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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.

HOMES: 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 Wilkin County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual median income</th>
<th>Food prep &amp; serving</th>
<th>Cashier</th>
<th>Personal care aide</th>
<th>Nursing assistant</th>
<th>Truck driver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$18,795</td>
<td>$19,175</td>
<td>$22,845</td>
<td>$24,629</td>
<td>$34,440</td>
<td>$36,479</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Salary needed to afford median-value home $34,440
Salary needed to afford two-bedroom apartment $23,688

New job openings in Northwest Planning Area by 2024 74,670
County median household income $51,476
Hours / week minimum wage employee must work to afford a two-bedroom apartment 48

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

Seniors % of overall population by 2035: 31%