on time, and an additional 14% said they had only "slight confidence" for an on-time payment. All told, more than 200,000 households were not sure they could cover their October rent.

Evidence is mounting that the current crisis is fueled by and magnifies existing inequalities in our public health and economic systems. The crisis poses severe economic risks for the region's residents, especially those who have lost work or wages. Many working households in Somerville and Cambridge are already paying more than they can afford for housing—in some cases more than half their income—and any loss of income will make this situation dramatically worse. Households that can't pay their rent or their mortgage face eviction or foreclosure, with long-term effects on household finances, credit score, housing stability, health, and student achievement outcomes. Without additional interventions, unprecedented layoffs caused by the economic and health crisis could quickly set off a massive housing crisis as well.

While state and local leaders have increased the amount of emergency rental assistance, it remains insufficient to cover the need. Without federal, state, or court intervention, both Somerville and Cambridge are likely to see a significant wave of evictions and foreclosures in the coming months. As a result, more people may find themselves homeless or living in overcrowded housing—circumstances that contribute to the spread of COVID-19 and may extend the length of the pandemic. Small landlords unable to cover mortgage payments due to lost rent may be forced to sell their rental properties, accelerating the consolidation of the rental real estate market under the control of large corporate owners and trusts.

## Food

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<sup>60</sup> <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey.html>

<sup>61</sup> These are very general estimates that apply shares from the Pulse survey to the most current household data. They do not account for the different universes for the two datasets (adult renters vs renter households) nor do they account for the very small number of renter households who do not pay rent.

## Adults Reporting That Household Didn't Have Enough to Eat

| State         | Number  | As % of Adults | Number  | As % of Adults Living with Children |
|---------------|---------|----------------|---------|-------------------------------------|
| Massachusetts | 365,000 | 8%             | 179,000 | 10%                                 |

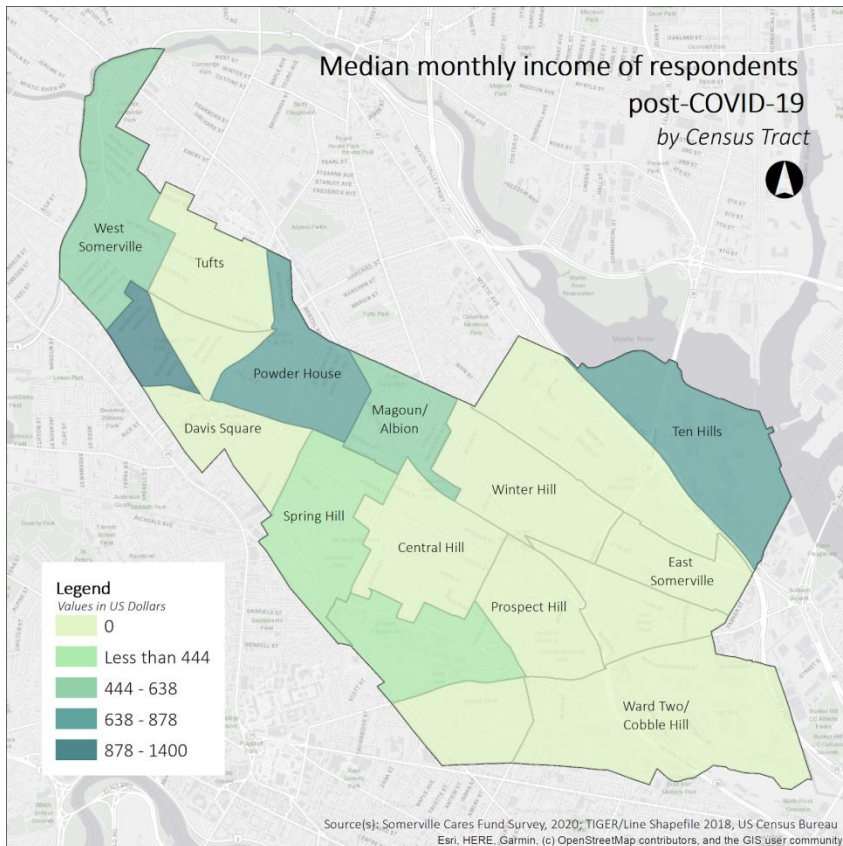
<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey/data.html>

### Essential Needs – Somerville Cares Fund

The Somerville Cares Fund (SCF) was established by the City of Somerville in partnership with United Way of Massachusetts Bay and CAAS. In April 2020, SCF began mobilizing resources for expanded food and supply access and emergency assistance to households who are financially impacted, with a focus on those who are most economically vulnerable to this crisis.

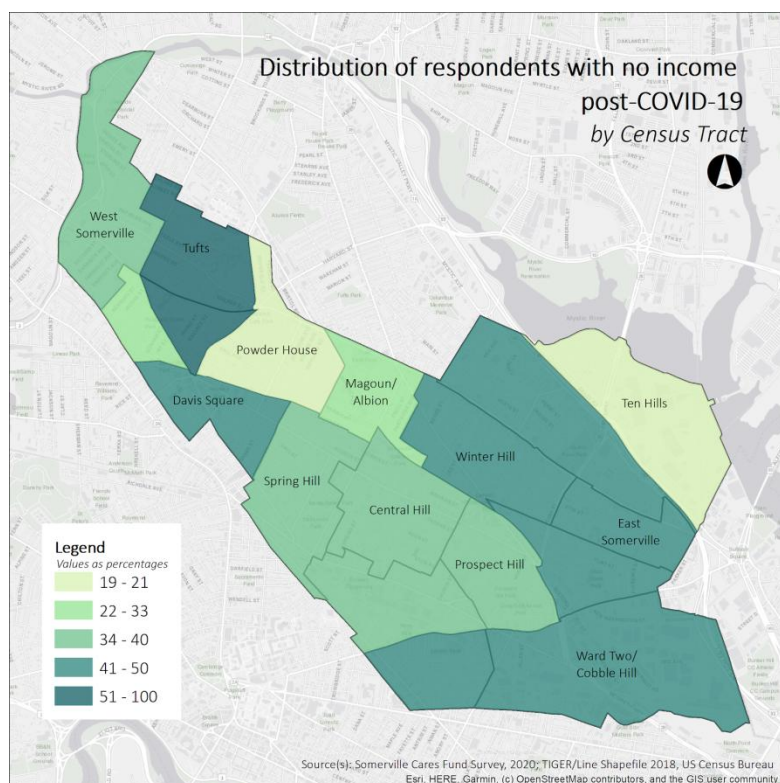
As of September 30, SCF applicants represented close to 5% of Somerville's total population – 3,789 individuals – and close to 20% of Somerville's population with incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty guideline prior to the onset of COVID-19. SCF respondents provide critical insight into the localized scope and texture of this crisis.

We can see by comparing these two maps of median income that the entire city has been hard hit by the pandemic, with some areas much worse than others, including East Somerville and parts of Ward 2.

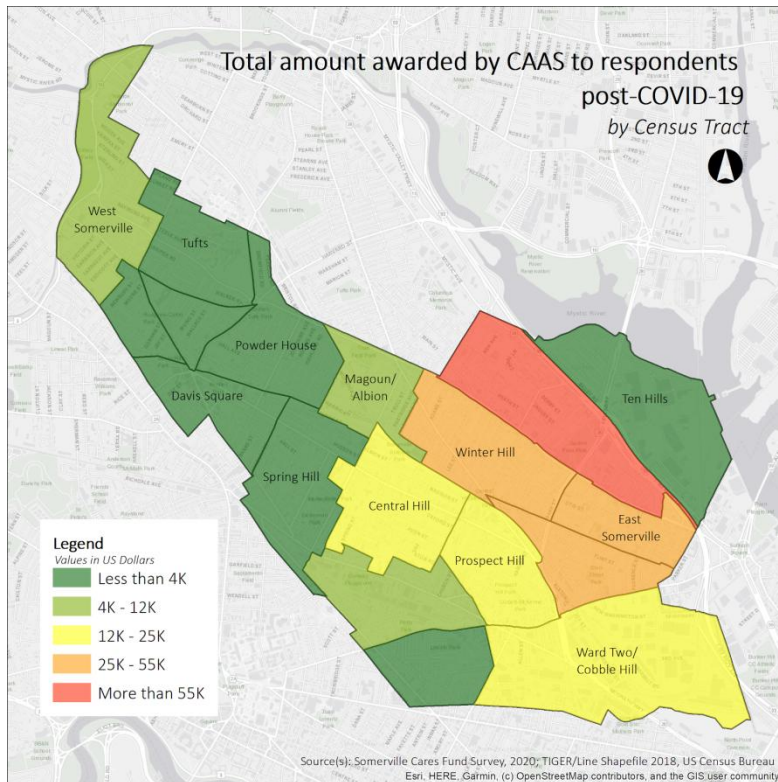




Similarly, those households reporting \$0.00 income are also distributed unevenly.

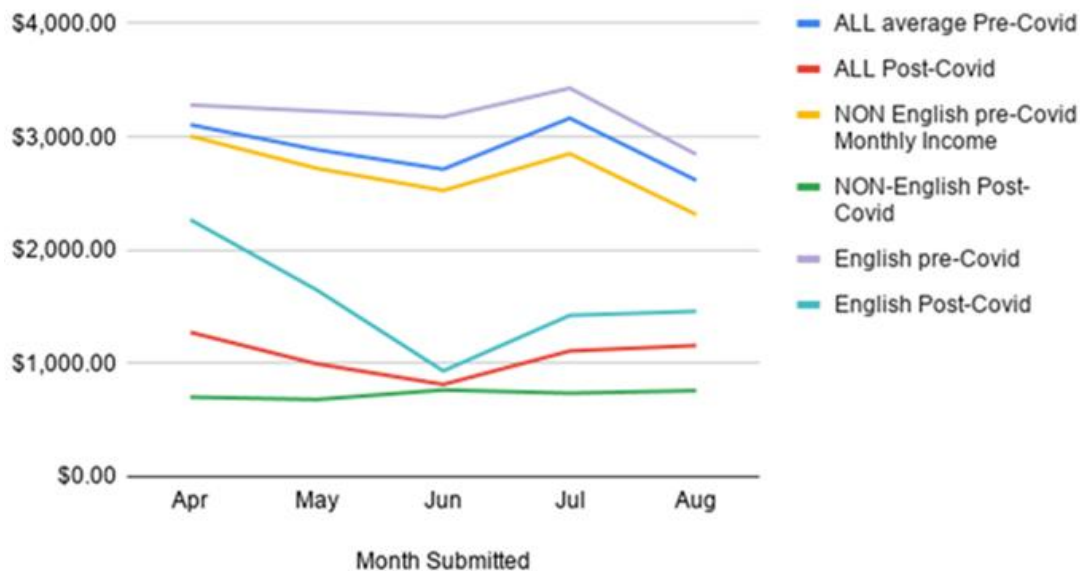


The SCF grants of financial assistance track closely to these areas of greatest need.



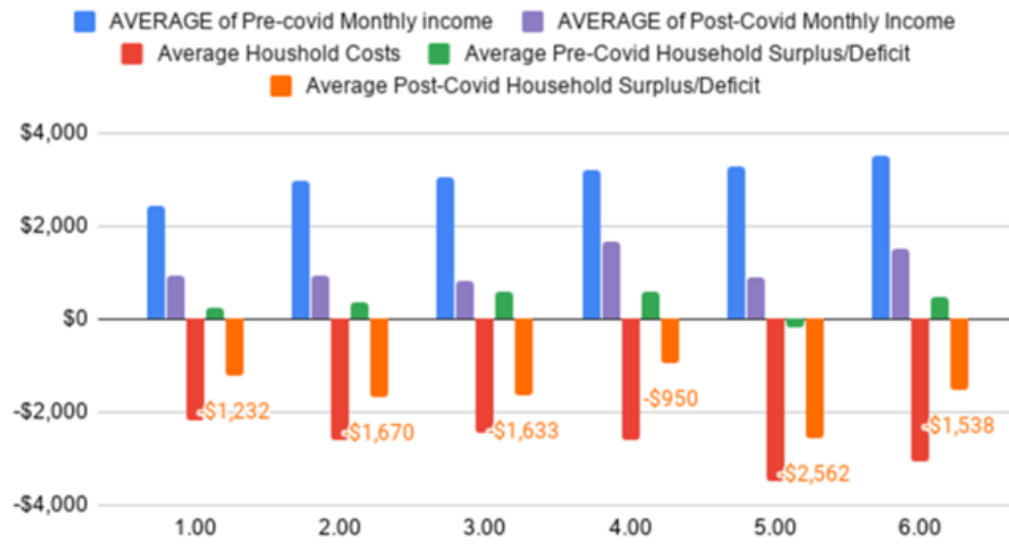
## Income and Solvency

### Monthly Income Averages – Pre/Post COVID – English/Non-English



We can tell that our applicants were on the edge of solvency before the onset of COVID-19, running only very small surpluses at the end of every month. Now, they have massive monthly deficits; \$1,232 / month for a single person, and \$2,562 for a family of five.

### Household Income Deficits



### Scale of the problem

To estimate total need, we can look at how much money it would take to return to “normal”. Pre-COVID, our 1,274 (1,488) households earned ~\$4.38 Million per month. Now they are earning ~\$1.56 million. This is a ~\$2.82M rolling monthly deficit among SCF households alone.

