

U.S. Land & Housing Statistics  
Feb. 27, 2012

**Land Distribution**

- **80%** of the U.S. population own no land at all.<sup>i</sup>
- Though over **60%** of the land in the United States is privately-owned,<sup>ii</sup> the wealthiest **half-a-percent own 35.6%** of this & the wealthiest **10% own nearly 80%**.<sup>iii</sup> The remaining land is owned by the Federal Government (29%), State & local governments (9%) & Native American territories (2%).<sup>iv</sup>
- There are *at least* **3.5 million** homeless people,<sup>v</sup> but there are over **18.5 million** “people-less” homes.<sup>vi</sup>

**Income Inequality & Unemployment**

- The Great Recession of 2007-2009 has left, as of July 2011, **13.9 million** people without jobs, nearly half long-term, **8.4 million** working part-time involuntarily, and an additional **2.8 million** unemployed who have stopped looking because they believe there are no jobs for them.<sup>vii</sup>
- Wages have been stagnant or decreasing for most U.S. households over the past 30 years,<sup>viii</sup> the median family income **falling 5%** between 1999 and 2009.<sup>ix</sup>

**Rising Rent & Mortgage Burdens**

- The market cost of a home rose severely before “crashing” (**188%** between 1997 & 2006,<sup>x</sup> declining **30%** since 2006<sup>xi</sup>), while rental prices are currently on the rise, with a **7.12%**, **2.59%** and **3.75%** increase in studio, 1-, and 2-bedroom apartments (2011).<sup>xii</sup>
- **78%** of all U.S. households pay banks or landlords for the use of their home, roughly **32%** as renters & another **46%** as owners with outstanding mortgages.<sup>xiii</sup>
- Mortgage debt has increased **890%** since 1980<sup>xiv</sup> (by 2009, it reached a **\$14 trillion** all-time high<sup>xv</sup>). Presently, homeowners are **\$709 billion** underwater (owe more than their home’s market value).<sup>xvi</sup>
- The number of severely rent-burdened households (where rent is more than 50 percent of income) has jumped to **26 percent** of the nation’s families and moderate rent-burdens (where rent is more than 30 percent of household income) impacts **52 percent**.<sup>xvii</sup>
- **1 in 3** households are unable to afford basic adequate housing and a conservative estimate of non-housing essentials (this is nearly **50%** of renters & **25%** of homeowners).<sup>xviii</sup>

**Massive Displacements**

- **8 million families** have lost their homes to foreclosure since 2007 & recent projections are that **8-10 million more** will join them before the “market bottoms out” (that’s **1 in 5** outstanding mortgages)<sup>xix</sup>
- Over **650,000** families that received government rental assistance have been forcibly moved since 1996 because of privatization & deregulation policies.<sup>xx</sup>
- Roughly **40 million** renters moved in 2009 (root causes vary & are largely unknown).<sup>xxi</sup>

**Federal Government’s Contributions**

- **\$16 trillion** of taxpayer money has been spent to bailout banks (for mortgage investments).<sup>xxii</sup>

- **\$304 billion** of taxpayer money is lost each year to tax cuts for wealthy homeowners (75% goes to the Richest 20% and 25% to the 1%),<sup>xxiii</sup> compared to **\$33 billion** spent on rental assistance for low-income families.<sup>xxiv</sup>
- Only **1 in 4** “eligible” families in need of rental assistance ever receive it.<sup>xxv</sup> The average wait for rental assistance is **5 years**.<sup>xxvi</sup>
- The federal government has continuously issued major cuts in these safety net programs for the past 30 years, as well as related funding made available to local governments, while increasing funds for private re-development projects & tax-cut programs with limited regulation (e.g. HOPE VI, CNI, & RAD demolitions, and low-income housing tax credits).<sup>xxvii</sup> Almost **300,000** public housing units have been demolished to date and public housing has been left with a **\$20-30 billion back-log** of capital needs, which the government argues justifies major privatizations.<sup>xxviii</sup>
- *At least 250,000* of the “people-less” homes throughout the United States are currently owned by federal agencies (that insured mortgages & receives foreclosed homes in exchange for these payouts).<sup>xxix</sup> The government plans to sell these properties “in bulk” (est. \$1 billion sales each) to “market participants” with the “financial capacity.”<sup>xxx</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> This statistic is based on population, not household, and thus counts women & children with no direct ownership rights. James A. Lewis. U.S. Dep’t of Agriculture, Landownership in the United States, 1978, 1980, p. 15.

