

Connecticut Housing Accessibility and Affordability

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After growing through most of the past decade, Connecticut's population is projected to decline over the next two decades, reflecting three key demographic trends:

- relatively more migration out of the state than into it
- an aging population
- a decline in the white population

Although the total number of households with very low incomes will decline through 2040, the decrease will not be enough to close the critical affordability gap the state faces. To fill the 87,000-unit gap in affordable housing for households with very low incomes, Connecticut must address several challenges. These include decreased housing construction rates and expiring Section 8 project-based rental assistance, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, and other forms of assistance.

Housing that is accessible to people with disabilities is also a need: the number of households that includes someone with a disability is projected to increase 22 percent by 2035.

BOX 1

Key Findings

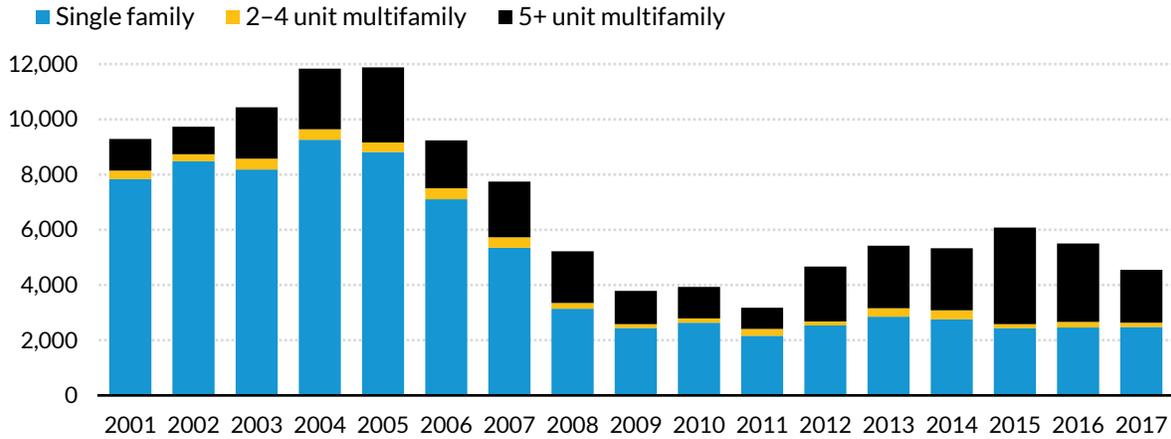
- From 2001 to 2017, Connecticut's **single-family housing permitting declined 68 percent**, while large (5+ unit) **multifamily permitting increased 67 percent**.
- Only **24 percent of white households rent their homes**, in contrast with **61 and 66 percent of Black and Latino households**, respectively.
- **Half the state's 470,000 renter households are cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened**, compared with only 28 percent of homeownership households.
- **More than a third of households with very low or low incomes have a member with a disability.**

Housing Tenure and Affordability

Applications for new housing construction permitting across the state decreased 51 percent from 2001 to 2017. Single-family housing, which represented 55 percent of new permits in 2017, dropped 68 percent, while large multifamily housing (42 percent of permits in 2017) increased 67 percent (figure 1). Small multifamily homes represent 3 percent of permits.

FIGURE 1

Housing Permits Issued Annually by Units in Building, Connecticut



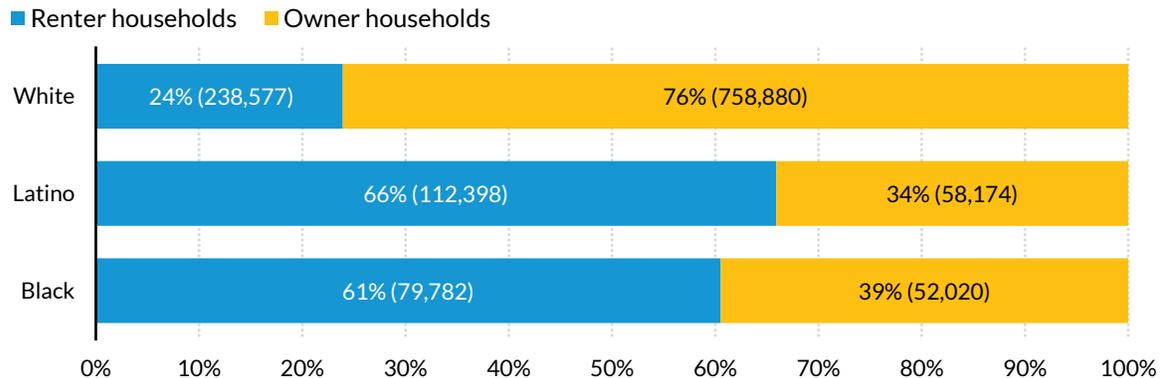
Source: Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) annual construction report data, 2000–17: “Housing & Income Data,” DECD, accessed March 1, 2021, https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/About_DECD/Research-and-Publications/01_Access-Research/Exports-and-Housing-and-Income-Data.

