



Housing Needs

The following section presents housing needs and special concerns relative to various segments of the population.

Several factors will influence the degree of demand for housing in Riverside County in the coming years. Four major "needs" categories are considered in this element:

- Housing needs resulting from overcrowding.
- Housing needs that result when households are paying more than they can afford for housing.
- Housing needs of "special needs groups" such as the elderly, large families, female-headed households, households with persons with disabilities, and the homeless.
- Housing needs resulting from population growth, both in the County and the surrounding region.

Analysis of demographics and market conditions indicates that the number of households at the extremes of the income spectrum will continue to grow while the traditional middle-income segments decline in size and activity in the housing market. In terms of specific housing needs, home ownership and the first-time homebuyer program will become critical for the moderate- to above-moderate income population, while the other income groups will need help in meeting increasingly higher cost burdens.

OVERCROWDING



A household is considered to be overcrowded if there are more than 1.0 persons per room. A typical two-bedroom apartment with a living room and kitchen (a total of four rooms excluding bathrooms and hallways) would be considered overcrowded if it had more than four occupants.

In response to higher housing prices, lower-income households must often be satisfied with smaller, less adequate housing for available money. This may result in overcrowding. Overcrowding causes a strain on physical facilities, does not provide a satisfying environment, and eventually causes conditions which contribute both to deterioration of the housing stock and neighborhoods in general. A household is considered to be overcrowded if there are more than 1.0 persons per room. A typical two-bedroom apartment with a living room and kitchen (a total of four rooms excluding bathrooms and hallways) would be considered overcrowded if it had more than four occupants.

Overcrowding varies with tenure and income. Based on 1990 Census data regarding overcrowding for lower-income households in the unincorporated area, approximately 22% of renter households were reported to be overcrowded. According to the CHAS Databook for the County, based on 1990 Census information, large related renter households, (i.e., those with five members or more, of which at least two are related), experienced severe overcrowding in every income category. Almost two-thirds of all large related households were overcrowded, including 75% of those households with Very-Low incomes. These statistics indicate that overcrowding was much more prevalent among renter households than owner households.



Only 7% of owner-occupied units were overcrowded, according to the 1990 Census. In ownership units, almost 20% of the lower-income (Very-Low and Low-income) non-elderly households were reported as overcrowded.

Table H-24 contains data regarding overcrowding for lower-income households in the unincorporated area in 1999 terms, based on the SCAG RHNA analysis. In the unincorporated area, nearly one-fourth of lower-income renter households were estimated to be overcrowded while only 7% of lower income owner-occupied units were overcrowded.

**Table H-24
Overcrowding
Lower-income Households
Riverside County Unincorporated Area
1999**

| Renter Households | | Owner Households | | All Households | |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Overcrowded (%) | Total Households | Overcrowded (%) | Total Households | Overcrowded (%) | Total Households |
| 3,811 (22%) | 17428 | 2,372 (7%) | 33806 | 6,183 (12%) | 51234 |

Source: SCAG based on 1990 Census

Among owner households, overcrowding can often be alleviated by a room addition to the home. However, many lower-income households may lack the resources for a room addition, or the owners may be constrained by lot size or other physical constraints.

HOUSEHOLDS OVERPAYING FOR HOUSING

State housing policy recognizes that cooperative participation of the private and public sectors is necessary to expand housing opportunities to all economic segments of the community. A primary State goal is the provision of decent housing and suitable living environment for Californians of all economic levels. Historically, the private sector generally responds to the majority of the community's housing needs through the production of market-rate housing. However, the percentage of the population on a statewide basis that can afford market rate housing is declining. By definition, a household is considered to be overpaying "when housing cost exceeds 30% of gross household income" (Health & Safety Code, Section 50052.5)



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In determining existing need for affordable housing it is necessary to relate income with housing costs and rent prices. As discussed previously in the Affordability Gap section, affordability is defined by HUD as the expenditure of no more than 30% of the household income for housing costs using a hypothetical family of four persons. Severe cost burden occurs when a household spends more than 50% of their total income on housing, including utilities. Incidence of cost burden is of concern for several reasons as previously discussed. Incidence of cost burden is most significant among lower-income households since, by definition, their income is so small that overpaying for housing endangers their ability to pay for other necessities. Among owner occupied households, cost burden is a concern, as sufficient resources to properly maintain the home or make repairs when needed may not be available, thus accelerating deterioration of the home.