

America's Poorest People Running Out Of Places To Live

The Huffington Post [Alexander Eichler](#)

The poorest people in America are running out of places to live.

In every state in the country, there are people looking for cheap rental housing -- and in every state, [there aren't enough units available](#), according to a report released Wednesday by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, a nonprofit organization.

"The existence of the gap is not a matter of debate," the report notes.

The findings highlight the increasingly desperate situation of people who work but don't earn much, and who are finding themselves priced out of the rental market as more and more Americans [look for alternatives to traditional homeownership](#). For every 100 households that earn less than one-third of the median income for their region, according to the report, there are [only 30 affordable and available rental units](#) -- meaning, places to live that aren't dilapidated, prohibitively expensive, too far from public transportation, or already occupied by someone earning a higher salary.

There might be more affordable housing options available for the poor if the housing market and the economy overall weren't so weak. Since the recession took hold, though, many people have found themselves [lacking the money or the credit](#) to make a major purchase like a house. Meanwhile, nearly five years of slumping prices has led many financially stable people to rent temporary accommodations instead of buying a home that might only keep declining in value. In a sign of the swelling demand for rental property, apartment vacancies had fallen to [their lowest level in a decade](#) by late 2011.

That's bad news for cash-strapped Americans who have traditionally depended on the rental market to keep a roof over their heads. In the absence of affordable rental units, a growing number of people are [doubling up with friends and family](#), and analysts say the national homelessness rate is [poised to begin climbing soon](#) as federal funding for housing programs dries up.

In general, a wide swath of the population is living in financially precarious circumstances, with one in every five households saying [they sometimes struggle to afford food](#), and nearly half of all households [just one emergency away](#) from falling below the poverty line.

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