

FOR RELEASE NOVEMBER 20, 2025 4:10 A.M. PACIFIC TIME

The Housing Affordability Crisis Is Accelerating Fastest in Rural America

- *Rural homebuyers need to earn \$75,000 to afford the typical home, up from \$36,000 before the pandemic.*
- *The median home sale price in rural areas is up 61% from before the pandemic, compared with a 49% increase in suburban areas and a 46% gain in urban areas.*
- *The median household income in rural areas has climbed 33%, less than the 37% increase in suburban areas and the 39% uptick in urban areas.*

SEATTLE — Nov. 20, 2025 — Homebuyers need to earn an annual income of \$74,508 to afford the median-priced home in rural U.S. counties. That's up 105.8% from before the pandemic, when rural buyers needed to earn \$36,206, according to a new [report](#) from [Redfin](#), the real estate brokerage powered by Rocket.

By comparison, the income needed to afford a home in suburban counties has risen 90.9% (to \$102,120 from \$53,482), and the income needed to afford a home in urban counties has climbed 87.5% (to \$118,300 from \$63,103). Rural America has been hit by a one-two punch of rising home prices and lagging incomes, and as a result has seen housing affordability erode faster than big cities and suburbs.

This is based on a Redfin analysis that compares the third quarter of 2025 with the third quarter of 2019. Redfin considers a home affordable if a buyer taking out a mortgage spends no more than 30% of their income on their monthly housing payment. The analysis uses MLS median home sale price data, prevailing mortgage rates and property-tax payments, and U.S. Census Bureau data on incomes.

Homebuyers in rural areas have faced relatively large jumps in home prices, which is one reason affordability has eroded. The median sale price in rural counties is \$280,900, up 60.5% from \$175,000 before the pandemic. By comparison, suburban counties have seen a 48.9% increase (to \$385,000 from \$258,500) and urban counties have experienced a 46.2% gain (to \$446,000 from \$305,000).

Income growth also hasn't kept up. The median household income in rural counties is \$69,307, up 33.3% from \$52,002 before the pandemic. By comparison, suburban counties have seen a 36.8% gain (to \$88,627 from \$64,782) and urban counties have seen a 39.3% gain (to \$89,784 from \$64,468).

Big cities fell out of favor during the pandemic, when scores of Americans moved to rural and suburban areas in search of space, privacy and access to nature. Some were seeking a lower cost of living, while others were buying up pricey vacation homes in places like Lake Tahoe. Record-low mortgage rates and remote work were the forces that empowered millions to relocate. The pandemic homebuying frenzy that swept through rural and suburban areas sent home prices soaring, leaving many communities grappling with an affordability crisis that

persists today. Rural areas often only have a handful of homes for sale, meaning homebuyers frequently compete with one another—another factor that drives up prices.

“During the pandemic, many buyers came to New Hampshire from out of state—places like New York, Texas, California, and Seattle. They often had larger budgets than locals and were able to pay above the asking price, which helped them win bidding wars and purchase properties in the [Lakes Region](#),” said [Julia Martinage](#), a [Redfin Premier](#) real estate agent in New Hampshire. “A lot of those people are now moving back to where they came from and being replaced by locals or people from border states like Massachusetts. I’m seeing a lot of young couples and families moving to rural areas from cities like [Nashua](#) and [Manchester](#). They want land, chickens, quiet—a better quality of life.”

Rural Areas Continue to Attract Homebuyers Because They Remain Relatively Affordable

While rural areas have seen the fastest uptick in home prices in recent years, they remain affordable compared to many suburban and urban areas—one reason people continue to move to rural America.

A household on the median income in rural counties would need to spend 32.3% of their earnings on housing to buy the median-priced home. While that’s up from 20.9% before the pandemic, it remains lower than the share in suburban and urban areas. In suburban counties, a household on the median income would need to spend 34.6% of their income to buy the typical home, and in urban counties, it would need to spend 39.5%.

A rule of thumb in personal finance is to spend no more than 30% of income on housing, but that has become less realistic as housing costs have climbed.

“Rural America isn’t as affordable as it once was, but the silver lining is that unlike many urban areas, there’s still room to build homes,” said Redfin Senior Economist [Asad Khan](#). “Adding more housing can ease the affordability crunch and also make room for more people, which can boost local economies.”

Governments in some states are actively seeking to combat the rural housing shortage through building. New York, for example, just invested \$50 million in a program that will build manufactured housing, which is typically cheaper and quicker to construct.

New Hampshire Has Seen the Biggest Increase in Income Needed to Afford a Rural Home

Homebuyers need to earn an annual income of \$119,361 to afford the median-priced home in rural New Hampshire. That’s up 141.4% from before the pandemic—a bigger increase than rural areas in any other state Redfin analyzed. It’s followed by neighboring Vermont and Maine, which saw respective increases of 139.2% and 137.3%.

These states top the list because they’ve seen the largest increases in home prices. The median rural home sale price in New Hampshire is up 88.3% from before the pandemic—a bigger

increase than any other state Redfin analyzed. Next came Vermont and Maine, with respective increases of 86.6% and 85.1%.

To view the full report, including charts and additional state-level data, please visit:

<https://www.redfin.com/news/suburban-urban-rural-q3-2025>

About Redfin

Redfin is a technology-driven real estate company with the country's most-visited real estate brokerage website. As part of Rocket Companies (NYSE: RKT), Redfin is creating an integrated homeownership platform from search to close to make the dream of homeownership more affordable and accessible for everyone. Redfin's clients can see homes first with on-demand tours, easily apply for a home loan with Rocket Mortgage, and save thousands in fees while working with a top local agent.

You can find more information about Redfin and get the latest housing market data and research at [Redfin.com/news](https://www.redfin.com/news). For more information about Rocket Companies, visit [RocketCompanies.com](https://www.RocketCompanies.com).

Contact Redfin

Redfin Journalist Services:

Angela Cherry

press@redfin.com

###