

Sonoma County 2025 Affordable Housing Needs Report — Overview and Key Takeaways

A Growing Housing Crisis

Sonoma County is facing a deepening affordable housing crisis. According to the 2025 Affordable Housing Needs Report, 14,083 low-income renter households in Sonoma County currently lack access to an affordable home. This shortage forces thousands of families to make impossible choices between paying rent and covering other basic needs like food, healthcare, and transportation.

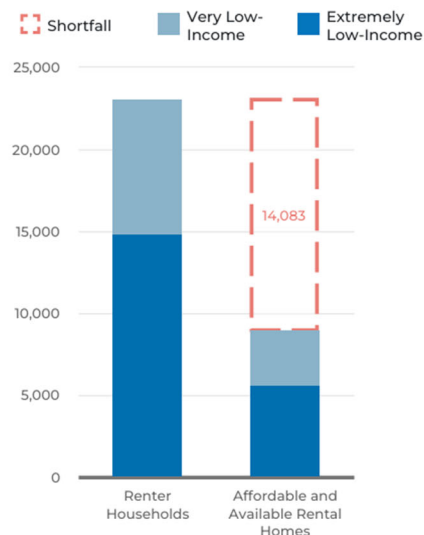
The True Cost of Housing

Seventy percent of extremely low-income (ELI) households in Sonoma County spend more than half their income on housing, compared to just one percent of moderate-income households. According to the 2025 Affordable Housing Needs Report, renters need to earn \$40.48 per hour, 2.3 times the City of Santa Rosa's minimum wage, to afford the county's average rent of \$2,105 per month.

These figures illustrate a widening affordability gap that continues to price working families out of the region they help sustain.

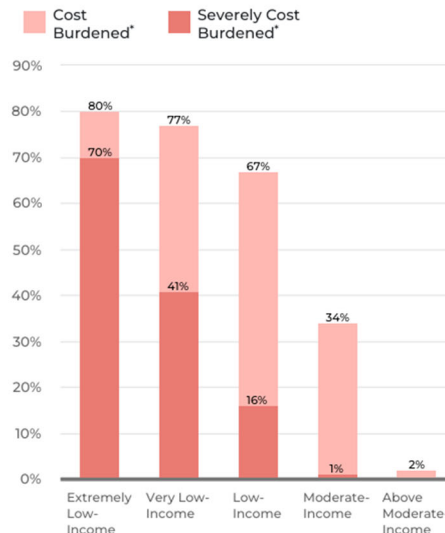
AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOMES

14,083 low-income renter households in Sonoma County do not have access to an affordable home (2023).



COST BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS

70% of ELI households in Sonoma County are paying more than half of their income on housing costs compared to 1% of moderate-income households (2023).



Funding Isn't Reaching Homeownership

State and federal funding for housing production and preservation in Sonoma County totals \$189 million, a 79 percent increase from the previous year. Yet **zero percent** of that funding supports affordable homeownership construction.

This critical gap leaves out hardworking residents who earn too much to qualify for most subsidized rental programs but far too little to purchase a home in Sonoma County's high-priced market. Without pathways to affordable homeownership, these families remain trapped in a cycle of unstable, rising rents with no opportunity to build equity or long-term financial security.

A Community at Risk

The consequences of this housing imbalance reach beyond individual families. Sonoma County's workforce, the people who make daily life possible, are being priced out of their own communities. These include:

- Healthcare providers
- Mechanics and service technicians
- Teachers and childcare providers
- Baristas, grocery clerks, and small business owners
- And a wide range of other neighbors who help make our communities thrive

If these essential workers cannot afford to live where they work, the fabric of our local economy and community weakens.

Part of a Larger California Trend

Sonoma County's housing challenges mirror the broader "California Exodus," a long-term migration trend where more residents leave the state than move in.

Since 2016, Sonoma County has experienced steady population decline, losing over 19,000 residents between 2016 and 2023 after peaking at just over 502,500 residents. High housing costs are consistently cited as one of the top reasons families and workers leave the area.

How You Can Make a Difference

It is expensive to live here, and that is exactly why we need your help. Habitat for Humanity of Sonoma County believes that everyone deserves a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home. By expanding access to affordable homeownership, we can help Sonoma County families put down roots, improve their financial future, and stay in the communities they serve.

Your support can help us build more affordable homes for ownership and ensure that hardworking families have a real path to stability.

You can get involved in several ways:

- **Donate** to help us build more affordable homes for local families.
- **Volunteer** at our build sites to make a direct impact.
- **Shop or volunteer** at our ReStore, where every dollar earned is funneled directly back into our mission to build and preserve affordable homes.
- **Advocate** for more affordable homeownership projects in Sonoma County by sharing the importance of this issue with your network.

Together, we can ensure that Sonoma County remains a place where everyone, from the nurse who cares for us, to the mechanic who fixes our car, to the barista who remembers our order, can afford to live, work, and thrive.

Source: *Sonoma County 2025 Affordable Housing Needs Report*, PDF available at [Sonoma_Housing_Report-2.pdf](#)