## **8. Community & Internal Assessment Process**

### **Methodology - Community Assessment**

#### ***Community Surveys***

From October 2019 to January 2020, CAAS conducted a community survey. In addition to an online survey distributed to directly low-income residents and other low-income-serving community partners, surveys were distributed at Clarendon Hill, Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experiences (SCALE), The Welcome Project, ESOL classes, and the Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS). Surveys were also conducted with clients at CAAS' administrative offices and with Head Start parents at CAAS' Jack Hamilton, Capuano, and Mystic Head Start sites. The surveys were available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole. There were 206 respondents.

Somerville Cares Fund (SCF) application data collected between April 2020 and September 2020 were used to assess pandemic-related economic hardship. SCF applications were treated as surveys for the purposes of this assessment. There were 1,516 household respondents (3,789 individuals).

A survey of public sector, private sector, educational, community, and faith-based organizations was conducted between September and November 2020. There were 19 respondents (4 public sector, 3 private sector, 7 community organizations, 2 faith-based, 3 educational institutions).

#### ***Key Informant Interviews***

From April 2020 to November 2020, CAAS conducted 10 key informant interviews. Interviewees were selected based on their expertise, work in Somerville and the diversity of perspectives (2 city officials, 5 nonprofit leaders, 1 employed by an educational institution, and 2 employed by local hospital systems).

Interviewees were asked to share their perspectives on the major challenges currently facing low-income Somerville residents, their organizational experiences with these challenges, and the gaps in Somerville's current service delivery landscape.

While different in substance and format to the "key informant interviews", CAAS also consulted with ABCD and CEOC with respect to needs assessed and the impact of the pandemic on communities served.

#### ***Board Involvement***

CAAS' Board of Directors made critical contributions to the Community Assessment. A full board retreat dedicated to theory of change and intended impact was held in October 2019. That retreat was facilitated by the Bridgespan Group. The Strategic Planning Coordinating Committee helped early in the planning and design of the assessment process. From October

2019 to November 2020, staff provided the board with regular updates on the Community Assessment process and findings. Once all the data were compiled and assessed, the board received the findings and provided input. The board approved the Community Assessment at its November 2020 meeting. As we pivot from assessment to planning, the board will play a central role in defining CAAS' strategic direction. This will be articulated in the full 2021-2023 CARSP. The board will approve the CARSP at its June 2021 meeting.

### ***Staff Involvement***

The Strategic Planning Coordinating Committee is comprised of the Executive Director, Director of Operations, Director of Head Start, Supportive Services Supervisor, Director of Housing Advocacy, Director of Community Organizing, the chair of the board's planning committee, the chair of the governance committee, the board president, and two other board members. Staff from both Head Start and HAP helped administer the community survey. The SCF Administrator assisted in the analysis of SCF applicant data. An intern from Tufts University assisted in the analysis and visualization of secondary data.

### ***Identifying the Top 3 Needs***

In order to identify the top three needs of low-income Somerville residents, we looked at the issues most prevalent among survey respondents, insights from key informant interviews and corroboration of the preceding in secondary data (e.g. census).

The top three needs that emerged from our Community Assessment were:

- 1) Inadequate supply of safe and affordable housing
- 2) Inadequate access to employment that meets basic needs
- 3) Inadequate supply of affordable, suitable care for children

### ***Limitations***

Our survey sample size was relatively small: we collected 206 surveys out of the approximately 13,000 Somerville residents who are living below 130% of the federal poverty guideline. Also, survey respondents may not evenly reflect Somerville's low-income community. For example, 40% of respondents were Head Start parents. Most important, the community survey was conducted prior to the onset of the pandemic. While SCF applicant data captured greater numbers (3,789 individuals) and was explicitly pandemic-related, the application data was more limited in depth and scope.

The fact that so much of the community profile necessarily relies on 2018 census data is limiting factor of usual significance in the present context. While 2018 data helped show who would be vulnerable, we have a limited understanding of the scope of impending crises in what remains a new and rapidly evolving situation.

### **Methodology - Internal Needs Assessment**

CAAS' internal assessment process was designed to identify gaps and strengths in our

programs and operations that impact our ability to meet the needs of low-income individuals and families. Both staff and board engaged in the internal assessment process, which was based on a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) retreat conducted by members of our senior management team and board, customer satisfaction data, and our most recent CSBG National Organizational Standards Self-Assessment and Monitoring. These sessions generated consensus on certain key findings, articulated in Section 9.

### ***CSBG National Organizational Monitoring***

CAAS has an annual opportunity to update DHCD on progress toward compliance with National Organizational Standards (NOS) and to agree on any further actions needed for full-compliance. After each Monitoring Visit, CAAS receives a Technical Assistance Plan to address areas of noncompliance. Out of 58 compliance domains one remains to be addressed. NOS Standard 2.4 relates to the documentation of volunteer hours. The sheer volume of and disparate nature of volunteer contributions across the past year frustrated documentation practices that are routine in the normal course. This should not be an issue going forward.

### ***Client Satisfaction Data***

CAAS engages in regular collection of client satisfaction data. Respondents have expressed near categorical satisfaction with CAAS' services and their experiences working with CAAS staff. The only areas of concern relate to our waiting/reception area (its size and comfort), wait time and hours of operation. While these concerns surfaced in fewer than 5% of surveys, we have endeavored to incorporate this feedback into our plans to better meet clients' needs across the next two years.

## 9. Key Findings: Community Assessment

### Introduction

What follows is a summary of CAAS' key findings on the existing and emerging causes and conditions of poverty in Somerville as well as the needs and strengths of the community assessed. The top 3 individual/family and community needs are identified as well as community strengths that can be drawn upon to meet these needs.

This Assessment has been updated in light of a global pandemic that has led to the most significant economic disruption since the Great Depression. The update can be found at the end of this section. It is worth noting here that while TOP needs identified in the Community Assessment have endured in substance, they have expanded dramatically in both depth and breadth. Both the Community Profile Update and Community Assessment Update address these changes in some detail.

### Top 3 Needs

The top three needs that emerged from our Community Assessment were:

- 1) Inadequate supply of safe and affordable housing
- 2) Inadequate access to employment that meets basic needs
- 3) Inadequate supply of affordable, suitable care for children

These were by no means the only needs expressed or reflected in the data, but they were the most significant challenges identified.<sup>62</sup> The housing and employment issues, in particular, stood out in the primary and secondary data as the most significant challenges facing Somerville's low-income community. Furthermore, these and other challenges frequently relate to and inform one another. For example, housing costs are a frequent driver of residents' inability to cover other basic living expenses. Similarly, the inability to find affordable, suitable care impacts the types of employment residents are able to pursue and secure.

#### 1) Inadequate supply of safe and affordable housing

The inadequate supply of safe and affordable housing emerged as the most significant need facing Somerville's low-income community. This is a community-level need; its causes are deep and systemic. This finding was overwhelmingly supported by the community survey,

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<sup>62</sup> There was broad recognition among survey respondents and other stakeholders that immigration and immigration status operate at the periphery of and exacerbate each of the top community needs. Immigration status can negatively impact a family's ability to access benefits, find affordable housing as well as an individual's ability to acquire a job. Language barriers emerged as a significant challenge in the community survey results and were shown in our secondary data to most significantly impact lower-income neighborhoods. Having limited English language skills poses major challenges, particularly in terms of employment. Translation and interpretation services for non-English-speaking clients are broad needs across the low-income community. CAAS will continue to build on its strong staff language capacity and will make efforts to expand translation and interpretation services in all of its programs.

interviews, SCF applicant data, and secondary data. It is a root cause of economic insecurity for low-income households.

Of the 206 community survey respondents, 85% identified affordable housing as the most significant challenge facing Somerville's low-income community.

- #1 community need identified by respondents
- 61% of low-income respondents had difficulty affording current rent or mortgage costs.
- 50% of low-income respondents could not find housing they could afford
- 47% of low-income respondents could not easily afford utility costs
- Percentage of (X Race/Ethnicity) families who cannot afford rent: Black/African American=31%; Hispanic Latino=38%; White= 23%

There was also consensus among key stakeholders that affordable housing is the most urgent need for Somerville's low-income residents. As one interviewee put it (pre-covid):

“No matter how you look at it, the lack affordable housing in this city is and has been the most urgent issue facing low-income residents for the last 20 years...at least.”

The most common concerns centered on gentrification and rising housing costs, lack of subsidized housing, overcrowding and substandard housing conditions, and high utility costs. There was also strong evidence of these challenges in the secondary data. Furthermore, the data point to the conclusion that, while displacement of individuals and families is of major concern, the inadequate supply of safe and affordable housing in Somerville is its root cause. As one interviewee put it:

“We understand the housing crisis we face, we have the solutions, and we know how these solutions benefit families, communities and the economy. We need the political will to target resources towards those with the greatest need.”

### *Gentrification and Rising Housing Costs*

The gentrification of Somerville began in the 1980s with the extension of the Red Line, but has accelerated in recent years and will continue to do so as a result of the Green Line extension. “Gentrification” generally refers to the arrival of wealthier people in an urban area, a related increase in rents and property values, and changes in the area's character and culture.<sup>63</sup> While gentrification can have positive effects for a city (e.g., new investment, reduced crime), it is more well-known for its negative effects: namely, skyrocketing rents and the marginalization and displacement of lower-income residents.

As housing costs continue to rise, Somerville residents are becoming increasingly cost-burdened. Cost burden is defined by HUD as paying more than 30% of one's income for housing. Over 38% of Somerville households were rent-burdened (of these 8,266 households, 21% were paying above 30% of their incomes towards housing, while 17% were paying above 50% of their incomes).<sup>64</sup> Interestingly, the situation is was only somewhat better among

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<sup>63</sup> PBS, “Flag Wars: What is Gentrification?,” accessed June 3, 2014, [http://www.pbs.org/pov/flagwars/special\\_gentrification.php](http://www.pbs.org/pov/flagwars/special_gentrification.php).

<sup>64</sup> US Census Bureau, Source: 2018 American Community Survey (ACS): 5-year estimates



homeowners, of whom half were paying over 30% of their incomes on housing. Our own survey results were entirely consistent with these earlier findings.

With housing in Somerville becoming increasingly less affordable, many long-time residents are being displaced to surrounding communities like Everett, Revere, and Chelsea. When it comes to rising housing costs, there appears to be no end in sight. A study by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) found that the Green Line extension could cause rents in certain areas of Somerville to rise anywhere between 25% and 67%.<sup>65</sup>

### *Overcrowding and Substandard Housing Conditions*

Two other major housing-related concerns that came up during our community needs assessment were overcrowding and substandard housing conditions. The City of Somerville's most recent Housing Needs Assessment (2015) found that many households are doubling up with family and friends in order to afford housing, leading to overcrowding and unsafe conditions.

Substandard housing conditions are also prevalent in Somerville. The poor conditions can be attributed, in part, to the age of the city's housing stock. Approximately 64% Somerville's housing units were built before 1939.<sup>66</sup> As several key stakeholders pointed out, another part of the problem is that many renters—especially undocumented immigrants—are afraid to complain to their landlords about maintenance issues and are not familiar with their rights as tenants.

### *Lack of Subsidized Housing*

Given the increasing cost of housing in Somerville, it should come as little surprise that the demand for subsidized housing far exceeds the supply. According to the City's Housing Needs Assessment, the number of households on the Somerville Housing Authority's public housing waitlist was nearly ten times the number of public housing units in the city.<sup>67</sup> 78% of the households on the waiting list were waiting for a family unit; the waiting time for a family unit was then 1 to 3 years for Somerville residents.<sup>68</sup> Meanwhile, the number of households on the Section 8 voucher waitlist was nearly double the number of vouchers in use.

As several key stakeholders pointed out, even when Somerville residents are approved for a Section 8 voucher, they often have trouble finding a unit in Somerville that meets the program's rent guidelines and inspection requirements. According to advocates working with households searching for units with vouchers, many of the more affordable rental units are in poor condition and not up to housing quality standards. Therefore, households with a voucher cannot rent them because they would not pass housing authority inspections. Households with

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<sup>65</sup> Metropolitan Area Planning Council, "The Dimensions of Displacement: Baseline Data for Managing Neighborhood Change in Somerville's Green Line Corridor," February 2014, accessed June 3, 2014, [http://www.mapc.org/sites/default/files/Dimensions\\_of\\_Displacement\\_Final\\_Draft\\_2\\_10\\_14.pdf](http://www.mapc.org/sites/default/files/Dimensions_of_Displacement_Final_Draft_2_10_14.pdf)

<sup>66</sup> US Census Bureau, Source: 2018 American Community Survey (ACS): 5-year estimates

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

rental subsidies face discrimination, because landlords do not want to bring the units up to housing quality standards as required. The City’s Housing Needs Assessment found that tenants with Section 8 vouchers have trouble finding and/or keeping their existing housing due to the high cost of rent requested by landlords compared with the relatively low “payment standard” for voucher holders.<sup>69</sup>

### *Utility Costs*

Community survey results indicate that utility costs are another major challenge for low-income households. 47% of low-income survey respondents reported that they had difficulty paying for utilities. Although the Fuel Assistance Program is available to help low-income families with heating costs in the winter, Somerville residents must go to Cambridge to apply. Furthermore, because of the high demand, the program often runs out of funds partway through the winter. The program also only assists with heating costs, so families are usually on their own with respect to electricity bills.

### *Community Strengths*

In recent years, there has been increased interest and coordination among community partners in community organizing and its potential impact on housing issues. Two public housing developments formed tenant organizations in 2017 with CAAS’ support. CSBG CARES Act funding allowed CAAS to reinvigorate its community organizing work in 2020. The Somerville Community Land Trust (SCLT) was formed and incorporated in 2019 with CAAS support. Union United, in which CAAS also played an active role, worked to ensure that redevelopment processes would result in tangible benefits and reduce displacement. The Union Square Neighborhood council has carried this work forward, including finalizing a community benefits agreement with US2 (developer) and the City. Local government has demonstrated a strong commitment to affordable housing, notably in the creation of the Office of Housing Stability (OHS), as have Somerville’s state and federal representatives.

CAAS led in the formation of the Nonprofit Boards Collaborative in 2020. The Collaborative has strengthened collaborations between community organizations and with the City. The collaborative is also particularly well situated to identify gaps in essential services and those organizations with the greatest capacity to meet them. The collaborative is actively engaged on the issues of affordable housing, workforce development and childcare.

In general, there is a robust municipal culture of community involvement in policy discussions and advocacy that will no doubt continue across the next three years. Several key stakeholders remarked on the extent of Somerville residents’ commitment to preserving an inclusive and diverse community. For a more comprehensive discussion of existing services and organizations working to meet aspects of this need, please see Section 11: Strategic 3-Year Goals.

## **2) Inadequate access to employment that meets basic needs**

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<sup>69</sup> Sweet, Lynne D. “Somerville Housing Needs Assessment.” Newton, MA: LDS Consulting Group, LLC, December 2015, p.47

Lack of access to employment – or inadequate income – to meet basic needs emerged as the second most significant need for Somerville’s low-income community. This finding was overwhelmingly supported by the community survey, interviews and the secondary data. While this has been identified and expressed as an individual/family level need, many of its causes are systemic and must also be addressed at the community/policy level (e.g. minimum wage ordinances). It is also a significant factor in causing and perpetuating economic insecurity for low-income households.

Local conditions reflect a national problem. Low-income adults with family incomes below 200% of the federal poverty line were much more likely than adults in higher-income families to face a material hardship (61.1% vs. 28.3%), including food insecurity (43.6% vs. 14.1%), problems paying for their housing (16.7% vs. 5.9%), problems paying their utilities (20.5% vs. 6.9%), problems paying for medical bills (25.1% vs. 12.9%), and unmet medical care because of costs (27.8% vs. 13.4%). Between 2017 and 2018, adults in low-income families were 3 times more likely to be evicted or forced to move compared to of adults in higher-income families.

When asked about the most pressing needs of low-income Somerville residents, issues surrounding “Jobs” were identified with the second highest frequency (57%). Training or education to obtain employment or better employment was identified as an urgent need by 51% of respondents.

- #2 community need identified by survey respondents.
- Respondents are split almost evenly between working full-time, part-time or are unemployed and looking for work.
- Of those working full-time, 69% of the respondents say their work does not pay them enough to cover their basic living expenses.

There was consensus among key stakeholders that employment was an area of significant need for Somerville’s low-income community. As one interviewee put it (pre-covid):

“Lack of employment –I mean employment that bears any correlation to the real cost of living – especially for lower wage earners and people with no immigration status – is pushing families to the brink, definitely out of this city.”

The most common concerns were about poor wages, lack of training, and the lack to job opportunities in the City. There was also strong evidence of these challenges in the secondary data.

### *Unemployment*

Unemployment remains a major issue for low-income households in Somerville. Although the city’s unemployment rate was only 1.8% as of October 2019, a much larger percentage of low-income survey respondents (13%) were unemployed and looking for work in the same timeframe.

### *Underemployment and Lack of Skills*

Underemployment is also a major challenge. Many low- and moderate-income Somerville residents have jobs, but those jobs are only part-time and/or pay low wages. For example, the majority of our survey respondents were employed, but fewer than half were working full time. In many cases, underemployed Somerville residents lack the skills or training they need in order to obtain a higher-paying job. Key stakeholders conveyed that a lack of education or training was a key driver of underemployment. This is born out in the secondary as well (linkage between education and income).

### *Lack of Jobs in Somerville*

Another concern is the lack of good local jobs. As one interviewee pointed out, “there are far more residents than there are jobs in Somerville, whereas next door in Cambridge, the opposite is true”. According the City’s *Talent Equity Playbook*, about nine out of 10 of Somerville’s working residents commute to jobs in businesses located in Boston, Cambridge, and in the cities and towns that surround the Somerville. Only 10% of Somerville’s working residents work for businesses located in Somerville.<sup>70</sup>

### *Community Strengths*

Despite the relative absence of jobs and workforce training in Somerville, both the City and local programs, notably Somerville Community Corporation through its First Source jobs program, remain committed to expanding opportunities in this area.

“30,000 new jobs in Somerville by the year 2030” is the ambitious job creation goal articulated in SomerVision: 2010-2030 Comprehensive Plan. While large gaps remain, the City has worked to become a part of Massachusetts’ workforce development ecosystem and to provide training and employment opportunities to residents. In one such city-funded partnership, CAAS provides case management and public benefits enrollment to program participants. The Nonprofit Boards Collaborative, discussed above, has also been active promoting workforce efforts. For a more comprehensive discussion of existing services and organizations working to meet aspects of this need, please see Section 11: Strategic 3-Year Goals.

### **3) Inadequate supply of affordable, suitable care for children of all ages**

Lack of affordable, suitable care for children of all ages emerged as the third most significant need for Somerville’s low-income community. This finding was supported by the community survey, key stakeholder interviews and the secondary data. While this has been identified and expressed as an individual/family level need, many of its causes are systemic and must also be addressed at the community/policy level. It is also a significant factor in causing and perpetuating economic insecurity for low-income households.

When asked about the most pressing needs of low-income Somerville residents, issues surrounding the supply and suitability of care for children were identified with the third highest frequency (54%). Of respondents those with children in their household, over 75% indicated that these were areas of significant need.

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<sup>70</sup> <https://www.somervillema.gov/news/somerville%E2%80%99s-talent-equity-playbook-outlines-workforce-development-strategies-building-economic>

- #3 community need identified by survey respondents
- 54% of respondents with children in preschool/childcare indicated that the hours and quality did NOT meet their family's needs
- Approximately of 42% of all low-income respondents indicated that afterschool and summer programs were among the TOP needs impacting the community.

There was consensus among key stakeholders that child care was an area of significant need for Somerville's low-income community. As one interviewee put it:

“For many child care can be like a second rent payment. It isn't possible to do it all. Some really tough choices must be made.”

There are also considerable hidden costs for interrupting a career for child care. By some estimates, a 26-year-old woman who is earning \$30,253 and takes off five years to provide care is losing \$467,000 over the course of her career — a 19% reduction in her lifetime earnings.<sup>71</sup>

#### *Limited Capacity in Childcare*

Part of the issue is that there simply are not enough childcare or preschool slots available to serve the estimated 3,408 children in Somerville under the age of 5. As the table below shows the city's licensed childcare and preschool programs can only serve 38% of children under age 5. This is consistent with the census data indicating that only 66% of children age 3 and 4 are enrolled in preschool.

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<sup>71</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2016/06/21/139731/calculating-the-hidden-cost-of-interrupting-a-career-for-child-care/>

## Somerville Childcare & Preschool Capacity

| Type  | # of Slots |
|---|------------|
| Licensed Family Childcare   | 272        |
| Licensed Large Group Childcare: Infant and Toddler Capacity                   | 186        |
| Licensed Large Group Childcare: Preschool Capacity                            | 529        |
| Licensed Large Group Childcare: Mixed Toddler, Preschool, School Age Capacity | 65         |
| Somerville Public Schools SMILE Program                                       | 232        |
| Total # of slots for infants, toddlers and preschoolers                       | 1,284      |
| Total # of children under 5   | 3,408      |
| Total Capacity  | 38%        |

Sources: Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care; Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; American Community Survey 2011-2015.

### *High Cost of Childcare*

According to data from the Somerville Family Learning Collaborative, the average annual cost of tuition for center-based infant care was \$24,071, center-based toddler care was \$22,070 and center-based preschool care was \$15,284.

For most low-income families, enrolling their child in one of these programs is not financially feasible. Without taxpayer support, families pay, on average, \$18,200 per year preschool and early-childhood care per year. And while low-income families receive subsidies through programs like Head Start, this simply is not enough. For families that don't qualify, there is very little support. Both survey respondents and key stakeholders indicated high costs were a barrier to accessing childcare or preschool programs.

### *Limited Hours in Childcare*

One other major challenge for parents is finding full-day childcare or preschool programs. Many programs only run for a few hours and/or end in the early afternoon, making access very difficult for parents who work full-time.

Given the limited number of childcare and preschool slots in the city, not to mention the high cost and limited hours of existing programs, it should come as no surprise that many of our survey respondents had trouble finding programs for their young children. 32% of low-income survey respondents reported that the cost of childcare was a barrier to financial stability. This latter figure almost certainly under-represents the need for affordable childcare because 44% of our survey respondents had children enrolled in the CAAS Head Start program. Even Head Start does not obviate the need for additional childcare for all enrolled families.

### *Community Strengths*

This is an area of particular strength in Somerville. There is, perhaps, more coordination among public, private and municipal entities than in any other area of need in the community. Somerville's selection and participation in the *By All Means* initiative is illustrative of this. The *By All Means* initiative is a partnership between 6 cities -- Louisville, KY; Oakland, CA; Providence, RI; and Salem, Somerville, and Newton, MA -- addressing the correlation between socioeconomic status and education outcomes. Each city has created a Children's Cabinet—a cross-sector team made up of mayors, superintendents, health and human services directors, and community and civic leaders -- to embark on a redesign process that is focused on creating integrated systems of opportunity and support from early childhood through higher education. These cities are laboratories for the construction of advanced, integrated systems which will make it possible for all children to succeed. The Nonprofit Boards Collaborative discussed above has also been promoting access to affordable, suitable childcare. For a more comprehensive discussion of existing services and organizations working to meet aspects of this need, please see Section 11: Strategic 3-Year Goals.

## Community Assessment Update

### I. Background

In response to an unprecedented public health crisis, this assessment update reflects an initial effort to capture some of the emerging and evolving community needs as well as to forecast how those needs may evolve over the near and longer term. Unfortunately, it is difficult to understand the scope of impending crises in what remains a new and rapidly evolving situation.

**It is likely that as needs evolve, some will not be captured in this update and, therefore, necessary community responses may not connect to the needs identified in this document.**

The needs assessed will inform services to those affected by the crisis. It is significant to note that Congressional action permits FY20 and special supplemental CSBG funding to serve families at or below 200% of the federal poverty level (as defined by the US Census Bureau).

The following table illustrates how the 200% eligibility standard will expand the number of Somerville residents eligible for services:

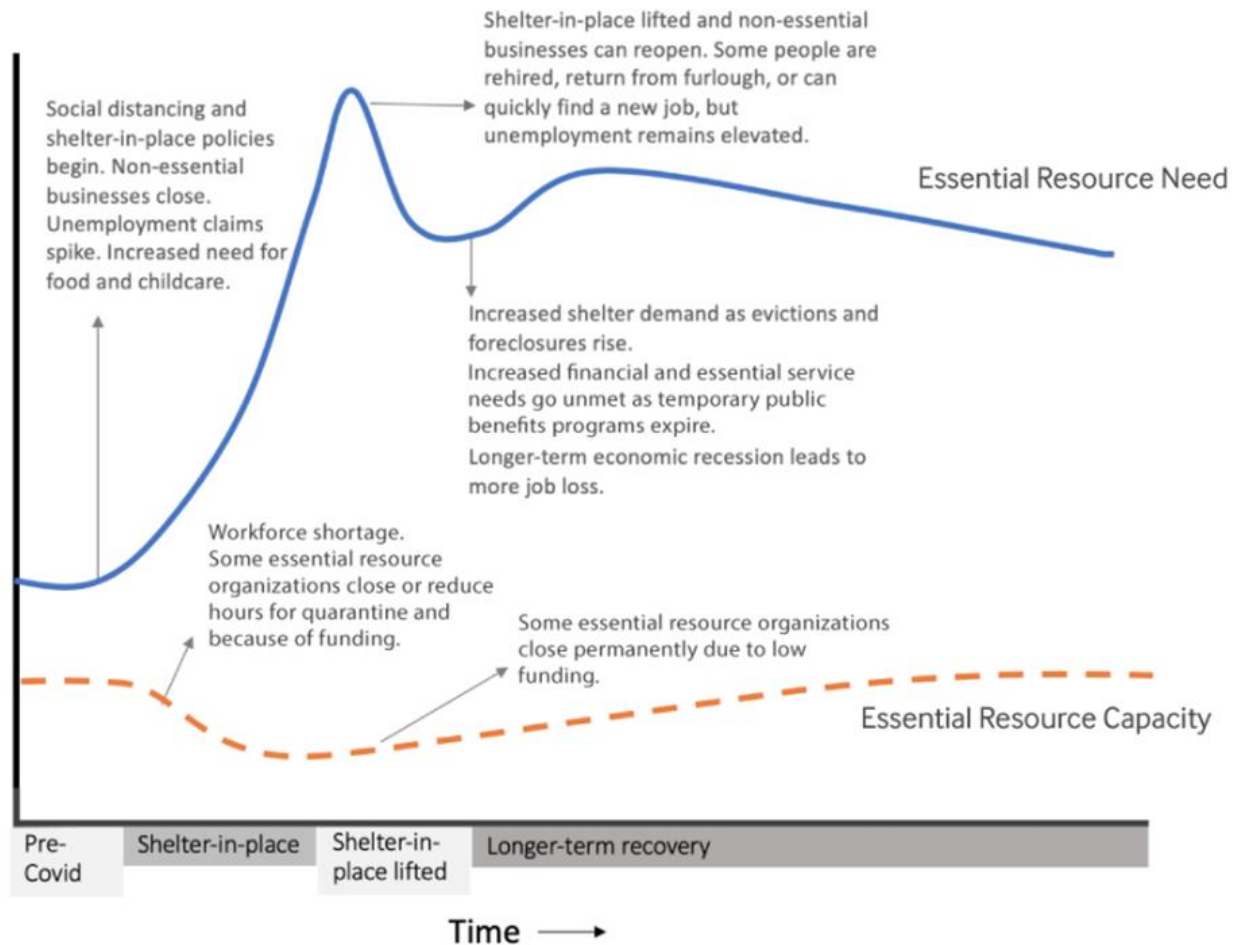
| CSBG Service Area | # below 125% | #below 200% | Additional eligible to be served |
|-------------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------------------|
| Somerville, MA    | 12,397       | 19,223      | 6,826                            |

### II. National, State and Local public health crisis

State and local health authorities responded to the outbreak by placing oscillating restrictions on travel, business and recreation that have had a number of impacts on the community. Of special concern, particularly from an anti-poverty perspective, is the impact of the pandemic on the gap between essential resource needs and capacity to meet them.