Note: These data show housing units (not buildings) permitted, not necessarily constructed.

White households represent most households in the state, and 24 percent of them rent their homes. In contrast, Black households and Latino households make up 10 and 12 percent of households, respectively, and 61 percent of Black households and 66 percent of Latino households rent (figure 2).

FIGURE 2

Household Tenure Type, Connecticut, by Race/Ethnicity, 2018



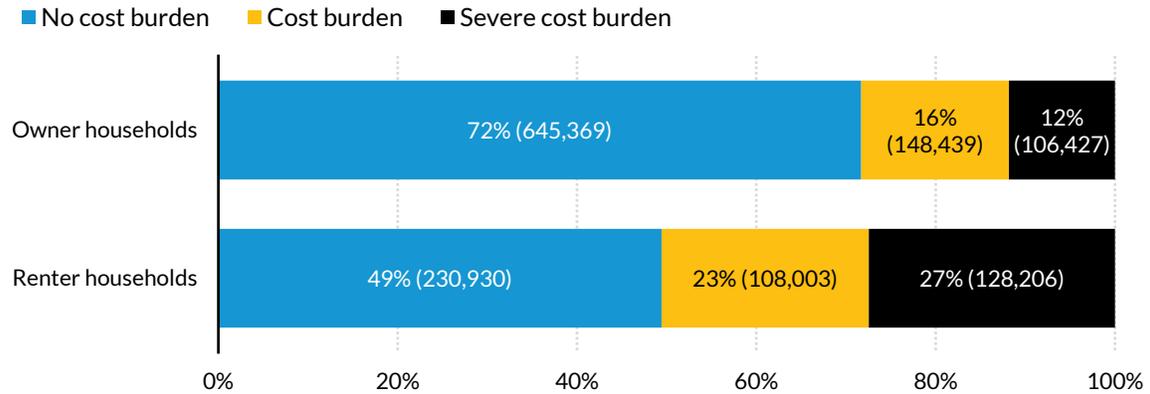
Source: American Community Survey 2014–18 data.

Note: White and Black households are non-Latino.

Across the state, one-third of households rent, while two-thirds own their homes. Among renter households, 23 percent are cost-burdened, meaning they pay 30 to 49 percent of their income on housing costs. Twenty-seven percent are severely cost-burdened, meaning they spend 50 percent or more of their income on housing costs. These shares are significantly lower for homeowners, with 16 percent of owners cost-burdened and 12 percent severely cost-burdened (figure 3).

FIGURE 3

Shares of Cost-Burdened Households by Homeownership Status, Connecticut, 2018



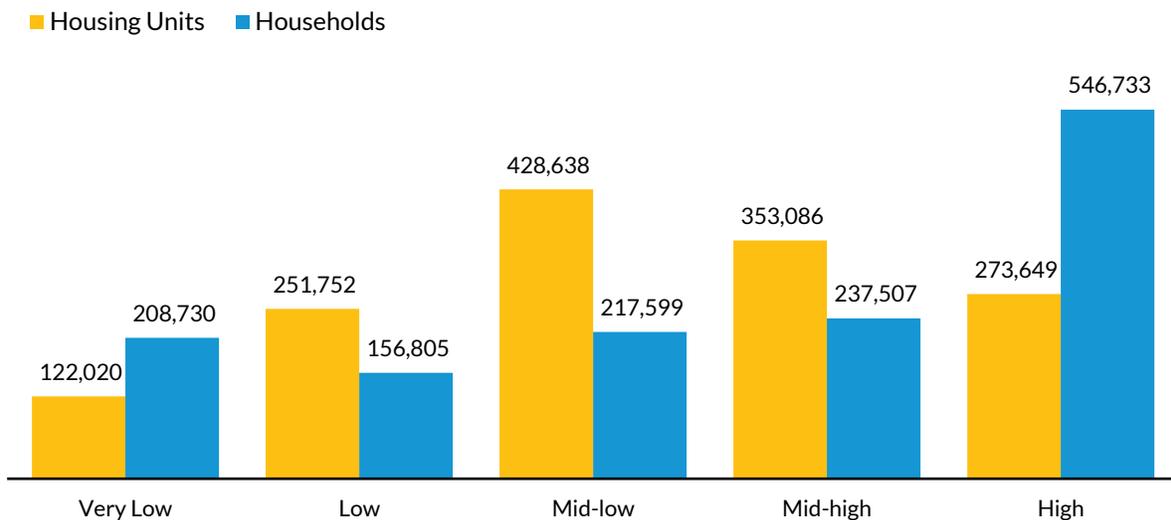
Source: American Community Survey 2014–18 data.

