

Housing Affordability in Le Sueur 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	367	88.0%	582	75.9%
\$20,000 – \$34,999	71	24.9%	757	60.5%
\$35,000 – \$49,999	114	21.5%	545	41.8%
\$50,000 and over	42	10.7%	591	11.0%
All Income Levels	594	32.7%	2,475	28.4%

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

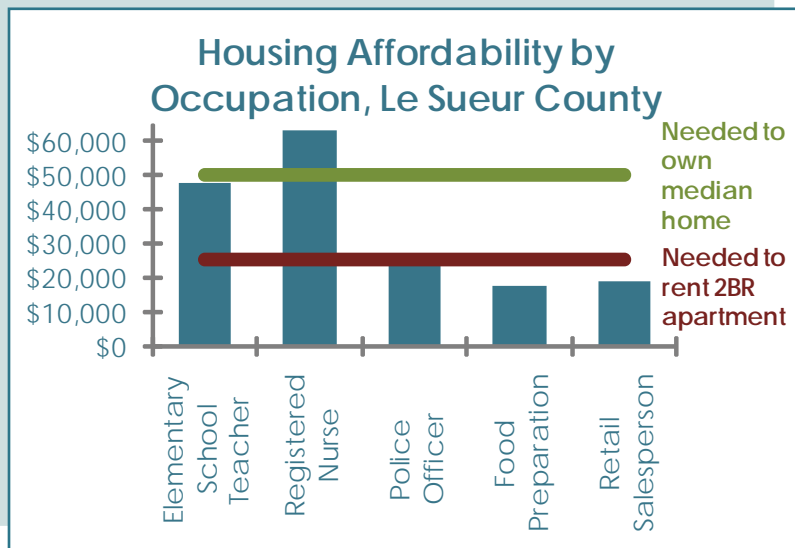
In 2005-2007, about 82.7% of Le Sueur County residents owned their home and 17.3% were renters. Of these, approximately 28.4% of homeowners and 32.7% of renters in Le Sueur County spent 30% or more of their household income on housing.³



2446 University Avenue West, Suite 140
 Saint Paul, MN 55114-1740
 f: 651-649-1725 p: 800-728-8916
 www.mhponline.org 651-649-1710

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 Le Sueur County, a median-priced home cost \$158,000 in 2008, and the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment was \$640 per month in 2009. Since 2001, home prices have increased by 32.8%, and the fair market rent has increased by 53.8%.⁵

INCOME. In Le Sueur County, a family of four with two full-time wage earners needs to earn a combined annual salary of \$52,656 to afford the basic cost of living.⁶ The median household income for Le Sueur County was \$55,984 in 2007.⁷

JOBS. 37% of jobs in Le Sueur County and counties nearby pay less than the regional wage required to afford basic needs.⁸ The average unemployment rate in Le Sueur County was 13.7% in March, 2009, up from 7.4% in March 2006.⁹

SOURCES: 1 American Community Survey, 2005-7. 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 American Community Survey, 2005-7. 16 Ibid.

Foreclosures in Minnesota

- In Le Sueur County in 2008, there were about 167 foreclosures, a 4.0% decrease 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, 342 people were sheltered in the Southeast Region, including 181 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 7.9% of renter households pay at least half of their income on housing in Le Sueur County.¹⁵
- For homeowner households in Le Sueur County, 8.2% pay at least half of their income on housing.¹⁶