Housing is considered affordable if it consumes less than 30% of a household’s gross income. At higher levels, families must choose between housing and other basic needs and will struggle to weather financial setbacks. In Minnesota, housing costs continue to consume a large portion of families’ income. For many, extended economic hardship is taking a toll.

The table above shows the number and percent of households at different income levels that pay 30% or more of household income for rental or ownership costs. It illustrates that the burden of housing costs weighs more heavily on lower-income families.¹

Even before the current economic downturn, housing needs were severe. In 2008, 1 in 8 Minnesota households spent at least half of their income on housing, up from 1 in 15 in 2000. Minnesota experienced the fastest increase of extremely cost burdened households of any state in the nation during this time period.²

In 2006-2008, about 83% of Cass County residents owned their home and 17% were renters. Of these, approximately 31.1% of homeowners and 33.8% of renters in Cass County spent 30% or more of their household income on housing.³
Lower-income households face extreme affordability challenges.

The chart below compares median earnings across different occupations to the income required to afford housing.4

### Foreclosures in Minnesota

- From 2005-2009 in Cass County, there were 425 foreclosures. Of these, 107 occurred in 2009.10
- Almost 8% of primary mortgages in Minnesota were delinquent by 60 days or more by early 2010.11
- The most common reason people sought foreclosure counseling in 2009 was loss or reduction of income.12

### Homelessness in Minnesota

- On a single day in 2009, 482 people were known to be homeless in the Central Region, including 208 children and youth through age 21.13
- An estimated 13,100 Minnesotans are homeless on any given night. The number of homeless people identified increased by 25% from 2006 to 2009.14
- The largest increase in homelessness from 2006 to 2009 was among young adults (18-21). Youth aged 12-21 saw the largest increase in likelihood of being turned away from a shelter.15

### Extreme Cost Burden

- Approximately 8% of renter households pay at least half of their income on housing in Cass County.16
- For homeowner households in Cass County, 11% pay at least half of their income on housing.17

### SOURCES: