

Housing Affordability in Aitkin County

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Minnesota Housing Partnership

Homes for all.

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.

Renters

Home Owners

Household Income	Number of Households Paying 30% or More in Rent	Percent of Households Paying 30% or More in Rent	Number of Households Paying 30% or More in Ownership Costs	Percent of Households Paying 30% or More in Ownership Costs
Less than \$20,000	239	50.5%	327	45.7%
\$20,000 – \$34,999	23	12.2%	181	25.5%
\$35,000 – \$49,999	0	0.0%	46	9.5%
\$50,000 and over	0	0.0%	22	2.4%
All Income Levels	262	31.3%	576	20.3%

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

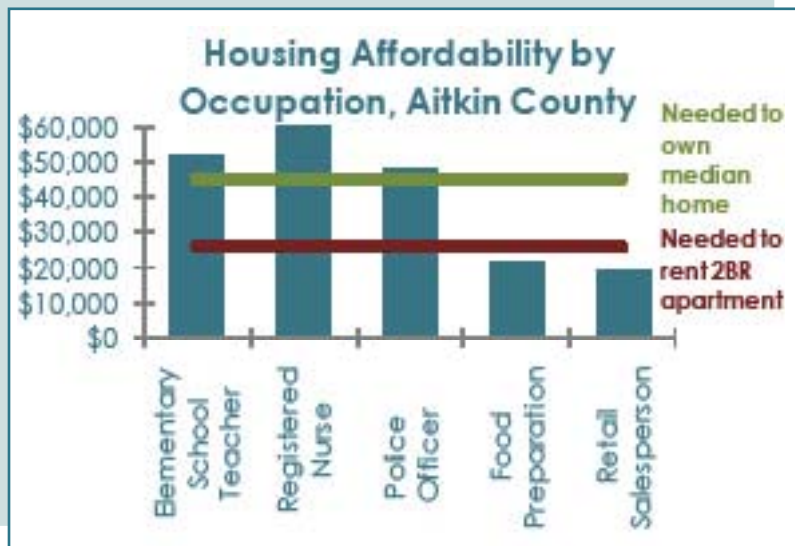
In 2000, about 85.0% of Aitkin County residents owned their home and 15.0% were renters. Of these, approximately 20.3% of homeowners and 31.3% of renters in Aitkin County spent 30% or more of their household income on housing.³



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Lower-income households face extreme affordability challenges.

The chart below compares median earnings across different occupations to the income required to afford housing.⁴



HOUSING COSTS. In Aitkin County, a median-priced home cost \$141,000 in 2008, and the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment was \$642 per month in 2009. Since 2001, home prices have increased by 50.5%, and the fair market rent has increased by 36.3%.⁵

INCOME. In Aitkin County, a family of four with two full-time wage earners needs to earn a combined annual salary of \$52,116 to afford the basic cost of living.⁶ The median household income for Aitkin County was \$38,610 in 2007.⁷

JOBS. 34% of jobs in Aitkin County and counties nearby pay less than the regional wage required to afford basic needs.⁸ The average unemployment rate in Aitkin County was 13.2% in March, 2009, up from 7.7% in March 2006.⁹

SOURCES: 1 US Decennial Census, 2000. 2 Ibid. 3 Ibid. 4 OES Wage Data by economic development region, MN DEED, 4th quarter, 2008; HUD Fair Market Rents, 2009; MN Department of Revenue Sales Ratio Study, 2007-8. 5 MN Dept of Revenue Sales Ratio Study 2000-1 & 2007-8; HUD Fair Market Rents, 2001 & 2009. Not adjusted for inflation. 6 The Cost of Living in Minnesota Family Wage & Budget Calculator, JOBS NOW Coalition, 2009. 7 Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates, 2007. 8 The Cost of Living in Minnesota, JOBS NOW Coalition, 2007. 9 Local Area Unemployment Statistics, MN DEED, March 2009. 10 Minnesota Foreclosure Supplement, 2008, HousingLink, 2009. 11 2008 Foreclosure Counseling Program Report, Minnesota Home Ownership Center, April 2009. 12 Wilder Research Center, 2007. 13 Ibid. 14 Ibid. 15 US Decennial Census, 2000. 16 Ibid.

Foreclosures in Minnesota

- In Aitkin County in 2008, there were about 57 foreclosures, a 21.3% increase 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, 74 people were sheltered in the Northeast Region, including 31 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 13.0% of renter households pay at least half of their income on housing in Aitkin County.¹⁵
- For homeowner households in Aitkin County, 8.0% pay at least half of their income on housing.¹⁶