Our assumptions are based on several factors. High unemployment and underemployment will drive an increase in essential needs demands well beyond 2020. Temporary policy responses, such as eviction moratoriums and changes to government benefit eligibility, will end. Large disparities across racial identities and other social determinants seen in health outcomes will continue and, potentially expand. While difficult to plot precisely, some measure of the gap between essential resource needs and capacity to meet those needs can be seen in Somerville Cares Fund data summarized in the preceding Community Profile Update.





Source: NEJM Catalyst © Massachusetts Medical Society<sup>72</sup>

What we have seen and anticipate is growing demand for an already under-resourced essential resource landscape that will be further strained by the secondary economic and social consequences of the pandemic. Similar to the COVID-19 infection-rate curve, to flatten this “secondary-impact curve”, multiple interventions will be required in a coordinated effort among health care, public health, human services, and the private sector. With unemployment rates drawing comparisons to those of the Great Depression, these secondary impacts will be deep and widespread.<sup>73</sup>

### III. Immediate impacts on the community

The immediate impacts of COVID-19 have been felt across all sectors of society. The following will focus on impacts in the areas of health, education, employment, human services provision, and community resources.

<sup>72</sup> <https://catalyst.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/CAT.20.0186>

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

Nationwide, early data suggest that the following groups have experienced disproportionately higher rates of infection and/or complications/death as a result the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Individuals 65+ years old
- People of color, particularly Black Americans and indigenous people (both the pandemic and secondary impacts are highlighting already existing inequities).
- People with underlying health conditions (especially, lung disease, asthma, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, liver disease, severe obesity, and individuals with immunocompromised conditions)

Critical areas of impact to the local community thus far:

- Health impacts:
  - Individuals over 65, especially those with underlying health conditions have been shown to be at particular risk for severe health implications from COVID-19. Those in congregate settings (e.g. nursing homes) are a particular concern in this community.
  - Community health resources may be periodically stretched thin as resources devoted to those sick with COVID-19 will limit resources available to others. This may result in others NOT directly affected by COVID might lack access to care.
  - Behavioral health resources will need to be available in new and increased ways to deal with the many different stressors/traumas caused by the pandemic, especially its impact over an extended time period. Issues such as domestic violence, elder abuse, child abuse, drug abuse, suicide and other indicators of behavioral health issues are a particular concern, though pertinent data is not yet available for Somerville.
  - Food/Nutrition, particularly for school-aged children previously accessing free/reduced breakfast, lunch, and snacks has been impacted as access to that food source has been complicated due to school closures.
- Employment impacts:
  - Employment impacts of the pandemic have been immediate and profound. Data about unemployment claims from March to November 2020 confirm the urgency<sup>74</sup>
  - Local indicators show that state and national patterns of high unemployment are reflected in this community.
  - Individuals in the health care field are at high-risk of exposure to COVID-19 and are under tremendous stress due to additional work hours and challenging work conditions. In particular, many of those workers with close, frequent contact with vulnerable individuals are lower-wage individuals.<sup>75</sup>
  - Individuals in the educational field – especially teachers and assistants in Head Start and Early Head Start as well as other early childhood care settings – are working remotely due to school shutdowns. Lower-wage workers in these fields

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<sup>74</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2020/05/13/what-weekly-unemployment-claims-reveal-about-the-local-impacts-of-the-covid-19-recession/>

<sup>75</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6915e6.htm?s\\_cid=mm6915e6\\_x](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6915e6.htm?s_cid=mm6915e6_x)

are also more vulnerable to layoffs and/or may lack the technology resources in their home to work remotely.<sup>76</sup>

- Individuals in many sectors of the economy – but particularly the service sector, the retail sectors, gig economy, and others most affected by pandemic-related policies – are experiencing sudden and unexpected unemployment and underemployment. Some are unaware of resources available to them. Some are ineligible due to immigration status.<sup>77</sup>
- Educational impacts:
  - Closings of public schools are having an immediate impact on children’s education. Children with less access to resources (broadband internet, computers/tablets, technology expertise, language barriers, etc.) and those with disabilities are most at-risk for suffering learning loss during a potentially protracted period of school closure.
  - Caregivers of school-age children must secure day care arrangements for their children or sacrifice employment to care for their children. These same caregivers are also expected to be primary teachers for their children during the period of the closure. Parents with limited resources face numerous challenges as a result of this situation; educational outcomes for their children will be affected.<sup>78</sup>
- Impacts on human services provision:
  - Services to vulnerable populations are being curtailed or drastically changed. Some service providers are not operating, leaving gaps in services to the community. Other service providers have had to alter their service provision in significant ways, leaving some family needs unmet. Finally, for those service providers continuing to operate, the changed circumstances have required significant, immediate adaptations that will require additional resources to support over a longer period of time.
- Community resource impacts:
  - The impacts of COVID-19 on community resources are numerous and include a reduction in the availability of resources (access to group activities, commercial services), a scarcity of some resources (health care, food and emergency supplies) and needs for resources that have not previously been required in this community in any significant capacity (e.g. technology required for distance learning and work).
  - The broad impacts of COVID-19 on this community have created an even more urgent need for coordination and collaboration of resources among the public sector, the public health sector, first responders, educators, the business

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<sup>76</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2020/04/11/830856140/teaching-without-schools-grief-then-a-free-for-all>

<sup>77</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/03/27/young-workers-likely-to-be-hard-hit-as-covid-19-strikes-a-blow-to-restaurants-and-other-service-sector-jobs/>

<sup>78</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2020/04/17/why-covid-19-will-explode-existing-academic-achievement-gaps/>

community, the faith community and many others. CAAS plays an important role convening organizations, people and resources to support families.

#### **IV. Anticipated near- and long-term impacts**

The needs above are already established through initial data and anecdotal reports from clients, staff, board members and community stakeholders. Based on these already-observed events, it is likely that there will be near-term (3-6 months) and longer-term (greater than 6 months) impacts that require responsive planning. A partial, but not complete, list of the anticipated impacts includes:

- *Prolonged service disruptions:* The disruptions in service delivery to clients are expected to continue for a substantial time. This is likely to lead to ancillary challenges for customers that may become long-term issues. For example, learning loss<sup>79</sup> and domestic violence/child abuse<sup>80</sup> have become larger problems due to service disruptions.
- *Exacerbated housing issues:* Due to the immediate economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, renters face one or more months where they have and will continue to lack the funds to pay rent; many homeowners will continue to miss mortgage payments. A historic wave of evictions appears to be on the horizon.
- *Prolonged employment issues:* Sudden layoffs and other employment disruptions were frequently addressed by temporary emergency response measures. Many of these measures have expired, or are set to expire in December 2020. It is also anticipated that long-term recovery efforts will be required to help local residents reconnect to the workforce, particularly those for whom employment assistance has not previously been required.<sup>81</sup>
- *Prolonged agency capacity issues:* Policies limiting in-person staff/customer interactions may be in place for an extended period of time and agencies will need to maintain remote work and remote customer-interaction infrastructure to be responsive to these needs in a more sustainable capacity.
- *Prolonged community resource/coordination issues:* The short-term community coordination needs cited in this Assessment are presumed to continue into the long-term. Current conditions may persist for an extended period; recovery efforts will require coordination; ongoing community preparedness to guard against a future outbreak will

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<sup>79</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2020/04/17/why-covid-19-will-explode-existing-academic-achievement-gaps/>

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/social-distancing-domestic-violence.pdf>

<sup>81</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/research/how-covid-19-will-change-the-nations-long-term-economic-trends-brookings-metro/>

also require ongoing convening and new community readiness strategies based on what is shown to be effective during the current crisis.<sup>82</sup>

## **V. Addressing Equity Implications**

Early data already obtained regarding the demographics of those most impacted by the pandemic, previous Community Assessments, as well as countless government and academic studies have established that structural racism, xenophobia, sexism, stigmatization and othering persist – and are often exacerbated – in times of crisis. CAAS recognizes the obligation to ensure that the barriers of structural race, gender, and other inequities are addressed during this time of crisis and beyond.

## **VI. Implications for “Top Needs”**

As noted above, the top needs identified in this assessment have endured in substance, but expanded dramatically in depth and breath.

1) The housing crisis has deepened and expanded to include households that were stable (if only just so) prior to the pandemic. With the Massachusetts eviction moratorium having expired on October 17 and federal protections expiring on January 31, Somerville will likely see a historic wave of evictions based on months of accrued and unpayable rental debt. This will coincide with colder weather and the flu season. In a fall 2020 survey of public sector, private sector, educational, community, and faith-based organizations, “affordable housing” was categorically cited by respondents as a TOP or most pressing community need (100%).

2) The gap between income and the cost of basic needs has now widened considerably. Unemployment in Somerville is now 7.8% – a 333% increase over 2019. This is to say nothing of the increasingly underemployed and those who, due to immigration status, cannot access unemployment benefits. In a fall 2020 survey of public sector, private sector, educational, community, and faith-based organizations, “unemployment or underemployment” was the second most frequently cited by respondents as a TOP or most pressing community need (75%). An overwhelming majority of the residents these organizations serve have lost 30% or more of their incomes due to COVID-19. Recall that nearly 40% of Somerville residents were cost-burdened (spending 30% or more of income on rent) prior to the pandemic.

3) Lack of affordable, suitable childcare was an already a familiar and pressing community need. This has been a long-simmering crisis that recently surged to the foreground of people’s lives. Its potential to inflict lasting damage is enormous, especially for lower-income families. In addition to child outcomes, this is particularly true for women, who have returned to the workforce in substantially lower numbers than men. This may not be about just a temporary loss income; it may have implications for a long-term, lower earnings trajectory. Moreover, when the economy does reopen more fully, many teachers and childcare slots may not return. In a fall 2020 survey of public sector, private sector, educational, community, and faith-based organizations, “access

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<sup>82</sup> <https://centerforcommunityinvestment.org/blog/reimagining-strategy-context-covid-19-crisis-triage-tool>

to childcare” was the third most frequently cited by respondents as a TOP or most pressing community need (50%).

## 10. Key Findings: Internal Assessment

### Introduction

CAAS' internal assessment process was designed to identify gaps and strengths in our programs and operations that impact our ability to meet the needs of low-income individuals and families. Both staff and board engaged in the internal assessment process in order to give a more complete view of the agency. As part of the internal assessment process, we considered the following questions:

1. What is our agency's overall financial health (current and projected)?
2. How visible are we/what are we known for in the community?
3. Do all of our programs address priority needs?
4. Are all of our programs running well/achieving the right results?
5. Do we have good systems for evaluating new potential projects, programs or opportunities?
6. Do we recruit/retain high quality, capable staff?
7. Are we adequately staffed?
8. Do we have strong succession plans for key staff/roles?
9. Are our staff and Board adequately trained/do they have the right skills?
10. How engaged is our Board in the development, planning, implementation and evaluation of the agency's programs and activities?
11. What are the greatest strengths and opportunities we can draw upon in meeting community needs?
12. What are the greatest impediments and threats to addressing priority community needs?

### Summary of Key Findings of the Internal Needs Assessment

Below is a summary of CAAS' current strengths and weaknesses, as well as our goals for improving internal operations over the next two years.

#### *Strengths and Opportunities*

- Quality of programming
  - Head Start: high-quality programming, strong leadership, deep collaborations with host cities, increased duration, mix of program offerings designed to meet community needs.
  - Housing Advocacy Program: strong advocacy for court involved tenants, significantly expanded rental assistance programs, movement towards increased depth of service to support housing stability.
  - Community Organizing & Advocacy Program: increased capacity to support low-income tenants, strong advocacy in a wide variety of public conversations related to the causes and conditions of poverty.
  - VITA: high-quality tax services, returning over \$3,000, on average, to program participants.
  - High level of client satisfaction.
- Stable and experienced leadership

- Functioning systems and policies in all administrative domains.
- Board of Directors has energized working committees that are meeting regularly to address programmatic and organizational needs with staff.
- CAAS is at a reputational high point and increasingly understood as a deep and broad resource for Somerville's low-income residents.

