

***Out of Reach* New Jersey Fact Sheet**

New Jersey is the fifth most expensive state in the U.S. for renters, with only Hawaii, California, New York and Massachusetts more expensive. The least expensive states for renters are North Dakota, West Virginia and South Dakota.

The hourly housing wage in New Jersey for a two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent in 2008 is \$22.25. This wage has risen 42.6 percent since 2000.

Numerous occupations in New Jersey — social service workers, dental lab technicians, emergency dispatchers, preschool teachers, accounting clerks, child care workers, home health aides, school bus drivers, security guards, janitors, hairstylists, receptionists, cashiers and others — pay less than the housing wage.

The mean wage for a New Jersey renter is \$16.45 an hour, below the housing wage for a modest two-bedroom. At the mean wage, an individual would have to work 54 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment at FMR.

At minimum wage — \$7.15 an hour — a New Jersey worker would have to work 124 hours a week or over three full jobs a week to afford a two-bedroom at FMR.

Hunterdon, Middlesex and Somerset counties are the most expensive for rentals, with a modest two-bedroom at fair market rent going for a monthly average of \$1,340.

But due to the varying occupations and wages of the renting population, Cumberland, Passaic and Essex counties are the least affordable for people living there. In Cumberland County, 64

percent of renters cannot afford the fair market rent. In Passaic County, it's 62 percent, and in Essex County, 61 percent.

Over 94,000 tenants cannot afford the fair market rent in Essex County. The same is true for over 91,000 Hudson County renters.