

Carroll County

One of the 10 counties in New Hampshire, Carroll County has a population of 47,408 (2008 estimate), and is considered one of the fastest growing counties in the state. There are many beautiful natural attractions in Carroll County, with two major lakes (Winnepesaukee and Ossipee) and many mountain ranges (the Presidentials, the White Mountains, and the Ossipee Range) with a wide variety of hiking trails. Its rural nature and physical beauty is a draw to residents, retirees and tourists alike. There are also a plethora of artistic and cultural opportunities, as well, including numerous acting troupes, many art galleries, musical performances throughout the year, and many classes offered through each town's recreation department.

Carroll County has the second highest percentage of people age 65 and older in the state (18.2%), which is expected to rise to the highest of the state by 2010. A recent study done by the Carsey Institute reports that Carroll County is not attracting as many younger people as older ones. Of the population, there is a higher proportion of older adults than average (second highest county in the state – 18.4% for Carroll County compared to 13% for the state) and a lower proportion of youth on average (second lowest county in the state – 18.9% for Carroll County compared to 22% for the state).

Carroll County is distinguished from other counties in New Hampshire through its economics. Most jobs fall into the retail and accommodations (tourism = 30%), education, social services, health, and construction realms. This county has the highest rate of self-employment (34.6% in 2007) compared to the state (22.9%), the lowest wage per job at \$31,307 compared to the state at \$44,737, the fewest livable wage jobs in the state (2007), and the second highest rate of poverty, (9.5% overall compared to 7.3% for the state) with 15% of those under 18 considered to be living in poverty (9.2% is the state average).

In 2006, Carroll County had one of the fewest physicians per capita, with only 1.6 per 1,000 people. Yet, it has one of the highest number of law enforcement officers per capita, with 1.82 per 1,000 people in 2007. Carroll County has nearly twice the number of nonprofits per capita, 10 for every 1,000 people, than the state as whole (5.76 per 1,000).

There are five school administrative units (2, 9, 13, 45, 49) sending students to three major public high schools within the county (Moultonborough, Conway, and Governor Wentworth Regional High Schools) (and two outside the county).

Carroll County is a very rural county with a relatively small population spread out over 933 square miles of land crisscrossed by mountains and lakes (51 people per square mile compared to Hillsborough at 459 people per square mile or Manchester at 3,290 people per square mile). Providing services (that more urban areas take for granted) can be a challenge. For example, Carroll County is the only county in New Hampshire that does not have a homeless shelter. Similar gaps exist in residential services for youth and alcohol and substance use. This means that people either go without or must leave their communities and support networks at a time they need them most.

Other county profiles:

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