



PRICED OUT

A Regional Report

Assemblymember Wesley Chesbro

The Housing Situation in the 2nd Assembly District

More and more people in California find themselves priced out of the current housing market. Foreclosures have forced more people into the rental market, pushing up rents across the state.



People who are key to the local economy cannot even afford to *rent* a home. To afford a two-bedroom apartment, a family in the district needs an average annual income of \$36,024 — significantly more than child care workers, teacher assistants, and pharmacy aides earn.

Homeownership is even further out of reach. As of October 2012, median home prices were still high in district areas like Healdsburg (\$440,000), Windsor (\$355,900), and Arcata (\$250,000). Even with home prices dropping, a home buyer in the district must earn, on average, more than \$61,475 a year to afford a median-priced home (\$290,000) — assuming a near-perfect credit score, sufficient savings for a down-payment and zero monthly debt (e.g. car payments, student loans, credit cards).

In Sonoma County alone:

Affordable Homes Needed: 39,775
Affordable Homes Available: 34,300
Shortage: 5,475



Some of the residents in your district who would benefit from more affordable homes include:

VERY-LOW-INCOME EARNERS*

Child Care Workers	\$ 22,468
Cashiers	\$ 23,003
Veterinary Assistants	\$ 23,783
Teacher Assistants	\$ 26,059
Pharmacy Aides	\$ 26,743

*below 50% of median income for a family of four

LOW-INCOME EARNERS**

Preschool Teachers	\$ 33,857
Dental Assistants	\$ 33,915
Bookkeepers	\$ 36,118
School Bus Drivers	\$ 37,154
Paramedics and EMTs	\$ 38,377

**below 80% of median income for a family of four

A range of homes affordable to all affects many of the issues that you care about.

Business and the Economy

Families who have access to affordable homes are a benefit to the area's businesses and economy. They are better able to afford reliable transportation to work, reducing tardiness and absenteeism and increasing productivity and continuity. Communities with well-constructed and maintained rental and for-sale homes are also more attractive to potential employers. A range of local rental and ownership choices improves businesses' access to the younger and lower-wage workers they need to succeed.

Households that can pay a reasonable portion of their income for rent also have more discretionary income. They become customers for local businesses and increase sales tax revenues that support economic development and public services.

Building homes that increase variety and balance in the market also increases local construction employment. Even in these tough economic times, affordable homebuilders are continuing to provide well-paid, construction-related jobs that support both families and the economy.

Environment

Affordable homes contribute to California's efforts to protect the environment. To reduce construction costs and rents, affordable homebuilders build more compactly, using land, water, and energy resources more efficiently. Most affordable-home developments are in locations closer to jobs and daily needs, increasing options for walking and public transit use, and reducing vehicle travel, greenhouse gas emissions, and development pressure on agricultural land and open space.

Children and Education

Despite foreclosures and home price declines, finding an affordable home is an ongoing challenge for working families in the 2nd District. Families with low incomes move 50 to 100% more frequently in search of a home they can afford, so children must move from school to school. Increasing options for families to afford a safe and stable home for their children will result in better outcomes for children. They will benefit from:

- Less exposure to violence.
- Increased school attendance.
- Reduced stress, illness, and mental-health problems.
- Having a safe place to play, do homework, and share family time.

Local schools will also benefit from increased family stability. Teachers can better plan for staffing and resources, and both teachers and classmates will experience fewer disruptions so they can focus on student achievement.

According to the 2011 Homeless Census, 4,539 were homeless in Sonoma County. This is a 40% increase from 2009, and accounts for 2.6% of the county's population.