Housing Affordability in Wabasha County

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Income</th>
<th>Renters</th>
<th>Home Owners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Households Paying 30% or More in Rent</td>
<td>Percent of Households Paying 30% or More in Rent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $20,000</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 – $34,999</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000 – $49,999</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 and over</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Income Levels</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 80% of Wabasha County residents owned their home and 20% were renters. Of these, approximately 28.40% of homeowners and 51.4% of renters in Wabasha 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 Wabasha County, there were 257 foreclosures. Of these, 60 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, 483 people were known to be homeless in the Southeast Region, including 278 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 20% of renter households pay at least half of their income on housing in Wabasha County.16
- For homeowner households in Wabasha County, 10% pay at least half of their income on housing.17

Housing Costs. In Wabasha County, a median-priced home cost $142,750 in 2009, excluding foreclosures. The fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment was $596 per month in 2010. Since 2001, home prices have increased by 6%, and the fair market rent has increased by 8%, after adjusting for inflation.5

Income. In Wabasha County, a family of four with two full-time wage earners needs to earn a combined annual salary of $48,901 to afford the basic cost of living.6 The median household income for Wabasha County was $51,870 in 2008.7

Jobs. 38% of jobs in Wabasha County and counties nearby pay less than the regional wage required to afford basic needs.8 In April 2010, the unemployment rate in Wabasha County was 6.3%, compared to 8.6% in 2009 and 4.4% in 2005.9