

Large and Small Households

The portion of Vermont households comprised of 1-2 people reached 70% in 2022, and the average household size fell to 2.3 from 2.6 in 1990.¹ Only 16% of Vermont households have four or more people, as of 2022 Census Bureau estimates.

Small Households Exceed Larger Households and Continue to Grow at a Faster Pace

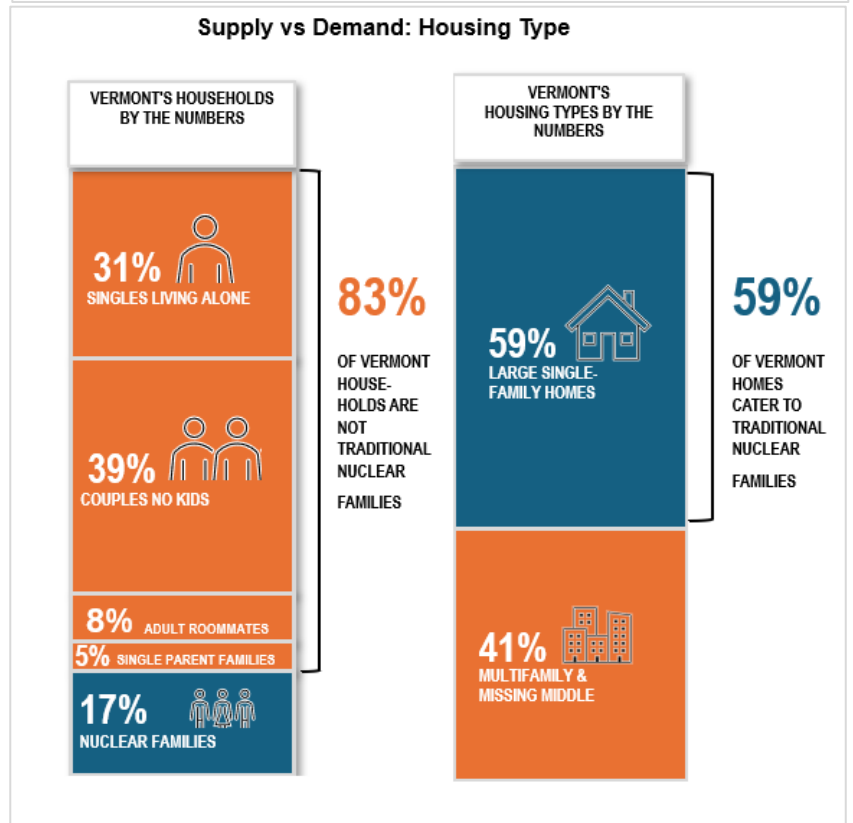
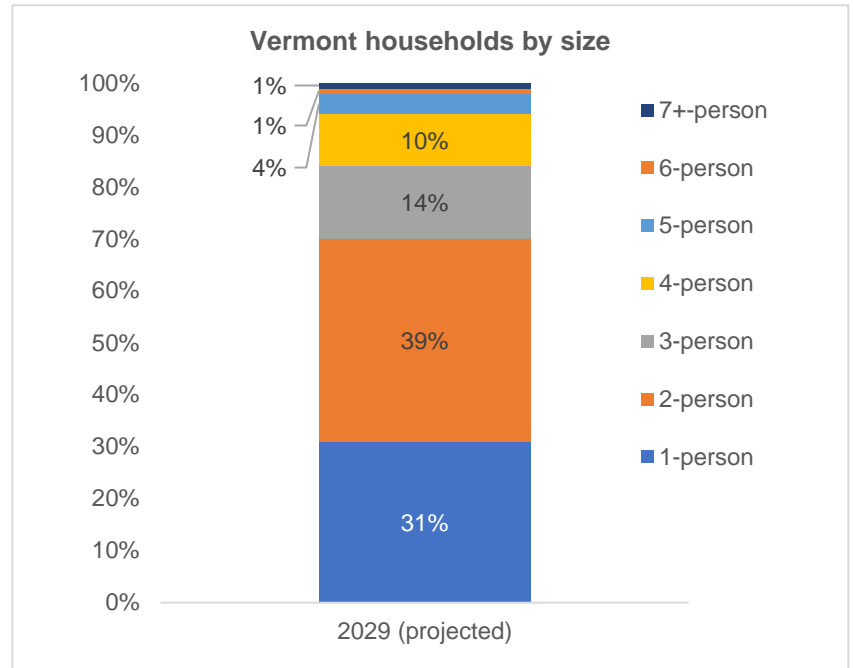
Vermont has the second-smallest average household size of any state after Maine. As of 2022, there were approximately 187,000 small households of 1-2 people in Vermont. Between 2010 and 2022, the number of 1-person households expanded by over 14% and 2-person households, by 8%. Meanwhile, households with 3 or more people contracted by 10%.

