A slow economic recovery and fallout from the foreclosure crisis have made housing difficult for many to afford. Though homes are less expensive in some areas, many owners cannot sell due to excessive debt. Renters often lack the savings or credit needed to buy. Regardless, renting is the best choice for many. High rental demand and rising rents make renters a focus for the 2013 County Profiles.

RENTAL OPTIONS LIMITED

Despite more renters after waves of foreclosures, the supply of places to rent is limited, and often in poor condition. 2007-2011 saw the lowest level of apartment construction statewide in any 5-year period in at least 50 years. In Grant County, for every 100 extremely low-income renters there are now 46 units that are affordable and available.

INCOMES DO NOT COVER COSTS

In most Minnesota counties, renter incomes have fallen. According to the most recent data available, in Grant County, real renter incomes have fallen by 25% while rents have risen by 16% since 2000.

The cost of housing now consumes more than half of income for 1 in 7 Minnesota households. In 2000, only 1 in 13 households experienced this level of cost burden.
When parents cannot afford safe housing, kids do not reach their full potential.

Homelessness and poverty are a reality for too many Minnesotans, adults and children alike. 10,214 Minnesotans were found to be homeless on a given night in 2012. Homelessness increased by 32% statewide from 2006 to 2012. 

Children in the Region

About half of the people experiencing homelessness in Minnesota are 21 or under. Children are especially vulnerable to the impacts of unstable, unaffordable housing and homelessness. Normal growth and development can be stunted, and school performance suffers as a result.

Locally, on a single day in 2012, 311 people were known to be homeless in the West Central Region. 80 were children with their parents, and 29 were youth through age 21 living on their own.

In 2011, 16% of the children in Grant County were living in poverty, up from 11% in 2001.

Veterans in need

Statewide, 580 homeless veterans were identified on a single night in 2012. Veterans are far more likely than non-veterans to experience homelessness.

In October 2012, 11% of homeless adults identified in the West Central Region had served in the military.

EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

- There are 2.3 job seekers for each vacant job in Grant County and counties nearby.
- For vacant positions, the median wage is $14.97 for full time and $7.99 for part time jobs.
- The area unemployment rate was 5.5% in May, 2013. This does not include any workers who have quit looking for work.

In Grant County, 8% of owner and 24% of renter households pay half or more of their income for housing. These families must choose between housing, food, medicine, and other basic needs.

HOMEOWNERSHIP & FORECLOSURE

- The median sales price for non-foreclosed homes is about $68,000 in Grant County, which is a real decrease of about 27% since 2006.
- From 2005-2012 in Grant County, there were 139 foreclosures.
- 16% of Minnesota mortgage holders currently owe more on their home than it is worth.
- Almost 4% of primary mortgages in Minnesota were delinquent by 60+ days in early 2013, down from 8% in 2009. The average was 1.7% from 1979 to 2004.