

# Chapter 15 : Essex County

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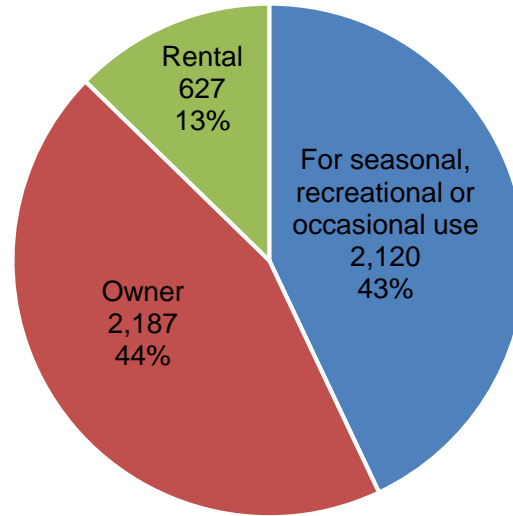
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## Total housing stock

Essex County’s housing stock consists of 4,934 year-round and seasonal homes. Essex County has the highest rate of seasonal homes as a percentage of its stock in the state, with seasonal homes accounting for 43 percent of the housing stock.

**Figure 15-1: Essex County housing types**

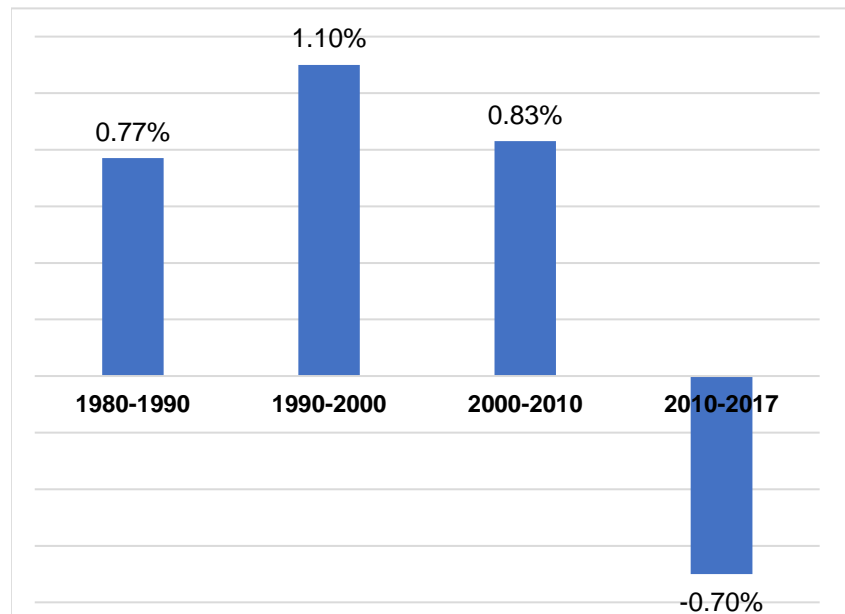


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Table B25003, B25004) from [housingdata.org](https://housingdata.org).

## Pace of housing and population growth

Since 2010, Essex County’s total occupied non-vacation housing stock has been declining at an annual pace of 0.70%<sup>1</sup>, compared to a growth rate of 0.16% for the state. With faster growth in some Essex County towns, the total pace of growth in households living in the county is projected at 0.2% per year between 2020 and 2025.

**Figure 15-2: Average annual change in Essex County housing supply**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey and Decennial Census from [housingdata.org](https://housingdata.org).

<sup>1</sup> The housing stock can decline when homes are destroyed or abandoned, when year-round homes converted to use as occasional/seasonal homes or non-residential purposes, or when multiple units are consolidated to form a single home.