Note: Cost burden = spending 30 to 49 percent of income on housing costs; severe cost burden = spending 50 percent or more of income on housing costs.

Cost burdens stem from households’ inability to find housing affordable to them, which relates to the supply and location of housing in the state. Connecticut has only 122,020 housing units affordable for the 208,730 households earning 30 percent or less of the median income in the county where they live (respective county median income), leaving 42 percent of these households to find more expensive housing (figure 4).

FIGURE 4

Comparison of Housing Needs and Supply by Income/Housing Cost Band, Connecticut, 2018



Sources: Authors’ analyses of American Community Survey and US Census Bureau data.

Note: Very low income = 30 percent or less of respective county median income (CMI); low income = 31–50 percent of respective CMI; mid-low income = 51–80 percent of respective CMI; mid-high income = 81–120 percent of respective CMI; high income = 121 percent or more of respective CMI.

Federal and state-funded assisted housing programs help fill the gap between incomes and housing costs (table 1). The US Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Housing Choice Voucher Program aids the largest number of households in the state (43,886), followed by its Section 8 project-based rental assistance and vouchers (27,682) and public housing units (14,238). The state offers additional support through its moderate rental housing (5,402) and deed-restriction (4,872) programs.

TABLE 1
Assisted Housing Units by Subsidy Sources, Connecticut

Subsidy source	Units
Federal	
Housing Choice Voucher Program	43,886
Section 8: project-based rental assistance and vouchers	27,682
Section 8: Single Room Occupancy Program	67
Public housing	14,238
Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)	10,811
FHA–HUD multifamily mortgages	12,020
HOME investment partnerships	2,906
Tax Credit Assistance Program	910
Section 515	1,702
Section 202	275
Section 236	63
State	
Deed-restricted	4,872
Moderate rental housing program	5,402
Bond-financed housing	768
Limited equity cooperatives	498
Community housing development corporation housing	356
Restrictive covenants	1,034
Private rental investment mortgage and equity program	660
Mutual housing	176
Affordable housing program	467
Urban Homesteading Program	14
Small units rental program	87
Disability-accessible	
Housing for elderly persons program	13,311
Congregate housing for the elderly	9,382
Congregate housing for the elderly: assisted living	226
LIHTC supportive housing	618
Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing	805
Federally assisted mobility accessible units	480
Federally assisted hearing/vision accessible units	278
HUD 811	70

Sources: “Policy Basics: Introduction to the Federal Budget Process,” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, April 2, 2020, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/introduction-to-the-federal-budget-process>; National Housing Preservation Database; US Department of Housing and Urban Development; Connecticut Department of Housing 2019 data; Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, Connecticut Department of Housing, and Housing and Urban Development Agency 2019 data; American Community Survey 2015–19 population data.

