

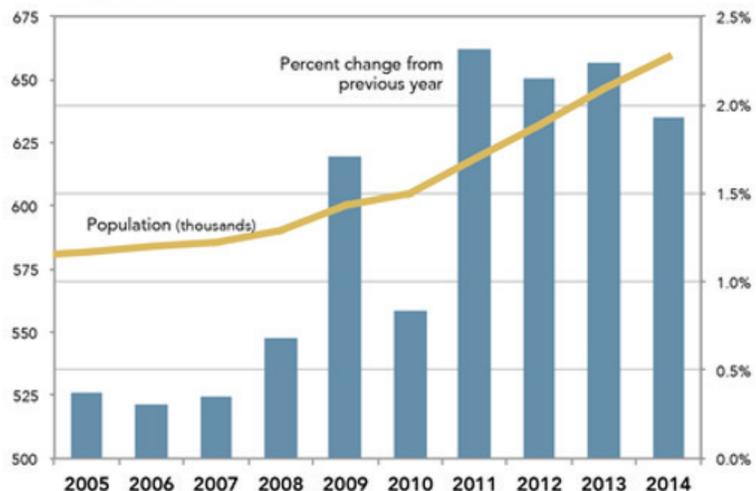
Living in DC: an Affordable Housing Crisis

The number one cause of homelessness in the DC area is a critical shortage of affordable housing. Having a safe and affordable place to call home is fundamental to positive life outcomes—in school performance, job retention, physical and mental health, and economic security. But for a number of reasons—a history of racist public policies, disappearing low-cost housing, and an economy with stagnant wages for those who earn the least—many people do not have that opportunity (*DC Fiscal Policy Institute*).

Some facts and statistics:

- The median monthly homeownership costs in the Washington metro area are \$2,293 and median monthly gross rent is \$1,629.
- 24% of all renter households in the region are considered severely cost burdened (paying more than 50% of monthly income towards housing costs) and may face difficult decisions regarding which basic needs to prioritize for payment.
- In 2018 a minimum wage worker would need to work 91 hours per week to be able to afford a one-bedroom apartment at the Fair Market Rent price (\$1,561/month).
- The median home sale price in DC hovers around \$550,000 (Zillow data)
- Residents of color represent nine out of 10 households with the most serious housing needs—those with low-incomes who pay more than half their income for rent.

Growing population means more demand for housing



Causes of the crisis:

The primary cause of DC's affordable housing crisis is a sharp increase in land and construction costs due to booming growth in demand to live in this area. Although new housing is being created and at a faster clip than in previous years, new housing does not translate to affordable housing. Without government intervention, folks earning minimum to medium-range incomes simply cannot afford market rates for either renting or buying in the District.

Let's talk about it:

- Why are People of Color, especially Black residents of DC, particularly affected by the affordable housing shortage in DC?
- What laws in our country's history perpetuated racism and racial inequality in the housing market?
- How do white people and/or people who are not cost-burdened by housing payments wrestle with their own contributions to this problem in the District and surrounding areas?
- How are gentrification and affordable housing decreases directly related?

How do we solve the problem?

- Build more affordable housing units
- Preserve already-existing affordable housing (much cheaper than new construction)
- Rehabilitate and support public housing
- Help families pay rent

Want more?

Visit our partners fighting for affordable housing:

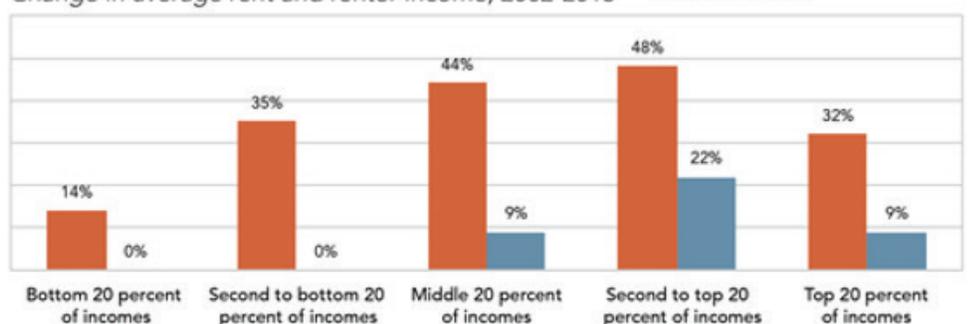
[11th Street Bridge Park Project](#)

[DC Fiscal Policy Institute](#)

[The Coalition for Non-Profit Housing and Economic Development's Housing for All Campaign](#)

Rents are growing faster than incomes

Change in average rent and renter income, 2002-2013



Source: DC Fiscal Policy Institute

WASHINGTON, DC
Coalition for Smarter Growth

For more information and ways to get involved, visit

edcjcc.org/volunteer

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