Figure 15-3: Essex County household growth

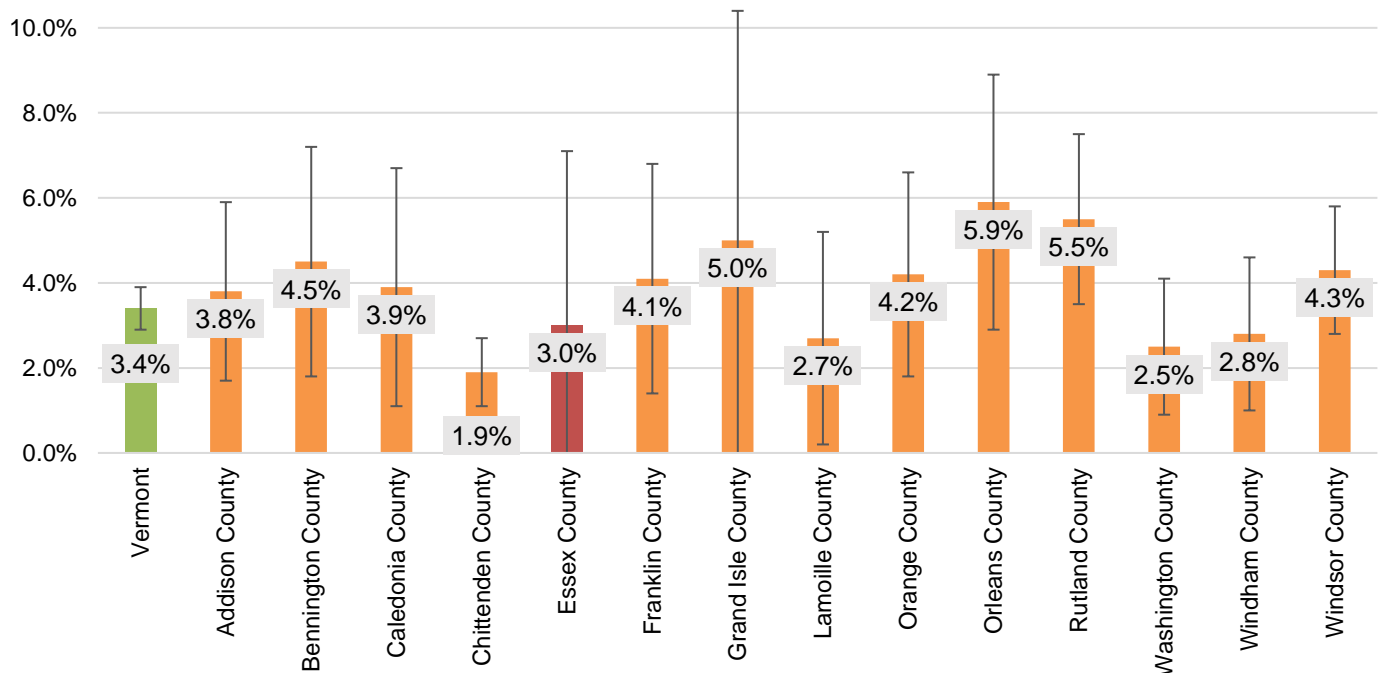
| Estimated households in 2020 | Projected expansion of households living in county, 2020-2025 |                   |                  |  |   |
|------------------------------|---|-------------------|------------------|--|---|
|                              | Total   | Renter households | Owner households | Renter households with incomes less than 80% of median | Owner households with incomes less than 80% of median |
| 2,864                        | 29  | 5                 | 24               | 5  | 6   |

Source: Claritas

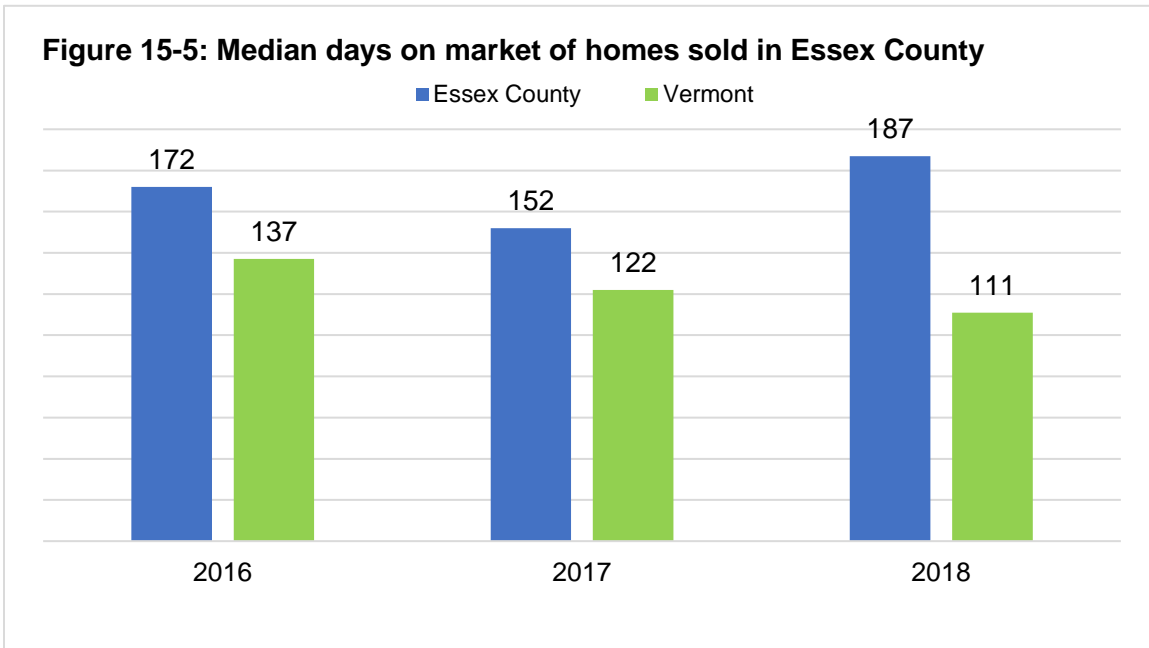
## For rent and for sale homes

Although vacancy rates may vary by town, the countywide estimated rental vacancy rate in Essex County is 3.0%-- slightly lower than the statewide rate of 3.4%, although the margin of error for this county is very large. The average days on market of for sale homes in Essex County (187 days in 2018) is considerably higher than the state as a whole.