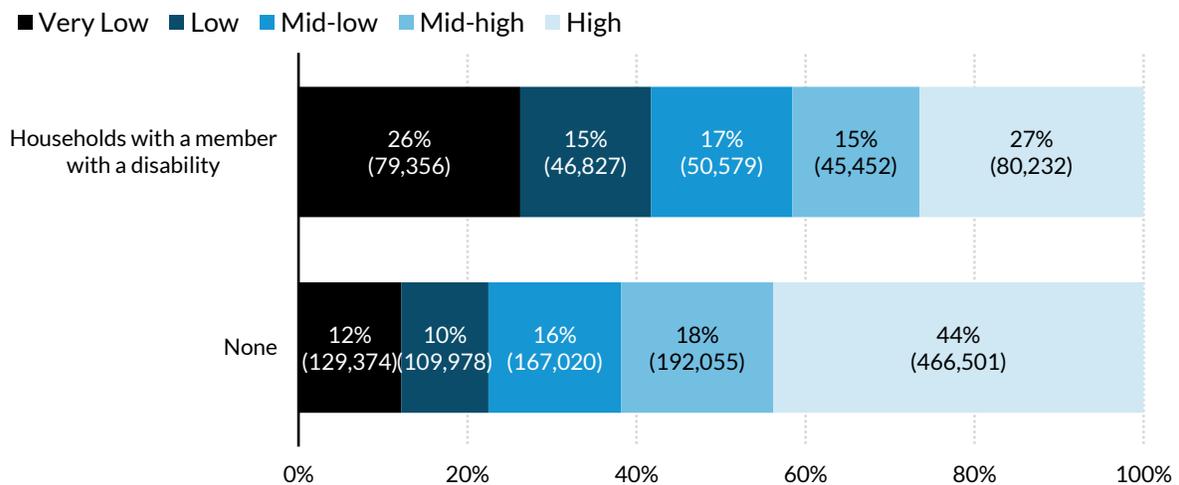
Notes: Public housing contains Section 8 Rental Assistance Demonstration units. FHA-HUD = Federal Housing Administration-US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Many subsidies and programs overlap. For example, households use vouchers to afford rents in Low-Income Housing Tax Credit units, and those units use Connecticut’s moderate rental housing program grants to cover development costs. This makes determining the total number of assisted units difficult. However, we know that in Connecticut, there is only about 1 subsidy for every 3 households with very low or low incomes, meaning that at least two-thirds of households with low incomes are not receiving housing assistance.

Housing Accessibility and Affordability for Residents with Disabilities

Forty-two percent of all households with at least one member with a disability across the state have incomes that are 50 percent or less of the respective county median. They represent 35 percent of all households with very low or low incomes in the state (figure 5), meaning that to meet accessibility and affordability needs, more than a third of all assisted housing units should meet basic disability accessibility standards.

FIGURE 5
Households That Include Someone with a Disability by Income Band, Connecticut, 2018



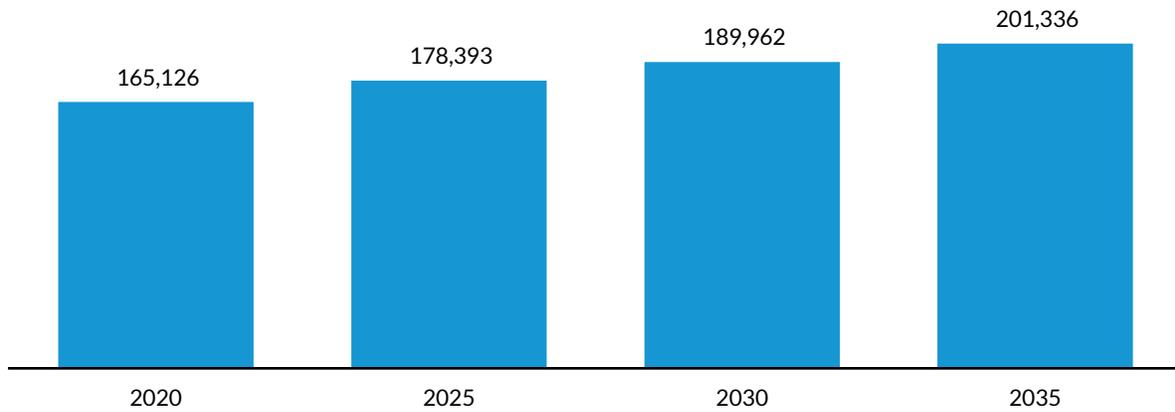
Source: American Community Survey IPUMS 2018 data.

Note: Very low income = 30 percent or less of respective county median income (CMI); low income = 31–50 percent of respective CMI; mid-low income = 51–80 percent of respective CMI; mid-high income = 81–120 percent of respective CMI; high income = 121 percent or more of respective CMI.

Between the private market and federal and state programs (using the limited documentation of accessible units available), Connecticut has at most 25,170 units for households with differing disabilities (table 1). Most of the accessible units are for older adults (22,919). The number of households with a member with a disability is expected to increase 22 percent from 2020 to 2035 (figure 6). This increase is mainly because of the aging population.

FIGURE 6

Projected Households That Include Someone with a Disability, Connecticut



Source: Authors' analysis of American Community Survey IPUMS data.

Acknowledgments

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