

WHAT IS WORKFORCE HOUSING?

Workforce housing may sound straightforward, but it's often misunderstood. At its core, it's housing for the people who keep our communities running — the teachers, nurses, first responders, service workers, and countless others who power our local economies.

Workforce housing isn't defined by a specific building type — it can include single-family homes, townhouses, apartments, manufactured homes, and accessory dwelling units. Rather, it is defined by who it serves: individuals and families with moderate- to low-incomes who earn too much to qualify for traditional housing assistance but still struggle to afford

market-rate housing. Workforce housing helps ensure that these community members have access to affordable places to live within a reasonable distance of their jobs.

Figure 1 shows that in 2025, the median sales price of a single-family home was **5.5 times** the median household income, up from a ratio of **2.8** in 1998. Home sale prices between 2–3 times median household income is ideal. During this period, household incomes in New Hampshire grew by 130%, while home prices surged by 343%. This widening gap highlights how housing costs have far outpaced earnings, underscoring the urgent need for more workforce housing so people can afford to live where they work.

HOUSING TYPES



Single-Family



Townhouses



Apartments

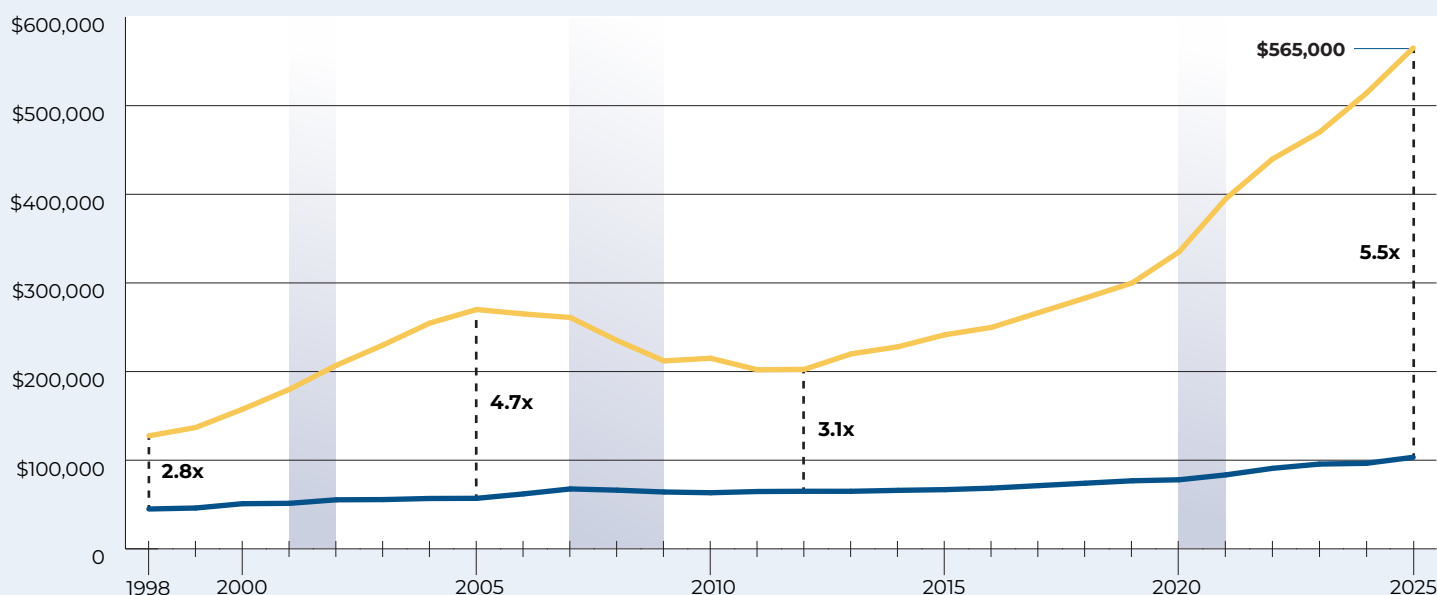


Manufactured Homes



Accessory Dwelling Units

Figure 1. Comparison of Median Household Income and Home Prices for Single-Family Homes in NH in current dollars (1998–July 2025).



- U.S. Recessions
- Median Household Income
- Median Sales Price SF Home

Source: New Hampshire Association of REALTORS

Notes: Home prices are the median sale price of all single-family homes in New Hampshire from the New Hampshire Association of Realtors. Incomes are median household incomes from U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Ratios were calculated by dividing the median home price by the median household income.

NH's Workforce Housing Law

The state's Workforce Housing Law (RSA 674:58–61) requires every community provide reasonable and realistic opportunities for the development of workforce housing, including rental and multifamily housing. The state defines workforce housing as rental housing affordable to households earning up to 60% of the area median income and for-sale housing affordable to households earning up to 100% of the area median income.