Figure 15-4: Essex County rental vacancy rate

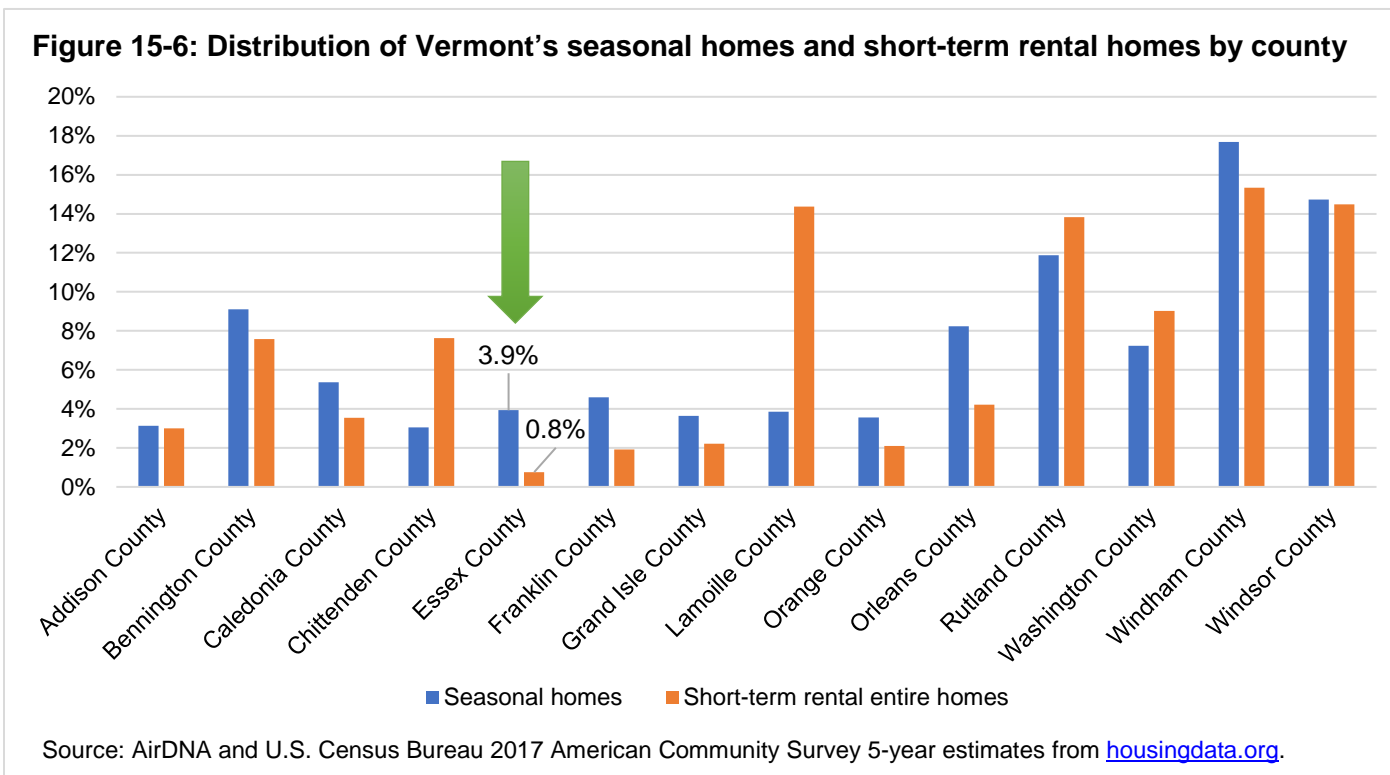


Source: VHFA analysis of estimates of U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2013-2017. Margins of error are shown with vertical lines within the bar for each county's point estimate. Reliable vacancy estimates are available for Vermont, Chittenden County, Rutland County and Windsor County. Estimates for other counties should be used with caution. The rate represents the estimated portion of "For Rent" homes that are not seasonal units as a percentage of all estimated occupied and vacant rental homes that are not seasonal. The portion of vacant rental homes that are not seasonal is estimated by assuming the same seasonal home rate as exists for the occupied housing stock.



### Short term rentals and vacation home effect on market

About 4% of Vermont’s stock of vacation homes and 1% of its short-term rental homes are located in Essex County. Of all homes in the county, 43% are vacation (seasonal) homes and 1% are consistently used as short-term rentals. Essex County has the highest rate of seasonal homes as a percentage of its stock in the state, yet it has comparatively few short-term rentals. The number of short-term rental homes in Essex County was 61 in July 2019--the same as in 2018.

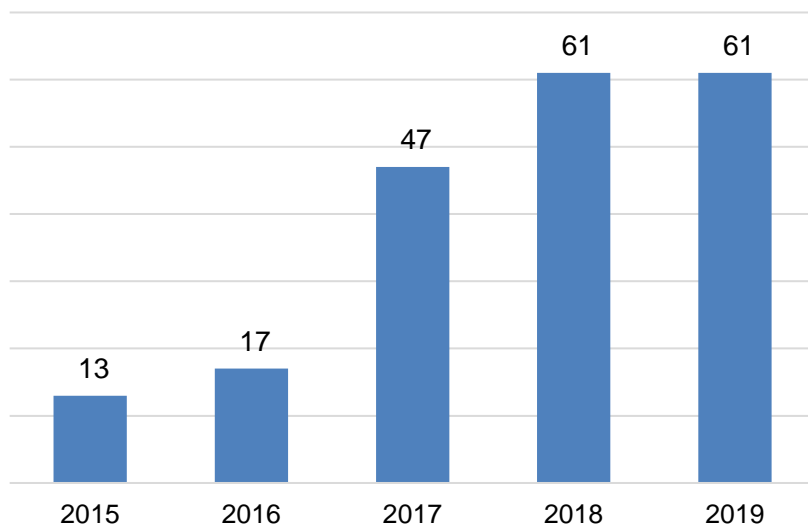


**Figure 15-7: Essex County seasonal home snapshot**

|              | Seasonal homes | As % of all homes in county/state |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Essex County | 2,120          | 43%                               |
| Vermont      | 53,940         | 17%                               |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2017 American Community Survey 5-year estimates from [housingdata.org](https://www.housingdata.org).

**Figure 15-8: Essex County short-term rental listings**



Source: Active listings of entire homes as of July of each year from AirDNA.

