RENTS HIGH, EARNINGS LIMITED

In order to afford rent and utilities for a safe, modest two-bedroom apartment at the fair market monthly rent of $583, Lyon County workers would need to earn $11.21 per hour, 40 hours per week, all year long. The typical renter in the county, however, earns the equivalent of $8.36. At the minimum wage of $7.25 per hour, a worker must work 1.5 full time jobs to afford this rent. 

In Lyon County, about 525 owner and 982 renter households pay at least half of their income for housing—a level considered severely unaffordable.  

In most Minnesota counties, renter incomes have fallen. According to the most recent data available, real renter incomes have fallen by 27% in Lyon County since 1999. The median income for renter households is now $21,210.  

When housing is unaffordable, families are forced to choose between paying for housing and other needs, such as food or medicine.

CONstrained RENTAL OPTIONS

Growing demand plus a limited supply of rental housing is leading to higher rents and limited choice in many areas. The foreclosure crisis has turned scores of former homeowners into renters, and much of the rental stock is aging and not matched well to the needs of renters. Meanwhile, construction of multi-family properties statewide reached a 50-year low in 2006-2010.

Where a shortage of rental homes exists, the burden is heaviest for the lowest-income renters. In Lyon County, for every 100 extremely low-income renters there are 49 units that are affordable and available.
Children are at higher risk when parents cannot afford safe, decent housing.

In 2010 the cost of housing consumed more than half of income for almost 1 in 7 Minnesota households. In 2000, only 1 in 12 households experienced this level of cost burden.\(^8\)

**OWNER COSTS, EQUITY, AND FORECLOSURE**

- In Lyon County, the median home sales price (for non-foreclosures) in 2011 was $117,575. This is a decrease of 13% since 2006, after adjusting for inflation.\(^9\)
- From 2005-2011 in Lyon County there were 263 foreclosures. Of these, 40 occurred in 2011.\(^10\)
- A drop in home prices as a result of the foreclosure crisis and the Great Recession has left 18% of Minnesota mortgage holders owing more on their home than it is worth.\(^11\)
- About 5% of primary mortgages in Minnesota were delinquent by 60 days or more in early 2012. As a comparison, from 1979 to 2004, this delinquency rate averaged 1.7%.\(^12\)

**Unemployment, Children, and Poverty**

- In 2010, 11.4% of people in Lyon County were living in poverty. Children face a poverty rate of 14.0%.\(^18\)
- The average unemployment rate in Lyon County was 4.7% in June, 2012, not including those who have quit actively looking for work.\(^19\)
- Of the available jobs in Lyon County and counties nearby, 44% pay less than the wage required to afford basic needs.\(^20\)
- In Lyon County and counties nearby, there are about 2.5 job seekers for each vacant job.\(^21\)