

Analysis of Regional Economic Conditions

# CEDS Data Appendix

**Updated July 2014**



Prepared by  
Pioneer Valley  
Planning Commission  
August 2015



Pioneer Valley Planning Commission  
and Economic Development District

*The Region's Comprehensive  
Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)*

**Analysis of Regional Economic Conditions  
CEDS Data Appendix  
Updated July 2014**

Prepared by

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission  
60 Congress Street - Floor 1  
Springfield, MA 01104-3419

Published as CEDS Appendix August 2015

Funding for this project was provided in part through an EDA Section 203  
Partnership Planning Grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Commerce,  
Economic Development Administration



## Contents

<b>AN ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS</b>	<b>1</b>
A SNAPSHOT OF THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION	1
THE STATE OF THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION	3
<i>The People</i> .....	3
<i>The Economy</i> .....	28
<i>The Infrastructure</i> .....	41

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: PERCENT CHANGE IN POPULATION (2002-2012).....	3
FIGURE 2: PIONEER VALLEY REGION POPULATION CHANGES BY RACE AND ETHNICITY.....	6
FIGURE 3: POPULATION BY AGE IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION.....	7
FIGURE 4: NET DOMESTIC MIGRATION IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION.....	8
FIGURE 5: FOREIGN BORN PERSONS BY YEAR OF ENTRY IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION.....	9
FIGURE 6: 2012 POVERTY RATES FOR ALL PERSONS AND FOREIGN BORN PERSONS BY CITIZENSHIP STATUS.....	10
FIGURE 7: PER CAPITA INCOME (ADJUSTED TO 2012 \$).....	12
FIGURE 8: MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME (2012).....	15
FIGURE 9: POVERTY RATE IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION, 2002-2012.....	16
FIGURE 10: CHILD POVERTY RATE IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION, 2002-2012.....	17
FIGURE 11: FAMILIES IN POVERTY (2012).....	19
FIGURE 12: COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY GRADUATES.....	26
FIGURE 13: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES.....	29
FIGURE 14: PIONEER VALLEY REGION LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT WITH TREND LINES.....	30
FIGURE 15: NEW UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CLAIMS, 2003 TO 2013.....	31
FIGURE 16: EMPLOYMENT IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION BY MAJOR INDUSTRY, 2007 AND 2012.....	32
FIGURE 17: CHANGE IN PIONEER VALLEY REGION EMPLOYMENT BY MAJOR INDUSTRY, 2007 TO 2012.....	33
FIGURE 18: AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES BY INDUSTRY IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION, 2012.....	34
FIGURE 19: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY WORKER'S PLACE OF RESIDENCE, 2012.....	36
FIGURE 20: LABOR FORCE BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE, 2012.....	37
FIGURE 21: NUMBERS OF EMPLOYERS BY SIZE IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION, 2006 AND 2011.....	38
FIGURE 22: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND SINGLE-FAMILY HOME PRICES IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION, 2002-2012.....	42
FIGURE 23: MEDIAN SALE PRICE OF SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION (2013).....	43
FIGURE 24: PIONEER VALLEY REGION HOUSING AFFORDABILITY RATIO (MEDIAN PRICE/MEDIAN INCOME), 2002-2012.....	44
FIGURE 25: PIONEER VALLEY TRANSIT AUTHORITY SYSTEM WIDE ANNUAL BUS AND VAN TRIPS 2002-2012.....	47

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: CHANGES IN TOTAL POPULATION OF THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION (1990 - 2012) .....	4
TABLE 2: HISPANIC OR LATINO POPULATION IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION 2000-2012 .....	5
TABLE 3: POPULATION BY RACE 2012 .....	5
TABLE 4: CHANGES IN PER CAPITA INCOME .....	13
TABLE 5: CHANGES IN MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION - 2000 TO 2012.....	14
TABLE 6: CHANGES IN COMMUNITY POVERTY RATES 2000 TO 2012 .....	18
TABLE 7: PIONEER VALLEY REGION SCHOOL DISTRICTS PROFILE .....	21
TABLE 8: ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RATE IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION - 2004 - 2013.....	23
TABLE 9: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION - 2000 AND 2012 .....	25
TABLE 10: NUMBER OF COLLEGE GRADUATES FROM THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION'S HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS .....	27
TABLE 11: PIONEER VALLEY REGION'S TOP 10 EMPLOYMENT CENTERS FOR 2012 .....	35
TABLE 12: MAJOR EMPLOYERS IN THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION IN 2013 .....	39
TABLE 13: DRIVING DISTANCES AND TIMES FROM SPRINGFIELD TO SELECT URBAN CENTERS .....	45
TABLE 14: MAJOR INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS SERVING THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION.....	45
TABLE 15: PIONEER VALLEY REGION AVERAGE COMMUTE TIMES TO WORK.....	46





## AN ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS



Boulevard Machine and Gear, Inc., Springfield  
Photo: Ed Cohen

### A Snapshot of the Pioneer Valley Region

Located in the midwestern section of Massachusetts and covering 1,179 square miles, the Pioneer Valley region and Economic Development District (EDD) encompasses the fourth largest metropolitan area in New England. The region is bisected by the Connecticut River and is bounded to the north by Franklin County, to the south by the state of Connecticut, to the east by the Quabbin Reservoir and Worcester

County, and to the west by Berkshire County. The Pioneer Valley region, which constitutes the 43 cities and towns within the Hampshire and Hampden county areas, is home to about 625,718 people and the urbanized areas of Springfield, Chicopee, and Holyoke.

Springfield, the third largest city in Massachusetts, is the region's cultural and economic center. Springfield is home to several of the region's largest employers, including Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company, Baystate Health, Mercy Medical Center, and Solutia, Inc., a subsidiary of Eastman Chemical. Major cultural institutions include the Springfield Symphony, City Stage, the Mass Mutual Convention Center, Quadrangle Museums, the Basketball Hall of Fame, and the Dr. Seuss National Memorial Sculpture Garden.

The cities of Chicopee and Holyoke were the first planned industrial communities in the nation. Merchants built an elaborate complex of mills, workers' housing, dams, and canal systems that evolved into cities. While many of the historic mills and industries are now gone, a number of 19th and 20th century structures are maintained and improved through municipal preservation and revitalization initiatives.

Unique within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Pioneer Valley region contains a diverse economic base, internationally known educational institutions, and limitless scenic beauty. Dominant physical characteristics include the broad fertile agricultural valley formed by the Connecticut River, the Holyoke Mountain range that traverses the region from Southwick to Pelham, and the foothills of the Berkshire Mountains. Prime agricultural land, significant wetlands, and scenic rivers are some of the region's premier natural resources. Choices in life-style range from contemporary downtown living to stately historic homes, characteristic suburban neighborhoods, and rural living in very small communities—a variety that contributes to the diversity and appeal of the region. The unique combination of natural

2 ❖ Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and Economic Development District

beauty, cultural amenities, and historical character make the Pioneer Valley region an exceptional environment in which to live, work, and play.

# The State of the Pioneer Valley Region

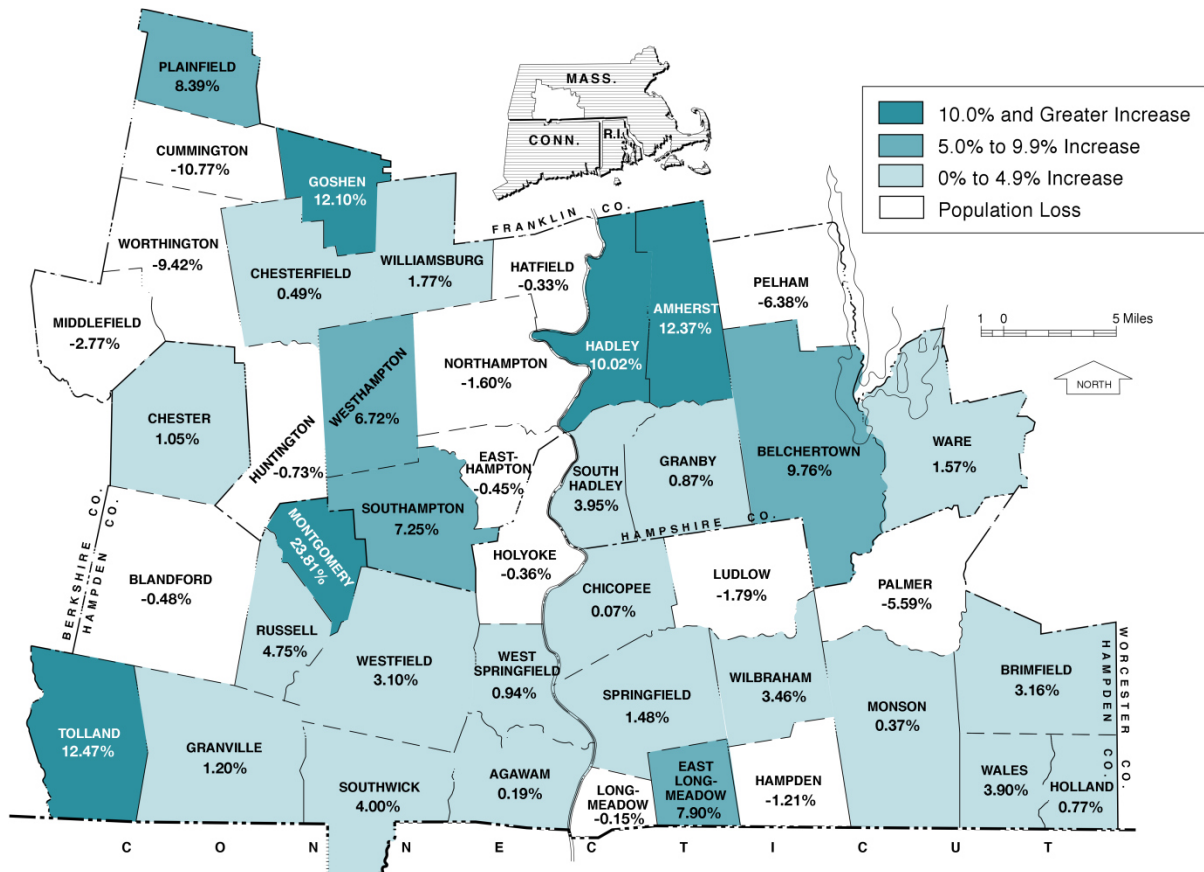
## The People

### Changes in Population

During the 1990s and early 2000s, the population of the Pioneer Valley region grew modestly. Unlike widely publicized cases of urban renewal in cities such as Chicago, the region’s most urbanized areas either remained stable or lost population, while numbers rose mainly in the outlying rural communities.

According to recent U.S. Census estimates, the region’s population increased by just 1.9% between 2002 and 2012. Of that limited growth, a small amount occurred in the urban areas: Collectively, the population of Agawam, Chicopee, Holyoke, Springfield, Westfield, and West Springfield grew just over 1 percent between 2002 and 2012 and nearly a quarter of that growth occurred in Westfield alone. This departs only slightly from the trend during the 1990s when the region’s three largest cities — Springfield, Chicopee, and Holyoke — all experienced population declines. There was some shift in this trend between 2002 and 2012, as all three cities experienced either stable population or slight growth instead of decline. At the same time, the last decade has seen Westfield surpass Holyoke as the city with the third largest population in the region.

**Figure 1: Percent Change in Population (2002-2012)**



Data Source: U. S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program, 2002-2012

**Table 1: Changes in Total Population of the Pioneer Valley Region (1990 - 2012)**

	1990	2002	2012	Avg. Annual Change 1990-2002	Avg. Annual Change 2002-2012
United States	248,709,873	287,803,914	313,914,040	15.7%	9.1%
Massachusetts	6,016,425	6,440,978	6,646,144	7.1%	3.2%
Pioneer Valley Region	602,878	613,859	625,718	1.8%	1.9%
Hampden County	456,310	460,848	465,923	1.0%	1.1%
Hampshire County	146,568	153,011	159,795	4.4%	4.4%
Agawam	27,323	28,555	28,608	4.5%	0.2%
Amherst	35,228	34,721	39,016	-1.4%	12.4%
Belchertown	10,579	13,410	14,719	26.8%	9.8%
Blandford	1,187	1,246	1,240	5.0%	-0.5%
Brimfield	3,001	3,548	3,660	18.2%	3.2%
Chester	1,280	1,337	1,351	4.5%	1.0%
Chesterfield	1,048	1,229	1,235	17.3%	0.5%
Chicopee	56,632	55,449	55,490	-2.1%	0.1%
Cummington	785	975	870	24.2%	-10.8%
East Longmeadow	13,367	14,732	15,896	10.2%	7.9%
Easthampton	15,537	16,079	16,007	3.5%	-0.4%
Goshen	830	942	1,056	13.5%	12.1%
Granby	5,565	6,228	6,282	11.9%	0.9%
Granville	1,403	1,586	1,605	13.0%	1.2%
Hadley	4,231	4,790	5,270	13.2%	10.0%
Hampden	4,709	5,219	5,156	10.8%	-1.2%
Hatfield	3,184	3,286	3,275	3.2%	-0.3%
Holland	2,185	2,468	2,487	13.0%	0.8%
Holyoke	43,704	40,279	40,135	-7.8%	-0.4%
Huntington	1,987	2,188	2,172	10.1%	-0.7%
Longmeadow	15,467	15,858	15,835	2.5%	-0.1%
Ludlow	18,820	21,582	21,195	14.7%	-1.8%
Middlefield	392	542	527	38.3%	-2.8%
Monson	7,776	8,647	8,679	11.2%	0.4%
Montgomery	759	693	858	-8.7%	23.8%
Northampton	29,289	29,058	28,592	-0.8%	-1.6%
Palmer	12,054	12,872	12,152	6.8%	-5.6%
Pelham	1,373	1,411	1,321	2.8%	-6.4%
Plainfield	571	596	646	4.4%	8.4%
Russell	1,594	1,707	1,788	7.1%	4.7%
South Hadley	16,685	17,098	17,773	2.5%	3.9%
Southampton	4,478	5,531	5,932	23.5%	7.3%
Southwick	7,667	9,207	9,575	20.1%	4.0%
Springfield	156,983	151,314	153,552	-3.6%	1.5%
Tolland	289	433	487	49.8%	12.5%
Wales	1,566	1,794	1,864	14.6%	3.9%
Ware	9,808	9,707	9,859	-1.0%	1.6%
West Springfield	27,537	28,309	28,574	2.8%	0.9%
Westfield	38,372	40,156	41,399	4.6%	3.1%
Westhampton	1,327	1,502	1,603	13.2%	6.7%
Wilbraham	12,635	13,857	14,337	9.7%	3.5%
Williamsburg	2,515	2,433	2,476	-3.3%	1.8%
Worthington	1,156	1,285	1,164	11.2%	-9.4%

Source: U. S. Decennial Census, 1990-2012

**Table 2: Hispanic or Latino Population in the Pioneer Valley Region 2000-2012**

	Hispanic or Latino Persons			% of Total Population		
	2000	2012	% Change	2000	2012	% Change
<b>Pioneer Valley Region</b>	74,409	110,301	48.2%	12.2%	17.6%	5.4%
<b>Hampden County</b>	69,197	102,369	47.9%	15.2%	22.0%	6.8%
<b>Hampshire County</b>	5,212	7,932	52.2%	3.4%	5.0%	1.6%
<b>Massachusetts</b>	4,287,29	6,738,85	57.2%	6.8%	10.1%	3.3%
<b>United States</b>	35,305,818	52,961,017	50.0%	12.5%	16.9%	4.4%

Sources: U. S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census and 2012 ACS 1-Year Estimates

**Table 3: Population by Race 2012**

	White	African American	Native American	Asian	Pacific Islander	Other Races
<b>Pioneer Valley Region</b>	81.3%	7.0%	0.3%	2.8%	0.0%	8.6%
<b>Hampden County</b>	78.4%	8.6%	0.3%	2.2%	0.0%	10.5%
<b>Hampshire County</b>	89.8%	2.6%	0.1%	4.4%	0.2%	2.9%
<b>Massachusetts</b>	80.1%	7.1%	0.2%	5.7%	0.0%	6.8%
<b>United States</b>	73.9%	12.6%	0.8%	5.0%	0.2%	7.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 1-Year County Population Estimates.

Percentages add up to more than 100% because of ability to report more than one racial category. Because the U.S. Census Bureau considers Hispanic/Latino an ethnic category rather than a race category, all race categories include some people who are Hispanic or Latino and some who are not.

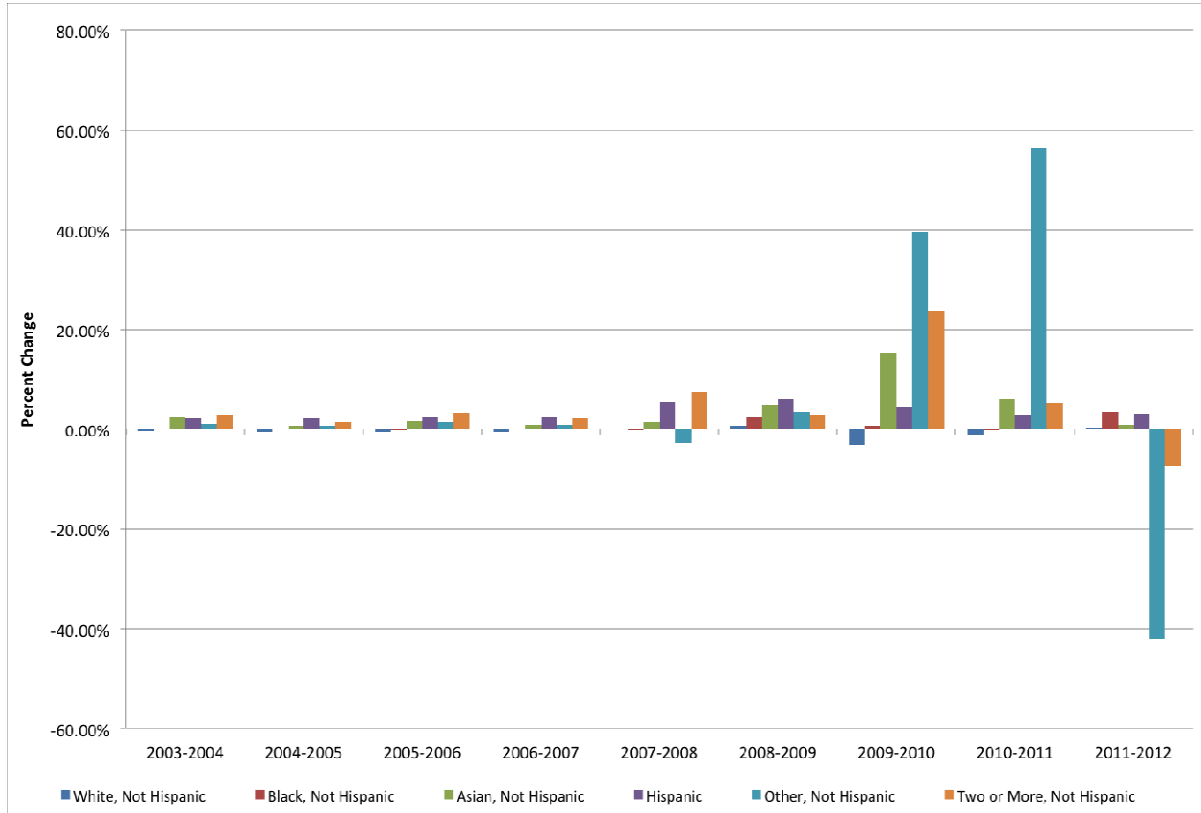
While the population in the urban core remained stable in the past decade, with some growth in Westfield, the suburban and rural communities experienced growth. Figure 1 depicts the pattern of population growth and decline between 2002 and 2012. The areas of greatest proportions of growth are generally outside the most urbanized, and even suburban, parts of the region. Rural communities, such as Montgomery, Goshen, Tolland, Belchertown, and Plainfield experienced significant population growth in that time period.

During the 1990s, the northern urban areas of Northampton and Amherst experienced a population decline, while the more rural communities around them grew. While between 2002 and 2012 Amherst’s population climbed back to well beyond its 1990 level, the general pattern of large proportional increases happening in smaller towns continued, with Hadley growing by 10.0 percent.

Continuing an established trend, the region’s Hispanic and Latino population grew by 48.2% between 2000 and 2012, a rate of growth that was significant, though slightly lower than that of both the state and nation (see Table 2). While the rate of growth in the Hispanic and Latino population has been slightly slower than that of the state, at approximately 17% of the total population, the Hispanic and Latino population is actually slightly higher than that of the nation. In this sense, the Pioneer Valley region looks less like the rest of the state as a whole and more like nation-wide demographics. Conversely, the proportion of the Pioneer Valley region population identifying exclusively as White (81.3%) is closer to that of the state (80.1%) than to the nation (73.9 percent). (See Table 3.)

While the proportion of people who identify as White in the Pioneer Valley region is now slightly higher than that of Massachusetts as a whole, the breakdown of people who identified as races other than White were varied somewhat. The Pioneer Valley region was nearly identical to the state in the proportion of people who identify as African Americans, Native Americans, or Pacific Islander, 3% lower in the proportion of people who identify as an Asian race and 1.8% higher in the proportion of people who consider themselves a race other than the main five classifications recognized by the U.S. Census Bureau. Conversely, in 2012, those who identify as Asian accounted for 5.7% of the state’s population, but they made up only 2.8% of the population of the Pioneer Valley region.

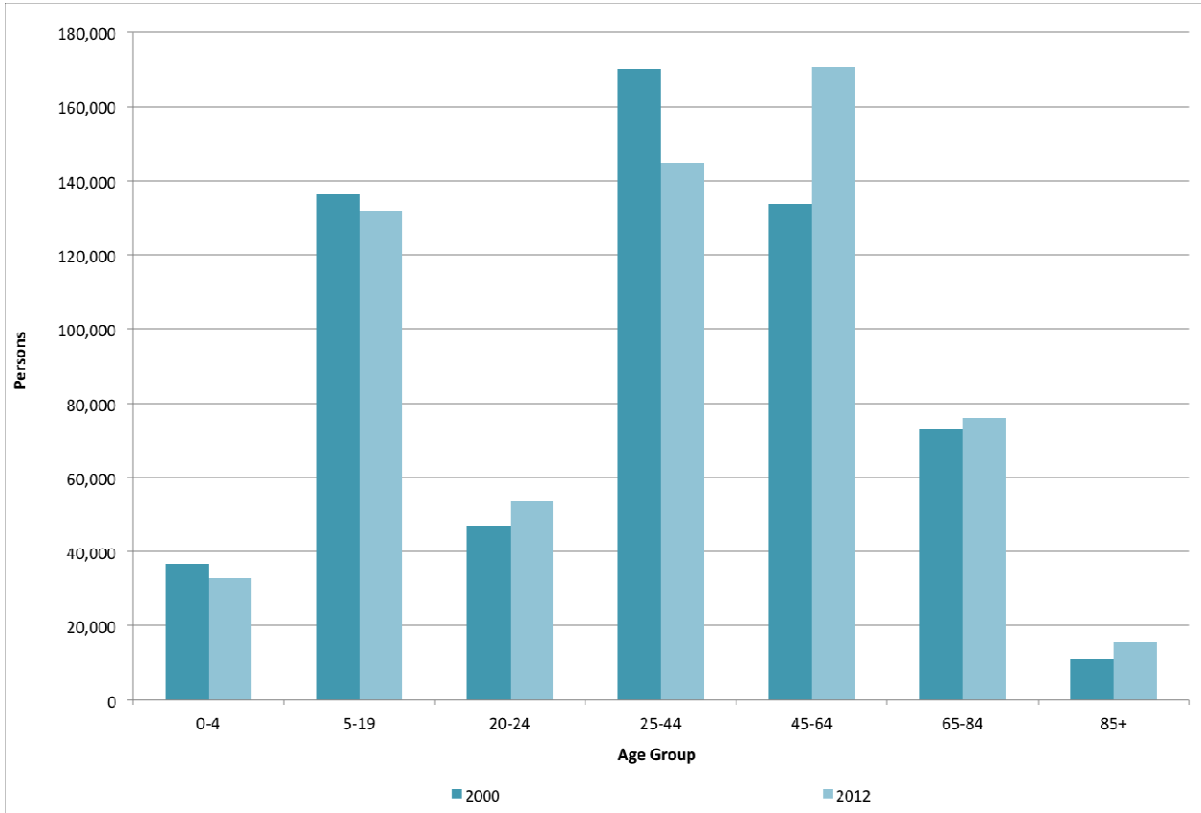
**Figure 2: Pioneer Valley Region Population Changes by Race and Ethnicity**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 One-Year County Population Estimates.  
 Note: In 2010, an additional Race category of "Some other race, not otherwise specified" was included in the category of "Other, Not Hispanic" which contributed to the significant increase in that category.

The age distribution of the population within the Pioneer Valley region mirrors the aging population trends across the nation, and hints at some explanations for the type of slow population growth that has occurred over recent decades. Between 2000-2012, the region has seen decreases in all age groups except those 5-19 and those 45-64. This suggests a smaller population in its prime wage-earning years, yet a larger portion of the population in or approaching years of dependence on others. While many in the 45-64 year old age category are still fully in their careers, it will be important to note the large proportion of the population (27%) who are likely to move out of the labor force and into retirement within the next decade.

**Figure 3: Population by Age in the Pioneer Valley Region**

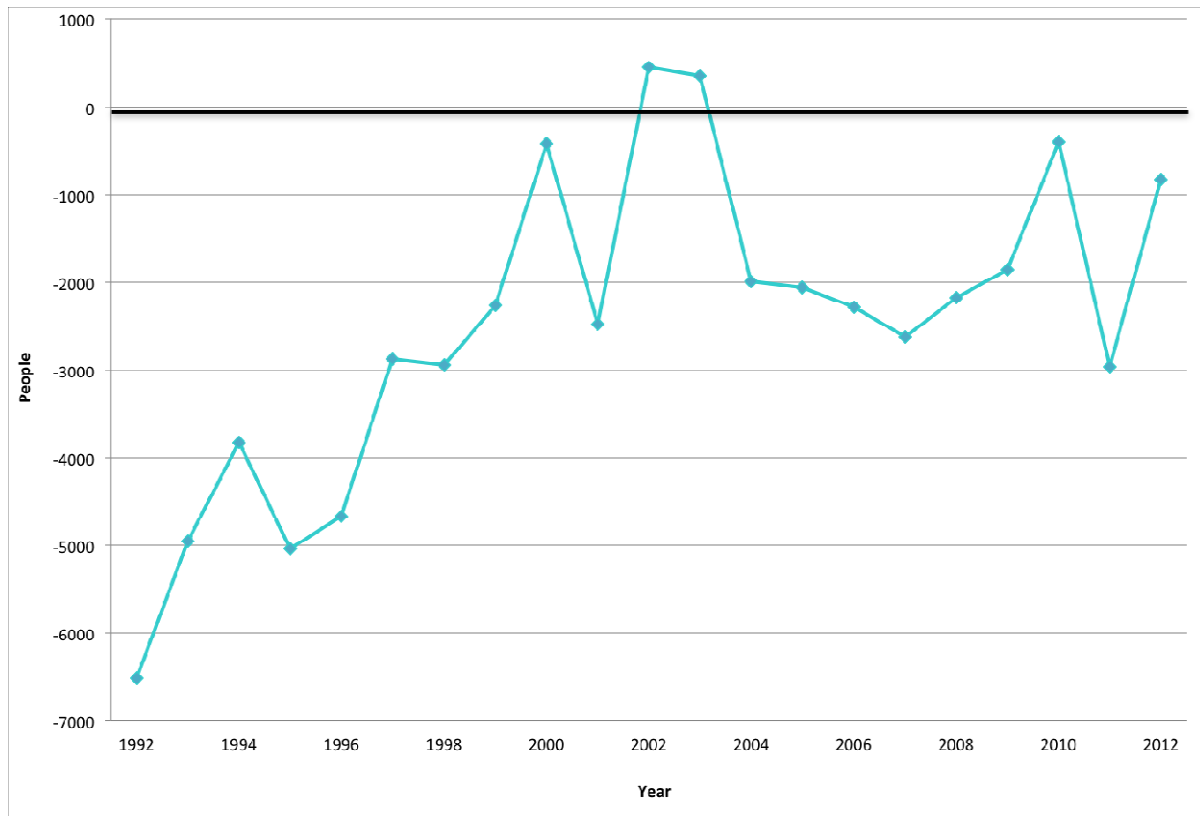


Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2012 1-Year-Estimates

### Demographics and Migration

Retaining the population base has been a challenge in the Pioneer Valley region, although trends of out-migration have decreased to half of what they formerly were. In the 1990s, there was a net domestic out-migration of nearly 40,000 people. While the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has still seen net domestic out-migration, the loss between 2000-2010 was less than half of the previous decade with net out-migration of about 15,500 people and just under 4,000 additional people lost by 2012. Migration out of the Valley peaked in 2007 at 2,621 and decreased significantly in the years following. This was also the period during the recession of the 2000s when the housing market crashed and reflected similar trends to those in previous economic downturns. Of concern, 2011 saw another spike in outmigration to 2,963; however, 2012 saw that trend slow again to 831. Although 2012 was hopeful, this trend will need to be watched closely to determine if recent improvements will be negated over the coming years..

**Figure 4: Net Domestic Migration in the Pioneer Valley Region**

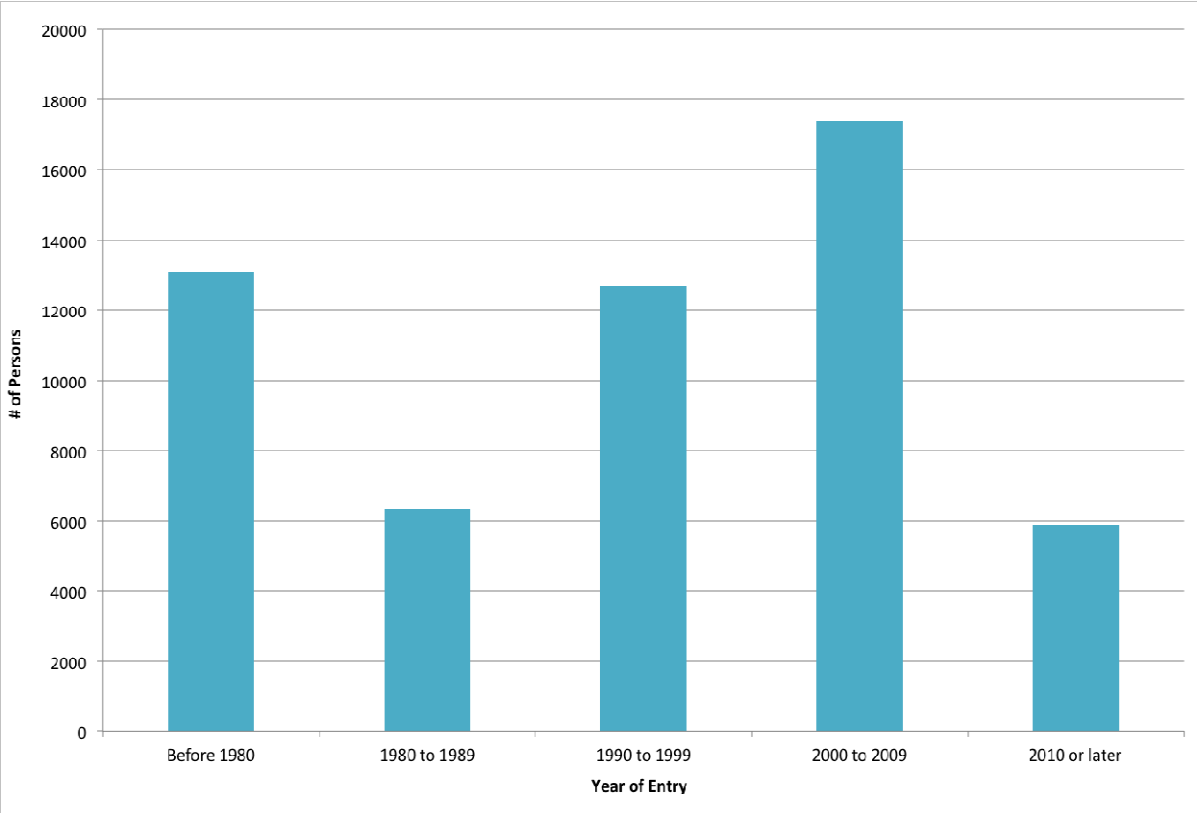


*Source: U. S. Census Bureau Population Division, 2012*

The Pioneer Valley has always been a destination for foreign immigrants and this continues to be the case. From 1990 to 1999 inclusive, a total of 12,703 new immigrants settled in the Pioneer Valley region. In fact, if not for foreign born immigration, the Pioneer Valley region would have experienced a net loss of population between 1990 and 2000. This trend of foreign immigration has continued and the first decade of the 2000s saw an even larger influx. During the period 2000-2012 inclusive, an additional 23,283 people immigrated to the region from another country representing 3.7% of the 2012 population.



**Figure 5: Foreign Born Persons by Year of Entry in the Pioneer Valley Region**

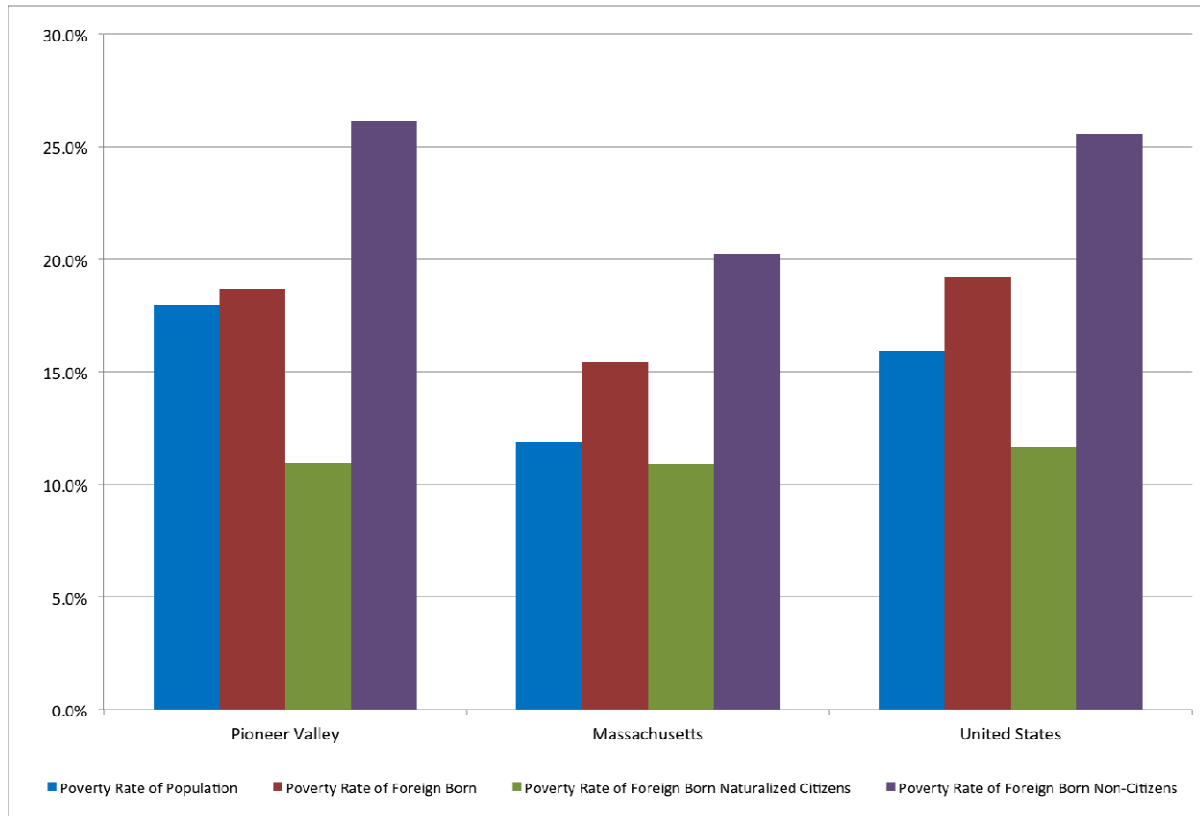


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 One -Year Estimates

A commonly cited concern about the region’s high level of international immigration is whether there are adequate services for new arrivals who often enter the country with few resources. However; the Valley, with its history of immigration dating back to the industrial mills of the nineteenth century, has demonstrated the capacity to readily absorb new immigrants into the economy. For instance, in 2012 the poverty rate of the foreign born population was only 0.7 % higher than the total population in the Pioneer Valley region. Conversely, statewide and national trends show the foreign born population with a much higher poverty rate than the general population (by 3.5% in Massachusetts and 3.3 % nationally).

Perhaps even more significant, once immigrants have become naturalized citizens, they have a poverty rate in the Pioneer Valley region that is 7% below that of the population as a whole (see Figure 6). Immigration has been, and will continue to be important to the growth of the region’s population and economy.

**Figure 6: 2012 Poverty Rates for all Persons and Foreign Born Persons By Citizenship Status**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

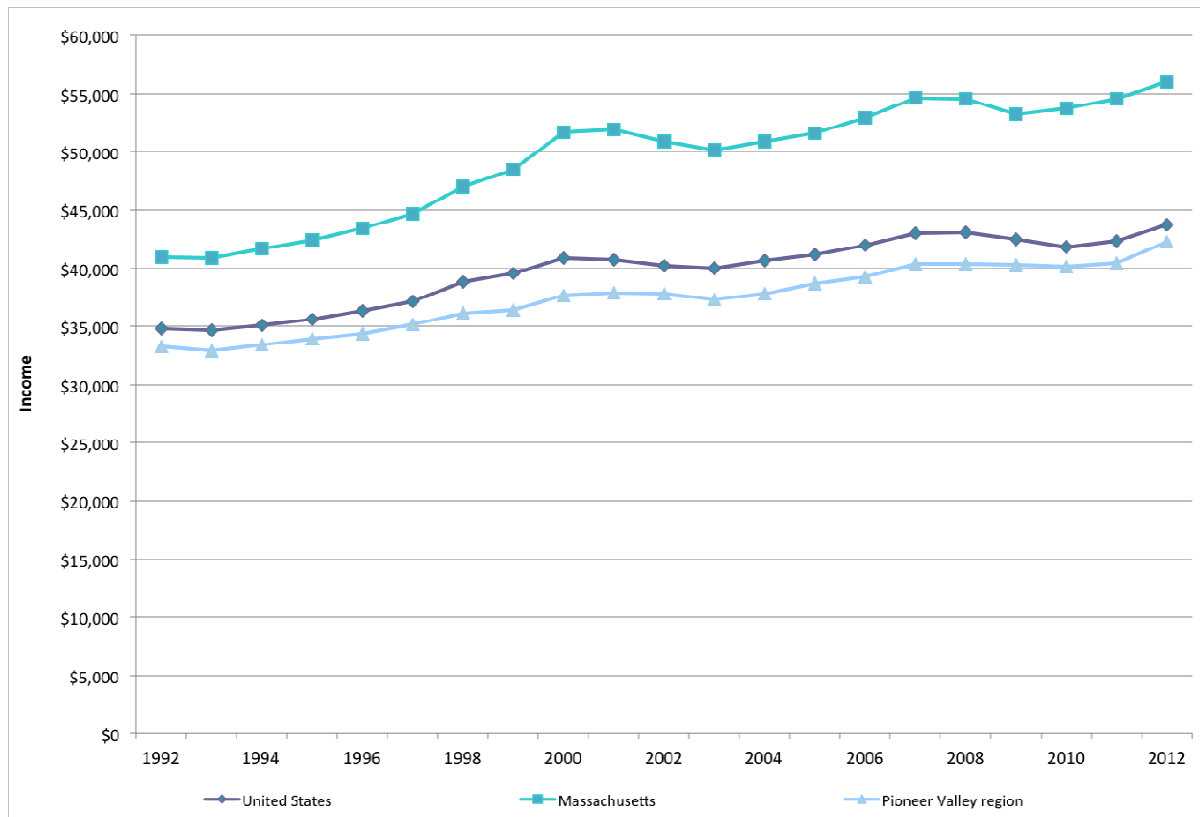
## Income and Poverty

To measure economic growth, we examine several indicators including per capita income, median family income, and poverty rates. According to these measures, the Pioneer Valley region experienced economic improvement consistent with national rates during the 1990s, and, while growth was slower than the nation for the first part of the 2000s, the region's economy seems to have been effected less negatively than that of the state and nation.

Per capita income is a useful measure of economic growth because it controls for population change by measuring total income as it relates to population size. Inflation is controlled by converting the annual values to current year dollars using the Consumer Price Index for the Northeast. As can be seen in Figure 7, the region's per capita income is significantly less than the per capita income for the Commonwealth and slightly below that of the nation. Much of the economic growth is the result of economic changes in the 1990s. In 1980, the difference between incomes in the Pioneer Valley and state, adjusting for inflation, was \$3,488 but in 2012 it was \$13,680. This difference exists despite significant regional growth, as evidenced by the 19% growth of per capita income between 1990 and 2012. However, in a comparable time period, Massachusetts incomes grew more than one third faster (25.8 percent). Since 2000, this trend has shifted and growth rates in the Pioneer Valley region have surpassed those of the state and nation: The region's per capita income gains have equaled 11.0% while gains have been a more moderate 7.6% statewide.