**Figure 15-9: Essex County short-term rental home snapshot**

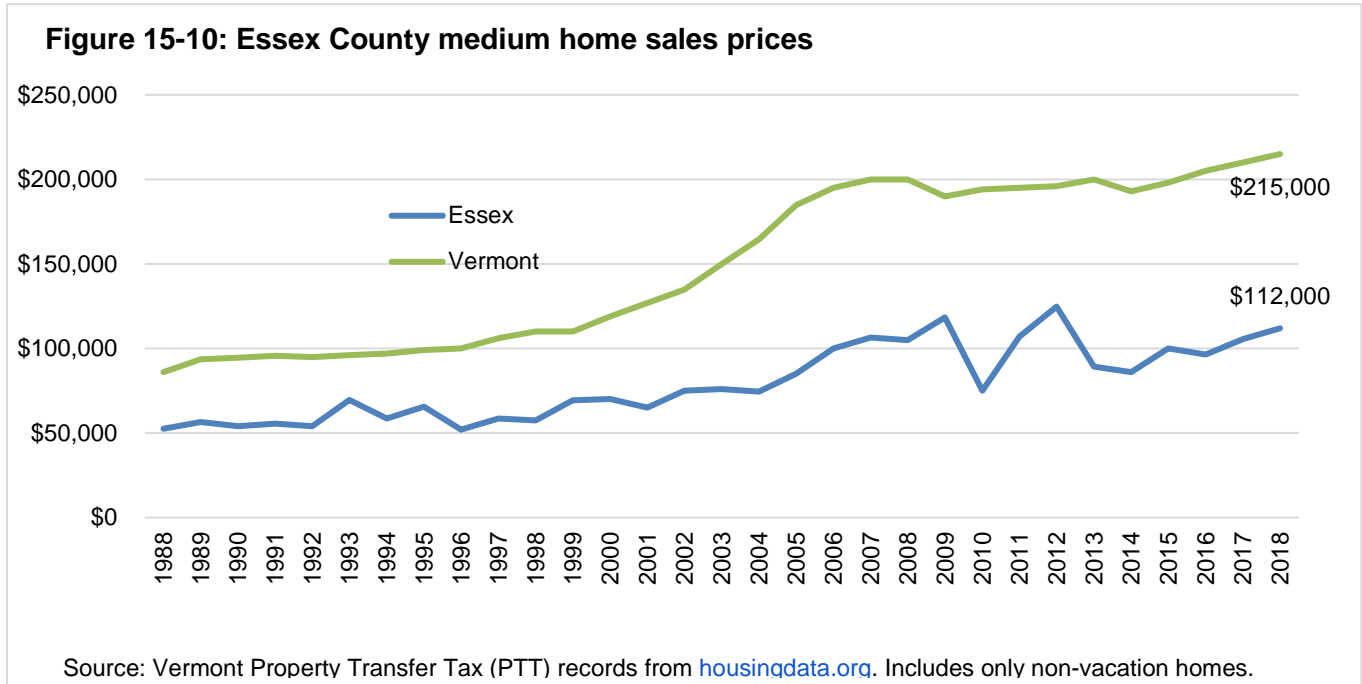
|              | Active listings (homes) | Available entire month | As % of all homes in county/state | 12-month increase in listings | Average daily rate |
|--------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Essex County | 61                      | 83%                    | 1.0%                              | 0%                            | \$125              |
| Vermont      | 8,041                   | 72%                    | 1.8%                              | 12%                           | \$215              |