<sup>ii</sup> Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Major Uses of Land, by Class Ownership, 2002. [www.ers.usda.gov/publications/EIB14/eib14j.pdf](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/EIB14/eib14j.pdf).

<sup>iii</sup> U.S. Congress. Concentrations of Wealth in the United States. 1987.

<sup>iv</sup> Supra note 2.

<sup>vv</sup> There is no real great estimate of homelessness in the US, but this is what a 2005 study of National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty estimates... Note: National Alliance to End Homelessness estimates 1.5 additional homeless since 2009.

<sup>vi</sup> US Census 2008 (Bloomberg & several newspapers report as 19 million as of 2010).

<sup>vii</sup> The Employment Situation – July 2011, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor (July 2011).

<sup>viii</sup> See Growing Economy, Stagnant Wages, Economic Policy Institute, Jan. 7, 2004.

<sup>ix</sup> DeNavas-Walt, Carmen, Bernadette D. Proctor, and Jessica C. Smith, U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, P60-238, Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2009, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 2010.

<sup>x</sup> S&P / Case-Shiller Housing Price Index – Composite of 10, nominal prices (cited in Jonas Debatin, A Time Dependent Lead-Lag Study of House Prices and Monetary Policy, 09/2011.

<sup>xi</sup> Standard & Poors Case-Shiller Home Price Indices. 08/31/2010.

<sup>xii</sup> A Closer Look at the 2011 U.S. Rental Market, hotpads.com

<sup>xiii</sup> American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.

<sup>xiv</sup> The Recent Boom in Credit Availability has Boosted Homeownership, Federal Reserve, Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Census Bureau (graph cited on FDIC.gov).

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- <sup>xv</sup> Table 1192. Mortgage Debt Outstanding by Type of Property and Holder: 1990 to 2010, U.S. Census Bureau.
- <sup>xvi</sup> “New CoreLogic Data Shows Slight Decrease in Negative Equity.” CoreLogic press release. 07 Jun 2011.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard, What Works Rental Market Stresses, Jul. 2011.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Michael E. Stone, *Housing Affordability: One-Third of a Nation Shelter-Poor, A Right to Housing*, Economic Policy Institute, 1988.
- <sup>xix</sup> 9/20/2011 Testimony of Laurie S. Goodman, Amherst Securities Group to the Subcommittee on Housing, Transportation and Community Development of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs.
- <sup>xx</sup> *The Preservation Guide: Federal housing & Homelessness Plans*, National Low-Income Housing Coalition, 04/2010.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Press Release, Renters Four Times More Likely to Move Than Homeowners, U.S. Census Bureau, 10/16/2007.
- <sup>xxii</sup> “Opportunities Exist to Strengthen Policies and Processes for Managing Emergency Assistance,” GAO, 07/21/2011, [www.gao.gov/products/GAO-11-696](http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-11-696) (cited in Alan Grayson, *The Fed Bailouts: Something for Nothing*, Huffington Post, 12/05/11).
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Robert Carroll, et al., *The Pew Charitable Trusts, Costs & Benefits of Housing Tax Subsidies*, 06/2011, p. 1, 12. See also Peter Dreier, *Federal Housing Subsidies: Who Benefits and Why?*, A Right to Housing, Economic Policy Institute, 1988.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> This statistic includes only HUD’s budget for tenant-based & project-based Section 8 rental vouchers & public housing capital and operating funds, which are direct subsidies for renters, and not tax credits for low-income developers or cost of homeless services. See U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, *Investing in People & Places, FY 2011 Budget (2010)*.
- <sup>xxv</sup> Center on Budget & Policy Priorities, *Taking Stock of the Safety Net, Part 3: Helping Families Afford Decent Housing*, Dec. 16, 2011.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty estimates 5 years. *Simply Unacceptable: Homelessness & the Human Right to Housing in the U.S. (2011)* (citing Douglas Rice and Barbara Sard, *The Effects of the Federal Budget Squeeze on Low-Income Housing Assistance*, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 10 (February 1, 2007)
- <sup>xxvii</sup> See Western Regional Advocacy Project, *Without Housing: Decades of Federal Housing Cutbacks, Massive Homelessness, & Policy Failures (2010)*.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, *Making Public Housing Work for Families*, Huffington Post, 05/26/10.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Press Release, Federal Housing Finance Agency, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Treasury, FHFA, Treasury, HUD Seek Input on Disposition of Real Estate Owned Properties, 08/10/2011.
- <sup>xxx</sup> Request for Information: Enterprise/FHA REO Asset Disposition, 08/2011 (on file with [brittany@nesri.org](mailto:brittany@nesri.org)).