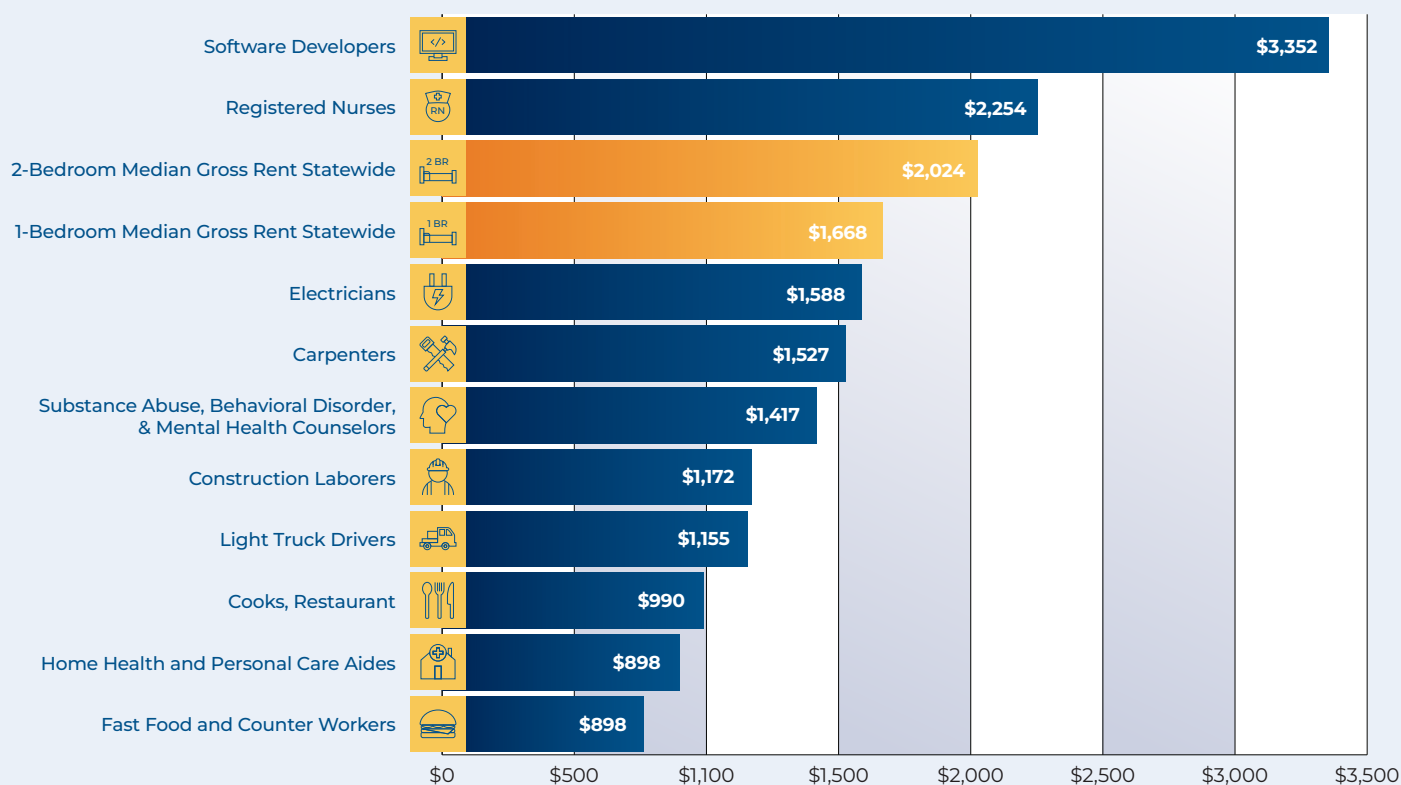
Why Is It Needed in the Granite State?

The median rent for all rental units has increased by 25% from 2020 to 2024 (CoStar). To rent a two-bedroom apartment in NH, an hourly wage earner would need to make \$38.92.

New Hampshire needs a diverse supply of housing to meet the needs of all people. Workforce housing is critical to young people early in their careers, growing families, and retirees interested in downsizing in their communities.

Figure 2 illustrates the maximum monthly rent that workers in highly demanded occupations in New Hampshire can afford based on their median hourly wages. The comparison shows that many cannot afford the 2024 median rent for a 1 or 2-bedroom apartment, underscoring the urgent need for more workforce housing.

Figure 2. Rental Housing Wage vs Median Hourly Wage Jobs Statewide with Largest Projected Growth (2020–2030).



Source(s): New Hampshire Employment Security, New Hampshire Occupational Employment & Wages - 2024.
New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs, FY24 Final High Demand Occupations List with WorkKeys, July 2024

Note: Rent affordability assumes 30% of gross monthly income assuming a 40-hour work week.
Median hourly wage comes from NH Dept. of Employment Security. To calculate the monthly median wage, the median hourly wage was calculated by multiplying by 40 to calculate the annual wage and then multiplied by 52 and then divided by 12 to calculate the monthly median wage and then multiplied by 30% to calculate the monthly affordable rent.



HOW DO WE TALK ABOUT HOUSING? A Grassroots Guide to Community Engagement and Advocacy.
Want to start a conversation about housing in your community? Our guide *How Do We Talk About Housing?* can help.



HOUSING FACT OR FICTION
Episodes 1 and 2 of Housing Fact or Fiction focus on what and who is workforce housing.