According to 2008-2012 5-year estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, "real" per capita income rose between 2000 and 2012 in 15 Pioneer Valley region communities (see Table 4). Pelham experienced inflation-adjusted increases in per capita income exceeding 21 percent. The communities of Chesterfield and Southwick also experienced significant increases in per capita income of 13.38 and 9.68%, respectively. In contrast, Amherst, Holyoke, Southampton, Springfield, and Tolland experienced double-digit decreases in per capita income.

**Figure 7: Per Capita Income (Adjusted to 2012 \$)**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, 1992-2012

Note: For each new year, you need to change the formula for the adjusted income so the constant number is the same as the CPI for the most current year. This formula should be updated for all previous years as well.

**Table 4: Changes in Per Capita Income**

	Per Capita Income (2012\$)		
	2000 Count	2008-2012 Estimate	% Change
<b>Massachusetts</b>	\$36,751	\$35,485	-3.57
<b>Pioneer Valley Region</b>	\$28,432	\$26,565	-7.02
<b>Hampden County</b>	\$27,673	\$25,646	-7.90
<b>Hampshire County</b>	\$30,709	\$29,246	-5.00
<b>Agawam</b>	\$31,951	\$30,672	-4.17
<b>Amherst</b>	\$24,679	\$19,837	-24.41
<b>Belchertown</b>	\$31,067	\$33,195	6.41
<b>Blandford</b>	\$34,391	\$33,499	-2.66
<b>Brimfield</b>	\$33,578	\$33,625	0.14
<b>Chester</b>	\$25,629	\$27,563	7.02
<b>Chesterfield</b>	\$27,218	\$31,422	13.38
<b>Chicopee</b>	\$26,405	\$24,264	-8.82
<b>Cummington</b>	\$30,522	\$30,487	-0.11
<b>East Longmeadow</b>	\$39,169	\$36,499	-7.31
<b>Easthampton</b>	\$31,044	\$31,282	0.76
<b>Goshen</b>	\$31,468	\$29,337	-7.26
<b>Granby</b>	\$32,867	\$32,348	-1.60
<b>Granville</b>	\$31,601	\$28,981	-9.04
<b>Hadley</b>	\$35,325	\$34,366	-2.79
<b>Hampden</b>	\$37,796	\$36,187	-4.45
<b>Hatfield</b>	\$35,138	\$32,080	-9.53
<b>Holland</b>	\$30,829	\$31,824	3.13
<b>Holyoke</b>	\$22,535	\$20,294	-11.04
<b>Huntington</b>	\$27,452	\$29,498	6.94
<b>Longmeadow</b>	\$55,157	\$52,122	-5.82
<b>Ludlow</b>	\$28,471	\$29,325	2.91
<b>Middlefield</b>	\$34,181	\$31,374	-8.95
<b>Monson</b>	\$31,890	\$31,612	-0.88
<b>Montgomery</b>	\$36,737	\$34,966	-5.07
<b>Northampton</b>	\$34,018	\$33,440	-1.73
<b>Palmer</b>	\$26,431	\$26,884	1.69
<b>Pelham</b>	\$42,230	\$53,791	21.49
<b>Plainfield</b>	\$29,434	\$30,138	2.34
<b>Russell</b>	\$30,189	\$29,217	-3.33
<b>South Hadley</b>	\$32,191	\$30,114	-6.90
<b>Southampton</b>	\$37,110	\$33,391	-11.14
<b>Southwick</b>	\$30,809	\$34,113	9.68
<b>Springfield</b>	\$21,570	\$18,016	-19.73
<b>Tolland</b>	\$42,662	\$37,672	-13.25
<b>Wales</b>	\$30,117	\$30,818	2.28
<b>Ware</b>	\$26,776	\$27,905	4.05
<b>West Springfield</b>	\$29,713	\$27,966	-6.25
<b>Westfield</b>	\$29,172	\$27,596	-5.71
<b>Westhampton</b>	\$35,913	\$34,542	-3.97
<b>Wilbraham</b>	\$42,277	\$40,566	-4.22
<b>Williamsburg</b>	\$36,554	\$35,529	-2.89
<b>Worthington</b>	\$34,256	\$34,375	0.35

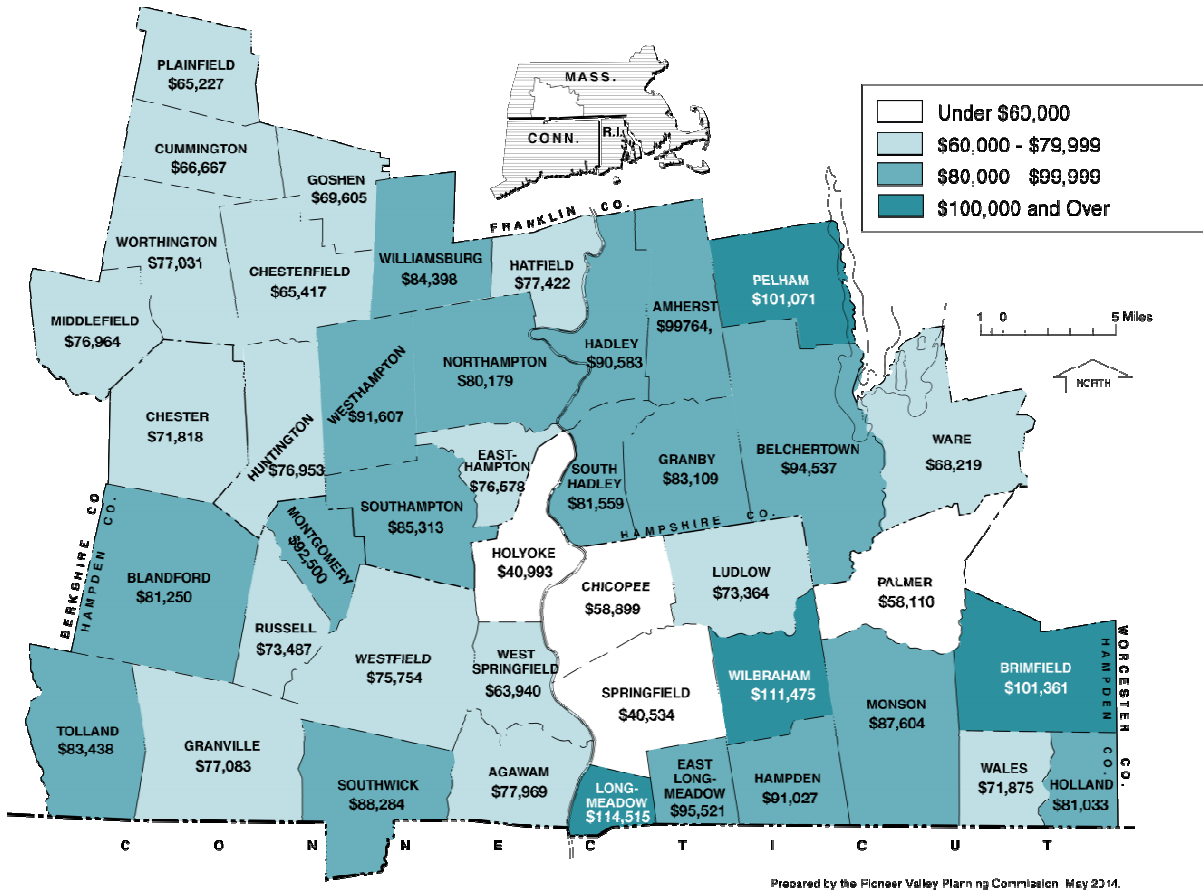
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000 Decennial Census and 2008-12 American Community Survey Estimates

**Table 5: Changes in Median Family Income in the Pioneer Valley Region - 2000 to 2012**

	Median Family Income (2012\$)		
	2000 Count	2008-2012 Estimate	% Change
<b>Massachusetts</b>	\$87,324	\$84,380	-3.37%
<b>Pioneer Valley Region</b>	\$72,549	\$73,619	1.47%
<b>Hampden County</b>	\$69,754	\$61,871	-11.30%
<b>Hampshire County</b>	\$81,399	\$82,436	1.27%
<b>Agawam</b>	\$83,676	\$77,969	-6.82%
<b>Amherst</b>	\$86,719	\$99,764	15.04%
<b>Belchertown</b>	\$86,143	\$94,537	9.74%
<b>Blandford</b>	\$84,083	\$81,250	-3.37%
<b>Brimfield</b>	\$84,887	\$101,361	19.41%
<b>Chester</b>	\$73,542	\$71,818	-2.34%
<b>Chesterfield</b>	\$81,230	\$65,417	-19.47%
<b>Chicopee</b>	\$62,502	\$58,899	-5.76%
<b>Cummington</b>	\$69,036	\$66,667	-3.43%
<b>East Longmeadow</b>	\$99,937	\$95,521	-4.42%
<b>Easthampton</b>	\$76,913	\$76,578	-0.44%
<b>Goshen</b>	\$83,197	\$69,605	-16.34%
<b>Granby</b>	\$81,614	\$83,109	1.83%
<b>Granville</b>	\$83,862	\$77,083	-8.08%
<b>Hadley</b>	\$87,654	\$90,583	3.34%
<b>Hampden</b>	\$106,786	\$91,027	-14.76%
<b>Hatfield</b>	\$87,243	\$77,422	-11.26%
<b>Holland</b>	\$80,753	\$81,033	0.35%
<b>Holyoke</b>	\$51,165	\$40,993	-19.88%
<b>Huntington</b>	\$74,075	\$76,953	3.89%
<b>Longmeadow</b>	\$124,254	\$114,515	-7.84%
<b>Ludlow</b>	\$78,902	\$73,364	-7.02%
<b>Middlefield</b>	\$76,314	\$76,964	0.85%
<b>Monson</b>	\$82,995	\$87,604	5.55%
<b>Montgomery</b>	\$93,818	\$92,500	-1.41%
<b>Northampton</b>	\$80,498	\$80,179	-0.40%
<b>Palmer</b>	\$69,897	\$58,110	-16.86%
<b>Pelham</b>	\$101,490	\$101,071	-0.41%
<b>Plainfield</b>	\$65,201	\$65,227	0.04%
<b>Russell</b>	\$68,882	\$73,487	6.69%
<b>South Hadley</b>	\$83,117	\$81,559	-1.87%
<b>Southampton</b>	\$91,992	\$85,313	-7.26%
<b>Southwick</b>	\$91,278	\$88,284	-3.28%
<b>Springfield</b>	\$51,384	\$40,534	-21.12%
<b>Tolland</b>	\$92,639	\$83,438	-9.93%
<b>Wales</b>	\$73,113	\$71,875	-1.69%
<b>Ware</b>	\$64,441	\$68,219	5.86%
<b>West Springfield</b>	\$71,206	\$63,940	-10.20%
<b>Westfield</b>	\$78,350	\$75,754	-3.31%
<b>Westhampton</b>	\$94,349	\$91,607	-2.91%
<b>Wilbraham</b>	\$104,546	\$111,475	6.63%
<b>Williamsburg</b>	\$79,067	\$84,398	6.74%
<b>Worthington</b>	\$85,155	\$77,031	-9.54%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000 Decennial census and American Community Survey 2008-2012 5-Year Estimates

**Figure 8: Median Family Income (2012)**

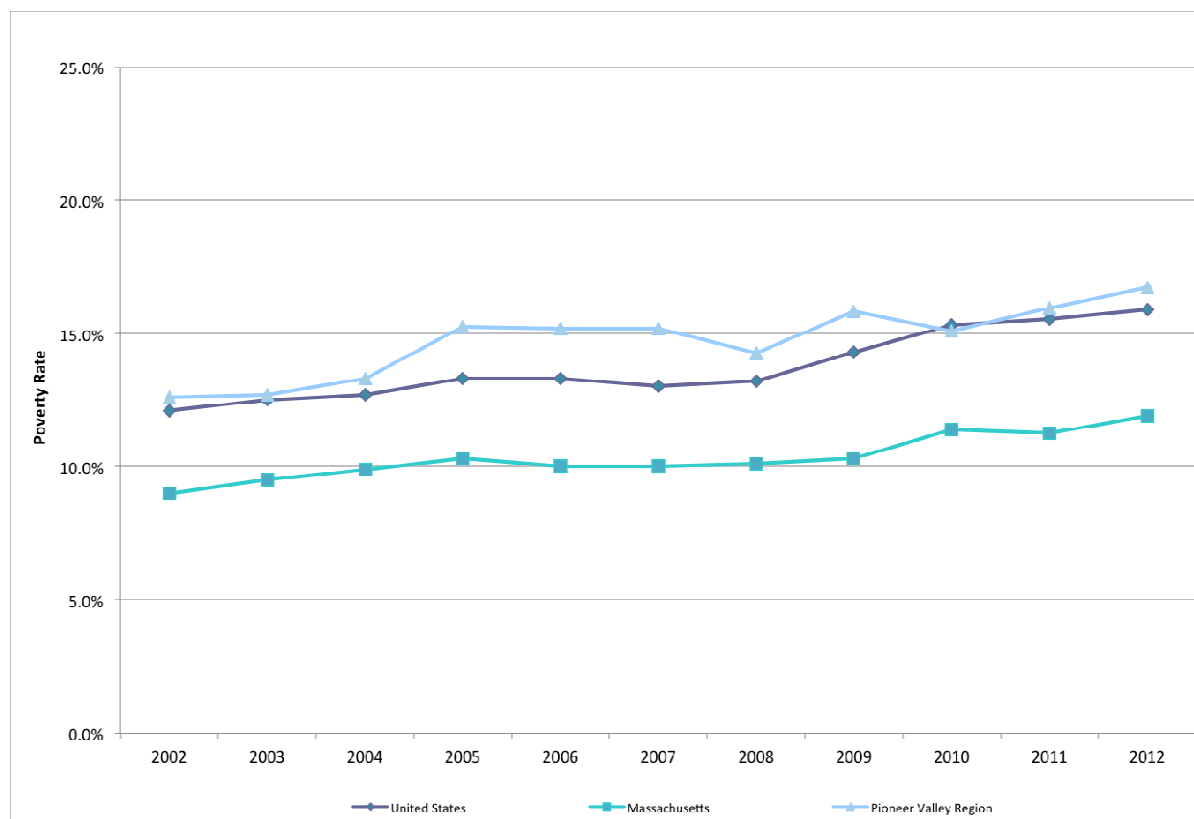


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, 2008-2012

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, median family incomes in the Pioneer Valley region increased by just over 1% between 2000 and the five year period between 2008-2012 (see Table 5). Within the region there are significant income disparities (see Figure 8). For example, while Longmeadow, Wilbraham, Brimfield, and Pelham have median family incomes greater than \$100,000, Springfield and Holyoke median family incomes are less than \$41,000.

What’s more, the lowest family incomes have continued to decline, particularly in Springfield and Holyoke (21.1% and 19.9% respectively). This trend is not exclusive to large cities, as one of the region’s smallest towns, Chesterfield, experienced a 19.5% drop. Palmer, Goshen, Hampden, Hatfield, and West Springfield also experienced significant proportional declines.

At the same time, several communities have experienced more positive trends. Amherst and Brimfield, for example, experienced large increases to their median family incomes (by 15.0% and 19.4% respectively). In 1999 median family incomes in both towns were approximately \$85,000 (adjusted for inflation to 2012 dollars). Twelve years later, both median incomes are both well over \$95,000, with Amherst at \$99,764 and Brimfield at \$101,361.

**Figure 9: Poverty Rate in the Pioneer Valley Region, 2002-2012**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), 2012  
 Note: Poverty rates displayed in this figure may differ slightly from Table 6 and Figure 11 as different data sources were required

The poverty rate is another measure used to determine quality of life and economic well-being. In the Pioneer Valley region, poverty rates amongst the general population have climbed from a low of 12.6% in 2002 to 16.7% in 2012 (as seen in Figure 9). Between 2005 and 2010, poverty rates hovered consistently around 15 percent, dropping slightly in 2008 but then increasing in 2009 to 15.8 and again in 2012 to 16.7 percent, a rate higher than has existed for over a decade. This rate continues to follow a decade-long pattern of exceeding Massachusetts' overall rate by several percentage points. In 2012, this difference was 5.9 percent. The poverty rate trends, and the per capita income growth patterns previously mentioned, suggest that the region did not share equally in the state's economic growth at the end of the 1990s, nor in the middle portion of the 2000s. While in 2010, for the first time in over a decade, the total poverty rate in the Pioneer Valley region was lower than that of the nation as a whole; the current 2012 rate is 1.9% above the national rate.

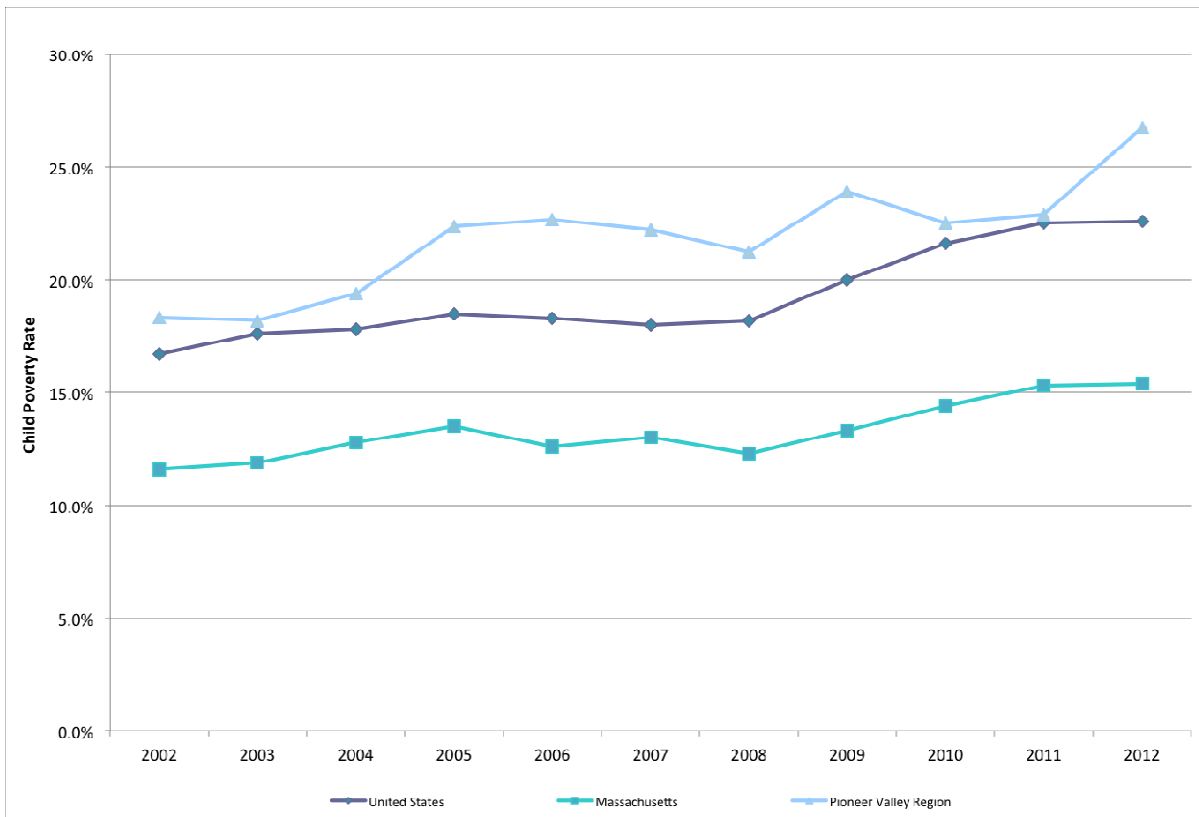
In the ten year period from 2002 to 2012, child poverty rates in the region have been consistently higher than those for the United States and drastically so in relation to Massachusetts overall, as seen in Figure 10. Child poverty rates in the Pioneer Valley region rose from 17.1% in 2001 to a startling 27.1% in 2012. Since 2005, child poverty rates in the Pioneer Valley region as a whole have exceeded 20% annually. This indicates that more than one in five children in the Pioneer Valley region has grown up in households with incomes below the poverty line.



According to the U. S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2008-2012 5-Year Estimates, disparities in the distribution of poverty amongst the municipalities of the region are substantial. The major urban centers of Springfield and Holyoke continue to have the highest poverty rates in the region, well above 20 % in all categories (as seen in Table 6). Most alarmingly, the rate of children living in poverty is 42.4% in Springfield and 46.1% in Holyoke.

