

Is There Enough Affordable Housing in Skagit County?

It should be possible for hard-working people to afford housing and still have enough left over for the basics like groceries, gas, and childcare. Unfortunately, a shortage of affordable homes makes this impossible for thousands of Skagit County households.

WHAT IS AFFORDABLE HOUSING?

How Much is Too Much?

1/4 of Skagit County renter households pay more than 50% of their income for housing, leaving them extremely cost-burdened. (2008-2012 ACS)



Housing is considered affordable if its occupants pay no more than 30% of their income on rent and utilities or for mortgage, taxes, and insurance.



Because "affordable housing" is a relative term (dependent on someone's income), affordability is expressed as a percentage of median income, adjusted for household size. For example: "this housing unit is affordable at 50% of median income."

When families pay too much toward housing, they are unable to save for a rainy day. If they suddenly lose their job, or have a major health care cost, they can end up without a place to live.



Area Median Income (AMI) measures the annual income at which half of the households in the area earn more and half earn less.

16,900 Skagit County Households Cannot Afford Their Housing (2008-2012 ACS)

A single parent raising a toddler in Skagit County would need to make \$19/hour to afford housing and other basic necessities. (NLHC, Out of Reach 2015)

HOUSING AVAILABILITY IN SKAGIT

- 3,672 Shortage of Rental Units for Low-Income Households
- 1,833 Families on Housing Authority Waitlist
- 200+ Homeless Households in Housing Interest Pool
- 1% Vacancy Rate

There is a limit to how cheaply the market can produce housing. With wages low, market-rate rents will always be out of reach for some households. Rents would have to decrease 33% for a minimum-wage worker to afford housing in Skagit.

Sources: 2008-2012 ACS; Housing Authority of Skagit, 2016; Skagit Community Action, 2016; HUD, 2014; UW Runstad Center, Fall 2015

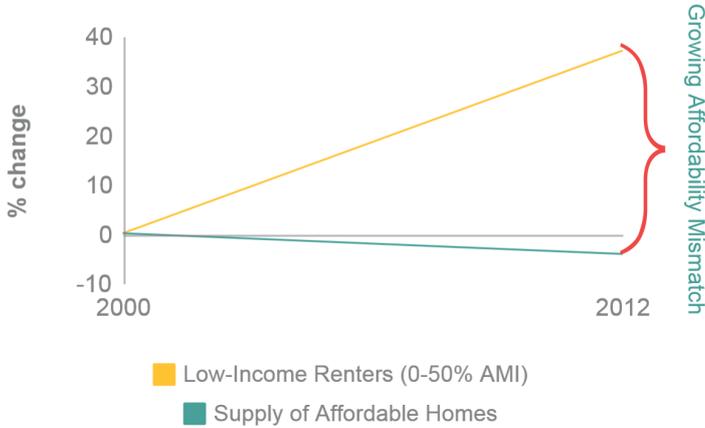


Homes Affordable and Available to Extremely Low Income Renters

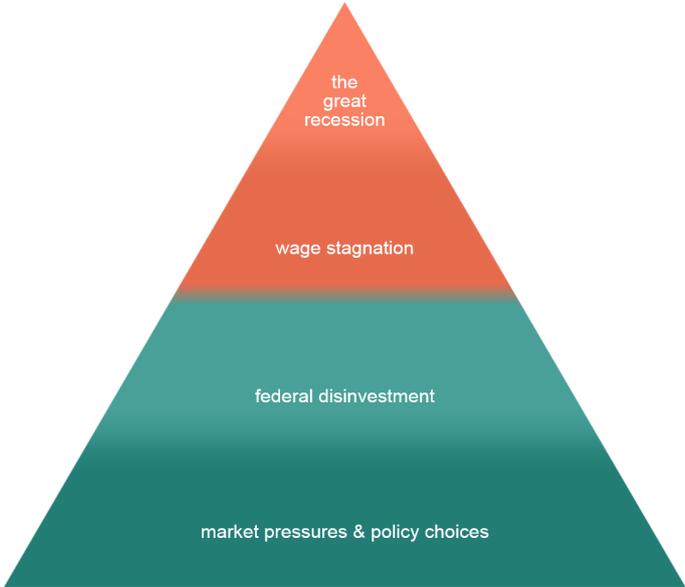
There are only 25 affordable and available rental homes for every 100 extremely low income renter households (30% AMI & below). (2008-2012 ACS)

HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

Affordable Home Supply Has Decreased While Need Has Skyrocketed

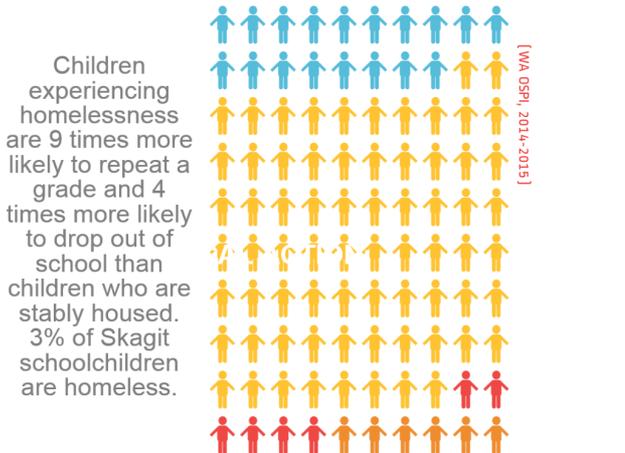


(HUD, CHAS Data, 2000, 2008-2012)



HOMELESSNESS & SOLUTIONS

634 Homeless Schoolchildren



- EMERGENCY SHELTER:** a facility providing temporary shelter for the homeless for a period of 90 days or less.
- RAPID RE-HOUSING:** a short-term intervention which includes housing attainment, employment, and financial assistance services.
- HOUSING VOUCHERS:** portable rental-assistance for families who cannot afford market-rate rents; often called "Section 8." a household with a voucher usually pays only 30% of their income for rent and utilities, with the voucher paying the remaining housing costs.
- TRANSITIONAL HOUSING:** aims to facilitate the movement of homeless individuals into permanent housing within a reasonable amount of time (usually 24 months).
- PERMANENT HOUSING:** rental apartments or ownership homes that provide individuals and families with a fixed street address and residence with no limits on length of stay.
- SUPPORTIVE HOUSING:** combines affordable housing with individualized support and case management services.

WHAT CAN COMMUNITY DO TO HELP?

- support affordable housing in your neighborhood
- talk to your friends and neighbors
- participate in civic processes
- support nonprofits
- volunteer

WHAT CAN GOVERNMENT DO TO PRESERVE & PRODUCE AFFORDABLE HOUSING?

- community engagement
- task forces
- partnerships
- policy change
- funding

BENEFITS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- improved health and educational outcomes
- downtown & neighborhood revitalization
- jobs in construction
- more discretionary income to spend in local economy
- lower criminal recidivism
- attracts employers & outside investment
- shorter commutes & less environmental impact
- lower public spending on healthcare, jail, and emergency services

Questions?
 Kayla Schott-Bresler | Housing Coordinator
 Skagit County Public Health
 kaylasb@co.skagit.wa.us | 360.416.1520