### ***Impediments and Threats***

- Lack of funding diversity
- Uncertainty with respect to future funding required to sustain current staffing levels and programming.
- Pay inequity due to restrictions on and limited financial resources.

### ***Financial Health***

The agency's current and projected financial health is stable, with appropriate and adequate resources to fulfill program goals across FY 2022 and FY 2023. Much of the agency's recent expansion to meet community needs has been funded by pandemic-related federal and state grants. However, these resources will almost certainly not endure past FY 2023.

The past year saw the departure of the Director of Finance and replacement by Glivinski & Associates. Glivinski has prior experience with CAAS and extensive experience working with Community Action Agencies in Massachusetts. This change in department structure has restored necessary stability and the smooth operation of essential functions. While the current structure will persist at least until the completion of the FY 2020 audit (projected to be completed by July 2021), both the board and management team are assessing the agency's future financial management needs. We will determine the optimal staffing pattern taking into account the need for a fiscal department that is deeply connected to our programs, the relative costs of an employee vs. an outsourced model, and the relative levels of expertise afforded by Glivinski and a potential internal hire.

The assessment also found that the agency's budgeting processes and measures of financial health require an equity lens. CAAS will not regard itself as having achieved financial health if it maintains the status quo of low wages, particularly within Head Start. These issues are difficult to resolve with level funding. Both a pay equity analysis and fundraising to increase pay equity will inform CAAS' work across the next two years.

### ***Visibility in the Community***

As noted in the summary of strengths, CAAS is at a reputational high point. Due in large part to pandemic-related crisis response, CAAS is increasingly understood as a deep and broad resource for Somerville's low-income residents. However, there are many ways in which the agency needs to improve in order to build upon and sustain this positive trajectory. CAAS has little formal communications budget and infrastructure. Each of CAAS programs and the constituencies they serve would benefit from a more robust communications strategy and infrastructure. Steps in this direction are already underway with the recent hiring of a Development and Communications Manager.



### ***Programs & Priority Needs***

While discussed in detail in the strategic goals and objectives sections of this document, the internal needs assessment found that CAAS programs are well aligned with and are addressing priority community needs.

### ***Points of Accountability***

While discussed in detail in the strategic goals and objectives sections of this document, the internal needs assessment found that CAAS programs have appropriate systems and measures in place to ensure that key indicators are tracked and evaluated.

Head Start has a particularly robust self-assessment process, largely defined by the Administration for Children and Families. Both HAP and CO&A are exploring similar processes. All programs fall within the CSBG framework and set goals and objectives responsive to priority needs. The assessment also found that CAAS has appropriate data systems and expertise to track and assess key indicators.

While necessarily delayed by the exigencies of the pandemic, the internal assessment reaffirmed the need for a high-level dashboard that can better position the management team and board to evaluate program performance and efficacy.

### ***Evaluating New Opportunities***

Having a formal framework for evaluating new opportunities, be that grant funding, a new project or a potential program direction, was identified as a critical need, particularly in the present climate. Accordingly, the Executive Director developed a set of questions and considerations to be applied in these contexts. It includes elements such as alignment with mission, strategic priorities, available resources, etc. While necessarily iterative, it has already proven useful in guiding program and enterprise-level decision making. It is also attached as an appendix.

### ***Staffing***

The internal needs assessment found that, on balance, CAAS attracts and retains high-quality staff. While dedication to and resources for professional development were identified as strengths, there are opportunities for growth in leadership development and creating pathways for upward mobility (across programs). As noted in the preceding section on financial health, a pay equity analysis is forthcoming. A relatively low pay scale also has an inevitable impact on qualifications and the corresponding quality and depth of services provided.

There are presently staffing gaps in the realms of office coordination and management as well as potential administrative support for various functions. The upcoming departure of the Director of Operations and Planning in July 2021 has led to a search for Deputy Executive Director. The

change in title and scope of work reflects the agency's growth and evolving needs. The agency hopes to have this position filled by August 2021 and is working to ensure a smooth transition.

### ***Succession Planning***

The unexpected absence of the Executive Director from October 2020 – January 2021 deepened the agency's commitment to updating and improving upon existing succession plans for senior managers. The assessment found that improved plans, practices and redundancy are necessary to ensure resiliency through both planned and unplanned, short- and long-term absences. There was also broad recognition that there are certain limitations and resource constraints. The assessment identified a need to develop a strategy based on descending areas of risk/threats to compliance, service delivery and continuity. This process is ongoing, with a goal to produce updated succession plans and practices by the end of the 2021 calendar year.

### ***Board***

The internal needs assessment found that, on balance, the board has the tools, training and resources to govern effectively and participate in the development, planning, implementation and evaluation of the agency's programs and activities. Board members, and the board president, in particular, have made extraordinary contributions to the agency and its mission across the pandemic. The assessment found a need for improved succession planning at the board level as well as a need for more engaged participation in fundraising.

### ***Diversity, Equity and Inclusion***

While necessarily permeating many other aspects of the assessment and planning process, the need for outside assistance in order to more fully realize the agency's aspirations in these domains was a specific finding of the internal needs assessment. In the fall of 2021 CAAS will a) hire a DEI consultant and b) populate a DEI Committee composed of not less than 7 individuals from all levels of the organization (from line staff to Board members). This group will issue a report detailing all DEI-related issues identified through their work, together with recommendations and a timeline for concrete actions that CAAS can take in response thereto.

## 11. Strategic 2-Year Goals

### Introduction

This section describes the broad goals that will guide CAAS' programs and operations to meet the needs of low-income individuals, families, and communities over the next two years. Within the discussions of each goal are thoughts on funding strategies, our service delivery system, linkages, and any service gaps requiring CAAS' use of linkages or other resources.

*See Appendix \_\_\_ for an expanded list of CAAS' Linkages, both active and planned.*

The board's Program Planning Committee and CAAS senior management gathered in April and May 2021 to discuss potential solutions and the role CAAS might play with respect to each of the top 3 community needs. These discussions were informed by needs assessment data, progress against the current Community Action Plan and the strategic objectives approved by the board in February 2021.

At a retreat on June 5, 2021, the full board evaluated and discussed the most pressing issues, opportunities and impediments facing each program as well as potential linkages that may assist in addressing priority needs. The resulting 2-year goals and strategies were approved by the CAAS board on June 29, 2021.

The following goals (and the specific objectives listed in Section 11) are grouped with respect to the particular need to which they respond most directly. But "needs" in real life rarely occur in isolation, and solutions must be correspondingly complex. For example, an eviction may be immediately related to an inability to pay the rent on time, but the causes of that inability may be manifold: underemployment, a sudden illness, a change of job schedule resulting in loss of child care, and so on. Recognizing this complexity, CAAS views needs and their solutions as an integrated whole and responds in this manner to the fullest extent possible. For example, many may view Head Start as a "preschool" or "child care" program, meeting that need alone. But Head Start, through the support given to families by Head Start program managers, family advocates, specialists, and classroom teachers, is uniquely situated to be able to identify other issues causing stress or crisis within a family, and make appropriate referrals within and beyond CAAS' programs. Funding streams may be limited to certain activities. The expertise of a particular service provider may not be applicable to all of the issues a client raises. A client may seek help for a particular problem, only to realize that we can help in ways they had not anticipated. To the fullest extent possible, we train and expect ourselves to ask questions, to think about how else CAAS can help, and to approach our work with genuine curiosity and caring for the whole lives of those we serve.

### **Goal 1: Preserve and increase supply of safe and affordable housing and help low-income households achieve sustainable tenancies**

Our Housing Advocacy Program (HAP) provides excellent crisis intervention, short- and long-term rental assistance, and supportive case management services to a broad client base and addressing a wide array of community needs. By its nature HAP is not designed to bring about

systemic, structural change in Somerville’s housing systems. Partially in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and with the assistance of CSBG CARES funds, but also in response to the ongoing gentrification crisis in our city, CAAS made a strategic decision to revive our Community Organizing and Advocacy (CO&A) program in the summer of 2020. Our hope was that by focusing on individual, family, and community self-empowerment and regular advocacy around public policy issues we could move the needle at a systemic level, not only with respect to housing, but ultimately with respect to a wide range of the causes and conditions of poverty in our city.

Despite the inherent difficulties of organizing in a pandemic, the effort has enjoyed significant success.

In August 2020, CAAS hired a Director of Community Organizing, Nicole Eigbrett. Since her hiring, the prerogatives of CO&A have been to prevent evictions and displacement during the COVID-19 pandemic, while building meaningful community and power for tenants. We do this by taking a comprehensive approach that leverages our internal services and resources at CAAS with our strong partnerships with collaborating institutions, resident allies, and low-income tenants. In FY 2021, CO&A initiated a Know Your Rights Coalition with the City of Somerville housing and immigrant services staff, nonprofit service providers, and grassroots organizers; established a Somerville Evictions Response Network, a non-violent direct action and rapid response network to respond to illegal evictions; and built power with working-class and lower-income tenants through monthly Renters Meetings and targeted organizing support.

Our vision for this work is to support and expand both HAP and CO&A in a coordinated manner in order to address housing and related issues at both the individual/family and community levels.

**Subgoal 1.1** Preserve and increase the supply of safe and affordable housing through community and tenant organizing and policy advocacy initiatives.

### *Strategies*

- 1) Tenant Organizing: educate and organize Somerville residents, particularly working-class and lower-income tenants, to advocate for better conditions and long-term affordability.
- 2) Eviction Prevention: educate and train community volunteers on eviction prevention and intervention strategies, particularly focusing on illegal evictions.
- 3) Coalition and Base Building: deepen CAAS’ partnerships with other service providers and community volunteers in Somerville to support broader tenants’ rights education, eviction prevention, and longer term affordable housing campaign efforts.
- 4) Policy Advocacy: advocate for municipal and statewide policies that preserve and increase supply of affordable housing.

Continuing the work of FY 2021, we anticipate the eventual expansion CO&A’s programming in all aspects, due to the hiring of two FTE Community Organizers in July 2021. We will focus efforts on building our citywide tenant organizing capacity through the monthly Somerville Renters Meetings and providing technical organizing assistance to tenants who wish to organize their building. Understanding that the definition of “illegal eviction” will change with the ending

of national and municipal eviction moratoriums, CO&A’s eviction prevention strategy of teaching community volunteers how to intervene effectively in these contexts may need to be reconsidered as well.

**Subgoal 1.2** Help low-income residents achieve sustainable tenancies through rental assistance, crisis intervention, income maximization, and longitudinal stabilization services.

### *Strategies*

- 1) Stabilize tenancies through rental assistance programs.
- 2) Assist clients in preparing for housing court appearances.
- 3) Assist clients in negotiating with landlords.
- 4) Maximize client incomes through benefits enrollment.
- 5) Provide longitudinal support in the form of case management, information and referrals.

Continuing the work of FY 2021, we will provide high-quality eviction prevention services and address the central facts of overdue rent and lost income by raising and distributing approximately \$1,200,000 in rental assistance and flexible cash funds, from local, state, and private sources. While community resources for rental assistance have increased dramatically over prior years, we remain concerned that they will be insufficient to meet the need when the residential eviction moratorium ends (end date still unclear).

### *Existing Services, Gaps, and CAAS’ Role*

The most salient gap with respect to the lack of safe and affordable housing is the limited capacity of Somerville to build affordable housing at a rate sufficient to keep up with the need. Like most cities in the United States, Somerville relied for many years on public housing and on “benevolent landlords” to meet the need for affordable units. SCC, our local Community Development Corporation, does great work purchasing, building, and managing affordable housing, but they would be the first to agree that their capacity is not sufficient alone to meet the need. Our “Inclusionary Zoning” ordinance (which requires developers to include a certain percentage of affordable units in all new housing construction over a certain size) at first required 12.5% of units to be affordable; this was raised to 20% and there is pressure to increase it even further. But if only a few units are being built, this has limited impact. Over the past decade, the City has seen an upsurge in housing development. Both large-scale projects like Assembly Square, which is providing hundreds (or even more) housing units at all price levels, and an abundance of small-scale (6 or more unit) projects replacing older housing stock, are resulting in substantial increase in new affordable units. However, the need continues to outstrip availability. In just one recent example, SCC received over 3,000 applications for approximately 30 new affordable units. New construction is not projected to meet the need in the immediate future, if ever, unless we see significant shifts in housing policy and development economics.

There are several organizations working to address Somerville’s affordable housing crisis from a service-delivery point of view. Based on our interviews and experience, the six organizations conducting the most housing-related work in Somerville are CAAS, Somerville Homeless Coalition (SHC), Somerville Community Corporation (SCC), Just-A-Start (JAS), Cambridge & Somerville Legal Services (CASLS), and the City’s Office of Housing Stability (OHS). Each

organization plays a distinct role. While SHC serves clients who are homeless or about to become homeless, SCC serves a more “up-stream” clientele, engaging in affordable housing development, community organizing, and providing foreclosure prevention resources and a first-time homebuyers program. CASLS provides legal advice to community organizations as well as direct services to Somerville residents facing displacement. The Affordable Housing Organizing Committee (AHOC), comprised of CAAS, SHC, SCC, CASLS, and OHS works to educate community members about the need for affordable housing, seeks to influence policy at the state and local level, engages community members through actions, campaigns and discussions, and raises funds for eviction prevention. OHS plays a critical role at several levels, including direct service, policy advocacy, and as a funder of housing search, rental assistance and tenant organizing work.

### *Housing Advocacy Program (HAP)*

Eviction prevention has, and will continue to play an important role in CAAS’ work to maintain housing and prevent displacement. HAP’s multifaceted approach includes: rental assistance, eviction prevention (legal and quasi-legal services), landlord negotiations, housing search, income maximization through benefits enrollment, and, starting in FY 2021, more longitudinal case management. With housing costs rising and a shortage of subsidized housing in Somerville, it is critical that low-income families and individuals remain in their homes; eviction almost always results in forced departure from our city.

The most responsive and effective tool HAP presently has in its arsenal is rental assistance. Funds for rental assistance will come predominantly from ESG-CV (through September 2022), CDBG-CV (through December 2021), and CPA (through June 2022). Associated linkages and community resources are described in greater detail in Section 11 under Subgoal 1.2.

HAP employs an innovative approach to eviction prevention. By partnering with the local district court and obtaining copies of the weekly “Summons and Complaint”, or eviction notices, we are able to identify which families or individuals are in the process of being evicted from their homes. We then send notice to each affected residence letting them know of our case management and in-court advocacy services. We then determine, in collaboration with each client, the type of advocacy and services that are most needed and will be most effective. Among the housing needs we regularly address are: assistance with the legal process, landlord negotiations, addressing poor housing conditions and fair housing issues (e.g. discrimination). Some cases can be solved with a phone call to resolve a misunderstanding with a landlord; others require assistance through the entire legal process, including appeals. HAP partners with Cambridge & Somerville Legal Services (CASLS) and De Novo Center for Justice and Healing for supervision of legal cases, directly assisting clients in negotiations and legal proceedings, referrals, and building internal capacity to assist court-involved residents.

HAP provides housing search services. The purpose is to assist community members who are seeking better or more affordable housing or are being displaced, but are not yet in the eviction process. Advocates acquaint participants with the types of available subsidized and affordable housing and assist with filling out applications and related tasks.

HAP guides and assists clients with initial enrollment for, and appeals from denials of, a wide variety of federal and state benefits such as SNAP, WIC, TANF, Fuel Assistance, and similar supports. By ensuring that our clients are maximizing their use of these supports we help them to free up income that can then be used to stabilize or improve their housing situation.

Starting in FY 2021, HAP secured funding to provide longer-term case management, with the goal of promoting more durable housing outcomes. Case managers assist clients in managing their budgets, finding opportunities for continuing education, accessing better jobs, childcare and referrals to other community resources.

### *Community Organizing & Advocacy (CO&A)*

Recognizing that many community needs/issues, including the affordable housing crisis, cannot be resolved at the level of direct service, CO&A takes a systemic approach to advancing CAAS' mission by engaging low-income residents in identifying community needs/issues and collectively pushing for systemic policy change. One way CO&A operationalizes this approach is through tenant organizing: providing assistance and technical support for tenants facing displacement from multi-family buildings, who believe their rights are being violated, or who are facing bad conditions or conflict with their landlords in both public and private housing. In FY 2021, we are supporting efforts to revitalize the Mystic Tenants' Association (MTA) of the Mystic View Apartments owned by the Somerville Housing Authority. Our Organizers are also supporting an organizing effort with tenants at 181 Washington Street, a subsidized apartment owned by Somerville Community Corporation and managed by Wingate.

In the context of the pandemic, our outreach and tenants' rights education have focused on ensuring that tenants know about the CDC/federal and City of Somerville/local eviction moratoriums and their right to access rental assistance, regardless of immigration status. Our first priority is to inform the tenants of their rights and resources, then refer them into the program that best suits their housing stability needs, which often includes CAAS HAP. After stabilizing the tenancy, CO&A then invites those tenants to participate in our organizing programs, namely the Somerville Renters Meetings or a tenant unionizing effort for their own building. All outreach and organizing programming are conducted in a multilingual manner to the broadest extent possible, as we recognize language as a matter of justice and dignity for our immigrant neighbors in Somerville. Throughout the agency, CAAS has speakers of Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Kreyol, Arabic, and other languages. CO&A Organizers speak Spanish and French in addition to English.

In February 2021, CO&A launched its monthly Somerville Renters Meetings for residents facing housing instability. These virtual meetings are 90 minutes long and are always simultaneously interpreted from English to Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole. These meetings aim to provide residents with a sense of community and support during this difficult pandemic, knowledge about their legal rights and resources, and greater understanding of tenant and community organizing. In just four months, we have attendance from typically 7 to 10 tenants at each meeting. Tenants consistently express their gratitude and relief for a space where they can safely share their hopes and fears about housing, and learn about community resources.

A second strategy CO&A takes in eviction prevention is building community capacity. In January 2021, CO&A launched its Somerville Eviction Response Network, which is our program to build the community's capacity to prevent and intervene on illegal evictions. The Network has over 30 volunteer members, the majority Somerville tenants themselves, who are actively engaged in our housing justice and eviction prevention efforts. The Network offers levels of engagement that accommodate all ranges of knowledge and commitment. Any member can participate in Know Your Rights neighborhood canvasses that require little to no training, and to date we've had 44 volunteers distribute flyers to over 5,000 households in Somerville. We have hosted trainings on the history of local housing organizing, tenants' rights in the eviction process, and verbal interventions to de-escalate landlord conflicts, made possible due to our partnerships with Somerville OHS and legal partners at CASLS and DeNovo.

The third CO&A strategy is policy advocacy. As we rebuild our tenant base and community at CAAS, we recognize the importance of cultivating the civic education and leadership of residents who have not traditionally had access to power and are underrepresented in these institutions (people with low incomes, immigrants and non-English speakers, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, and youth). Our leadership development in the Renters Meetings includes components of civic engagement, with a particular focus on political power and influence at the local/city level. This has evolved into a project where tenants are now planning a Candidates Forum on Housing for this year's Somerville elections, and we are excited for this opportunity to have the concerns and aspirations of low income tenants brought to the forefront of this critical election. Depending on the outcomes of this event, anticipated for August or September 2021, this initiative may evolve into a larger campaign for continued changes in the city that support affordable housing and the needs of working class and low income residents. Ultimately, our goal is to have most if not all of our policy advocacy efforts in CO&A informed and led by our tenants.

The primary challenges facing CO&A include staff capacity, the "digital divide", and the ever-changing eviction landscape. Since October 2020, the program has had two full-time Organizers carrying out this work. Thanks to new funding in the Massachusetts state budget and a recent grant award from the Cambridge Health Alliance, we are quickly growing our staff and anticipate hiring two additional FTEs by July 2021. The addition of these staff will expand our ability to engage, educate, and organize tenants across Somerville, building upon the successful organizing framework we established in FY 2020.

The so-called "digital divide" — a term for the inequitable access to internet, wifi, electronic devices, and other technology critical to work and learning in the 21st century — is also a challenge to our tenant and community organizing. Unfortunately, this problem is not exclusive to Somerville, but has the greatest impacts on our core stakeholders. Recognizing that this barrier would be most prevalent in renter households with low-incomes, we decided early on that the majority of our eviction prevention would be done in person, on the ground, with printed flyers. While we have refrained from door knocking to maintain residents' safety during the pandemic, our staff and volunteers have participated in numerous literature drops outside homes with Know Your Rights flyers. We also have not shied away from telephone calls when 1:1 in person meetings were not yet safe, though we anticipate adopting the in person approach soon due to strong vaccination rates in Somerville. In addition, CO&A has budgeted funding for the purchase



of at least two data-ready tablets, which would allow Organizers to enroll residents into services and collect data on the spot, regardless of wifi access. CAAS Board members also participate in the Somerville Nonprofit Board Collaborative and have actively met with the Mayor's office over many months to develop solutions at the citywide level.

The final challenge impacts everyone in the human services sector: the pandemic itself, and the ever-evolving policies that have provided a safety net for tenants. The CDC eviction moratorium is a critical backstop to our tenant outreach and eviction prevention efforts in CO&A and HAP, though the timeline for its expiration has moved several times. Thanks to the unprecedented amount of resources for rental and legal assistance, in addition to the organizing done by CO&A and our partners in the last year, we in Somerville have not experienced the “tsunami of evictions” we feared when the Massachusetts state eviction moratorium ended in October 2020. However, we recognize that these tenant protections will likely end in summer 2021. CO&A is ready and will continue to be nimble and adaptable to these realities, modifying our work plans if the needs of our tenants drastically change. Our mindset for organizing is such that we will meet the crisis first, then through this stabilization process, build community, resiliency, and power for tenants in the long term.

### *Linkages*

Over the next two years, CAAS will continue to work with the community organizations identified above, as a collective and with its individual members, to educate community members about the need for affordable housing, influence policy at the state and local level, and engage community members through actions, campaigns, and discussions, and in raising funds to prevent displacement. CAAS will also partner with the City in identifying expiring use properties and landlords suspected or known to systematically engage in unethical housing practices.

Since October 2020, CO&A has convened and led the Somerville Know Your Rights Coalition (KYRC), which includes staff from OHS, the Somerville Immigration Services Unit (ISU), Somerville Community Corporation (SCC), Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services (CASLS), The Welcome Project, City Life/Vida Urbana (CLVU), the MAMAS mutual aid network, and staff from CAAS HAP. The goal of this partnership has been to integrate existing know your rights efforts at the nonprofit provider and city institution level to prevent housing instability for our most at-risk Somerville residents — renter households with low-incomes, who are undocumented immigrants, and/or who do not speak English.

The Coalition has been very successful: we developed a Know Your Renter & Immigrants Rights flyer that is translated and available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Kreyol, and Nepali; a social media campaign with graphics translated into English and Spanish; and an online guide in English and Spanish with more comprehensive information on renter and immigrant policies and resources. These resources were shared widely throughout the city in digital format and print, as CAAS Organizers and volunteers canvassed business districts and public spaces throughout the fall of 2020. The KYRC also organized two virtual community presentations: one on tenants' rights during the eviction process during the COVID-19 state of emergency in November 2020, then a webinar on the Fair Housing Law and other issues in housing discrimination in April 2021. Both webinars attracted attendance from dozens of service

providers and community members seeking to build their knowledge about these issues, and are available online for continued reference. The second webinar also offered simultaneous interpretation in Spanish and Portuguese.

The KYRC also implemented a successful landlord pledge campaign, utilizing the statewide eviction diversion pledge crafted by the Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) to encourage property owners and managers to abide by the CDC eviction moratorium policies. Through partnership with the Mayor's office and members of City Council, the pledge gained nine new signatories in Somerville, three of whom are the largest owners of subsidized properties in the city. This effort demonstrated a strong coordination between CAAS, OHS, and our housing stability partners to reach win-win situations with landlords who were not as aware or actively integrated into the financial assistance referral network for their tenants. We are proud that through these efforts, evictions by these landlords for non-payment of rent have nearly halted during the pandemic. With expanded staffing, this Coalition will likely continue under the sustained leadership of CO&A and offer more citywide presentations on tenants' rights topics, supplementing the work we're already doing with smaller groups of tenants in the Renters Meetings.

In connection with our efforts to maintain housing and prevent displacement, we will continue to work closely with CASLS and De Novo, which provide legal supervision and act as an advisory resource for CAAS' housing advocates. We will also work closely with other community partners that provide rent and other forms of assistance to unstably housed residents to further develop more cohesive and effective systems of support (discussed further in Section 11 subgoal 1.2).

### *Funding*

These initiatives will leverage CSBG funds to increase fundraising from private sources (foundations, corporations, individual giving). CAAS has identified and continues to research a number of donors with an interest in this issue and is actively pursuing the development of corresponding funding relationships. Funds for rental assistance will come predominantly from ESG-CV (through September 2022), CDBG-CV (through December 2021), and CPA (through June 2022).

## **Goal 2: Maximize incomes and increase access to higher-paying jobs for low-income residents**

Following the lack of safe and affordable housing, the most obvious and frequently expressed need we found was inadequate income and access to employment that meets basic needs. In the recent past, CAAS' capacity to address this issue was limited to our Early Childhood Teacher Training Program, which offers parents of children in our Head Start program the opportunity to become qualified to work as preschool teachers certified by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. While this excellent program has run for many years and has provided a path out of poverty for many parents, it lacks the capacity to make a major impact on the community's more general need for better jobs and increased income.

Through a grant awarded by the Somerville Job Creation & Retention Trust in FY 2021, CAAS partnered with Bunker Hill Community College, The Welcome Project, and East Somerville Main Streets. This collaboration is predicated on the realization that many students fail to complete programs of study -- programs that would provide access to better jobs -- due to ancillary personal issues (such as access to public benefits, lack of child care, etc.) that are necessary to succeed. Bunker Hill and The Welcome Project provide English for Speakers of Other Languages classes geared toward specific employment sectors; East Somerville Main Streets assists with recruiting and establishing partnerships with local employers. This program caters to a largely low-income and immigrant student body. CAAS provided strength/needs assessments and supportive case management for the over 120 students enrolled in this program.

CAAS will continue to collaborate with other continuing education and workforce training programs with the goal of providing supportive wraparound services to participants. CAAS is prepared to add staff and service capacity to expand this program model should funding be secured.

In the event that this funding does not materialize, we will continue on a more limited scale and maintain our current practice of referring clients with employment issues to Somerville Community Corporation's First Source jobs program, One-Stop Career Centers and other referral partners.