Source: Active listings of entire homes as of July of each year from AirDNA

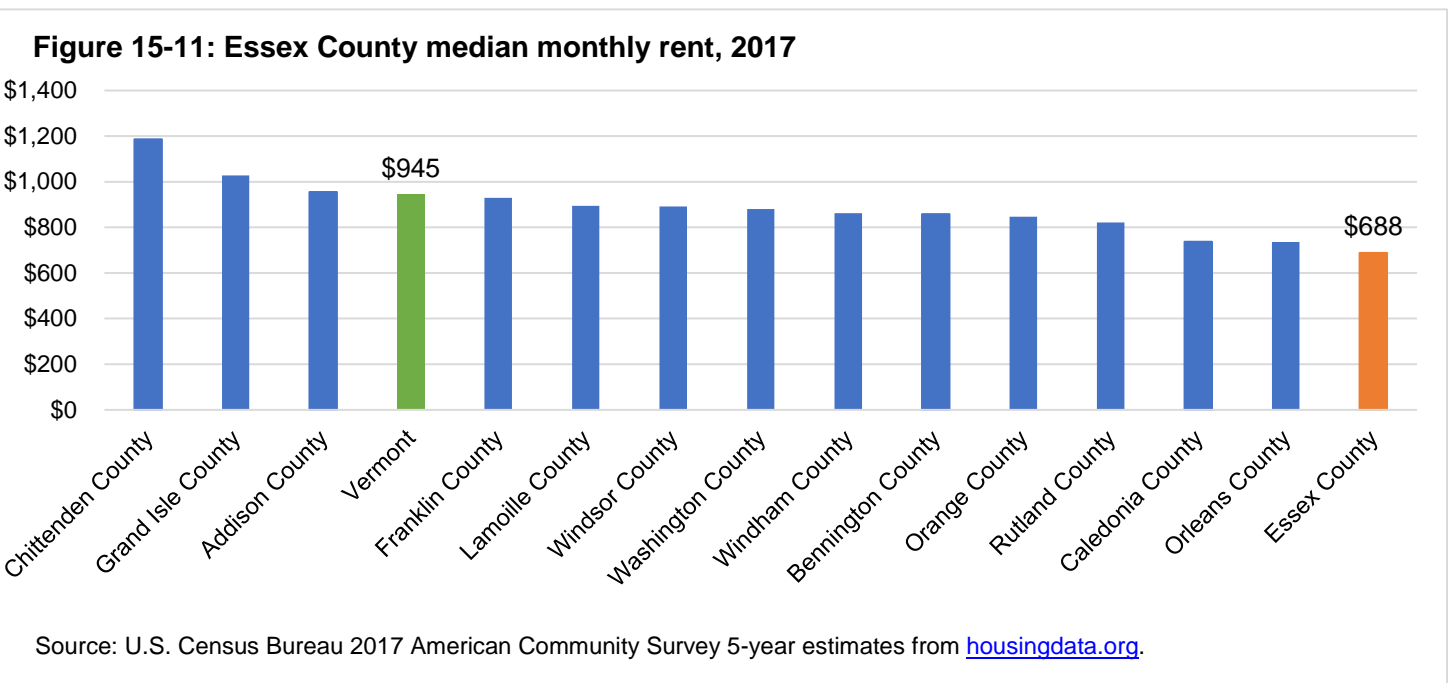
# Housing affordability

## Home prices and rents

The median sales price of homes sold in Essex County in 2018 was \$112,000, lower than the statewide median of \$215,000.



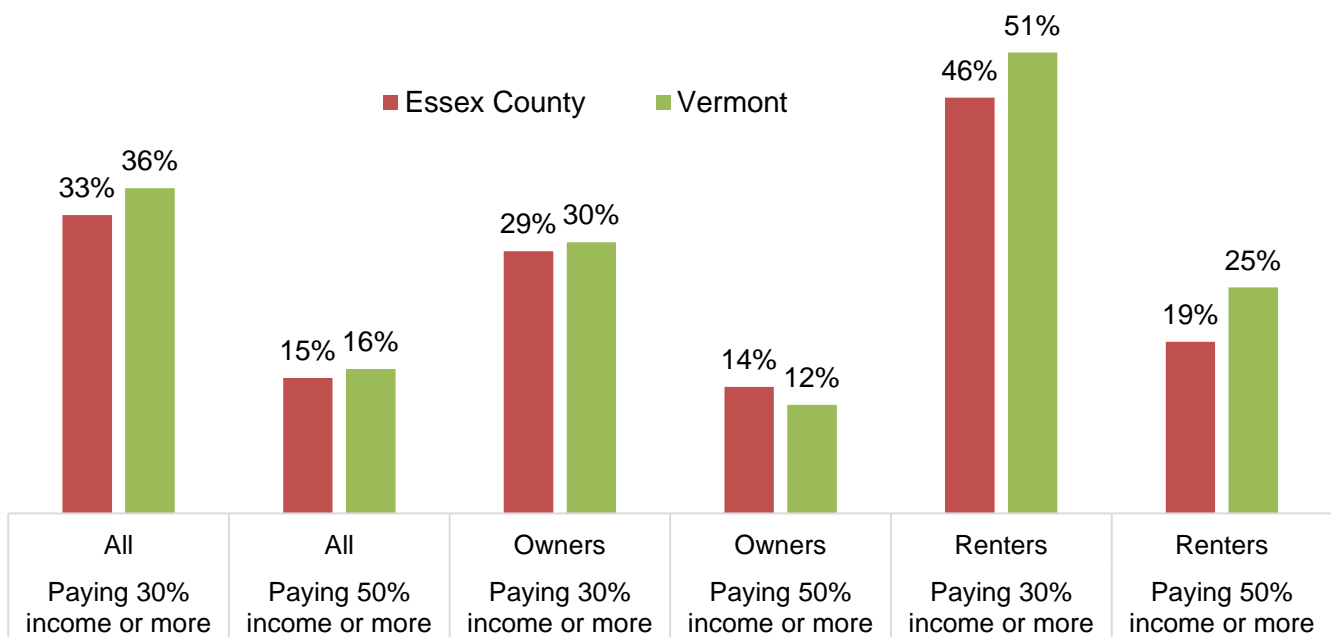
The estimated median gross rent (including utilities) in Essex County was \$688 per month. This is the lowest median rent in the state, and significantly less than the statewide median of \$945.