There has been a significant increase in the number of individuals living in poverty in the Town of Amherst. Second only to Holyoke, the Town of Amherst has surpassed Springfield in the number of individuals living in poverty. The large student population in Amherst is likely a major contributor to the high poverty rate in town, a theory supported by the fact that family and child poverty rates remain much lower than the individual rates. Still, this doesn't explain why there was such a large increase in the poverty rate in recent years. Springfield, Holyoke, Cummington, Hatfield, Huntington, Northampton, Plainfield, Pelham, Chester, Agawam, Amherst, Ware, and Chicopee all experienced significantly increasing percentages of children in poverty. Among those communities close to the urban centers, Westfield and West Springfield have also managed to keep relatively stable family and individual poverty rates but experienced a significant jump in child poverty (3.1% and 11.9% respectively).

**Figure 10: Child Poverty Rate in the Pioneer Valley Region, 2002-2012**



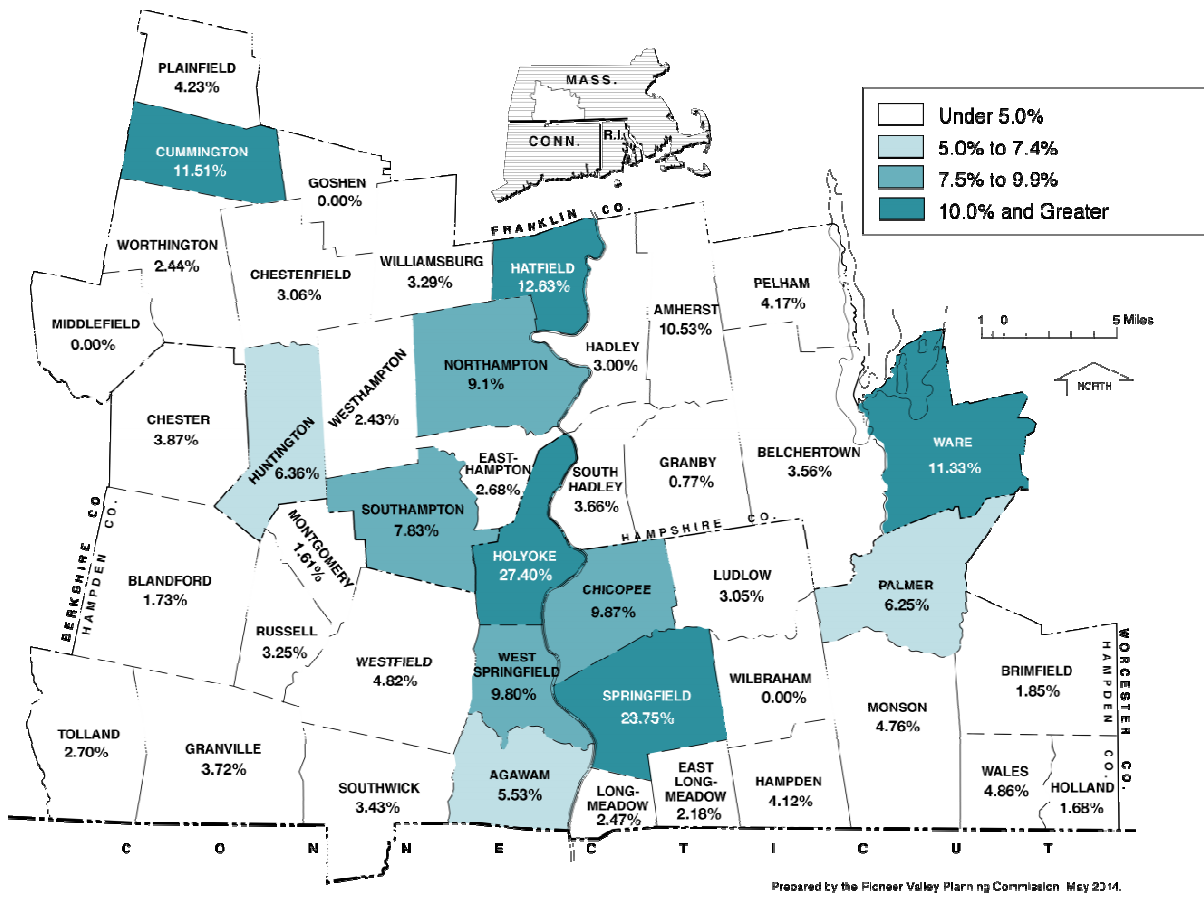
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), 2012  
 Note: Poverty rates displayed in this figure may differ slightly from Table 6 and Figure 11 as different data sources were required.

**Table 6: Changes in Community Poverty Rates 2000 to 2012**

	Families in Poverty		Children in Poverty		Individuals in Poverty	
	2000	2012	2000	2012	2000	2012
<b>Massachusetts</b>	6.70%	7.75%	6.70%	14.00%	9.30%	11.00%
<b>Pioneer Valley Region</b>	10.01%	11.42%	10.01%	23.78%	13.41%	15.90%
<b>Hampden County</b>	11.45%	13.04%	11.45%	26.60%	14.74%	17.10%
<b>Hampshire County</b>	5.05%	5.99%	5.05%	11.70%	9.40%	11.90%
<b>Agawam</b>	4.26%	5.53%	4.26%	12.50%	5.63%	7.60%
<b>Amherst</b>	7.23%	10.53%	7.23%	18.20%	20.21%	29.10%
<b>Belchertown</b>	5.11%	3.56%	5.11%	4.80%	5.90%	6.00%
<b>Blandford</b>	1.72%	1.73%	1.72%	4.60%	3.39%	3.10%
<b>Brimfield</b>	2.15%	1.85%	2.15%	6.30%	4.38%	4.40%
<b>Chester</b>	2.87%	3.87%	2.87%	12.10%	5.85%	8.50%
<b>Chesterfield</b>	3.38%	3.06%	3.38%	4.60%	5.69%	5.30%
<b>Chicopee</b>	9.59%	9.87%	9.59%	21.60%	12.25%	13.70%
<b>Cummington</b>	4.18%	11.51%	4.18%	22.30%	6.64%	12.50%
<b>East Longmeadow</b>	2.09%	2.18%	2.09%	5.10%	3.44%	3.90%
<b>Easthampton</b>	5.89%	2.68%	5.89%	6.10%	8.88%	5.80%
<b>Goshen</b>	4.27%	0.00%	4.27%	0.00%	7.87%	2.30%
<b>Granby</b>	0.95%	0.77%	0.95%	3.90%	2.21%	2.80%
<b>Granville</b>	1.77%	3.72%	1.77%	5.60%	3.38%	6.20%
<b>Hadley</b>	4.76%	3.00%	4.76%	4.40%	6.89%	8.30%
<b>Hampden</b>	1.36%	4.12%	1.36%	6.60%	2.21%	4.60%
<b>Hatfield</b>	1.37%	12.63%	1.37%	12.70%	2.77%	13.60%
<b>Holland</b>	6.51%	1.68%	6.51%	2.10%	7.29%	7.30%
<b>Holyoke</b>	22.56%	27.40%	22.56%	46.10%	26.38%	30.60%
<b>Huntington</b>	4.37%	6.36%	4.37%	10.50%	5.78%	7.50%
<b>Longmeadow</b>	0.97%	2.47%	0.97%	4.70%	2.05%	4.20%
<b>Ludlow</b>	5.27%	3.05%	5.27%	6.40%	6.35%	5.70%
<b>Middlefield</b>	7.32%	0.00%	7.32%	0.00%	8.62%	0.50%
<b>Monson</b>	5.25%	4.76%	5.25%	6.80%	5.58%	9.10%
<b>Montgomery</b>	1.01%	1.61%	1.01%	0.00%	2.94%	2.40%
<b>Northampton</b>	5.72%	7.83%	5.72%	15.90%	9.82%	13.50%
<b>Palmer</b>	5.76%	6.25%	5.76%	9.80%	7.88%	10.30%
<b>Pelham</b>	2.65%	4.17%	2.65%	10.50%	4.87%	4.40%
<b>Plainfield</b>	4.85%	4.23%	4.85%	15.40%	7.99%	8.40%
<b>Russell</b>	7.10%	3.25%	7.10%	5.00%	9.05%	4.30%
<b>South Hadley</b>	4.12%	3.66%	4.12%	9.80%	5.88%	6.70%
<b>Southampton</b>	1.82%	7.71%	1.82%	1.10%	2.36%	6.00%
<b>Southwick</b>	3.80%	3.43%	3.80%	9.10%	6.10%	5.20%
<b>Springfield</b>	19.32%	23.75%	19.32%	42.40%	23.08%	28.70%
<b>Tolland</b>	2.31%	2.70%	2.31%	0.00%	4.23%	3.20%
<b>Wales</b>	1.85%	4.86%	1.85%	6.20%	3.49%	7.60%
<b>Ware</b>	8.43%	11.33%	8.43%	31.40%	11.22%	15.30%
<b>West Springfield</b>	8.66%	9.80%	8.66%	20.60%	11.94%	12.50%
<b>Westfield</b>	6.85%	4.82%	6.85%	10.00%	11.28%	8.80%
<b>Westhampton</b>	1.94%	2.43%	1.94%	1.90%	3.54%	4.90%
<b>Wilbraham</b>	3.15%	0.00%	3.15%	0.50%	5.13%	3.10%
<b>Williamsburg</b>	1.22%	3.29%	1.22%	4.90%	5.48%	7.30%
<b>Worthington</b>	1.50%	2.44%	1.50%	2.90%	3.46%	4.60%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000, American Community Survey 2008-12 5-Year Estimates

Figure 11: Families in Poverty (2012)



Source: American Community Survey 2008-12 5-Year Estimates

## Education

The 43 communities in the Pioneer Valley region are served by 39 school districts, nine of which serve only students from kindergarten through sixth grade. The four largest school districts are Springfield, Chicopee, Westfield, and Holyoke, which together, account for slightly less than half of all the pupils in the region (see Table 7). With the exception of Springfield, in those districts, as well as most across the region, school enrollments continued to fall.

In the Pioneer Valley, enrollment remained stagnant, falling 0.72% between the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. During that time period, enrollment declined in 29 of the region's 39 districts between the 2013-2014 school year. Enrollment dropped substantially in several areas, including Brimfield (-6.4%), Chesterfield-Goshen (-7.7%), Granby (-7%), Hadley (-5.8%), Monson (-7.6%), and Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical (-7.7%). In contrast, only four districts had increased enrollments above 1 percent. These districts were Holland (2.2%), Springfield (2.2%), Wales, (4.7%), and Westhampton (4.2%). It is worth noting that these rural communities with declining enrollments are places where the population numbers as a whole remain fairly stable or are increasing (see Table 1). For example, the population growth in Monson and Granby, was less than 1%, but enrollment declined 7.6% and 7%, respectively. In Goshen, Chesterfield and Hadley, , the population grew by varying amounts with Goshen increasing the most by 12.1 % and Chesterfield increasing by 0.5% while enrollments for the school district declined overall by 7.7%.

Only 12 of the 39 districts have average per-pupil expenditures greater than or equal to the state's 2011-2012 average per-pupil expenditure of \$13,636. The Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical district had the highest per-pupil expenditure (\$20,065) out of all the region's districts serving students in grades K-12. On the other end of the spectrum, Southampton's Pre-K to 6<sup>th</sup> grade had the lowest average per-pupil expenditure at \$10,074.

In today's economy, a high school education is the minimum requirement to participate effectively in the job market. Unfortunately, the region's average high school dropout rate remains persistently a full 1% higher than the state's (see Table 8). However, in the two communities with the highest dropout rates (Holyoke and Springfield) per-pupil spending is above the statewide average, a factor that may help pull the dropout rates down over time.

**Table 7: Pioneer Valley Region School Districts Profile**

Public School District Name	Cities & Towns in the Pioneer Valley Region	Student Enrollment			Average Per Pupil Expenditures 2011-2012	Average Teacher Salary 2011-2012
		'12 – '13	'13 – '14	% Change		
Pioneer Valley Region		93,421	92,747	-0.72%	N/A	N/A
Agawam	Agawam	4,113	4,107	-0.15%	\$13,398	\$61,706
Amherst (PK-6)	Amherst	1,206	1,210	0.33%	\$18,388	\$75,452
Amherst-Pelham (7-12) *	Amherst, Pelham	1,533	1,478	-3.59%	\$18,026	\$76,405
Belchertown	Belchertown	2,492	2,416	-3.05%	\$11,396	\$59,138
Brimfield (K-6)	Brimfield	328	307	-6.40%	\$13,626	\$58,694
Central Berkshire *	Cummington-only	1,782	1,736	-2.58%	\$13,282	\$62,124
Chesterfield-Goshen (PK-6)	Chesterfield, Goshen	169	156	-7.69%	\$11,597	\$57,150
Chicopee	Chicopee	7,775	7,779	0.05%	\$12,736	\$62,990
East Longmeadow	East Longmeadow	2,734	2,699	-1.28%	\$12,153	\$75,578
Easthampton	Easthampton	1,593	1,561	-2.01%	\$11,382	\$63,416
Gateway	Blandford, Chester, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Russell, Worthington	1,009	989	-1.98%	\$13,967	\$56,337
Granby	Granby	1,010	939	-7.03%	\$10,828	\$54,943
Granville (PK-8)***	Granville				\$15,990	\$66,358
Hadley	Hadley	661	623	-5.75%	\$11,268	\$71,348
Hampden-Wilbraham	Hampden, Wilbraham	3,404	3,346	-1.70%	\$12,215	\$66,347
Hampshire	Chesterfield, Goshen, Southampton, Westhampton, Williamsburg	766	756	-1.31%	\$14,281	\$67,050
Hatfield	Hatfield	450	450	0.00%	\$11,078	\$51,109
Holland (PK-6)	Holland	232	237	2.16%	\$13,702	\$58,306
Holyoke	Holyoke	5,782	5,573	-3.61%	\$15,700	\$64,691
Longmeadow	Longmeadow	2,868	2,857	-0.38%	\$13,110	\$65,791
Ludlow	Ludlow	2,874	2,802	-2.51%	\$12,588	\$56,621
Mohawk Trail *	Plainfield-only	1,007	959	-4.77%	\$15,136	\$57,715
Monson	Monson	1,255	1,160	-7.57%	\$11,811	\$59,331
Northampton	Northampton	2,722	2,746	0.88%	\$12,528	\$58,055
Northampton-Smith Vocational & Agricultural	Hampshire County	418	413	-1.20%	\$19,047	\$58,221
Palmer	Palmer	1,535	1,469	-4.30%	\$12,541	\$58,464

(Continued Next Page)

**Table 7: Pioneer Valley Region School Districts Profile  
(Continued)**

Public School District Name	Cities & Towns in the Pioneer Valley Region	Student Enrollment			Average Per Pupil Expenditures 2011-2012	Average Teacher Salary 2011-2012
		'12 – '13	'13 – '14	% Change		
Pathfinder Vocational Regional Technical**	Belchertown, Granby, Monson, Palmer, Ware	662	611	-7.70%	\$20,065	\$65,184
Pelham (PK-6)	Pelham	131	127	-3.05%	\$14,648	\$69,813
South Hadley	South Hadley	1,959	1,939	-1.02%	\$13,310	\$66,478
Southampton (PK-6)	Southampton	552	550	-0.36%	\$10,074	\$63,695
Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District	Granville, Southwick, Tolland	1,761	1,709	-2.95%	\$11,547	\$59,852
Springfield	Springfield	25,283	25,826	2.15%	\$14,548	\$57,127
Tantasqua (7-13) *	Brimfield, Holland, Wales	1,803	1,779	-1.33%	\$12,985	\$74,006
Wales (PK-6)	Wales	150	157	4.67%	\$11,994	\$57,090
Ware	Ware	1,296	1,267	-2.24%	\$11,919	\$58,573
West Springfield	West Springfield	3,882	3,899	0.44%	\$13,039	\$59,773
Westfield	Westfield	5,922	5,814	-1.82%	\$12,568	\$62,658
Westhampton (PK-6)	Westhampton	142	148	4.23%	\$12,375	\$55,041
Williamsburg (PK-6)	Williamsburg	160	153	-4.38%	\$13,041	\$62,333

*Source: Massachusetts Department of Education, School District Profiles, 2014*

*\*Enrollment data for regional school district includes all students who attend schools within the Pioneer Valley Region. This includes some students who reside outside the Pioneer Valley Region.*

*\*\*Enrollment data for vocational school district includes students who attend vocational schools within the Pioneer Valley Region. This includes some students who reside outside the Pioneer Valley Region.*

*\*\*\* The Granville K-8 school district was merged with the Southwick-Tolland school district in 2012, therefore there is no data for the Granville school district after 2011-2012.*

**Table 8: Annual High School Dropout Rate in the Pioneer Valley region - 2004 - 2013**

School District	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Massachusetts</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>
<b>Pioneer Valley Region</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>
Agawam	3.1%	3.4%	2.1%	4.4%	1.4%	2.2%	1.1%	1.9%	1.3%	1.8%
Amherst-Pelham	3.3%	2.2%	1.5%	2.5%	2.1%	0.8%	1.5%	2.1%	1.6%	1.0%
Belchertown	1.8%	0.5%	1.6%	1.6%	1.0%	1.4%	1.7%	1.1%	0.9%	0.3%
Central Berkshire	3.3%	2.9%	2.3%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	2.2%	1.7%	1.7%	1.3%
Chicopee	6.9%	7.3%	6.0%	6.0%	6.2%	5.7%	5.5%	5.4%	4.3%	4.3%
East Longmeadow	0.7%	0.6%	0.5%	1.5%	0.9%	0.6%	0.7%	0.4%	0.6%	0.3%
Easthampton	5.6%	4.5%	1.7%	2.1%	2.7%	2.0%	2.9%	2.9%	1.6%	1.3%
Gateway	6.0%	6.0%	4.3%	4.3%	5.1%	2.4%	2.9%	2.4%	3.9%	2.0%
Granby	3.0%	1.3%	0.0%	0.9%	1.1%	2.0%	1.1%	0.8%	0.0%	0.3%
Hadley	1.2%	1.9%	1.3%	0.6%	0.6%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.1%	0.0%
Hampden-Wilbraham	0.9%	2.0%	0.7%	1.2%	1.2%	0.7%	0.8%	0.6%	0.8%	0.6%
Hampshire	4.4%	1.5%	2.9%	2.9%	1.5%	1.9%	2.4%	1.0%	2.0%	1.0%
Hatfield	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	2.5%	4.5%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Holyoke	11.1%	9.7%	11.7%	11.3%	11.6%	9.8%	9.5%	9.8%	7.7%	9.1%
Longmeadow	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.1%	0.0%	0.5%	0.7%	0.5%	0.2%	0.0%
Ludlow	4.7%	1.5%	1.6%	1.7%	1.9%	0.9%	1.5%	0.8%	1.9%	2.0%
Mohawk Trail	5.9%	4.4%	2.4%	6.2%	5.0%	4.6%	3.6%	2.0%	2.4%	2.7%
Monson	4.4%	4.0%	1.2%	4.2%	0.5%	3.3%	2.7%	1.4%	1.2%	2.8%
Northampton	3.0%	3.8%	2.1%	1.9%	2.1%	1.2%	1.6%	0.9%	1.5%	1.1%
Northampton-Smith	5.2%	1.6%	3.3%	4.1%	1.8%	2.4%	1.3%	1.4%	1.4%	1.2%
Palmer	1.5%	1.0%	0.4%	4.1%	6.6%	3.6%	4.9%	7.1%	2.7%	2.2%
Pathfinder Voc Tech	2.8%	4.0%	3.0%	1.5%	3.1%	2.8%	2.6%	1.9%	1.4%	2.1%
Pioneer Valley Perf Arts	6.2%	8.8%	2.5%	4.5%	4.0%	1.3%	5.1%	2.6%	1.5%	0.7%
Sabis International	0.0%	1.3%	0.3%	1.5%	1.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.6%	0.4%	0.2%
South Hadley	1.9%	1.4%	1.9%	3.3%	2.9%	2.0%	2.8%	2.0%	0.8%	1.0%
Southwick-Tolland	3.2%	0.5%	1.9%	2.6%	1.8%	4.5%	0.7%	1.6%	1.7%	2.0%
Springfield	8.1%	12.4%	8.3%	10.9%	9.7%	9.6%	10.5%	11.7%	10.0%	6.5%
Tantasqua	3.5%	3.1%	1.7%	1.2%	0.7%	1.9%	1.2%	1.5%	1.4%	0.4%
Ware	10.1%	5.0%	6.3%	7.3%	10.2%	3.6%	4.2%	5.4%	3.8%	4.3%
West Springfield	6.8%	5.5%	4.4%	6.3%	6.0%	5.4%	3.4%	5.1%	3.1%	2.1%
Westfield	4.7%	2.9%	4.6%	5.3%	3.2%	2.4%	3.3%	2.3%	2.0%	2.2%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Education, Statistical Reports, 2014

In 2013, 28 out of 31 districts had dropout rates that were either the same or lower than they were in 2004. While most school districts in the region had dropout rates below the regional 3.2% mark, two districts had rates of much higher concern. Holyoke saw nearly one in ten students drop out of high school (9.1%). Meanwhile, while Springfield had the highest dropout rate in 2012 at 10%, they managed a significant reduction to 6.5% in 2013. This is the first year the dropout rate for Springfield has fallen below 8% since at least 2003. Unfortunately, after a large decrease in high school dropouts last year (7.7%), the Holyoke dropout rate has increased to 9.1%, a similar rate to prior years. Chicopee, another of the region's urban core cities, has seen even greater improvements and reached its lowest dropout rate in ten years, falling to 4.3% in 2012 and remaining at 4.3% in 2013.

