Access to safe, affordable homes builds a strong foundation for families and communities. But too many Minnesotans lack good housing options. Mirroring the state trend, the cost of rent continues to rise, while, on average, income is flat, making it increasingly challenging for renters to make ends meet. Income for families who own their homes is also not rising as quickly as home values – and homeownership among young families is declining, as well.

**RENTER HOUSEHOLDS**

2,472 | 19% of all households

- Median rent, 2000: $511
- Median rent, 2015: $665 (up 30%)
- Median renter income, 2000: $25,908
- Median renter income, 2015: $25,917 (down 0%)

Fair market rent for 2-bedroom apartment $725

Median-income renter can afford $648

**OWNER HOUSEHOLDS**

10,404 | 81% of all households

- Median home value, 2000: $132,410
- Median home value, 2015: $172,000 (up 30%)
- Median owner income, 2000: $50,526
- Median owner income, 2015: $51,918 (up 3%)

Change in homeownership rate for households younger than 35 years old, 2000-2015: -5%

Countywide, 3,093 households pay more than 30 percent of their income toward housing costs, putting them at risk of being unable to afford basic needs like groceries, clothes, prescriptions and transportation. This includes 27% of seniors who rent and more than 65% of owners and 77% of renters who earn less than $20,000 per year.

**COST BURDEN**

- Renters
- Owners

- Percentage of households paying more than 30% of their income toward housing

- Total number of cost burdened households 3,093
  - Total # cost burdened RENTER households 1,018
  - Total # cost burdened OWNER households 2,075
  - Total # cost burdened SENIOR households 1,059
**WAGES**: Housing remains a challenge even for workers who are fully employed. The median earnings for most of the top in-demand and high-growth jobs do not cover housing costs at an affordable level. Those working at the median wage – and especially those earning the minimum wage – cannot afford a two-bedroom apartment or the mortgage for a median-value home.

**HOMESTEADING**: Across the state, homelessness has declined since 2012, but too many families, seniors and children in the Central region are still suffering the devastating consequences of having no place to call home.

**Housing Stock**: While a significant portion of the rental and owner-occupied housing is aging (built before 1960), new construction is not keeping up with demand. Of particular concern is the gap between the number of available units for extremely low income households – and the number of people who need them.

**Wages & housing affordability for top in-demand jobs in Cass County**

- **$60K** Salary needed to afford median-value home
- **$51,600**
- **$40K** Salary needed to afford two-bedroom apartment
- **$26,100**
- **$20K**
  - Food prep & serving: $18,688
  - Cashier: $19,135
  - Retail sales: $21,549
  - Personal care aide: $23,662
  - Nursing assistant: $27,601

**County POPULATION growth by 2035**: 1,109

- % single family homes built before 1960: 17%
- Single-family units permitted in 2015: 208
- % rental units built before 1960: 15%
- Multi-family units permitted in 2015: 16

**Number of extremely low income (ELI) households**: 655

**Available units affordable to ELI households**: 375

- * earning less than 30% of area median income

**SENIORS**: The number of seniors will rise dramatically over the next two decades, growing by more than 90% across the state – and making senior housing a critical need.

**Total senior households by 2035**: 9,780

**Growth in number of individual seniors by 2035**: 25%

**Seniors % of overall population by 2035**: 31%

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**Sources**:
- Renter households: Rent and income adjusted for inflation. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2015, 5 year estimates.
- Owner households: Home value and income adjusted for inflation. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2015, 5 year estimates.
- Cost burden: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2015, 5 year estimates.
- Homelessness: Wilder Research Center, 2016. [Region based on Wilder regions].