

**April 14, 2009**

EMBARGOED: April 14, 2009, 1:00 p.m. (EDT)

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## **Rental Costs Continue to Climb, Renters Struggle to Find Affordable Housing**

The National Low Income Housing Coalition's (NLIHC) annual *Out of Reach* report, released on April 14, provides data for every state, metropolitan area and county in the country showing how much a household must earn to afford a modest market-rate rental home. The report also provides local wage and income data for comparison purposes.

According to the report, a person with a full-time job needs to earn an hourly **Housing Wage of \$17.84** to afford a two-bedroom rental home at the nation's average Fair Market Rent. This is the hourly wage a full time worker must earn in order to afford a two-bedroom home at his or her community's Fair Market Rent (FMR).

- In 2009, the estimated median wage for workers in America is only \$16.03.
- At the federal minimum wage of \$6.55, a household would have to work 109 hours each week to afford the nation's average FMR for a two-bedroom home.
- In no county in the U.S. can a full-time minimum wage worker afford even a one-bedroom apartment at the FMR.

The statistics in *Out of Reach* show the disconnect between what it costs to afford decent rental housing in the U.S. and what low-wage employment actually pays. Even before the current foreclosure and economic crises, renters with the lowest incomes faced a shortage of homes they could afford. With more families turning to the rental market and job losses numbering in the millions, the struggle to find affordable housing has become even more acute.

“The longstanding structural deficit of rental homes that the lowest income people can afford, exacerbated by the economic recession, will surely lead to more people becoming homeless,” said Sheila Crowley, President of the National Low Income Housing Coalition. “We hope that *Out of Reach* will demonstrate to policy makers the urgency of acting now to increase the supply of affordable housing and housing assistance for those who are hit hardest by the recession.”

Extensive data for every state, metropolitan area and county in the country are available online, at [www.nlihc.org/oor2009/](http://www.nlihc.org/oor2009/). Ranking tables and maps are also available at the website, as is further analysis and explanation of the data.

Established in 1974 by Cushing N. Dolbeare, the National Low Income Housing Coalition is a membership organization dedicated solely to achieving socially just public policy that assures people with the lowest incomes in the United States have affordable and decent homes.

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