In 2012, nearly 30% of Pioneer Valley residents aged 25 years and over had a bachelor's degree or higher (see Table 9). According to the 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 13 of the Pioneer Valley's 43 communities had a higher percentage of college graduates than the statewide average (39% of the population) (See Figure 12). In four communities (Amherst, Pelham, Longmeadow, and Northampton) more than 50% of the residents had a bachelor's degree or higher. In contrast, there were 11 communities (including Ware, Chester, Chicopee, Holyoke, and Springfield) where the proportion was at or below 25 %.

Given the region's rich endowment of higher education institutions, some of these rates are lower than expected. Other indicators, however, point towards the beginning of a positive trend. There has been a 27.1 % increase in the population 25 years and over who have attained a bachelor's degree or higher since 2000 (see Table 9). Additionally, the number of people 25 years and over who are high school graduates increased by 11.6 percent.

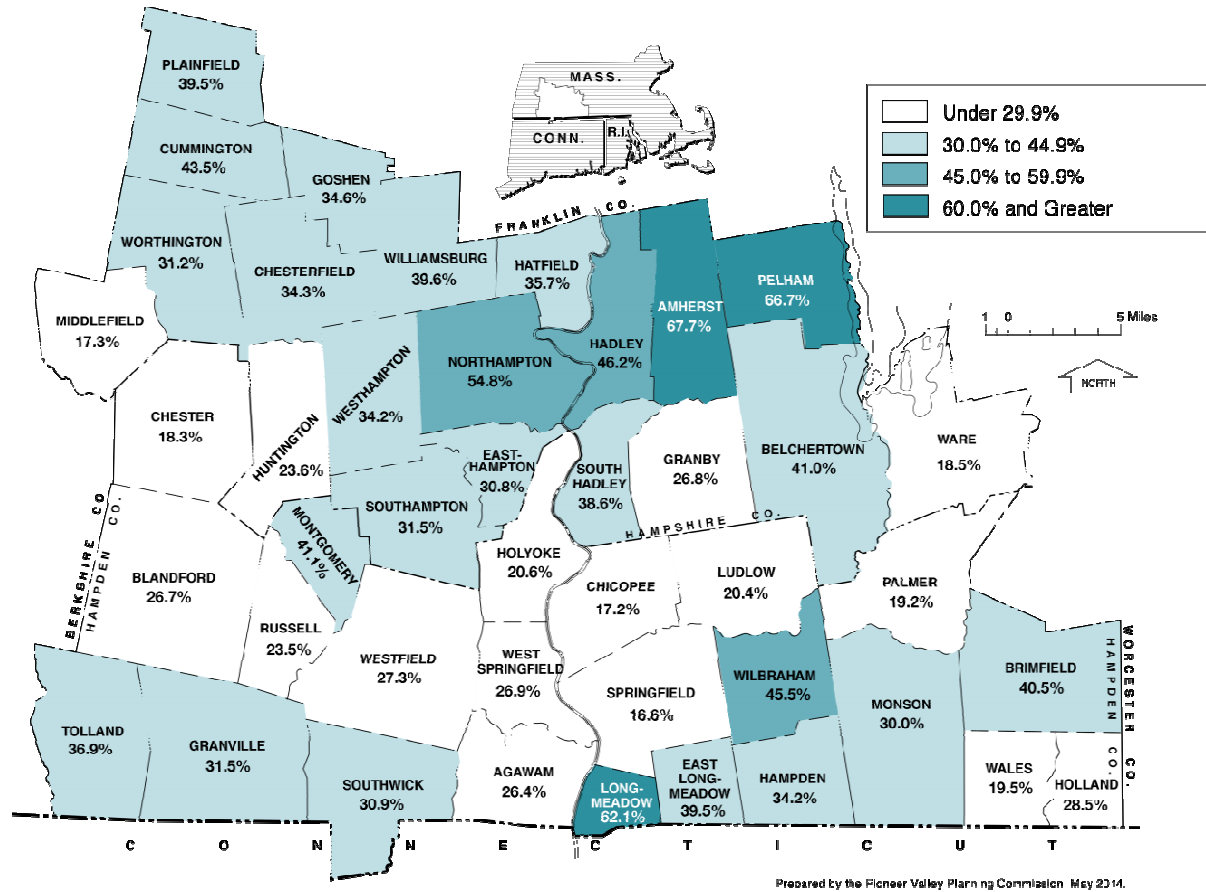


**Table 9: Educational Attainment in the Pioneer Valley Region - 2000 and 2012**

	2000 Population	% of Population	2012 Population	% of Population	12 Year % Change
<b>Population 25 Years and Over</b>					
Hampden County	295,837	100.0%	308,083	100.0%	4.1%
Hampshire County	93,193	100.0%	99,214	100.0%	6.5%
Pioneer Valley Region	389,030	100.0%	407,297	100.0%	4.7%
<b>Less Than 9th Grade</b>					
Hampden County	22,138	7.5%	18,515	6.0%	-16.4%
Hampshire County	3,104	3.3%	1,396	1.4%	-55.0%
Pioneer Valley Region	25,242	6.5%	19,884	4.9%	-21.2%
<b>9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma</b>					
Hampden County	39,325	13.3%	28,401	9.2%	-27.8%
Hampshire County	6,815	7.3%	4,462	4.5%	-34.5%
Pioneer Valley Region	46,140	11.9%	32,863	8.1%	-28.8%
<b>*High School Graduate</b>					
Hampden County	96,474	32.6%	95,000	30.8%	-1.5%
Hampshire County	24,029	25.8%	24,515	24.7%	2.0%
Pioneer Valley Region	120,503	31.0%	119,515	29.3%	-0.8%
<b>Some College, No Degree</b>					
Hampden County	53,670	18.1%	61,248	19.9%	14.1%
Hampshire County	16,336	17.5%	17,656	17.8%	8.1%
Pioneer Valley Region	70,006	18.0%	78,904	19.4%	12.7%
<b>Associate's Degree</b>					
Hampden County	23,676	8.0%	26,434	8.6%	11.6%
Hampshire County	7,544	8.1%	7,755	7.8%	2.8%
Pioneer Valley Region	31,220	8.0%	34,189	8.4%	9.5%
<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>					
Hampden County	37,752	12.8%	48,933	15.9%	29.6%
Hampshire County	17,995	19.3%	20,825	21.0%	15.7%
Pioneer Valley Region	55,747	14.3%	69,758	17.1%	25.1%
<b>Graduate or Professional Degree</b>					
Hampden County	22,802	7.7%	29,552	9.6%	29.6%
Hampshire County	17,370	18.6%	22,632	22.8%	30.3%
Pioneer Valley Region	40,172	10.3%	52,184	12.8%	29.9%
<b>High School Graduate or Higher</b>					
Hampden County	234,374	79.2%	261,167	84.8%	11.4%
Hampshire County	83,274	89.4%	93,383	94.1%	12.1%
Pioneer Valley Region	317,648	81.7%	354,550	87.0%	11.6%
<b>Bachelor's Degree or Higher</b>					
Hampden County	60,554	20.5%	78,485	25.5%	29.6%
Hampshire County	35,365	37.9%	43,457	43.8%	22.9%
Pioneer Valley Region	95,919	24.7%	121,942	29.9%	27.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2000 and American Community Survey 2012 1-yr estimate  
\*Includes Equivalency

**Figure 12: College and University Graduates**



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2008-12.

**Table 10: Number of College Graduates from the Pioneer Valley Region's Higher Education Institutions**

College or University	Location	Graduates				
		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>American International College</b>	Springfield	479	794	946	1,065	1,128
<b>Amherst College</b>	Amherst	445	419	428	483	442
<b>Bay Path College</b>	Longmeadow	386	469	540	654	673
<b>College of Our Lady of the Elms</b>	Chicopee	289	239	346	337	395
<b>Hampshire College</b>	Amherst	289	300	304	308	356
<b>Holyoke Community College</b>	Holyoke	961	1,022	1,095	1,128	1,016
<b>Mount Holyoke College</b>	South Hadley	570	569	599	572	568
<b>Smith College</b>	Northampton	901	840	929	874	846
<b>Springfield College</b>	Springfield	1,631	1,577	1,616	930	981
<b>Springfield Technical Community College</b>	Springfield	831	922	984	1,023	941
<b>University of Massachusetts</b>	Amherst	6,050	6,220	6,517	6,890	7,152
<b>Western New England University</b>	Springfield	904	883	915	899	978
<b>Westfield State University</b>	Westfield	1,082	1,232	1,279	1,210	1,370
<b>Total Graduates</b>		<b>14,818</b>	<b>15,486</b>	<b>16,498</b>	<b>16,373</b>	<b>16,846</b>

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2012

Our region’s relatively low educational attainment rates, despite the existence of 13 area colleges and universities (see Table 10), demonstrates the Pioneer Valley’s continuing struggle to retain those locally college-educated persons who possess the skills and knowledge critical for the health of the region’s economy. The University of Massachusetts, Amherst, a leading national research university, anchors the Five College area of the Pioneer Valley. The other members of the Five College group are the prestigious Smith, Mount Holyoke, Amherst, and Hampshire colleges. Complementing the Five College consortium is a collaboration of eight area schools centered in the greater Springfield area. These include: American International College, Bay Path College, Elms College, Holyoke Community College, Springfield College, Springfield Technical Community College, Western New England University, and Westfield State University. Together, these 13 colleges and universities afford the residents and employers of the Pioneer Valley a multitude of opportunities and advantages that are unique to the region. These assets will undoubtedly continue to aid in the region’s economic development initiatives.

## **The Economy**

### **The Workforce and Employment**

After experiencing the highest unemployment in ten years in 2010, the Pioneer Valley's economy improved in 2011 and 2012. Unemployment rates lowered from 8.5% in 2011 to 7.7% in 2012; however, the number of employed people decreased from 287,960 in 2011 to 282,999 in 2012. The declining unemployment rate is more directly attributable to a smaller labor force which decreased from 314,556 to 306,602 between 2011 and 2012. While the unemployment rate has shown improvements in the past few years, the decline in labor force participation may be due to people dropping out of the labor force because of a sluggish economy. Of course this cannot be assumed as the only cause of labor force reductions, as a declining labor force size could also be due to larger rates of retirement amongst a large population of older workers, among other factors.

In 2013, this trend appeared to reverse as the unemployment rate increased again to 8.1% while the total number of people employed also increased by nearly 2,000 people (Figure 13).

On the state level, unemployment rates also increased, while the nation experienced an overall decrease. Nation-wide, unemployment lowered to 8.1% in 2012 from 8.9% in 2011, and the Massachusetts rate fell from 7.4% to 6.7%. Still, comparing these rates to 2007 figures shows an increase in unemployment of 3.5% (nation-wide) and 2.2% (state-wide). While progress is beginning to be made, the national, state, and regional economies still face a long road to recovery.

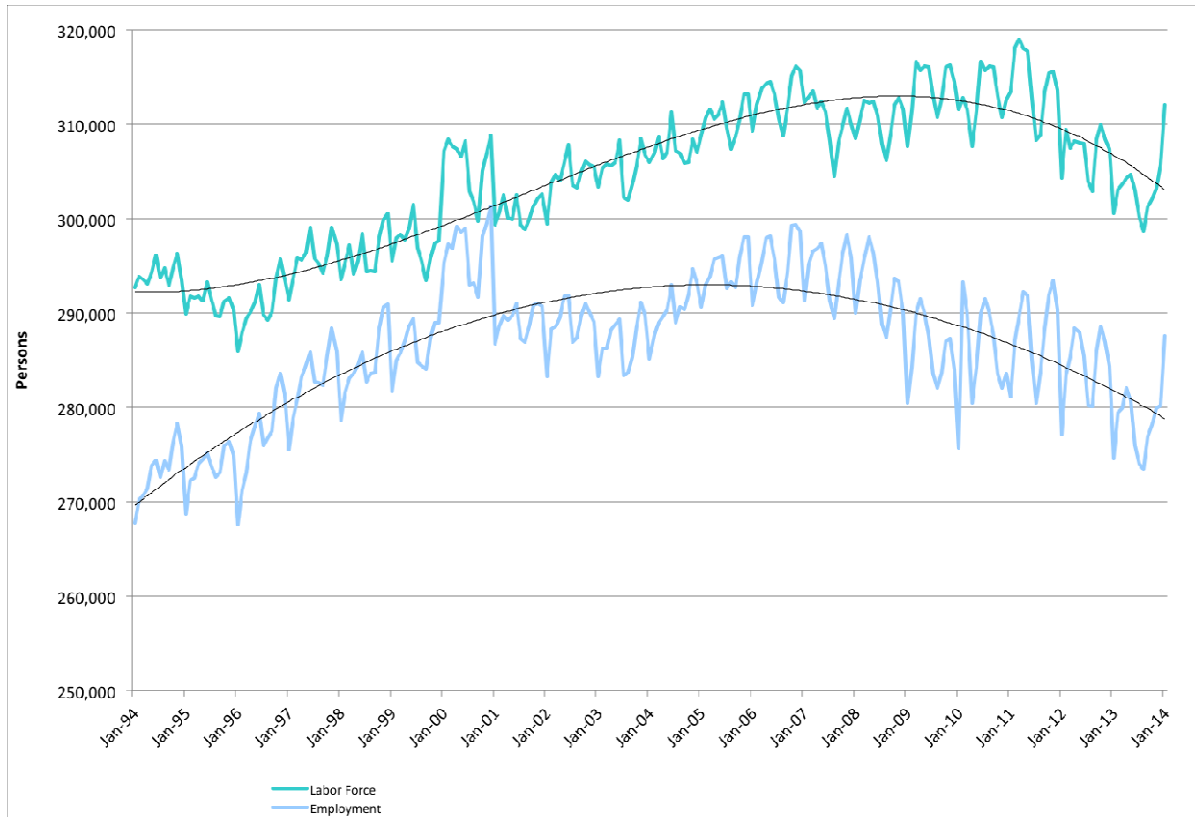
Figure 13: Unemployment Rates



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, MA Office of Labor and Workforce Development, 2013

While the labor force gained strength between 2010 and 2011, rising to the highest levels in twenty years (314,556 participants), this trend was followed by decline in 2012, decreasing by 7,954 participants between 2011 and 2012. There has been a slight rebound in 2013 yet with fewer than 310,000 people, this was the second smallest labor force of the Pioneer Valley since the year 2001(see Figure 14). Between 1993 and 2003, the number of people who work in the Pioneer Valley rose from 272,174to 294,499 (a gain of 24,810 jobs); however, between 2003 and 2013, the number of people employed fell by nearly 10,000 jobs. While the labor force grew by just under 14,000 people between 2003-2013, the number of people unemployed increased by 1,421 (see Figure 13).

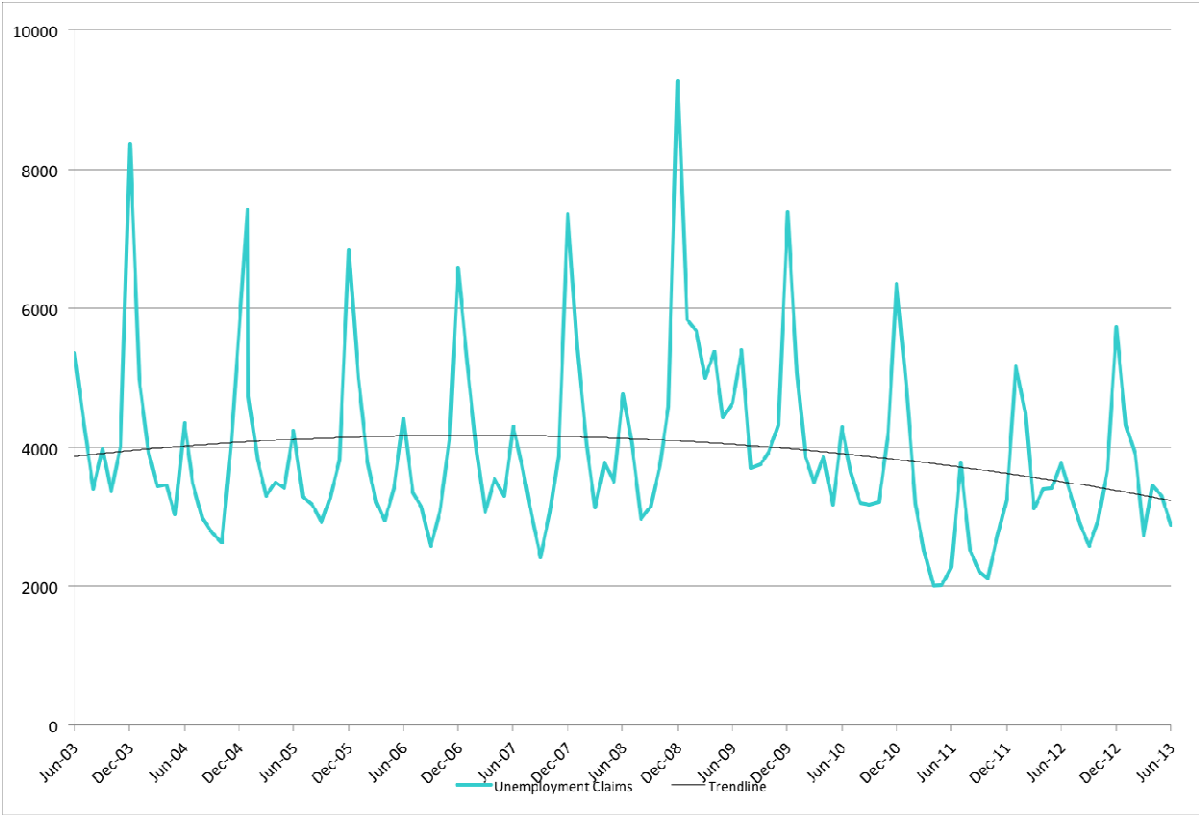
**Figure 14: Pioneer Valley Region Labor Force and Employment with Trend Lines**



Source: MA Office of Workforce Development, 1993-2013

Unemployment claims have fluctuated greatly over the last few years, demonstrating the unpredictable nature of the economic recovery. While there was a decline in the number of new unemployment claims in 2011, there was an increase in unemployment claims in 2012. Data available for the first portion of 2013 showed another decrease in new unemployment claims. The number of individuals filing new claims for unemployment insurance tends to fluctuate markedly by month, but December traditionally sees the highest number of new claims as employers let go of workers they had hired for the holiday season. Therefore, comparing new claims from December to December provides a helpful measure of economic health. In December 2008, the number of new claims in Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden Counties was 9,268, the highest since 2001. In 2010, the December new-claims figure dropped to 6,391 and in 2011 it was down to 3,256; however, it appears that end of year unemployment claim increases were forestalled until January 2012, as the number of applicants increased to 5,165 the following month. In December 2012, the number of claims were lower than December 2010, 5,737 to 6,361 respectively, hinting at a slowly recovering economy (Figure 15).

