



Hello!

Thank you for your ongoing support of Keystone! I know how much you care about our community and your neighbors and **I am grateful for all of the ways you step up to help!**

Over the past few months, supporters like you have asked me this question: **With low unemployment rates and a healthy economy, why do people still need a food shelf?**

Perhaps this question has crossed your mind too.

The simple answer is that thousands of people in our community are living paycheck to paycheck and one \$600 unexpected expense or an unexpected lay-off creates a household budget crisis.

Below are some [statistics recently shared with Keystone by the Minnesota Housing Partnership \(MHP\)](#) that explain why so many in our community are one unexpected crisis away from needing help from Keystone's food shelf.

Housing costs are increasing faster than wages, making it increasingly difficult for people to make ends meet. For example, the fair market rent for a 2-bedroom apartment in Ramsey County is \$1,027 but the amount median-income renters can afford is only \$792.



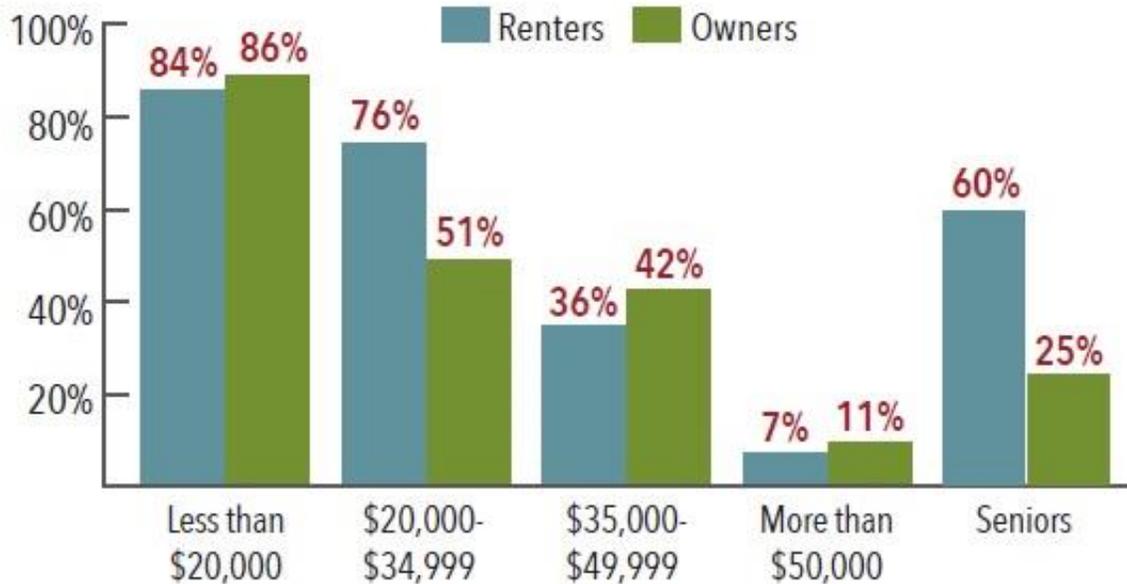
The cost of a median-value home or apartment in Ramsey County exceeds the average income being earned. **A person working a minimum wage job would need to work 75 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment in Ramsey County.**



These wage and housing trends are requiring more and more households to spend 30% or more of their income on housing.

COST BURDEN

Percentage of households paying more than 30% of their income toward housing



Keystone data indicates that our food shelf participants spend an average of 57% of their income on housing. **An increase in housing costs puts people at risk of being unable to afford basic necessities like groceries, clothing, transportation, medical care, etc.**

High housing costs are the main reason more than 24,000 people used Keystone's food shelves last year. **Food shelves help families and seniors stretch their monthly income so they can sustain a stable household.**

The generosity of supporters like you is why Keystone is able to say "yes" when some one comes to our food shelf looking for support. **We can not do this work without you.** I am so grateful for your support.

If you have any questions about the needs facing people in our community or if you want to hear more about why food shelves are still part of the safety net, please call or email me anytime. I'm always happy to talk with our supporters!

Thank you,

Mary

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Wondering what you can do to support local food shelves?



March is a great time to give to food shelves because your contribution will have any even bigger impact.

Keystone is a partner food shelf in the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign and we invite you to support your neighbors in need this month. **Throughout the month, donations –both dollars and pounds of food – will be matched by Minnesota FoodShare and provide even more support to families in need!**

Contribute food, give a cash donation, hold a food drive at your work place, encourage your faith community to get involved, invite a friend to volunteer with you -- find your way to support food shelves this March.

[Click Here to Donate Today](#)

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