### *Strategies*

- 1) Coordinate with other providers to increase success in education and workforce training programs.
- 2) Organize and advocate for municipal policies that improve the bottom line and increase access to higher-paying jobs for Somerville residents.
- 3) Expand CAAS' VITA program to promote income maximization
- 4) Increase access to resources through information and referrals

### *Existing Services, Gaps, and CAAS' Role*

Both the City of Somerville and SCC have made employment a priority in their work. SCC has partnered with the City and The Career Place (the One-Stop Career Center in Woburn) to offer a First Source jobs program, connecting Somerville residents with local employers. SCC has also been advocating for local hiring in connection with new development projects like Assembly Row and the Green Line Extension.

While some progress has been made on employment issues, Somerville residents must look outside the city limits, not only to find jobs, but also to access many employment-related services. There are still very few job training programs in Somerville. The City does not have its own One-Stop Career Center; the closest centers are in Boston, Cambridge, Chelsea, and Woburn. Both in the current and previous community assessments, interviewees and focus group participants pointed to the absence of a city-based employment center where residents could access the full scope of employment-related services. Finally, it is important to note that Somerville lacks a community college presence that might expand access to the training, skills and credentials required for higher-paying jobs. Bunker Hill Community College has campuses in nearby Charlestown and Chelsea and satellite campuses in East Boston, the South End, and Malden, but not in Somerville.

While workforce development is not an area of core competency for CAAS, the agency has partnered with education and jobs programs to provide wraparound supportive case management to participants. CAAS' objective is to increase the likelihood that participants will matriculate from these programs (which provide the skills necessary to acquire higher-paying jobs) by increasing access to resources to address personal obstacles (e.g., housing instability, access to public benefits, etc.).

Recognizing the importance of the EITC to income maximization, CAAS plans to double the size of its VITA program for the 2022 tax season, addressing staffing, volunteer management, and funding issues necessary to achieve this goal. Now in its third year at CAAS, VITA completed 152 returns resulting in \$411,219 in refunds and credits for participants in 2021.

In addition, CAAS will continue to offer an on-site ESOL program to help non-English-speaking residents develop the language skills necessary to secure employment and advance in their careers. While there are other providers of ESOL programming in Somerville, demand outstrips capacity. These classes will occur at times convenient for Head Start parents. The Early Childhood Teacher Training will continue to provide Head Start parents with the education and training required to begin careers in early education and care. We will also continue and expand access to financial literacy courses.

On a systemic/community level, CAAS will, to the extent funding allows, organize and advocate for municipal policies that improve the bottom line and increase the supply of, and access to, higher-paying jobs for Somerville residents. These may include local hiring commitments from large project developers, increases to Somerville's minimum wage, and support of Neighborhood Councils empowered to negotiate community benefits agreements.

### *Linkages*

CAAS will pursue programmatic partnerships with adult education and workforce training programs. The agency will also explore deepening ties with the local labor movement, employment-related community organizing, policy advocacy and workers' rights initiatives.

### *Funding*

These initiatives will be funded by CSBG and other, to be determined, public and private sources.

**Goal 3: Increase the availability of high-quality, affordable care for low-income children.**

By September 30, 2021, CAAS will reopen all of its 15 Head Start classrooms to in-person programming, serving its funded enrollment of 267 children.

*Projected Classroom Hours and Funded Enrollment for PY 2021-2022*

| Funded Child Enrollment | Number of Classes | Hours per Day | Days per Year |
|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|
| 114                     | 6                 | 10            | 240           |
| 85                      | 5                 | 6             | 180           |
| 36                      | 2                 | 5.5           | 180           |
| 32                      | 2                 | 4.5           | 160           |

Over the next two years, CAAS Head Start will continue to build on the strengths of the program and launch new initiatives to improve school readiness and promote family engagement. We will move toward more classrooms offering more service hours covering more of the year. We will continue to facilitate parent-specific groups and services and look to expand these programs in accordance with community needs and available funding. Recognizing that Head Start has a parallel and complementary strategic goal setting and monitoring process, much of that will not fully be delineated in what follows here.

*Strategies*

- 1) Continue to provide and expand high-quality Head Start Programming in Somerville and Cambridge.
- 2) Improve referral systems and advocate for programs and resources for families needing care for school-aged children.

*Preschool-Aged Children - Existing Services, Gaps, and CAAS' Role*

CAAS operates Head Start programs in Somerville and Cambridge. While there are many providers of childcare and preschool programs in this service area, the data make it clear that these providers do not have the present capacity to provide high-quality, affordable care to all preschool-aged children. Furthermore, many of these programs are expensive and/or do not offer a full-day option.

CAAS plays a critical role in addressing these needs and in the ecosystem. CAAS Head Start serves the second largest number of preschoolers in Somerville, after the Somerville Public School Department's (SPSD) SMILE program. It is also recognized as a significant provider of high-quality preschool in Cambridge, serving children located in the two poorest neighborhoods in that city. Head Start is unique among our service area's center-based preschool programs. Not only is it free, making it a tremendous asset to low-income families, but it combines early education and care with comprehensive wraparound of child and family services. Head Start

teachers, family advocates, and specialists work together to ensure that both the children and their families have the support they need to succeed.

To address the need for full-day programming and to improve school readiness, CAAS will steadily increase the number of full-day and full-year classrooms. In addition, the program will continue to pursue expansion of its partnership with SPSD. In FY 2021, the City of Cambridge will provide supplemental funding allowing CAAS to expand three Head Start classrooms to full-day/full-year.

As a result of both Cambridge and Somerville's commitment to Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK), 4-year olds are being served in greater numbers, leading to a reduction in the number of 4-year olds available to be served by Head Start. This has not been entirely intentional. There is broad recognition that the population of low-income families with preschool-aged children has not diminished and that these families benefit from the wraparound that Head Start provides. Accordingly, CAAS is pursuing new models of collaboration, cooperation and integration with SPSD with the objectives of achieving better outcomes for universal school readiness and meeting the needs of low-income families.

Importantly, there is no less need for center-based early childhood educational programming, but, rather, a need to carefully consider and potentially pursue a shift in the target age demographic, from 3-5 to 0-5 year olds. Early Head Start (EHS) serves low-income families with children ages 0 to 3. Riverside Community Center (RCC) operates the EHS program in Somerville and Cambridge. RCC is a long-term partner in both EHS and the provision of mental health services to Head Start children, families and staff. However, RCC EHS does not provide any form of center-based care. In addition to not addressing the community need for childcare, the home-visiting model has limitations from the perspective of promoting school readiness as well. Accordingly, CAAS is exploring new models of collaboration with the RCC EHS while also considering the programmatic and community benefits of offering center-based early education and care for this younger population. This may ultimately lead to an application for conversion of some portion of our Head Start capacity to EHS slots. It may also involve collaboration with Riverside EHS to create full-day, full-year, center-based EHS programming.

We will also embark on a collaboration with the Mystic Learning Center, an out-of-school-time program with afterschool and summer offerings, located in the same housing project as one of our sites. The MLC is eager to expand their 3-5 age programming and in need of physical space that meets state licensing requirements. We are able to provide the space in exchange for slots for Head Start children currently enrolled in the Mystic part- and school-day classrooms. We will explore additional collaborations leading to extended service hours, including connecting with the network of family child care providers, the Cambridge Birth-Third Grade Partnership, and the Somerville Partnership for Young Children, the latter of which has expressed an interest in financial support for such endeavors.

### *Care for School-Aged Children - Existing Services, Gaps, and CAAS' Role*

CAAS lacks existing and reasonably foreseeable capacity to address these needs directly across the next two years. The agency will build stronger relationships with relevant service providers and improve its referral systems.

There are a number of providers of summer and after-school care for children K-12 in Somerville. These include the Somerville Public Schools, Boys and Girls Clubs of Medford and Somerville, YMCA, Elizabeth Peabody House, and others. While many of these providers serve low-income children, the data suggest that there are inadequate slots/options to accommodate the need for high-quality, affordable care options among low-income Somerville families. While caring for school-aged children is not a core competency for CAAS, the agency will improve its referral systems and relationships with providers both within and beyond Somerville.

### *Linkages*

For the past several years, the City of Somerville has been exploring ways to improve early childhood education and care in the city. In 2014, a report commissioned by the City and the School Committee and titled “SomerReady: Creating a Citywide, Universal Kindergarten Readiness System” was released. Since that time, there has been increased coordination and collaboration among early education and care providers in which CAAS has played a leading role. Stemming from the same initial impetus, the City has a Director of Early Education and Care and an informational website providing families with an overview of all the programs, services, and options available in the city.

CAAS currently operates three school-day/school-year Head Start classrooms in partnership with the SPSD. The City’s Director of Early Education, Lisa Kuh, described the partnership and its benefits in the following way:

“This partnership represents a way for Somerville Public Schools to better support low-income families, providing an entry into the public school system that includes afterschool care. Families continue to get the home visiting and family advocate services, as well as other services CAAS can provide and the public schools have much to learn from CAAS about how to wrap families with the supports they need. In this way, families see that successes the children have at the “big school” build on their success in Head Start. This collaboration is an opportunity for the public schools and CAAS to share curriculum and instructional practices that enrich experiences in both agencies.”

We look forward to continued collaboration with the City and other service providers on these initiatives and on the broader goals of expanded care and improved kindergarten readiness for Somerville children.

As indicated above, the City of Cambridge has a strong commitment to expanded early education and care, including the Birth to 3rd Grade Partnership and funding the expansion of three Head Start classrooms to full-day/full-year programming.



### *Funding*

These initiatives will be funded by ACF, EEC, the two host cities, and fundraising from other private sources (foundations, corporations, individual giving).

## 12. Specific Objectives

### Introduction:

This section describes the specific steps CAAS will take over the next two years (FY 2022-2023) to achieve our overarching Strategic 2-Year Goals. The discussion of each objective begins with a general description of that activity and its context, and is followed by a discussion of linkages and funding relating to each specific objective on a year by year basis.

### Goal 1: Preserve and increase supply of affordable housing and help low-income residents achieve sustainable tenancies.

|   |
|---|
| <b>Need #1:</b> Inadequate supply of safe and affordable housing  |
| <b>Strategic Two Year Goal Statement</b>  |
| <b>Subgoal 1.1:</b> Preserve and increase the supply of safe and affordable housing through community and tenant organizing and policy advocacy initiatives.  |
| <b>Indicate whether the goal addresses (check all that apply):</b> <span style="float: right;"><i>Org. Standard 6.2</i></span><br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reduction of Poverty <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revitalization of low-income communities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Empowerment of people with low-incomes to become more self sufficient   |
| <b>Indicate whether it is a (check all that apply):</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Family Goal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Goal <input type="checkbox"/> Agency Goal <span style="float: right;"><i>Org. Standard 6.3</i></span>  |
| <b>Indicate which CSBG Service Category applies (check one):</b> <span style="float: right;"><i>Org. Standard 4.2</i></span><br><input type="checkbox"/> Employment <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Income Management <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Services <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Linkages <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Sufficiency <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <b>Specific Objectives</b><br><small>insert additional rows if needed</small>   |
| <b><u>Fiscal Year 2022</u></b>  |
| Empowerment of people with low-incomes: Educate and organize low-income residents citywide through monthly Renters Meetings and maintain and strengthen support for subsidized housing tenants’ unions (both public and private) by continuing to facilitate their work and build leadership capacity.  |
| Promote civic engagement/community involvement: Increase the number of people with low-incomes who participate in public hearings, policy forums, community planning or other strategies designed to address the affordable housing crisis (or other conditions of poverty) in Somerville.  |
| Increase affordable housing: In collaboration with community partners, plan and conduct tenant organizing campaigns in private affordable housing with the objective of either preserving or increasing the number of safe and affordable units of housing in Somerville.   |
| Strengthen community partner coalitions: Through the Know Your Rights Coalition and partnerships with key elected officials, offer citywide training on tenants’ rights education and negotiate with landlords and property managers on issues of eviction and bad management practices.  |
| Expand community capacity to prevent evictions: Educate and train community volunteers on eviction prevention and intervention strategies.  |

|   |
|---|
| Increase capacity of CO&A as dictated by community needs and upon evaluation of the program's impact and efficacy in achieving desired outcomes. 4 full-time CO&A staff anticipated.  |
| <b><i>Fiscal Year 2023</i></b>  |
| Continue to promote empowerment of Somerville residents with low-incomes through the strategies identified and refined in FY2022.   |
| Continue to promote and increase civic engagement/community involvement of Somerville residents with low-incomes on the issues identified in FY2022 and as dictated by community needs.   |
| Increase Affordable Housing: In collaboration with community partners, engage in at least two new organizing campaigns in private affordable housing developments with the objectives of either preserving or increasing the number of safe and affordable units in Somerville. |
| Monitor existing organizing campaigns and conclude or add to the active campaign list as dictated by community needs.   |
| Increase capacity of CO&A as dictated by community needs, available funding and upon evaluation of the program's impact and efficacy in achieving desired outcomes.   |

**Fiscal Year 2022 - Linkages and Funding:**

Since the previous CARSP submission, the landscape of community organizing in Somerville has shifted due to lapses in funding for FTE organizing staff at CAAS, and with partners at SCC and AHOC. Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic has also taken precedence since FY 2020, and so our linkages have primarily been centered on housing stabilization and crisis relief for the city’s low-income residents. While the community landscape is shifting rapidly and vaccine rates continue trending upward for Somerville and surrounding communities, we nonetheless acknowledge that pandemic relief may very much be at the core of our service provision, including as an entry point into community organizing, into the next fiscal year. There will still be a need for collaborations like the KYRC to coordinate outreach and service referrals. As mentioned in the previous section, CO&A has placed significant energy in organizing the KYRC, which serves as a conduit to organize housing stability efforts between Somerville OHS and ISU, nonprofit agencies like CAAS, and grassroots organizers in order to reach residents with the most vulnerable tenancies. This partnership with an institution such as the City has also granted us greater negotiating power with major landlords and property developers, so we intend to sustain this coalition for future anti-displacement campaigns as well.

