The demand for affordable housing exceeds supply.

The unmet affordable housing need through the year 2010 in Lincoln County is conservatively estimated at 345 low-income households. Meanwhile, the number of households in the state spending more than half of their income on housing increased from 1 in 15 in 2000 to 1 in 8 in 2006. Minnesota experienced the fastest increase of extremely cost burdened households of any state in the nation during this time period.

The table above shows the number and percent of households in different income brackets that pay over 30% of household income for rental or ownership costs. It illustrates that the burden of housing costs weighs more heavily on lower-income families.

About 80% of Lincoln County residents own their home and 20% are renters.

**WHAT IS AFFORDABLE HOUSING?**

Housing is considered affordable if it consumes 30% or less of a household’s gross income.
Lower-income households face extreme affordability challenges.

The chart below compares the median earnings of different workers to the income required for affordable housing. The median household income for Lincoln County was $35,083 in 2006.

In Lincoln County, a median-priced home is $59,500, and the fair market rent for a two bedroom apartment is $550 per month. Since 2000, home prices have increased by 49.1% and fair market rent has increased by 29.4%.

Approximately 17% of homeowners and 22% of renters in Lincoln County spend over 30% of their household income on housing.

In Lincoln County, a family of four with two full-time wage earners needs to earn a combined annual salary of $41,088 to afford the basic cost of living.

30% of jobs in Lincoln County and counties nearby pay less than the regional wage required to afford basic needs.

The average annual unemployment rate in Lincoln County was 3.6% in 2007.

### Foreclosures in Minnesota
- In Lincoln County in 2007, there were about 10 foreclosures, a 233% increase from 2005.
- Left unaddressed, abandoned foreclosed properties destabilize neighborhoods, erode the local tax base and drive up the costs of municipal services.

### Homelessness in Minnesota
- In 2006, 28% of all adults experiencing homelessness in Minnesota reported income from work, with 12% working full time.
- 39% of Minnesota’s homeless population cite the inability to afford housing as a primary reason for leaving previous housing.
- Roughly 9,200 Minnesotans are homeless and 7,700 are precariously housed in temporary or unstable housing. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of these are children and youth.
- On a single day in 2006, 67 people were sheltered in the Southwest Region, including 25 children.

### Extreme Cost Burden
- Approximately 4% of renter households pay over 50% of their income on housing in Lincoln County.
- For homeowner households in Lincoln, 6% pay over 50% of their income on housing.

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**Sources:**
4. Ibid.
5. OES Wage Data by economic development region, MN Dept of Employment & Econ Development, 4th quarter, 2007; HUD 2008 Fair Market Rents; Minnesota Dept. of Revenue Sales Ratio Study 2006-7; HUD Fair Market Rents 2008; Low Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach, 2007-8.
17. Ibid.