As Vermont’s average household size decreases and the mix of homes in its housing stock remains largely unchanged, it is becoming more common for the number of bedrooms in a home to outnumber the people in the household. Vermont’s stock of 138,000 1- to 2-bedroom homes² is far less than its 187,000 1- to 2-person households. When residents live in larger homes than they need or want, they are likely to incur costs that reduce the home’s long-term affordability. At a minimum, the costs of home heating and cooling, as well as home maintenance, are likely to raise the total monthly cost of living in a home that is larger than the household needs.

Similar to national trends, only 17% of Vermont households today are nuclear families, comprised of parents living with children. The remaining 83% are people living alone, couples with no kids, adults living with roommates and single-parent families. These small households face a housing stock dominated by large, single-family houses that comprise 59% of all homes across the state.³

Overcrowding

About 4,200 (or 2%) of Vermont households live in overcrowded homes. These homes are defined as those with fewer rooms than household members. For example, a one-bedroom home with a living room and kitchen has three rooms. Thus, it would be considered overcrowded if the household had four or more members. About half of these households (2,154) have more than 1.5 people per room, which indicates severe overcrowding.⁴ Renter



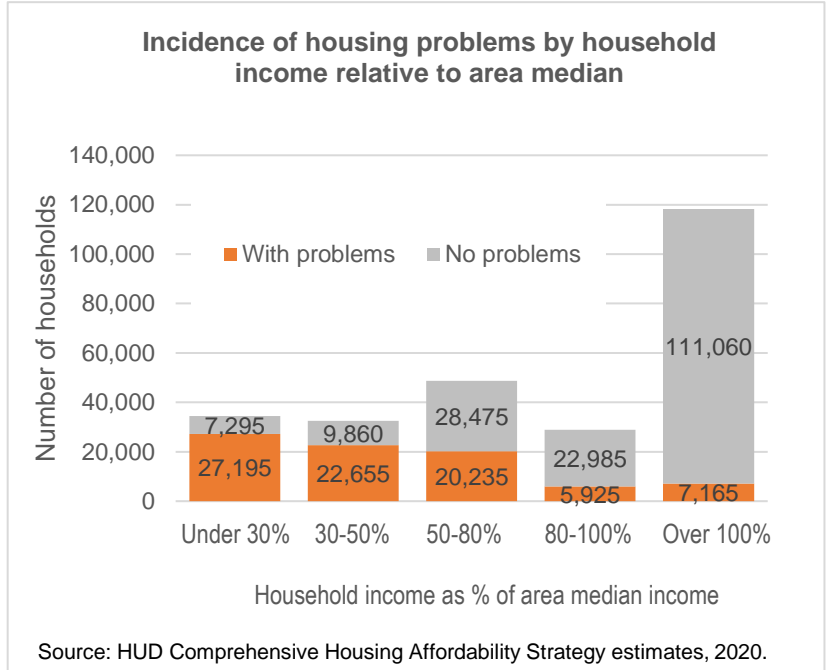


households experience overcrowding at over three times the rate of homeowners, with 3.4% of renter households overcrowded versus just under 1% of owner households. Households headed by someone under 35 years of age are also more likely to be overcrowded, with 4% of all households in this demographic overcrowded.⁵ Overcrowding typically occurs when a household cannot afford or cannot find a home large enough to accommodate it.

