

HOPE Service Area HOUSING FACT SHEET



HOUSING VIRGINIA

INFORM | CONNECT | UNLOCK

Income growth isn't keeping up with rent increases.

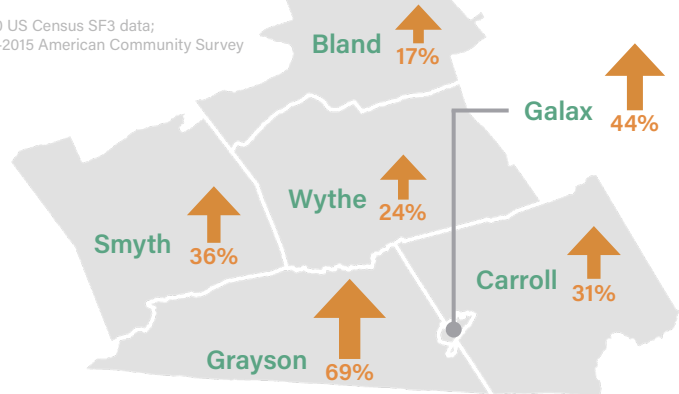
Between 2000 and 2015, the cost to rent a home in southwest Virginia increased much more than the average wages earned by families.

For example, in **Grayson County**, the median incomes grew by only **4%**, while rents rose **73%**.

From 2000 to 2015:	Increase in median income	Increase in median rent	How much rents have outpaced income
Bland County	49%	66%	17%
Carroll County	14%	45%	31%
Grayson County	4%	73%	69%
Smyth County	26%	62%	36%
Wythe County	28%	52%	24%
Galax City	8%	52%	44%

How much have average rents gone up more than average incomes?
(2000-2015)

2000 US Census SF3 data;
2011-2015 American Community Survey



In the HOPE service area:

4,515

Households eligible for and in need of assistance¹

1,565

Homes with rent assistance²

Only **1 in 3** households that need help finding an affordable home get the assistance they need.

¹ All households earning <80% of Area Median Income that pay >30% of their income on rent (i.e., cost burdened).
² Includes all housing choice vouchers, public housing units, and LIHTC units.

2010-2014 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy data; U.S. HUD; VHDA

Our current resources can't meet today's demand for secure homes.

In FY 2016-2017, HOPE provided direct housing assistance to **213 households** and met the needs of over **3,000 individuals** who entered their centralized homelessness intake.

Despite these efforts, we still need help making safe homes for thousands more of our neighbors.

Old, unsafe mobile homes are the only affordable option for many.

There are nearly **10,000** mobile homes in HOPE's service area. About **1 in 5** were built before federal safety and efficiency standards became mandatory in 1976.

With some of the lowest rents, these homes are the only choice left for families still on waiting lists for assistance.

Mobile homes built before 1976 often have leaking roofs, little insulation, and dangerous heating sources.

Virginia Center for Housing Research;
2011-2015 American Community Survey

Over **1,900 pre-1976 mobile homes** are in the region.

Placed end-to-end, they would stretch from Wytheville to Marion – about **22 miles**.



Did you know?

There are over **5,300** vacant, abandoned homes in the HOPE service area – even excluding those that are for sale, for rent, or used seasonally. 2011-2015 American Community Survey

Helping Overcome Poverty's Existence, Inc. (HOPE) is a human services organization reducing the conditions that contribute to poverty and providing tools to build community sustainability and independence throughout southwest Virginia.

Mount Rogers Community Services Board provides a wide array of community services for individuals with mental health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and substance use disorders.

Housing Virginia is a broad based, statewide partnership dedicated to advancing a positive image of affordable housing by informing community discussions, connecting housing to other critical issues, and unlocking opportunities.

www.wythehope.org
276-228-6280

www.mountrogerscsb.com
276-223-3200

www.housingvirginia.org
804-915-7899

We know how important a stable home is. **Let's make sure all our neighbors have one.**

"It was one thing after another," Dana F. said.

Often, she and her mother would work multiple jobs to help raise and provide for her growing boys, without receiving the tens of thousands of dollars owed to her in child support. "We didn't always have everything we wanted, but we had everything we needed."

Through the last couple decades, HOPE has helped Dana make ends meet with rent and electric several times.

"They've helped us in times of need," she said. "It's a comfort to know we have a place to lay our heads at night."

Last fall, her hours were cut at a local restaurant, and unable to pay rent, she was evicted. HOPE was able to place her in emergency shelter at a local hotel while she sought more secure housing through our **Rapid Re-housing program**.

In a reflection of the shortage of affordable units in the county, **it took her 105 days to find an apartment** which passed inspection. The average number of days spent in emergency shelter has been steadily increasing, from below 20 days to nearly 70 days!

Our referral list of area landlords has decreased dramatically, notes Beth Horton, HOPE's housing counselor working with the Emergency Shelter and Rapid Re-housing programs.

Just since November, there are **12 fewer landlords** on the publicly available list, down from 26. While incomes are rising, so are rents, making units both less affordable and available.

Dana battles depression, which makes keeping a steady job difficult. "Most people [without depression] don't understand," she said, "the struggle it is mentally to prepare yourself to go to work."

Keeping her boys and the precious memory of her mother in the forefront of her mind helps her stay focused on her goals: saving enough for a place to live and spending precious time with her family.

When people tell her, "I don't know how you do it," that makes her feel good, she said, and gives her spirit a boost to persevere. "I have eyes watching me. I can't quit. I can't let them see me quit."

She keeps reminding herself that this is all just a season and that there will be better days on the other side of this valley. "I have faith," she said, **"sometimes it gets thin—but you gotta have hope for a better day."**



Dana and her family.

We have proven solutions to help our neighbors.

Rapid Re-housing and **Permanent Supportive Housing** are both evidence-based solutions that divert housing insecure persons away from shelters, emergency rooms, and jails – and into safe homes paired with social services.

In Virginia, **93%** of all persons in PSH successfully stay in stable homes, greatly increasing their chances for a productive life. HOPE and MRCSB are implementing these solutions in our community today.

Virginia is making progress.

In 2017, following recommendations from the Deeds Commission, the General Assembly **doubled funding** for PSH targeted to assisting those with serious mental illnesses throughout Virginia.

Lawmakers also retained the funding increase for the Virginia Housing Trust Fund, which accelerates homelessness reduction and the production of affordable homes.

But the work isn't done.

Over **5,000** Virginians need immediate access to safe and permanent homes, including hundreds in Southwest Virginia. Many need a little extra help to be successful, like the treatment and counseling services provided by HOPE and MRCSB.

"DBHDS Permanent Supportive Housing Update,"
Virginia Dept. of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services (Dec. 2017)



HARVa

HOPE is a proud member of **Housing Action for Rural Virginia (HARVa)**, a coalition of nonprofit rural housing providers developing strategic solutions for rural Virginia's unique housing challenges. Contact admin@housingvirginia.org to learn more.