**Figure 15: New Unemployment Insurance Claims, 2003 to 2013**



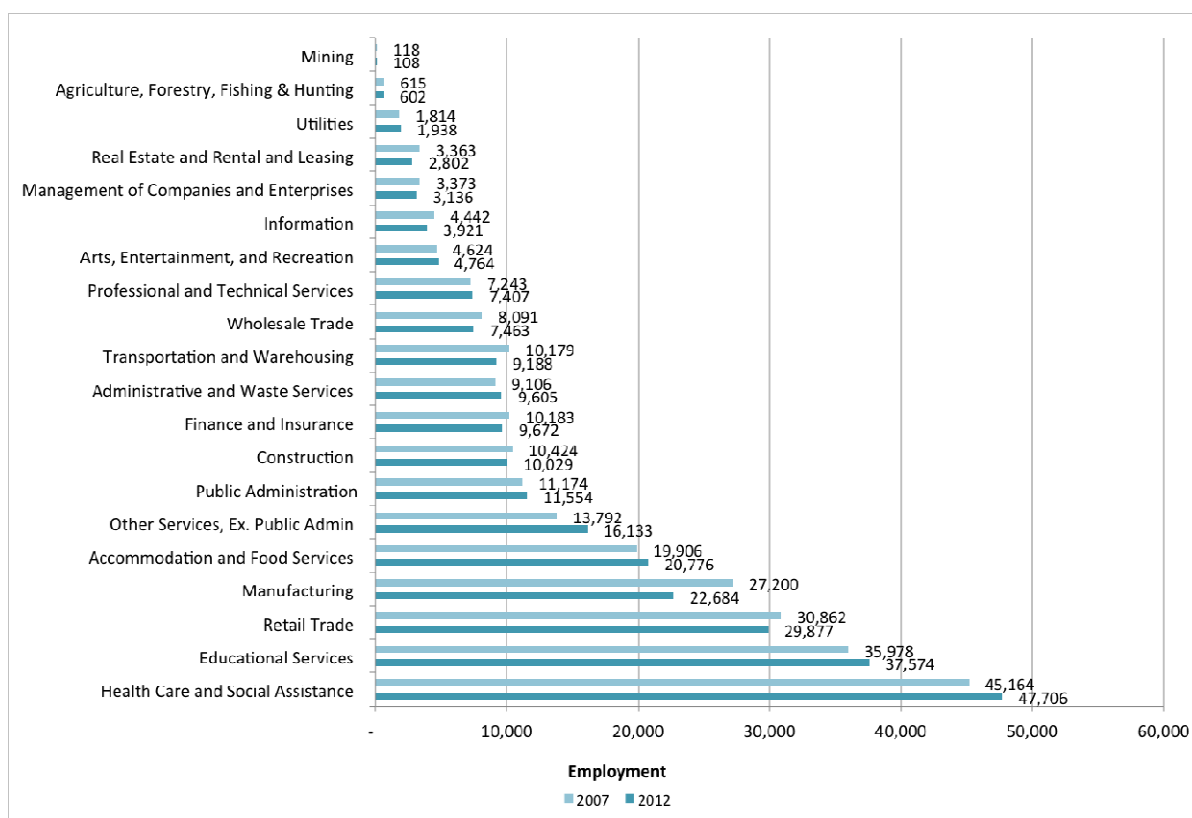
Source: MA Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Unemployment Insurance Claims, 2003-2013  
Note: This data is only available by Workforce Investment Board, so it includes Franklin County

**Employment Distribution**

The region’s economy is in transition. Manufacturing was once the mainstay of the region’s economy, employing more than 29 percent of the workforce in 1980. Like most of the nation, service sector employment is increasing in the Pioneer Valley region while the number of manufacturing jobs has decreased. Examples of professions in the service sector include healthcare, education, and other industries that focus on customer-provider interactions: automotive/household goods repair, beauty salons and barber shops, funeral homes, political organizations, and pet care. From 1990 to 2000, the service sector’s share of total private sector jobs grew from 36.0 to 40.9 percent and as of 2011 the service sector comprised about 54% of the private sector. Manufacturing’s share of jobs declined from 14.4 % in 2000 to 8.8 % in 2012.

Between 2007 and 2012, the fastest growing industries in the Pioneer Valley region were utilities, healthcare and social assistance, administrative and waster services, educational services, and other services (Figure 16). These industries are components of the larger human, social, and health services component of the region's economy, which provided 23% of all employment in the Pioneer Valley (including Franklin County) in 2009. (For a detailed analysis of this portion of the regional economy, see the PVPC data digest on The Economic Impact of Human, Social, and Health Service Organizations in the Pioneer Valley on the [PVPC website](#).) Both educational and food/accommodation services grew by approximately 4.4%. In 2012, the four largest industries in the Pioneer Valley region, by total employment, were healthcare and social assistance; educational services; retail trade; and manufacturing. These four sectors account for 54% of the employment in the Pioneer Valley region.

**Figure 16: Employment in the Pioneer Valley Region by Major Industry, 2007 and 2012**



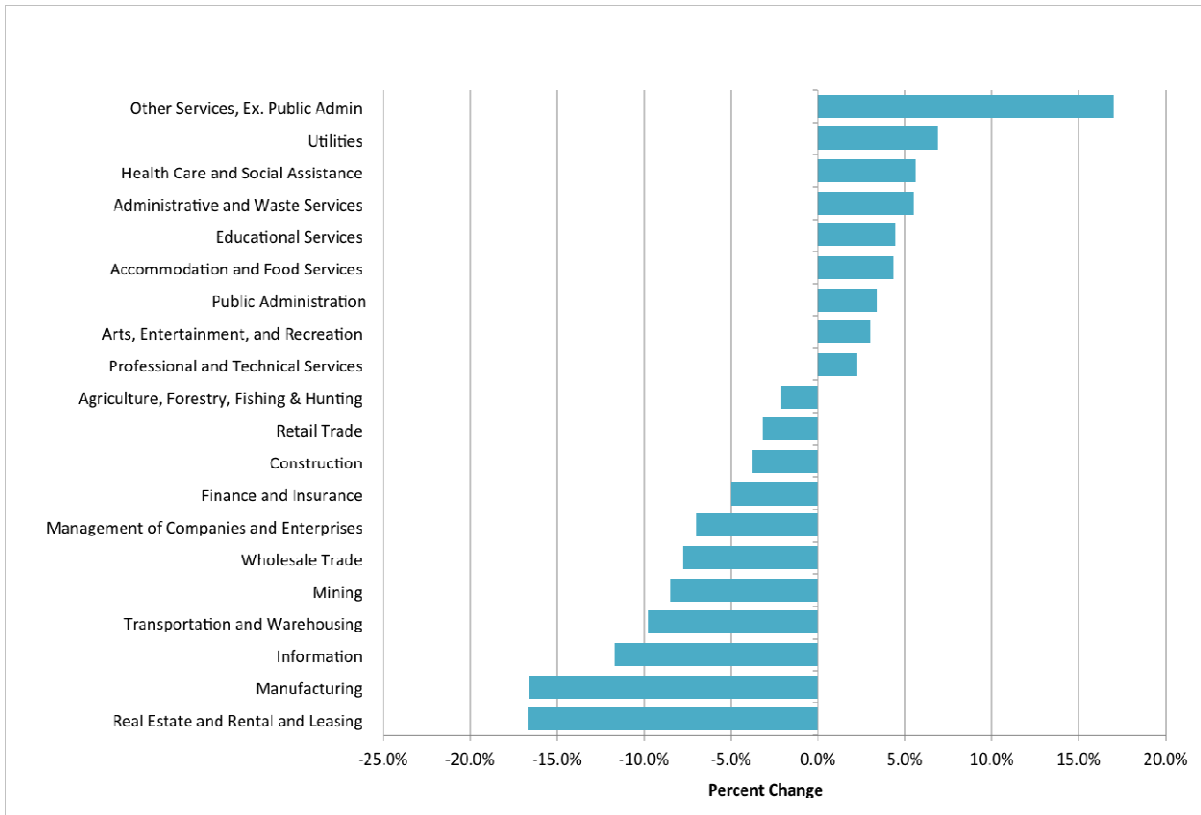
Source: Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development, ES-202 Program, 2012

Despite the large number of people employed in manufacturing, employment in the industry fell 16.6% between 2007 and 2012. This decline represents the ongoing transition from a manufacturing based economy to a service and knowledge based economy. Other industries that experienced significant decreases were: information, real estate and rental and leasing, construction, wholesale trade, and transportation and warehousing.

It is somewhat worrisome that two of the fourteen Pioneer Valley region industries with employment losses between 2007 and 2012 were the information sector and management of companies and enterprises (see Figure 17). Both are “new economy” industries that pay good wages and employ sought-after knowledge workers. Further research should be conducted to understand the employment losses in these industries.



**Figure 17: Change in Pioneer Valley Region Employment by Major Industry, 2007 to 2012**

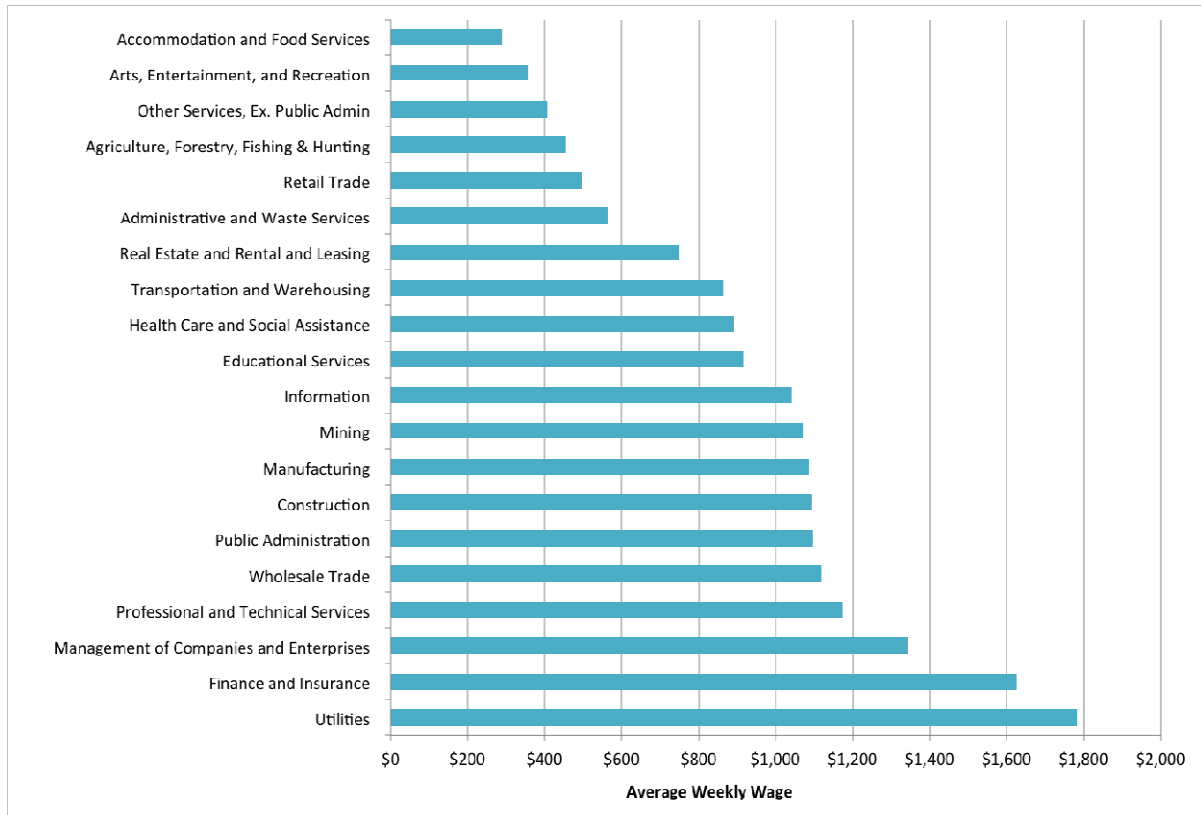


Source: Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development, ES-202 Program, 2011

Work in utilities, finance and insurance, and management of companies and enterprises offer the highest weekly wages. Each industry offers a weekly wage greater than \$1,300 (see Figure 18).

Manufacturing, educational services, and healthcare, three of the region’s largest industries by employment, have average weekly wages between \$891 and \$1,085. Unfortunately, several of the region’s faster growing industries – accommodation and food services as well as other services – are among the lowest paying with average weekly wages of \$290 and \$408 respectively. Accommodation and food services also had the lowest average weekly salary, but this may be affected by a high rate of part-time work in this industry.

**Figure 18: Average Weekly Wages by Industry in the Pioneer Valley Region, 2012**



Source: Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development, ES-202 Program, 2012

### Regional Employment

Within the Pioneer Valley region, nearly half (44%) of all employment is located in the urbanized communities of Springfield, Holyoke, and Chicopee, reaching a combined total employment of nearly 116,000. The northern urban areas, Northampton and Amherst, employ more than 33,800 people. Other communities with high employment totals include the suburbs directly around the region's urban core, such as Agawam, Westfield, and West Springfield, each employing over 10,000 people. The City of Springfield alone is home to 28.5% of the region's jobs.

A comparison of average weekly wages and total wages for the region's employment centers reveals some discrepancies. The total employment in Springfield in 2012 was 340% of the total employment of Holyoke, but the total wages paid was more than 400% of the amount paid in Holyoke, indicative of the much higher average wages for jobs located in Springfield. This is also shown in the \$188 difference in the average weekly wages between Springfield (\$964) and Holyoke (\$776). Although workers in Chicopee were paid a higher average weekly wage (\$783) than those in Holyoke, the total employment was lower resulting in lower total wages. There is a significant gap in total employment and average wages between the northern cities of Northampton and Amherst. Although the total employment in Amherst was only 15,595, the average weekly wage was \$868; in contrast, total employment in Northampton was 18,249 but the average weekly wage was \$843, a difference of \$23 per week. These differences also appear in a comparison of suburban towns located near the urban core cities, like Agawam, East Longmeadow, and Ludlow. Total employment was higher in Agawam (11,953) than in East Longmeadow (7,685) or Ludlow (6,564). However, the average wage in Agawam was lower at \$806 than in East Longmeadow at \$845 and about the same as Ludlow, at \$804.

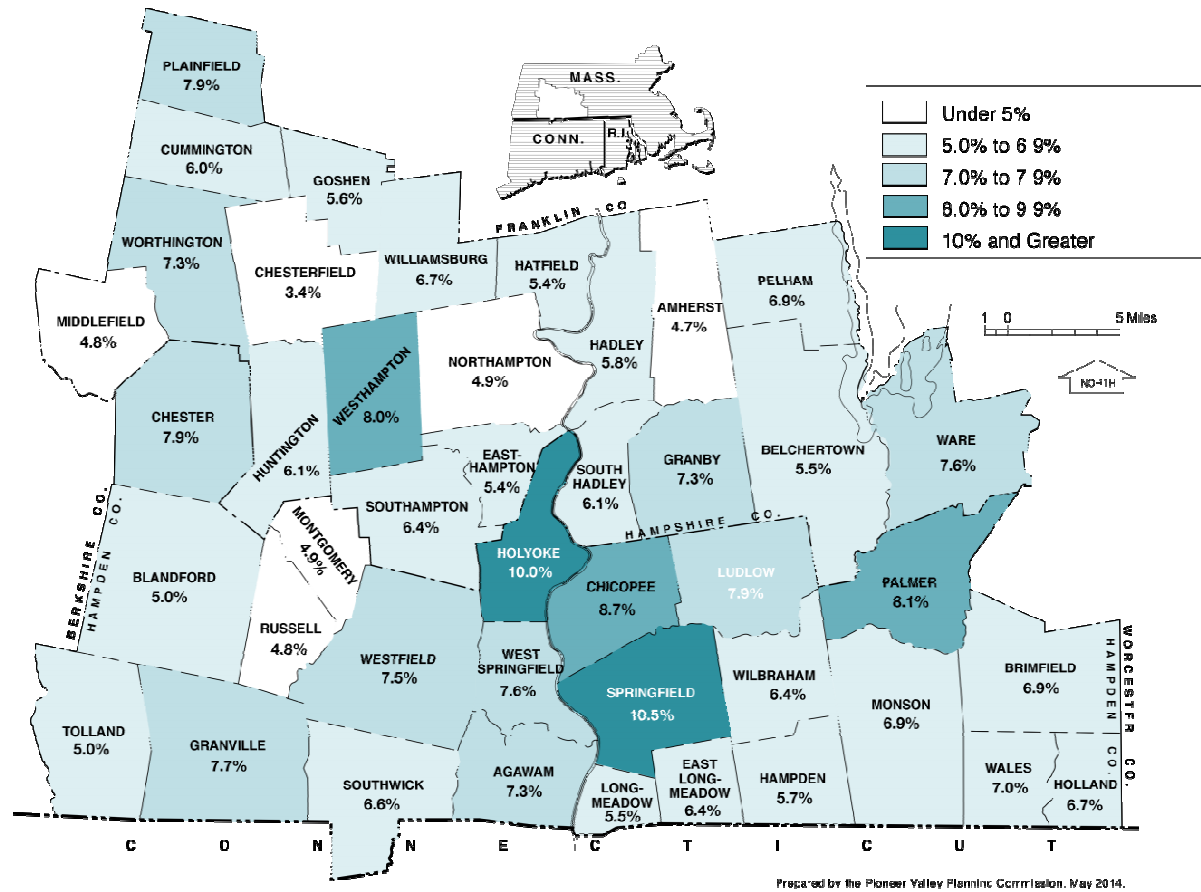
**Table 11: Pioneer Valley Region's Top 10 Employment Centers for 2012**

Community	Total Employment	Percent of Region's Employment	Average Weekly Wage	Total Wages
Springfield	75,045	28.48%	\$964	\$3,762,410,520
Holyoke	22,039	8.36%	\$776	\$889,119,762
Chicopee	18,730	7.11%	\$783	\$762,232,298
Northampton	18,249	6.92%	\$843	\$800,024,521
West Springfield	17,477	6.63%	\$826	\$751,123,736
Westfield	17,140	6.50%	\$737	\$656,653,229
Amherst	15,595	5.92%	\$868	\$703,879,125
Agawam	11,953	4.54%	\$806	\$500,699,686
East Longmeadow	7,685	2.92%	\$845	\$337,532,890
Ludlow	6,564	2.49%	\$804	\$274,515,006

Source: Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development, 2013

The regional map showing unemployment rates by workers' place of residence in 2013 (Figure 19) indicates that some of the region's largest employment centers also have high unemployment rates among their residents, suggesting that residents of some urban communities are not benefiting from their proximity to the region's leading employers. Springfield, which had the highest number of jobs (total employment) in the region (as seen in Table 11), also had the highest unemployment rate among residents at 10.5%. Holyoke ranked second for total employment but their unemployment rate (10.0%) ranks second highest in the region for residents of the community. Chicopee was the third largest employer in 2012, but had an 8.9% unemployment rate for its residents in 2012.

**Figure 19: Unemployment Rates by Worker's Place of Residence, 2012**

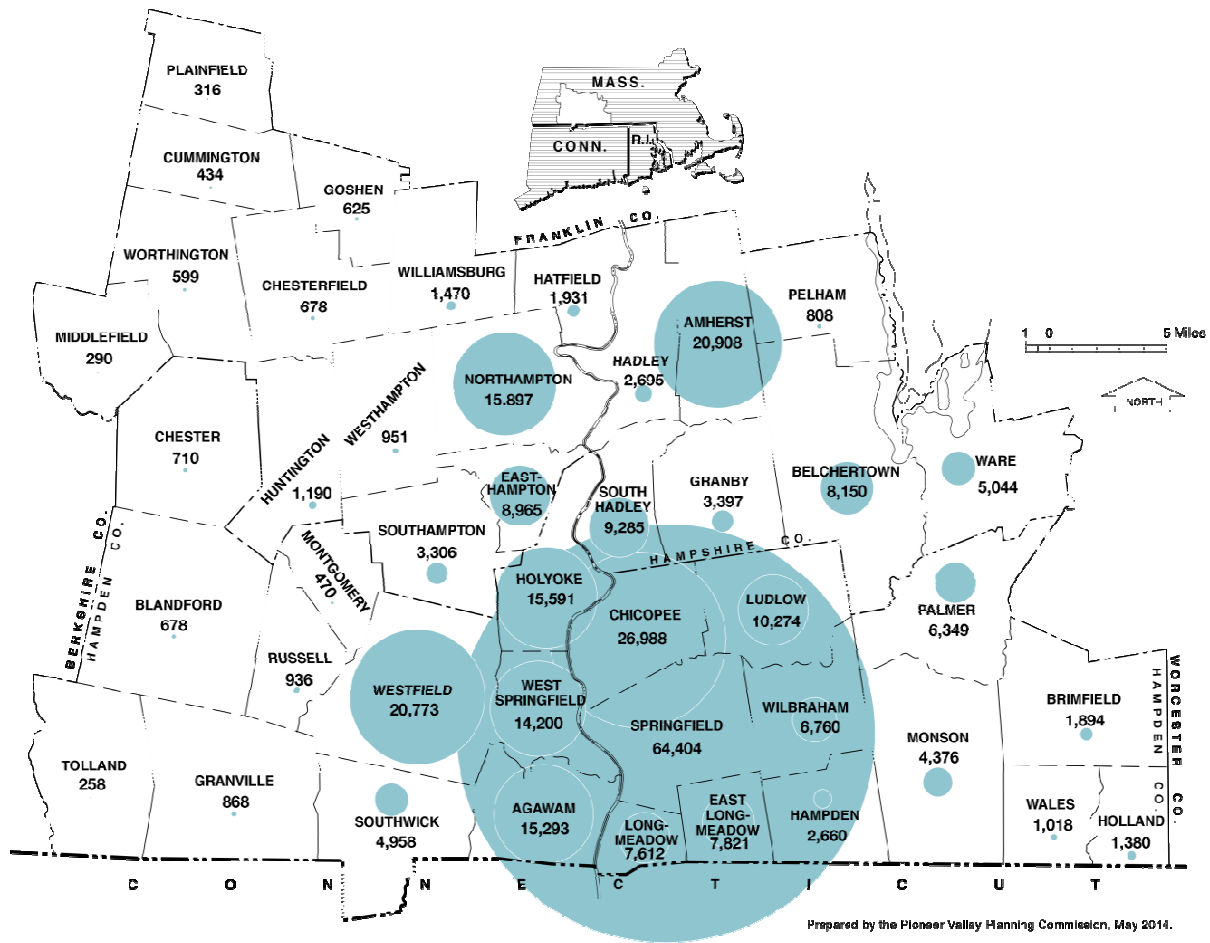


Source: MA Office of Labor and Workforce Development, 2013

A comparison of the total employment in the top employment centers in 2012 (Table 11) and the labor force (Figure 20) indicates that not all of the region's employment centers are importing workers from other communities. In communities such as Agawam, Amherst, Ludlow, and Westfield, the number of workers living there were larger than the number of jobs – indicating that these communities must export workers to other communities.

