



Census 91 Fast Facts

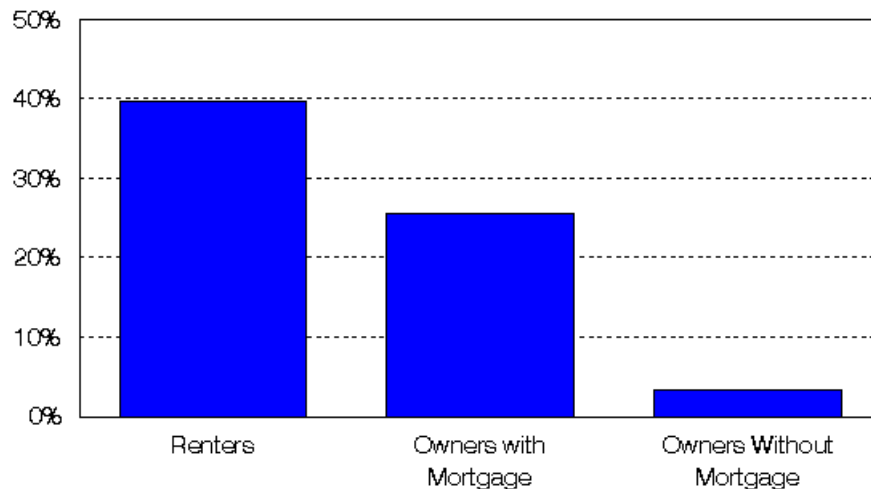
Issue 31: Housing Affordability

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The threshold of housing affordability is generally considered to be 30 per cent of household income. If more than 30 per cent of household income is spent on housing costs, it is likely that inadequate funds will be available for other necessities, such as food, clothing, and transportation.

In 1991, in British Columbia, renter households were more likely to spend at least 30 per cent of their household income on housing than home-owning households. Almost 40 per cent of renters were in this category compared to only 14 per cent of homeowners. The difference is less extreme when homeowners without mortgages are omitted. Almost 26 per cent of homeowners with a mortgage spent at least 30 per cent of their household income on housing, but only 3 per cent of homeowners without a mortgage spent that much.

Households Spending 30 Per Cent or More
of Their Income on Shelter
British Columbia, 1991



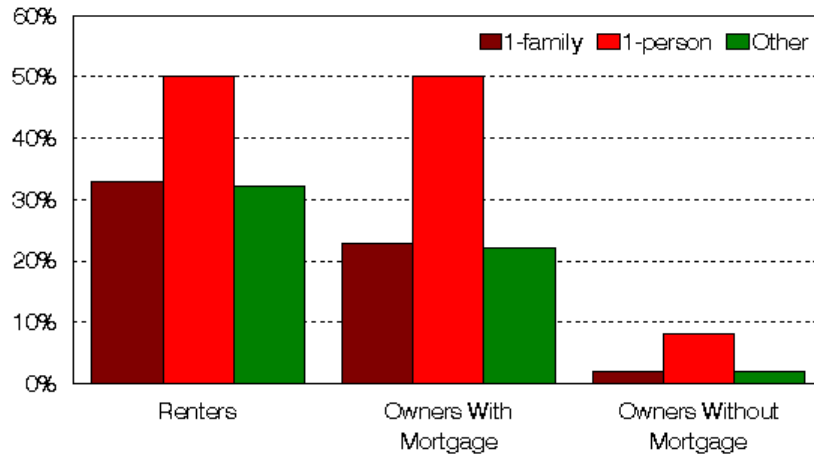
Source: Statistics Canada

The situation was reversed with respect to average monthly cost of housing, where the cost was higher for homeowners than for renters. The average cost was \$637 for homeowners, versus only \$606 for renters. The reason for this apparent contradiction is that the average household income of renter households was substantially lower than that of homeowners. The average income of a renter household was \$32,817, while that of a home-owning household was \$55,731. This averages to a housing expenditure of about 18 per cent of income for renters, and only 14 per cent for homeowners.

People who lived alone were the most likely to spend more than 30 per cent of their income on housing. Half the renters, and half the homeowners with a mortgage who lived alone were in this

category. Only 8 per cent of homeowners without a mortgage spent that much of their income on housing. Overall, about 38 per cent of people who lived alone spent at least 30 per cent of their income on housing. By comparison, less than 25 per cent of households as a whole are in the same bracket.

Households Spending 30 Per Cent or More of Their Income on Shelter, by Household Type
British Columbia, 1991



Source: Statistics Canada

British Columbia is fifth behind the Northwest Territories, Ontario, Alberta and the Yukon in terms of average monthly shelter costs for homeowners. The range of costs is from a high of \$900 in the Northwest Territories, to a low of \$418 in Newfoundland. British Columbia is second only to Ontario in terms of average monthly shelter costs for renters. The range is from a high of \$618 in Ontario, to a low of \$422 in Saskatchewan. British Columbia had the highest proportion of renters spending more than 30 per cent of their income on shelter. Only Ontario had a higher proportion of homeowners with a mortgage who were in this category.

Average Monthly Shelter Costs
Canada, Provinces and Territories, 1991