Another way we will further integrate our community partnerships is through expanded staffing via the Cambridge Health Alliance grant. With this two-year award, we will begin regularly co-locating our Community Organizers at identified housing developments or key community sites around Somerville. In this process, we hope to establish agreements or MOUs with at least three landlords, property management companies, or community partners who will offer us regular space to set up a table or office hours and establish in-roads with residents. We will identify said properties in consultation with CHA, which may be a mix of both public and privately-owned housing, possibly subsidized properties, and locations where we know residents with a higher risk of housing instability may spend time. Foss Park in Winter Hill, for example, is a location where families of Latinx descent often spend time, and undocumented Brazilian workers are

known to negotiate informally contracted work, and so we may establish a routine of tabling in a highly trafficked location in the park.

After the collocated sites are identified, Organizers will establish a regular presence with residents and offer housing stability services and referrals into other programs and opportunities that may benefit tenants with low incomes. At the same time, our staff will also build relationships with residents to understand the living conditions of their units and buildings, inquire about treatment from landlords and property management, and assess how viable their tenancies are from a health and affordability standpoint. With housing stability as the entry point, we hope to engage these residents into our monthly Renters Meetings, property-specific tenant organizing, or another community or civic organizing effort.

### **Fiscal Year 2023 - Linkages and Funding:**

We will maintain our relationships with tenants citywide through the Renters Meetings and any tenants' unions already established. We will collaborate with our organizing partners (listed above) to identify and conduct at least one additional tenant organizing campaign in private housing identified through our growing collective knowledge of the city's rental market, and develop at least one citywide campaign for policy advocacy at the municipal or legislative level to further the supply of affordable housing. To the extent practicable, will also continue to be active with Union United, the Union Square Neighborhood Council, WINS, and our emerging CLT.

The focus of our work in FY 2023 will again be on maintenance of funding relationships and support for existing staff. This will also be a year for careful evaluation, in collaboration with our organizing partners, of all campaigns conducted to date, their success or lack thereof, maintenance of campaigns that show evidence of ongoing relevance and viability, and examination of our joint capacity to initiate any additional campaigns.

**Goal 2: Maximize incomes and increase access to higher-paying jobs for low-income residents**

|   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <b>Need #2: Inadequate access to employment that meets basic needs</b>  |                                 |
| <b>Strategic Two-Year Goal Statement</b>  |                                 |
| <b>Goal 2: Maximize incomes and increase access to higher-paying jobs for low-income residents</b>  |                                 |
| <p><b>Indicate whether the goal addresses (check all that apply):</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reduction of Poverty <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revitalization of low-income communities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Empowerment of people with low incomes to become more self sufficient</p>  | <p><i>Org. Standard 6.2</i></p> |
| <p><b>Indicate whether it is a (check all that apply):</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Family Goal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Goal <input type="checkbox"/> Agency Goal</p>  | <p><i>Org. Standard 6.3</i></p> |
| <p><b>Indicate which CSBG Service Category applies (check one):</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Income Management <input type="checkbox"/> Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Services <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition <input type="checkbox"/> Linkages <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Self-Sufficiency <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input type="checkbox"/> Other:</p> | <p><i>Org. Standard 4.2</i></p> |
| <b>Specific Objectives</b><br><small>insert additional rows if needed</small>   |                                 |
| <b><u>Fiscal Year 2022</u></b>  |                                 |
| <p>Job Readiness Education/Services Supporting Multiple Domains: In collaboration with workforce training and adult education programs, CAAS will provide case management supports to participants with the shared objective of increasing the number of participants who matriculate and obtain at least living-wage employment. CAAS' objective in FY2022 is to identify new partners in these initiatives.</p>   |                                 |
| <p>Job Readiness Training/Education: Early Childhood Teacher Training Program - enroll 15-20 Head Start parent-participants with the objective of 60-70% obtaining the training and certification necessary to begin careers in early childhood education and care.</p>   |                                 |
| <p>Devote CO&amp;A resources not necessary to address Housing needs to campaigns relating to increasing supply of and access to higher-paying jobs for Somerville residents (e.g. minimum/living wage campaigns)</p>  |                                 |
| <p>VITA: Expand to complete not less than 250 returns in FY2022.</p>  |                                 |
| <p>Increase HAP and Head Start capacity to provide appropriate case management support, information and referrals.</p>  |                                 |
| <b><u>Fiscal Year 2023</u></b>  |                                 |
| <p>Job Readiness Education/Services Supporting Multiple Domains: Expand job preparation collaborations with the objectives of providing case management supports to participants with the collaborative objective of increasing the number of participants who matriculate and obtain at least living-wage employment</p>   |                                 |
| <p>Job Readiness Training: Early Childhood Teacher Training Program- enroll 15-20 Head Start parent-participants with the objective of 60-70% obtaining the training and certification necessary to begin careers in early childhood education and care.</p>  |                                 |
| <p>Devote CO&amp;A resources not necessary to address Housing needs to campaigns relating to increasing supply of and access to higher-paying jobs for Somerville residents (e.g. minimum/living wage campaigns).</p>   |                                 |
| <p>VITA: Expand in proportion to identified need and available funding.</p>   |                                 |
| <p>Increase HAP and Head Start capacity to provide appropriate case management support, information and referrals.</p>  |                                 |

### **Fiscal Year 2022 - Linkages and Funding:**

As described earlier in the previous section, CAAS has participated in several collaborations wherein we provided case management supports to participants in job training and adult education programs. While a strategic partner has not yet been identified for FY2022, we would staff up our portion of such a program as soon as feasible.

Our Head Start Early Childhood Teacher Training program has operated for many years, and will continue to be an integral part of our Head Start program. This program is funded entirely with Head Start funds.

While housing will continue to be the major focus of our CO&A department, there may be opportunities to advocate and organize for more and better jobs for Somerville residents. There will invariably be opportunities to advocate and organize for other solutions that improve the bottom line for residents with low incomes. A prior example emerged in the context of community benefits negotiations with the developer of central Union Square; the community was asking for local-hiring commitments, minimum- and prevailing wage standards, an apprenticeship program, and a variety of other job-related benefits. CAAS' organizers, through involvement with Union United and the Union Square Neighborhood Council, played an integral role in those discussions. To the extent resources and capacity allow, we will continue to organize in this area.

### **Fiscal Years 2023 - Linkages and Funding:**

To the extent funding remains available to support a strategic workforce partnership, Head Start, and CO&A programs, we will maintain our existing programming at above FY2022 levels and with then-current partners.

### Goal #3: Increase availability of high-quality, affordable care for low-income children

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Need #3: Inadequate supply of affordable, suitable care for children</b>   |  |
| <b>Strategic Two Year Goal Statement</b>  |  |
| <b>Goal 3: Increase availability of high-quality, affordable care for low-income children</b>   |  |
| <p><b>Indicate whether the goal addresses (check all that apply):</b> <span style="float: right;"><i>Org. Standard</i></span></p> <p>6.2</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reduction of Poverty <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revitalization of low-income communities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Empowerment of people with low incomes to become more self sufficient</p>   |  |
| <p><b>Indicate whether it is a (check all that apply):</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Family Goal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Goal <input type="checkbox"/> Agency Goal <span style="float: right;"><i>Org. Standard 6.3</i></span></p>  |  |
| <p><b>Indicate which CSBG Service Category applies (check one):</b> <span style="float: right;"><i>Org. Standard</i></span></p> <p>4.2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Employment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Income Management <input type="checkbox"/> Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Services <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Linkages <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Self-Sufficiency <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other:</p> |  |
| <b>Specific Objectives</b><br>insert additional rows if needed  |  |
| <b><u>Fiscal Year 2022</u></b>  |  |
| Education/Care: Improve program quality and increase outcomes for children and families by using QRIS, program self-assessment, and increased oversight as a roadmap for improvement in all areas of programming.   |  |
| Education/Care: Increase service hours with ACF duration funds (Quality Improvement (QI) funds).  |  |
| Education/Care: Continue to expand full-day (including SPSPD collaborative) and “extended day” programming as Head Start, EEC, and, if applicable, private funding for this purpose.  |  |
| Education/Care: Increase service hours in all Cambridge Head Start sites from part to full (10 hour) day.   |  |
| Services Supporting Multiple Domains: Continuously improve referral systems and advocate for programs and resources, including for families needing care for school-age children.   |  |
| <b><u>Fiscal Year 2023</u></b>  |  |
| Maintain quality of Head Start program, adjusting full-day, extended-day, and collaborative classroom mix as needed.  |  |
| Education/Care: Continue to expand full- and extended-day programming as Head Start, EEC, and, if applicable, private funding for this purpose becomes available.   |  |
| Services Supporting Multiple Domains: Continuously improve referral systems and advocate for programs and resources, including for families needing care for school-age children.   |  |

#### **Fiscal Year 2022 - Linkages and Funding:**

CAAS will continue its long-standing work with community partners that serve Head Start children and families. These linkages support the entirety of the Head Start wraparound (including physical health, mental health, nutrition, disabilities services, parenting curriculum,

food security, family economic mobility services, etc.). In addition to the ongoing and prospective linkages described in Section 10, we will continue our work with the Somerville Public Schools through both the Dept. of Early Education and Care's Preschool Partnership Initiative Grant and with the City of Cambridge Department of Human Service Programs' Birth to 3rd Grade Partnership. These collaborations leverage state and city funding to provide support to programs and act as central coordinating hubs for early childhood information and quality improvement. Through both grants, classroom materials are purchased with guidance from coaches, teaching teams receive coaching and attend communities of practice meetings and program managers receive mentoring and T/TA for navigating the online QRIS management system.

The most recent Head Start Performance Standards finalized in September 2016 require that all Head Start classrooms offer at least 1,020 hours of planned class operations over the course of at least 8 months for all center-based classrooms (the so-called "extended day" standard). CAAS now meets this standard in all but 4 of its 15 current classrooms. Assuming we maintain the same number of classrooms, additional funding will be required to meet the standard, either from Congressional appropriations or other sources. ACF has not yet indicated that it will enforce a deadline for meeting this standard until or unless Congress appropriates the necessary funding. Given the clear community need for expanded child care services, we will continue to work toward providing as much full- and extended-day programming as possible.

#### **Fiscal Year 2023 - Linkages and Funding:**

We expect FY2023 to be a year focused on maintenance of quality in our Head Start and referral programs, as well as assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of any changes implemented during the prior year. We will continue to seek alternate sources of donated funding across both in case the other sources of income discussed above fail to materialize. We will also achieve compliance with the "extended day" standard, subject to the availability of ACF funding made available for this purpose.

As previously noted, we do not anticipate providing direct services to school-age children in FY 2022 - 2023. We will continue to maintain and improve our referral network in order to help families find resources to meet these areas of need, and will advocate for increases in relevant programs and resources.



## 13. Plan Monitoring and Reporting

### Evaluation

Evaluation is critical for CAAS to ensure that areas for improvement are identified and addressed in a timely fashion and to ensure that the agency is evolving to meet the needs of Somerville's low-income community. This section provides a summary of our CSBG evaluation process. This evaluation covers the entire agency, though the individual programs, and Head Start in particular, have complimentary evaluation processes not set forth in this document.

### Evaluation Process

CAAS' CSBG evaluation process follows a program logic model customized for Community Action Agencies. The structure of the evaluation process, from developing the CARSP and the annual Community Action Plans to collecting and analyzing the data, is driven by requirements of the federal government and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The basic CSBG evaluation process for CAAS is as follows:

1. Board and staff develop a 3-year Community Assessment Report and Strategic Plan (CARSP).
2. From the CARSP, CAAS senior staff—with significant input from program staff—develop an annual Community Action Plan (CAP). The “Specific Objectives” listed for each “Strategic 3-Year Goal” feed the CAP. The CAP identifies all agency activities, quantifies outcomes, and establishes interim and long-term benchmarks (using data collected during the previous year in the agency's databases as a baseline). CAAS' senior staff also develop procedures for the regular collection and analysis of data on program activities and outcomes, as well as procedures for regular reporting. The Executive Director reviews and comments on the CAP, which is then revised accordingly.
3. The CAAS Board Planning Committee reviews the annual CAP, requires revisions if necessary, and recommends approval of the (amended) plan to the CAAS Board.
4. Staff measure progress against the CAP and write interim and final reports each year. These reports are reviewed by the CAAS Board Planning Committee, which provides a report of its review to the Board for discussion. Corrective action is taken as needed.
5. On an annual basis, the CARSP is reviewed and, if necessary, updated. Most updates, however, occur in the annual CAP, which reflects how the agency is evolving on a yearly basis.
6. Each year, CAAS provides interim and final reports to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), which reviews them and uses them for monitoring. CAAS also completes a second type of CSBG report each year, the “Annual Report”, which provides an overview of client demographics and describes how resources are distributed throughout the agency.

This process runs parallel to the CAAS Head Start planning and evaluation process. The two systems are not entirely compatible, but similar enough that one can inform the other. Head Start planning and evaluation documents are used in developing CSBG plans and reports, and vice versa. Data from the two programs are combined in the agency-wide database, which is used for reporting, program evaluation, and program planning.