However, the total employment in Springfield, Holyoke, Chicopee and West Springfield in 2012 exceeded the number of workers living in those cities in the same year; therefore, those regional employment centers are attracting workers from other cities and towns in the region. The high unemployment rate for residents of these communities suggests that there is a skills mismatch between the residents and the needs of employers in these communities.

**Figure 20: Labor Force by Place of Residence, 2012**

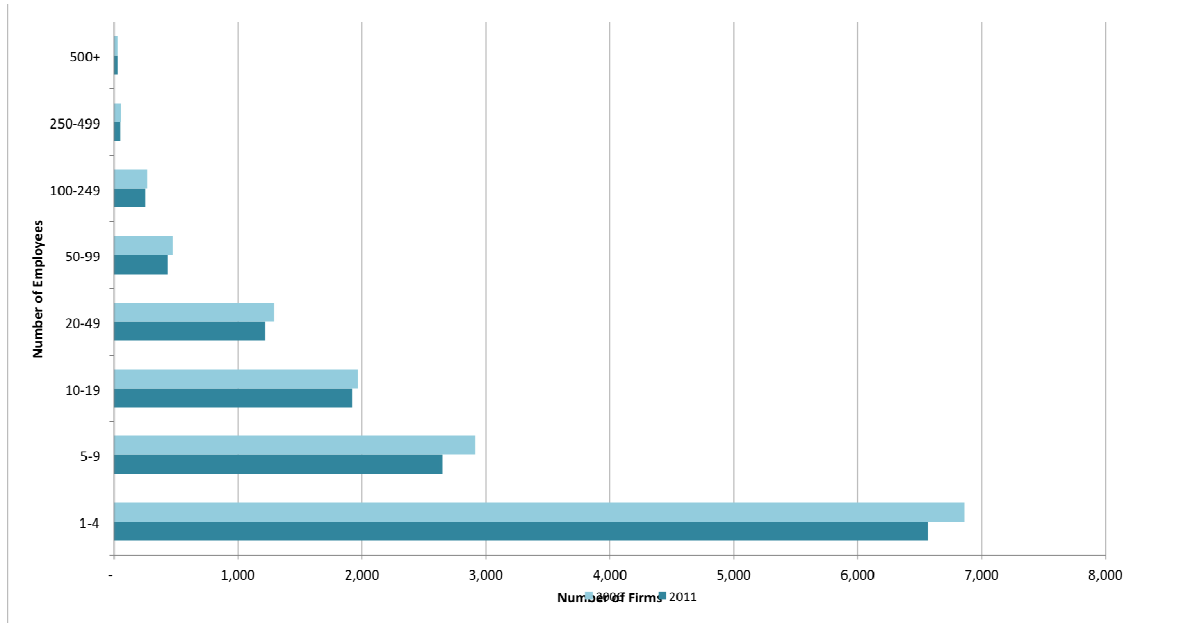


source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, 2012

## Regional Employers

The Pioneer Valley region’s economy is rooted in small businesses. About 94% of businesses in 2006 and 2011 were firms of fewer than 50 employees (Figure 21), and approximately 70% of firms had fewer than 10 employees.

**Figure 21: Numbers of Employers by Size in the Pioneer Valley Region, 2006 and 2011**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns, 2006 and 2011

The number of firms employing between 100 and 499 people was 297 in 2011 and 25 firms had more than 500 employees in 2011 (Table 12). Among the region’s largest employers are Baystate Health, Sisters of Providence Health System, Cooley Dickinson Hospital, and Holyoke Medical Center. These large health service sector employers are located in three of the region’s top employment centers (Table 11), Springfield, Holyoke, and Northampton. In addition, seven of the region’s colleges and universities are also major employers, and some of the largest employers in the region are firms with national name recognition, such as Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co., Hasbro Games, and Solutia, Inc., a subsidiary of Eastman Chemical.

For more detailed information and analysis of employment and major employers in the region, please see the 2008 Major Employers for the Pioneer Valley Region report, available on the [PVPC website](#).

For extensive analysis of the businesses that are growing in the region, please see the Pioneer Valley Growth Business Study completed in 2013. The full study and executive summary are also available on the PVPC website.

**Table 12: Major Employers in the Pioneer Valley Region in 2013**

Company	Location	Primary Industry Code
<b>5,000 to 10,000 Local Employees</b>		
Baystate Health	Springfield	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
University of Massachusetts	Amherst	Colleges, Universities, and Public Schools
<b>1,000 to 4,999 Local Employees</b>		
C & S Wholesale Grocers Inc	Hatfield	Grocery and Related Product Merchant Wholesalers
Cooley Dickinson Hospital	Northampton	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
Hampden Cnty House-Correction	Ludlow	Executive, Legislative, and Other General Government Support
Holyoke Medical Ctr	Holyoke	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
Holyoke Senior High School	Holyoke	Elementary and Secondary Schools
Massachusetts Mutual Life Ins	Springfield	Agencies, Brokerages, and Other Insurance Related Activities
Mercy Medical Ctr	Springfield	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
OMG Inc	Agawam	Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services
ServiceNet	Northampton	Offices of Misc Health Practitioners
Sisters of Providence Health	Holyoke	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
Center for Human Development	Springfield	Other Social Advocacy Organizations
Smith College	Northampton	Colleges, Universities, and Public Schools
US Post Office Bulk Mail Ctr	Springfield	Postal Service
Weldon Rehabilitation Hospital	Springfield	Vocational Rehabilitation Services
<b>500 to 999 Local Employees</b>		
Agawam Public Schools	Agawam	Elementary and Secondary Schools
Amherst College	Amherst	Colleges, Universities, and Public Schools
Amica Insurance	Holyoke	Agencies, Brokerages, and Other Insurance Related Activities
Behavioral Health Network	Springfield	Psychiatric & Substance Abuse Hospitals
Big Y Foods Inc	Springfield	Grocery Stores
Chicopee City Hall	Chicopee	Executive, Legislative, and Other General Government Support
Clinical and Support Options	Northampton	Other Individual and Family Services
Commonwealth of Massachusetts Trial Courts	Springfield	Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services
Gandara Mental Health Center, Inc	Springfield	Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Abuse Centers
Hasbro Games	East Longmeadow	Other Miscellaneous Manufacturing
Holyoke Community College	Holyoke	Junior Colleges
J Polep Distribution	Chicopee	Grocery and Related Product Merchant Wholesalers
Mt Holyoke College	South Hadley	Colleges, Universities, and Public Schools
Noble Hospital	Westfield	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
Northeast Utilities	West Springfield	Utility System Construction
Republican	Springfield	Newspaper, Periodical, Book, and Directory Publishers
Six Flags	Agawam	Entertainment
Solutia Inc., a Subsidiary of Eastman Chemical	Springfield	Chemical and Plastics Manufacturing
Springfield College	Springfield	Colleges, Universities, and Public Schools
Springfield Police Dept	Springfield	Justice, Public Order, and Safety Activities
Springfield Wire	Springfield	Ventilation, Heating, Air-Conditioning, and Commercial Refrigeration Equipment Manufacturing
Turbo Care Inc	Chicopee	Miscellaneous Durable Goods Merchant Wholesalers
US Post Office	Springfield	Postal Service
US Veterans Medical Center	Northampton	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals

<b>500 to 999 Local Employees (Continued)</b>		
Western New England University	Springfield	Colleges, Universities, and Public Schools
Westfield State University	Westfield	Colleges, Universities, and Public Schools
Wing Memorial Hospital	Palmer	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals

*Source: MA Department of Labor & Workforce Development*



## **The Infrastructure**

### **Real Estate**

#### ***Housing***

Where homes have been built and will continue to get built as well as the type and characteristic of our housing is a reflection of land use policies, the strength or weakness of the housing market, mortgage lending practices, housing discrimination, transportation networks, topography, and public infrastructure. Our settlement patterns and built environment are also a reflection of structural issues such as economic security and educational attainment, which taken together, can promote or hinder self-sufficiency, mobility and residents' abilities to obtain and maintain stable housing situations. One who does not need to worry about finding a safe and decent place to live can devote time to other pressing concerns, such as education, employment, personal health and community well-being. Housing is a basic human need and one of the most significant expenditures individuals and families face. This region needs a full range of housing opportunities that are affordable to households of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, abilities, and income ranges to ensure that our region remains economically competitive.

#### **Housing Market**

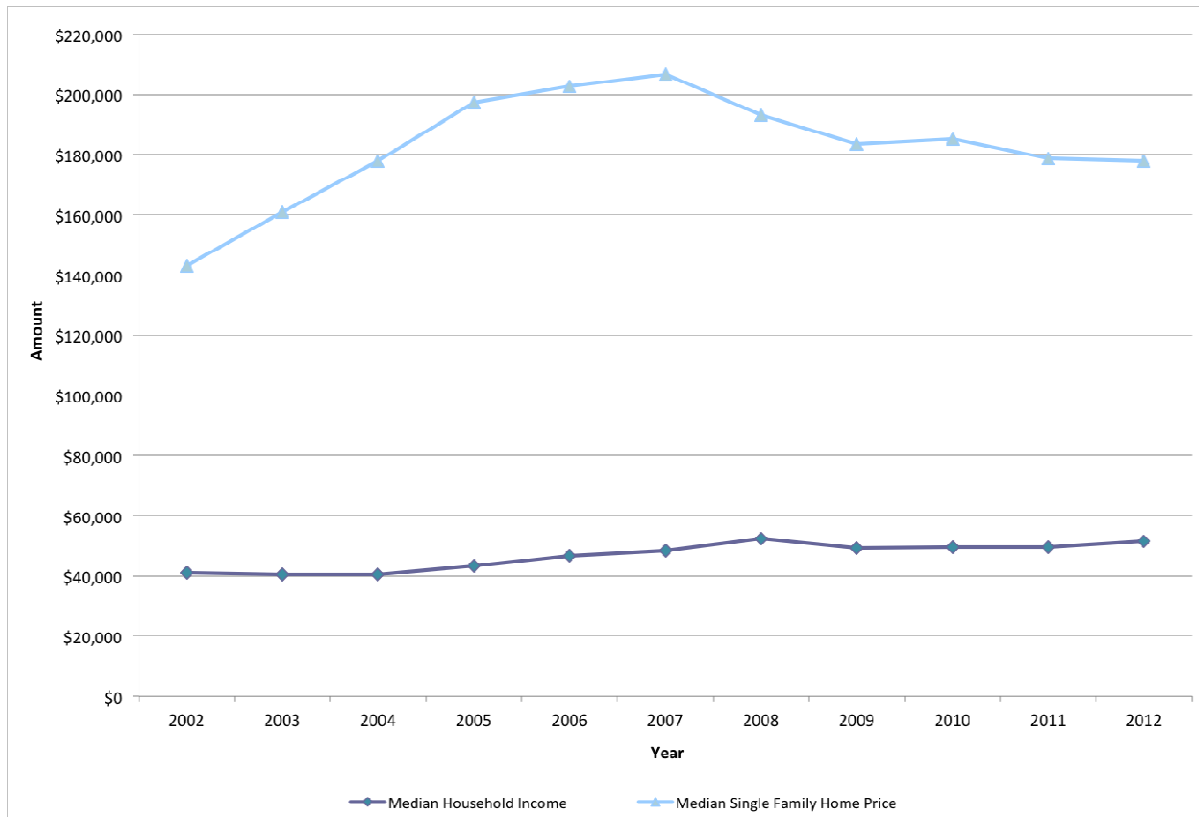
In the 2000s, particularly between 2003 and 2007, housing prices rose dramatically in the region as well as nationwide (Figure 22). Median sale price data through 2012 shows how the recent national economic downturn and housing market crash have impacted the region, with a decrease in median single-family home prices by 14% from 2007 and 2012. Figure 22 also shows how household incomes have not kept pace with increased housing costs. Signaling the possibility of a real shift, however, the 2013 regional median sale price, surpassed the 2009 regional median sale reaching a median sale price of \$191,382 for a single family home.

Our region has strong and weak housing markets which affect the cost housing, the quality of housing, and the demand for housing. Figure 23 demonstrates the significant variation of our region's strong and weak housing markets in the form of single-family home prices. While prices are still not what they were before the beginning of the housing crises in 2007, it is possible that declines are beginning to level off and prices are beginning to turn around. The communities with the strongest housing markets had median sale prices close to \$300,000, including, Amherst, Longmeadow, and Hadley. At the same time, more than half of the communities in the region had prices under \$200,000. The strong market communities tend to be the most desirable communities in the region. Strong demand for homes in these communities is driven by having good schools, low crime rates, and low poverty rates. Housing in these communities tends to have higher sale prices, home values, and higher rents, which has the affect of limiting the potential for a household with more limited economic means from being able to afford to buy or rent in the community.

The communities with weaker housing markets had median sale prices around or below \$150,000, Springfield, Chester, and Middlefield experienced the lowest home prices in the region with Springfield and Chester at \$120,000 and Middlefield at \$68,750. Palmer, Ware, and Goshen also had median sale prices at or below \$150,000 levels in 2013 (Figure 23). Our weak market communities tend to have low property values and high vacancies. The main revitalization challenge facing our central cities are weak housing markets. Low

property values create a disincentive for homeowners and landlords to make capital or maintenance improvements to their properties because the cost of these improvements can be greater than the overall value of the property or does not increase the value of the property. Divestment from low property values has led to vacant or deteriorating housing, which creates neighborhood blight and makes for unsafe living conditions.

**Figure 22: Median Household Income and Single-Family Home Prices in the Pioneer Valley Region, 2002-2012**



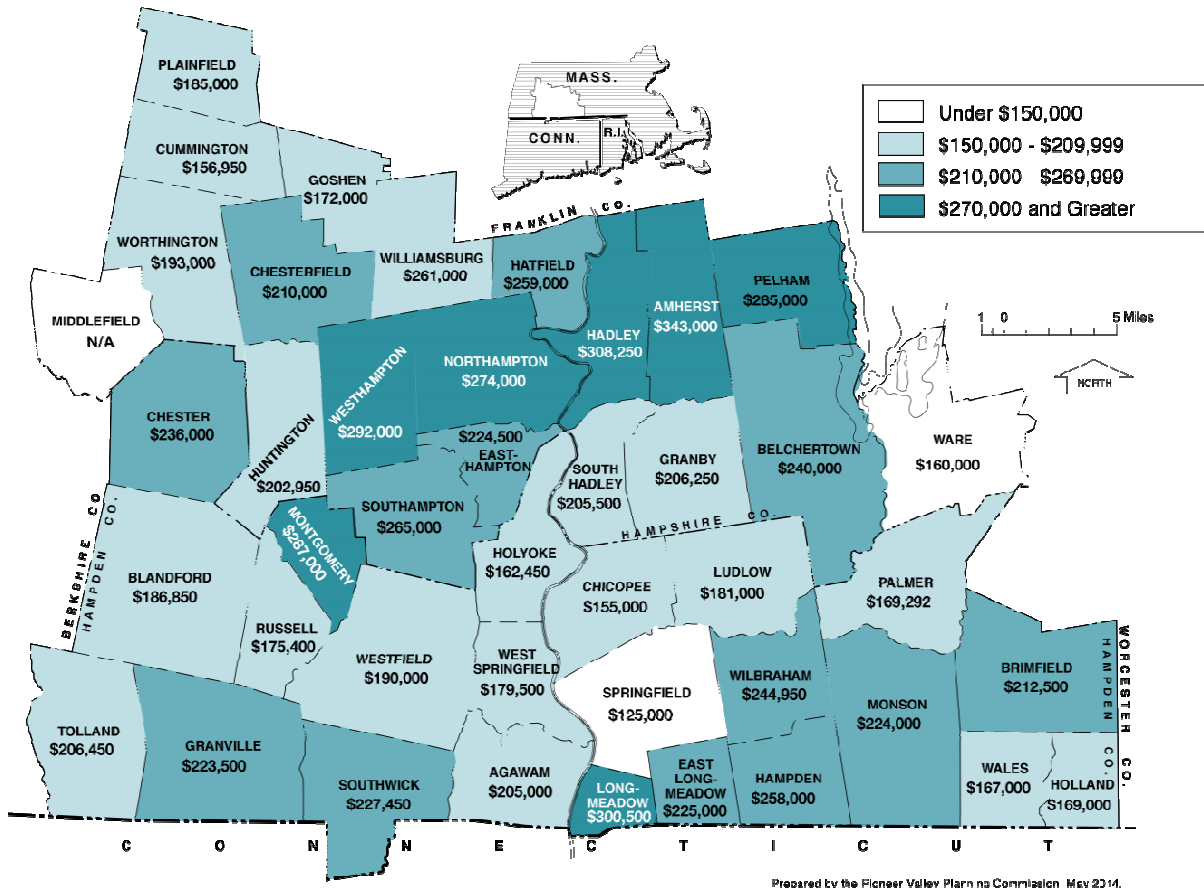
Source: Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, American Community Survey 2012 one year estimate

Studies conducted as part of the regional housing plan found that weak market cities and towns in the Pioneer Valley would like to see their communities become desirable places to live—places of choice—and see a greater variety of market rate housing options created in the vacant or underutilized upper story spaces of their downtowns as well as on vacant lots and within underutilized properties that would attract moderate, middle, and upper income households. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there are young professionals, empty-nesters, or two person households who desire to rent apartments or buy condominiums in our cities but are unable to find housing that suits their tastes in areas they find safe and that have ready access to goods and services. However, the depressed housing market makes it financially difficult to develop new housing on infill lots or within existing mill and commercial buildings or renovate existing multi-unit residential buildings for households that would pay market rent. Housing developers point to the problem that current market rents are typically insufficient to support the cost of new construction or significant rehabilitation of multi-unit housing. The limited state or federal public subsidies that exist to help developers fill the financing gap require income-restricted housing as a condition of receipt of these funds. These restrictions are good practice in many instances but can also serve as one more

barrier to attracting an economically diverse population to urban neighborhoods and to increasing home-ownership rates.

A weak housing market can exist in spite of an unmet need for housing that is affordable to residents in that community. A key reason for this disparity is the very low incomes of residents in our weak market cities and towns. There is tremendous demand for existing affordable housing units, and these programs all maintain waiting lists. The strong demand for affordable housing units and lack of sufficient supply of these units is a statewide issue.

