

Affordable Housing

Aitkin County

May 2008

The demand for affordable housing exceeds supply.

The unmet affordable housing need through the year 2010 in Aitkin County is conservatively estimated at 2,001 low-income households.¹ Meanwhile, the number of households in the state spending more than half of their income on housing increased from 1 in 15 in 2000 to 1 in 8 in 2006. **Minnesota experienced the fastest increase of extremely cost burdened households of any state in the nation during this time period.**²

WHAT IS
AFFORDABLE
HOUSING?

Housing is considered affordable if it consumes 30% or less of a household's gross income.

Household Income	Renters		Home Owners	
	Number of Households Paying Over 30% in Rent	Percent of Households Paying Over 30% in Rent	Number of Households Paying Over 30% for Ownership Costs	Percent of Households Paying Over 30% for Ownership Costs
Less than \$19,999	239	51%	327	46%
\$20,000-\$34,999	23	12%	181	26%
\$35,000-\$49,999	0	0%	46	10%
\$50,000 and over	0	0%	22	2%

The table above shows the number and percent of households in different income brackets that pay over 30% of household income for rental or ownership costs.³ It illustrates that the burden of housing costs weighs more heavily on lower-income families.

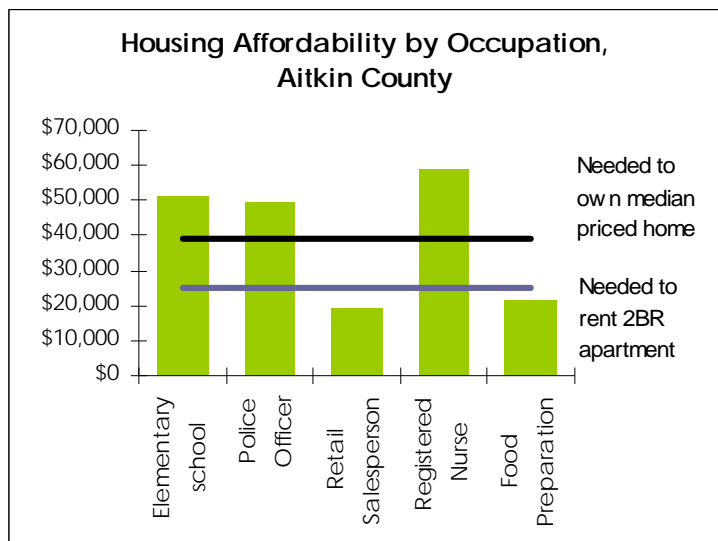
About 85% of Aitkin County residents own their home and 15% are renters.⁴

Generally, when households spend more than 30% of their income to meet housing costs, they do not have enough income to meet other basic needs or weather financial setbacks.



Lower-income households face extreme affordability challenges.

The chart below compares the median earnings of different workers to the income required for affordable housing.⁵ The median household income for Aitkin County was \$37,268 in 2006.⁶



In Aitkin County, a median-priced home is \$121,500, and the fair market rent for a two bedroom apartment is \$625 per month. Since 2000, home prices have increased by 29.7% and fair market rent has increased by 28.1%.⁷

Approximately 20% of homeowners and 31% of renters in Aitkin County spend over 30% of their household income on housing.⁸

In Aitkin County, a family of four with two full-time wage earners needs to earn a combined annual salary of \$47,436 to afford the basic cost of living.⁹

34% of jobs in Aitkin County and counties nearby pay less than the regional wage required to afford basic needs.¹⁰

The average annual unemployment rate in Aitkin County was 6.0% in 2007.¹¹

Foreclosures in Minnesota

- In Aitkin County in 2007, there were about 44 foreclosures, a 144% increase from 2005.¹²
- Left unaddressed, abandoned foreclosed properties destabilize neighborhoods, erode the local tax base and drive up the costs of municipal services.

Homelessness in Minnesota

- In 2006, 28% of all adults experiencing homelessness in Minnesota reported income from work, with 12% working full time.¹³
- 39% of Minnesota's homeless population cite the inability to afford housing as a primary reason for leaving previous housing.¹⁴
- Roughly 9,200 Minnesotans are homeless and 7,700 are precariously housed in temporary or unstable housing. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of these are children and youth.¹⁵
- On a single day in 2006, 74 people were sheltered in the Northeast Region, including 31 children.¹⁶

Extreme Cost Burden

- Approximately 13% of renter households pay over 50% of their income on housing in Aitkin County.¹⁷
- For homeowner households in Aitkin, 8% pay over 50% of their income on housing.¹⁸

Sources:

¹ "The Next Decade of Housing in Minnesota," BBC Research and Consulting, 2003. ² American Community Survey, 2006. ³ Census 2000. ⁴ Ibid. ⁵ OES Wage Data by economic development region, MN Dept. of Employment & Econ. Development, 4th quarter, 2007; HUD 2008 Fair Market Rents; Minnesota Dept. of Revenue Sales Ratio Study, 2006-7. ⁶ Census Small Area Income Poverty Estimates, 2005. ⁷ Minnesota Dept. of Revenue Sales Ratio Study; HUD Fair Market Rents; Low Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach, 2007-8" ⁸ Census 2000. ⁹ "The Cost of Living in Minnesota Family Wage & Budget Calculator," JOBS NOW Coalition, 2008. ¹⁰ "The Cost of Living in Minnesota," JOBS NOW Coalition, 2007. ¹¹ Minnesota Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Minnesota Dept. of Employment & Economic Development, Nov. 2007. ¹² "Foreclosures in Greater Minnesota: A Report based on County Sheriff's Sales Data," Greater Minnesota Housing Fund and HousingLink, 2007. ¹³ Wilder Research Center, 2007. ¹⁴ Ibid. ¹⁵ Ibid. ¹⁶ Ibid. ¹⁷ Census 2000. ¹⁸ Ibid.