Housing Problems Among Household Types

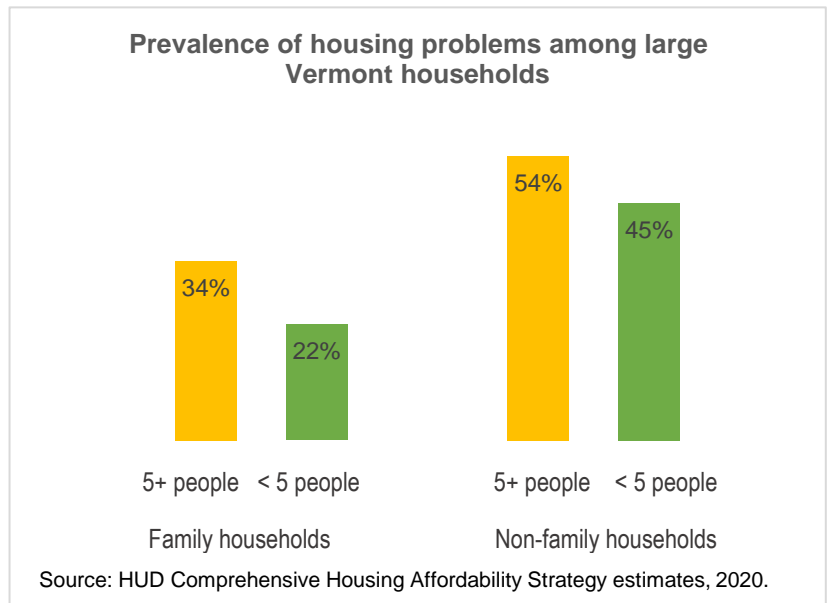
Although they are far outnumbered by smaller households, large households have a higher likelihood of experiencing housing problems. Housing problems include living in a home that lacks a complete kitchen or plumbing facilities, in an overcrowded home, and housing costs above 30% of household income (i.e. “cost burdened”). A household is categorized as having a housing problem if it has any one or more of these four problems.⁶ Cost burden is the most common housing problem.⁷

Housing problems are more prevalent among low-income households (less than 80% of the median), with 79% of all extremely low-income households (under 30% median) experiencing housing problems compared with 6% of households with incomes over 100% of the median.



Large Non-Family Households are More Likely to Have Housing Problems

Although non-family households represent a relatively small share of overall Vermont households, they are more likely to have housing problems than family households.⁸ Over half of large non-family households have at least one housing problem, compared with roughly one-third of large-family households.





Notes

- ¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2018-2022 (Table B25010) from [housingdata.org](https://www.housingdata.org)
- ² U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year estimates, 2018-2022 (Table B25042) from [housingdata.org](https://www.housingdata.org)
- ³ Based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau and assumes that defines “large, single-family houses” as homes with 3 or more bedrooms and “nuclear families” as households comprised of couples living with children under 18. Concept is from the AARP publication entitled “Making Room.”
- ⁴ U.S. Census Bureau 2022 Public Use Microdata Sample.
- ⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2018-2022 (Table B25015)
- ⁶ Overcrowding is defined here as having more than 1 person per room of the unit. Cost burden is defined as monthly housing costs (including utilities) exceeding 30% of monthly income.
- ⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year estimates, 2018-2022 (Table B25070, B25091)
- ⁸ Non-family households are householders living alone or exclusively with nonrelatives. Unmarried couple households, whether opposite-sex or same-sex, with no relatives of the householder are tabulated in nonfamily households.

This fact sheet is part of the **Vermont Housing Needs Assessment 2025-2029** completed in June 2024 for the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development. Related information is available in companion fact sheets and the comprehensive, more detailed report.

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