Housing Affordability in Wilkin County

May 2009

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. For 2009, housing costs continue to consume a large portion of families’ income, with substantial unemployment threatening Minnesotans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Income</th>
<th>Renters</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Home Owners</th>
<th></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>
<td>Number of Households Paying 30% or More in Ownership Costs</td>
<td>Percent of Households Paying 30% or More in Ownership Costs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $20,000</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 - $34,999</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000 - $49,999</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 and over</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Income Levels</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows the number and percent of households in different income brackets 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 2007, 1 in 8 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 2000, about 81.0% of Wilkin County residents owned their home and 19.0% were renters. Of these, approximately 10.9% of homeowners and 25.1% of renters in Wilkin 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
- In Wilkin County in 2008, there were about 16 foreclosures, a 48.4% decrease from 2007.10
- Left unaddressed, abandoned foreclosed properties destabilize neighborhoods, erode the local tax base and drive up the costs of municipal services.
- Of homeowners seeking foreclosure counseling in 2008, three-quarters were considered to be low- and moderate-income. Half experienced a reduction of income before seeking counseling. 60% had prime mortgages.11

### Homelessness in Minnesota
- On a single day in 2006, 175 people were sheltered in the West Central Region, including 59 children.12
- Roughly 9,200 Minnesotans are homeless and 7,700 are precariously housed in temporary or unstable housing. 38% are children and youth.13
- 39% of Minnesota’s homeless population cite the inability to afford housing as a primary reason for leaving previous housing.14

### Extreme Cost Burden
- Approximately 10.0% of renter households pay at least half of their income on housing in Wilkin County.15
- For homeowner households in Wilkin County, 3.0% pay at least half of their income on housing.16

### HOUSING COSTS
In Wilkin County, a median-priced home cost $87,750 in 2008, and the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment was $577 per month in 2009. Since 2001, home prices have increased by 45.8% and the fair market rent has increased by 38.7%.5

### INCOME
In Wilkin County, a family of four with two full-time wage earners needs to earn a combined annual salary of $44,904 to afford the basic cost of living.6 The median household income for Wilkin County was $45,030 in 2007.7

### JOBS
39% of jobs in Wilkin County and counties nearby pay less than the regional wage required to afford basic needs.8 The average unemployment rate in Wilkin County was 6.5% in March, 2009, up from 4.2% in March 2006.9

### SOURCES: