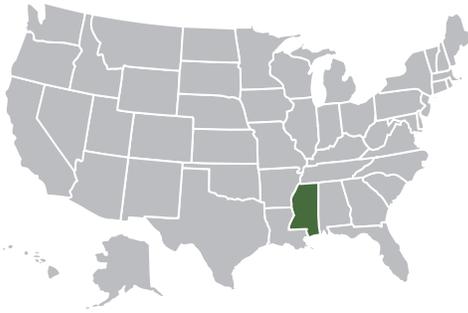


## Issue Brief

## HOUSING IN MISSISSIPPI



In 2009, the housing costs for approximately one out of four (25.2%) households in Mississippi exceeded 30% of household income. Approximately 2,800 Mississippi residents were using a homeless shelter or transitional housing on a single night in January 2009.

### What is precarious housing and homelessness?

**Precarious housing** refers to housing conditions that are unaffordable, overcrowded, or physically inadequate (e.g., no hot water). **Homelessness** refers to the state of living in emergency shelters, transitional housing, or places not meant for habitation (e.g., the streets, abandoned buildings). **Chronically homeless** persons are unaccompanied homeless individuals with a disabling condition who have either been continuously homeless for a year or more or have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.

### How many Mississippi residents are affected?

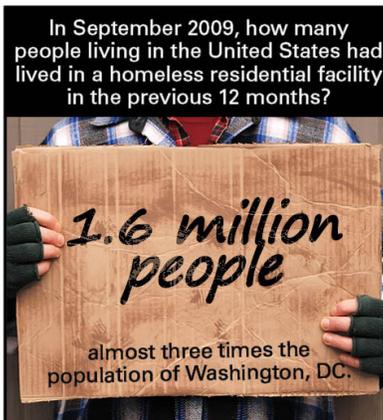
In 2009—the most recent year for which complete data are available:

- Housing cost burdens, a major stressor and risk factor for homelessness, were severe (at least 50% of income) in 78,000 (10.4%) owner-occupied households.
- The housing cost burden for an additional 111,000 (14.8%) households was moderate (30–49.9% of income).
- Overcrowding (more than one occupant per room) existed in approximately 25,000 (2.2%  $\pm$  0.3%) households.
- A small percentage of Mississippi households (0.7%  $\pm$  0.2%) lacked complete plumbing facilities.
- Of those counted as homeless on one night in January 2009, 18.7% qualified as chronically homeless.

#### WHAT IS SOCIETAL DISTRESS?

Societal distress describes living conditions that do not satisfy basic human needs, such as food, shelter, health, income, and education.

Visit [www.humanneeds.vcu.edu](http://www.humanneeds.vcu.edu) for more details.



**THE PROJECT ON SOCIETAL DISTRESS** is an initiative of the Virginia Commonwealth University Center on Human Needs, which examines the prevalence of societal distress in five domains—food security, housing, health, education, and income—and makes the information available to the public and policymakers. This research effort focuses on presenting accurate data on the number of Americans affected by these conditions and not examining the causes or proposing solutions. The Project on Societal Distress is funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

On a single night in January 2009, households with children accounted for 34.1% of homeless persons in Mississippi.

## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Precarious housing conditions and homelessness pose a threat to physical, mental, and emotional health; to personal safety; to the stability of home life; to childhood development and learning; and to the employment and productivity of the family.

## What are the trends?

From 2000 to 2009, the prevalence of severe housing cost burden in Mississippi increased from 7.2% to 10.4%.

## Who is affected?

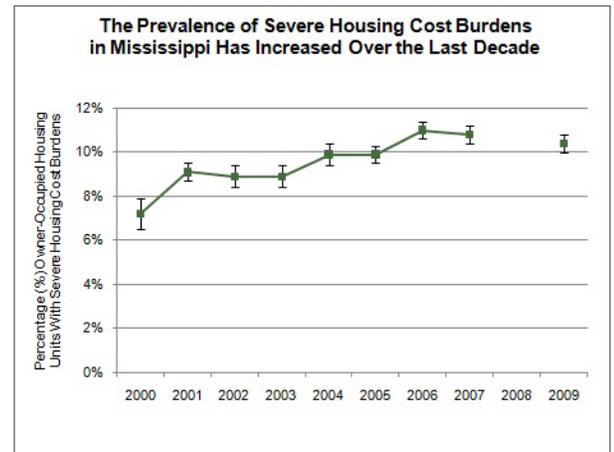
As of 2009—the most current year for which data are available:

**Seniors:** Nearly one out of every ten (9.5%  $\pm$ 1.1%) senior (age 65 and older) owner-occupied households in Mississippi was paying more than 50% of their income toward housing costs.

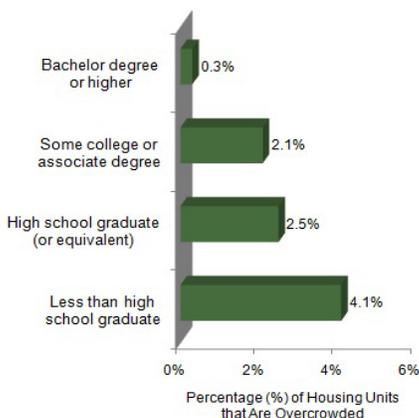
**Minorities:** Approximately 17.7% ( $\pm$ 1.6%) of black owner-occupied households experienced severe housing cost burden, more than double the rate of white households (7.4%).

**The Poor:** More than one-third (38.6%) of owner-occupied households with incomes below \$20,000 experienced severe housing cost burden compared to 1.5% ( $\pm$ 0.4%) of households with incomes of at least \$35,000.

**The Disabled:** Among persons who used Mississippi homeless shelters, 33.1% suffered from chronic substance abuse and 11.1% had a severe mental illness.



**In Mississippi, Low Educational Attainment is Associated With a Higher Risk of Household Overcrowding**



## SOURCES AND METHODS

The statistics reported here were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau's *2009 American Community Survey* and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's *2009 Mississippi Continuum of Care Homeless Populations and Subpopulations Report*. The data underwent statistical analysis by the research staff of the Virginia Commonwealth University Center on Human Needs. Analytic methods are detailed at [www.humanneeds.vcu.edu](http://www.humanneeds.vcu.edu).

**THE VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY CENTER ON HUMAN NEEDS** ([www.humanneeds.vcu.edu](http://www.humanneeds.vcu.edu)) was chartered in 2007 to provide the public and policymakers with information about the prevalence of societal distress in the United States. Its mission is to document how many Americans confront food insecurity, precarious housing or homelessness, inadequate health and health care, inferior education, and inadequate income/poverty.

For more details, visit [www.humanneeds.vcu.edu](http://www.humanneeds.vcu.edu).