**Figure 23: Median Sale Price of Single-Family Homes in the Pioneer Valley Region (2013)**



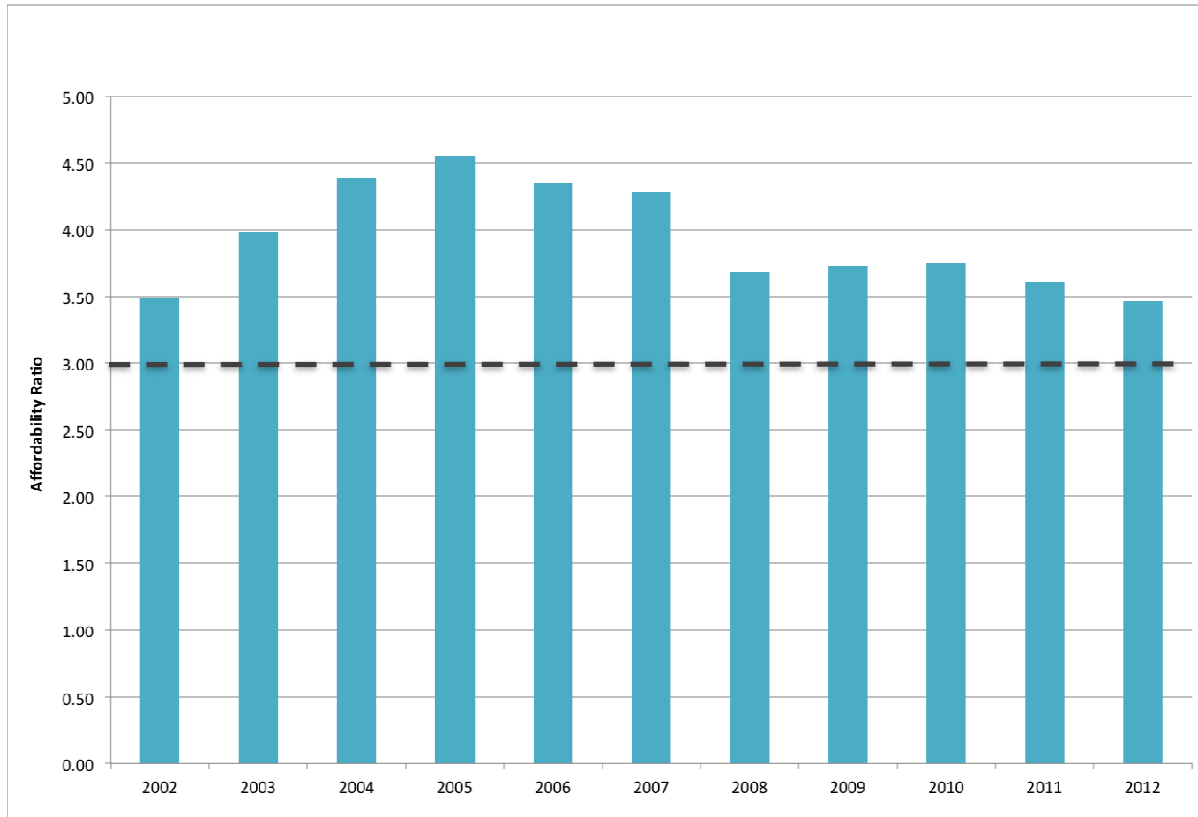
Source: The Warren Group 2013

### Housing Affordability

Recent declines in housing prices have not solved the issue of housing affordability, as incomes have decreased when inflation is factored in. It is generally accepted that a household can afford a home up to a price that is equal to three times the household yearly income. Households who pay more than this for a home are considered “cost-burdened” and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care as well as saving for their future and that of their families. Considering the median household income in the Pioneer Valley in 2012 was \$51,381, that translates into approximately \$154,000 of purchasing power for a home. Only nine out of forty-three communities in the region had median housing prices equal to or less than that amount in 2013. This is an increase from the four communities with affordable housing in 2009, which may suggest the beginnings of favorable housing prices in the area. Springfield and Holyoke

have many homes available for under \$150,000 and are actively promoting their affordable home-ownership opportunities through programs such as “Buy Springfield Now” and “Buy Holyoke Now” as a way to attract first-time homebuyers into their cities. At the same time, several communities such as Longmeadow, Pelham, and Amherst have remained consistently unaffordable to households that earn below the region’s median household income.

**Figure 24: Pioneer Valley Region Housing Affordability Ratio (Median Price/Median Income), 2002-2012**



Another way to examine the problem is through the use of a housing affordability ratio (See Figure 24). The Pioneer Valley’s housing affordability ratio can be calculated by dividing the median price of a single family home by the median household income. Therefore an affordability ratio above 3.0 is of concern because it means that, statistically, a household with the median income in the region cannot afford a single family home at the median price. The affordability ratio steadily climbed starting in 1997, and passed the 3.0 threshold in 2001. However, the most recent data shows a decrease in the affordability ratio (from 4.3 in 2007 to 3.5 in 2012). This is an indication that the drop in housing prices has been significant enough to compensate for some of the concurrent decrease in incomes. Despite the steady decrease in the affordability ratio since 2007, a ratio of 3.5 is still of concern. In the long term the issue of housing affordability will continue to be very important, especially if incomes continue to decrease or if housing prices return to higher levels once the economy recovers.

**Transportation**

**Vehicle Roadways**

The Pioneer Valley area is considered the crossroads of transportation in western Massachusetts. Situated at the intersection of the area’s major highways, Interstate 90 (Massachusetts Turnpike) traveling east-west and Interstate 91 traveling north-south, the region offers easy access to all markets in the eastern United States and Canada. Major southern New England population centers are accessible within hours.

The interstate expressways (I-90 and I-91) link most of the major urban centers in the region. The basic highway network, including interstate highways, U.S. numbered routes, state routes, and other traffic arteries, provides access to all municipalities in the region, both urban and rural. The pattern of principal arterial highways in the region is radial, extending outwards from each of the region’s major centers, a consequence of development and topographic influences.

Of the existing transportation facilities in the Pioneer Valley region, major bridge crossings remain a focal point of regional transportation concerns, as many streets and highways converge into a limited number of crossings over the Connecticut, Westfield, and Chicopee rivers.

**Table 13: Driving Distances and Times from Springfield to Select Urban Centers**

Destination	Distance in Miles	Estimated Driving Time
<b>Albany</b>	85	1.5 hours
<b>Boston</b>	91	1.5 hours
<b>Montreal</b>	301	5.5 hours
<b>New York City</b>	140	3.0 hours
<b>Philadelphia</b>	260	5.0 hours
<b>Washington, DC</b>	400	8.0 hours

*Source: PVPC, Regional Transportation Plan for the Pioneer Valley – 2007 Update*

**Table 14: Major Interstate Highways Serving the Pioneer Valley Region**

Interstate Highway	Principle Orientation	Number of Interchanges in the Region	Road Mileage in the Region	Toll Road?
<b>I-90</b>	East/West	6	46.08	Yes
<b>I-91</b>	North/South	22	31.17	No
<b>I-291</b>	Connector (Springfield to I-90)	6	5.44	No
<b>I-391</b>	Connector (I-91 to Chicopee/Holyoke)	6	3.82	No

*Source: PVPC, Regional Transportation Plan for the Pioneer Valley – 2000 Update*

In general, traffic on the region's roadways has been increasing. Between 1999 and 2009 the estimated number of daily vehicle miles traveled (DVMT) in the Pioneer Valley region rose about nearly half of a million miles per day, from about 14.76 million to about 15.23 million. The magnitude of increase is shared in the region's rural areas. Table 16 presents the commute times for each of the Pioneer Valley communities in 2000 and 2012. The 3.8% increase in commuter times can be attributed to several major trends including a rise in vehicle ownership and the onset of several major roadway improvement projects, such as the Great River Bridge in Westfield.

**Table 15: Pioneer Valley Region Average Commute Times to Work**

	Mean Driving Time to Work (minutes)		
	2000	2008-2012	% Change
<b>Massachusetts</b>	27	27.7	2.6%
<b>Pioneer Valley Region</b>	21.8	22.6	3.8%
<b>Hampden County</b>	21.8	22.4	2.8%
<b>Hampshire County</b>	21.9	23.2	5.9%
Agawam	20.5	20.9	2.0%
Amherst	18	19.4	7.8%
Belchertown	28.1	27.9	-0.7%
Blandford	37.5	31.3	-16.5%
Brimfield	30.1	33.3	10.6%
Chester	38.9	35.8	-8.0%
Chesterfield	29.4	33.1	12.6%
Chicopee	19.3	21	8.8%
Cummington	38.3	33	-13.8%
East Longmeadow	21.9	22.1	0.9%
Easthampton	21.1	22.2	5.2%
Goshen	31	32.3	4.2%
Granby	20.6	26.1	26.7%
Granville	29.5	30.2	2.4%
Hadley	21.9	19	-13.2%
Hampden	26.4	25.5	-3.4%
Hatfield	20.9	22.9	9.6%
Holland	34.2	34.3	0.3%
Holyoke	18.6	20.2	8.6%
Huntington	34.4	33.7	-2.0%
Longmeadow	20.3	21	3.4%
Ludlow	21.3	22.2	4.2%
Middlefield	41.6	38.4	-7.7%
Monson	29.5	31.5	6.8%
Montgomery	29.7	32.8	10.4%
Northampton	20	20.7	3.5%
Palmer	22.9	26.1	14.0%
Pelham	22.3	23.9	7.2%
Plainfield	33.5	36.9	10.1%
Russell	28.1	32.1	14.2%
South Hadley	19.4	20.8	7.2%
Southampton	24.8	25.7	3.6%
Southwick	26.4	24.1	-8.7%
Springfield	21.5	21.4	-0.5%
Tolland	39.4	31.9	-19.0%
Wales	36.7	38.1	3.8%
Ware	25.8	30.4	17.8%
West Springfield	20.9	19.4	-7.2%
Westfield	22.6	23.4	3.5%
Westhampton	25.2	29.7	17.9%
Wilbraham	24.3	23.8	-2.1%
Williamsburg	23.3	23.4	0.4%
Worthington	40.5	38.1	-5.9%

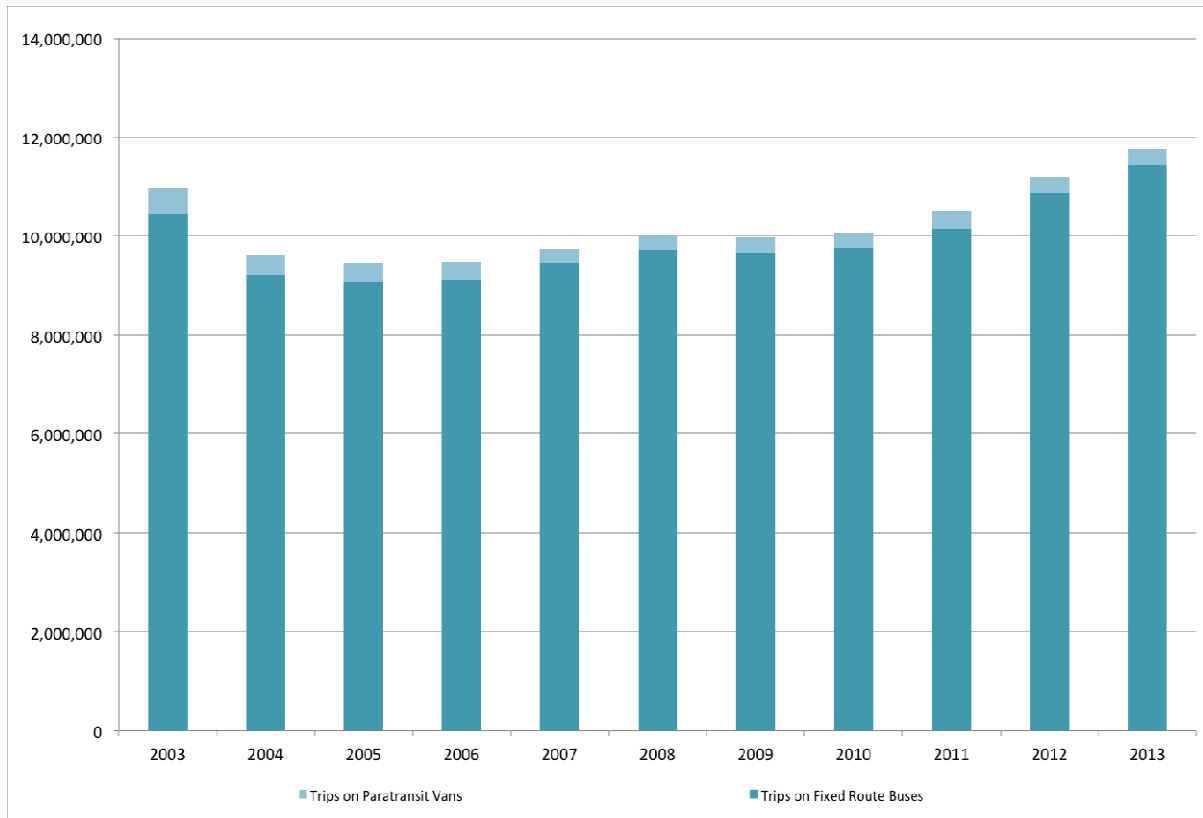
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census and 2008-12 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**Transit Routes**

The Pioneer Valley has a well-developed public transit system that includes local bus service, ADA and senior paratransit van service, intercity bus service, and passenger rail. In addition, there are formal and informal park-and-ride lots, as well as ridesharing and car rental services that offer more options for accessing and leveraging transit services. New passenger rail services and facilities are now in the planning and construction processes, which will greatly enhance transit capacity in the region. All of these elements are vital contributors to mobility options for the region’s residents.

The Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA), established in 1974 is the largest of the Commonwealth’s 14 regional transit authorities. A total of 24 municipalities are members of the PVTA service area. PVTA oversees the operation of 174 buses and 135 vans throughout Hampden and Hampshire Counties, as well as two municipalities in Franklin County. The PVTA system has 43 scheduled bus routes that provide service in urban centers, as well as outlying suburban and rural areas.

**Figure 25: Pioneer Valley Transit Authority System Wide Annual Bus and Van Trips 2002-2012**



Source: PVTA Annual Reports

Fourteen towns in the PVPC region (which are not members of PVTA) contract with the Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) based in Greenfield, for senior paratransit service. These towns are: Blandford, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Plainfield, Russell, Southampton, Southwick, Westhampton, and Worthington.

Intercity bus service in the region is provided by Peter Pan Bus Lines, Greyhound Lines and Megabus. These companies operate a mix of routes to destinations within the region, as well as connections throughout New England and the country. Other private bus carriers provide charters and package tours.

The regional transit system includes the following bus terminals and hubs:

- Springfield Bus Terminal is the major bus station in western Massachusetts, serving as the hub for 22 PVTA Springfield-area routes, Peter Pan regional service, and Greyhound regional routes.
- Holyoke Transportation Center is the hub for 6 PVTA routes, as well as limited service by Peter Pan.
- Northampton Bus Terminal is served by Peter Pan and Greyhound, with connections to 8 PVTA and FRTA routes at the nearby Academy of Music stop.
- Amherst, PVTA and Peter Pan service is available at the UMass Haigis Mall and Amherst Town Common. Megabus "Amherst" service stops only at the Hampshire Mall in Hadley.

Passenger rail stations for Amtrak service at the Springfield Depot (Lyman Street) and the Amherst Depot (Railroad Street). Service to the Amherst Station will be replaced by service to Northampton in late 2014. Amtrak's most frequent service is at Springfield Station, where 11 trains per day are available to and from Springfield that provide extensive service within the Northeast. Passenger rail service is provided on both east-west (Lake Shore Limited) and north-south (Vermont) routes through the region.

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation is now in the process of realigning Amtrak Vermont service north of Springfield to restore passenger rail service to the Connecticut River line through Holyoke, Northampton and Greenfield. Service to Amherst is currently provided by a PVTA bus connection. This project is funded by a \$70 million dollar grant provided in part by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail Program under the Federal Railroad Administration. Service is expected to move from the current alignment (through Amherst) to this new alignment by the end of 2014.

In addition, the Connecticut Department of Transportation's New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) commuter rail project is underway, which will nearly double north/south passenger rail capacity at the Springfield terminal. The first trains on this service are expected in 2016.

Commercial van shuttles serve an important segment of the region's transit market. Many operators focus on service to and from airports and rail stations in New England. Service to Bradley International is provided hourly from most locations the Pioneer Valley. Service to Boston, Providence, and New York is also provided, though not on a scheduled basis. Non-profit organizations also operate shuttles, typically for their clients.



Examples include municipal councils on aging, day care providers and social service agencies.

There are more than 20 taxi companies operating in the region. Taxi companies provide a vital link in the transportation system by offering mobility during times and at locations when public transportation is not available.

### ***Non-Motorized Transportation***

Bicycling and walking are popular transportation options in the Pioneer Valley. Historic town centers, vibrant central business districts and a variety of destinations are within easy walking or bicycling distance from many residential neighborhoods. An expanding network of bikeways, sidewalks, and accommodating roadways provide residents with a variety of transportation alternatives. Many of the region's downtowns including Springfield, Holyoke, Northampton, and Amherst, offer easy accessibility to pedestrians and are supported by a strong transit network.

To support the increasing number of people who walk and bike, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission has developed a strategic plan of policy-related actions and physical projects in which municipal and regional officials along with citizens and nonprofit organizations can collaborate on to improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists in the Pioneer Valley. The plan includes information and recommendations for incorporating bicycle and pedestrian features into the design phase of road reconstruction projects, using zoning and community development tools to foster environments that support bicycling and walking, increasing bicycle and pedestrian safety through design enhancements, and promoting bicycling and pedestrian through "Complete Street" policy initiatives

Recently the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority expanded its "Rack and Roll" bikes-on-buses program to the entire region. Now all fixed route buses in the PVTA fleet are equipped with frequently used racks, allowing cyclists to transport their bikes on public service transit lines throughout Hampden and Hampshire Counties.

Through the Pioneer Valley "Share the Road," program the PVPC has worked jointly with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) on the installation 380 bike related signs including "Share the Road" signs, "Bike Route" signs, "Connecticut River Walk" signs, as well as directional signs. The Pioneer Valley Share the Road Program also produced an educational video and public service announcement that was distributed through local cable access channels and via the internet.

The region has an ever expanding network of off-road facilities ranging from traditional bike paths to multi-use trails or linear parks. The PVPC assisted local municipalities on the installation of more than 300 bicycle parking racks throughout the region's urban cores with the capacity to secure more than 900 bicycles. The PVPC also produced a series of instructional bike-rack installation videos to assist communities and nonprofit organizations which are available at the PVPC's video hosting site: <http://www.youtube.com/user/PVPCgroup>. Currently sixteen communities provide 80 miles of bicycle lanes, multi-use paths or "rail trails" in the region, while several communities have similar projects in the design phase. In addition, the Pioneer Valley communities are active participants in "Baystate Bike Week" with dozens of activities hosted during the third week of May each year (<http://baystatebikeweek.org/>).

The Norwottuck Rail Trail is one example of the region's commitment to bicycling and walking. The ten-mile Norwottuck Trail links together the communities of Northampton, Hadley, Amherst, and Belchertown, and facilitates travel to and from educational institutions, downtown commercial areas, major employment centers and residential neighborhoods. Weekend traffic counts show an average of 1,200 people per day utilize the Trail during the peak season which includes when local colleges and the University of Massachusetts,

Amherst are in session. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) started a reconstruction project for the Norwottuck Rail Trail in 2013. The reconstructed path will be wider in most places, incorporate improved access for the disabled, and re-decked bridges. (More information available at [www.mass.gov./dcr/projects/norwottuck/index.htm](http://www.mass.gov./dcr/projects/norwottuck/index.htm)).

Many communities in the Pioneer Valley have begun to address pedestrian safety and health related issues through the initiation of “Safe Routes to School Programs.” Safe Routes to School (SRTS) promotes healthy alternatives for children and parents in their travel to and from school. The program educates students, parents and community members on the value of walking and bicycling and provides funding for sidewalks, crosswalks, and traffic calming measures. In 2014 ten of the Region’s 43 cities and towns had schools enrolled in the SRTS program including Amherst, Hadley, Holyoke, Longmeadow, Northampton, Palmer, Southampton, South Hadley, Springfield and Westfield.

### **Transportation of Goods**

The Pioneer Valley region is strategically located at a geographic crossroads in which more than one-third of the total population of the United States can be reached by overnight delivery. The region is also well positioned to support new ventures in international trade, especially in Canadian and European markets. An efficient multi-modal transportation network includes truck, rail, air and pipeline.

Trucking is the dominant mode for moving freight in the Pioneer Valley. This mode carries over 91% of all freight in the region. This regional percentage share is slightly higher than the state, which on average transports 86% of freight by truck. Urbanized communities in the region have at least one trucking firm, the majority of these carriers are small, short haul carriers handling feeder and distribution traffic. They provide both full truckload and less than truckload deliveries. This mode has the ability to transport goods to the northeastern United States and southeastern parts of Canada by overnight service. These freight companies carry goods for a variety of industries outside Hampden and Hampshire County. Franklin County possesses few freight companies and often employ/hire Hampden and Hampshire based trucking companies to transport their goods. Essentially, this transportation service sector is exported to other areas, in turn producing regional income. The future competitiveness of the industry hinges on the investment in the maintenance and development of interstate, state and local roadways, multimodal facilities and all related infrastructure as truck traffic is expected to grow throughout the state over the next twenty years.

Five rail carriers provide freight service in the Pioneer Valley Region: CSX Transportation, Pan AM Southern, New England Central, Pioneer Valley Railroad, and MassCentral Railroad. The region’s largest freight and intermodal yard, operated by CSX, is located in West Springfield. Another major freight and switching yard important to the region is B&M’s North Deerfield Yard, located in neighboring Franklin County to the north. Within the Pioneer Valley, other smaller freight yards are located in Holyoke, Palmer, and Westfield. The geographic location of the Pioneer Valley at the crossroads of interstate highways 90 and 91 and long-haul rail lines (CSX and B&M) creates a strategic and attractive location for businesses and industries participating in local and international marketplaces.

In addition, air freight and package express services are readily available in the Pioneer Valley region. Predominantly, air freight is moved through either Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks, Connecticut; Logan Airport in Boston; or New York City's metropolitan airports. Air freight is also handled at Westover Airport in Chicopee. None of the other airports located within the region's boundaries offer air cargo services at this time.