## Cost burden

When a household’s housing expenses consume less than 30% of their monthly income, their housing is considered “affordable” because there is likely to be enough income remaining to afford other necessities. Slightly less than the rest of the state, 33% of all Essex County households pay more than 30% of their income for housing. About 15% of Essex County households pay a severely high 50% or more of their income for housing. These households are at a high risk of housing instability, including frequent moves, eviction, foreclosure and homelessness.

**Figure 15-12: Essex County households with high housing costs relative to income**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 2017 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Table B25070, B25095) from [housingdata.org](http://housingdata.org).

**Figure 15-13: Essex County households with high housing costs relative to income**

|                             | Paying more than 30% of income for housing | Paying more than 50% of income for housing |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Essex County Renters</b> | 234  | 97   |
| <b>Essex County Owners</b>  | 625  | 308  |

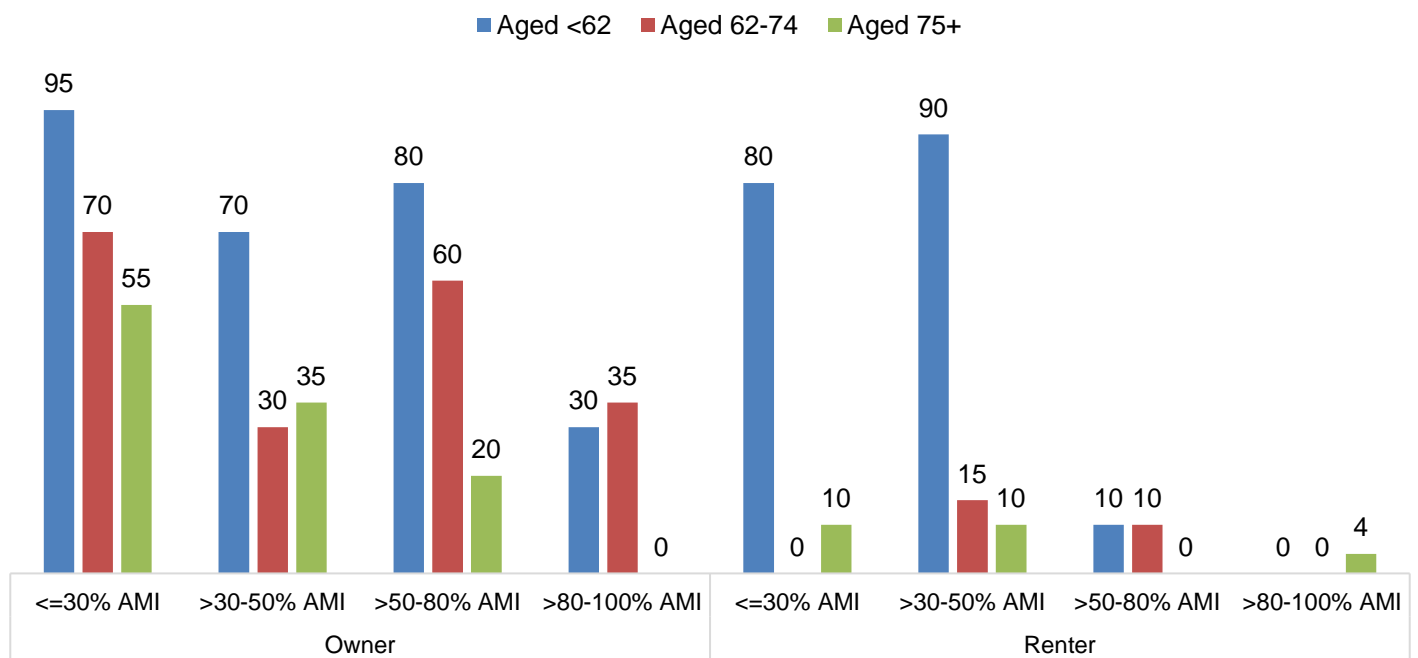
Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 2017 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Table B25070, B25095) from [housingdata.org](http://housingdata.org).



## Who faces housing problems most often?

Homeowners with household income of less than 30% of the median who are at least 62 are the largest demographic group in Essex County to experience housing problems. The HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy estimates 125 of these households had at least one of the following housing problems: housing costs of 30% or more of income, lack of kitchen or plumbing facilities, and overcrowding<sup>2</sup>.

**Figure 15-14: Essex County households with housing problems**



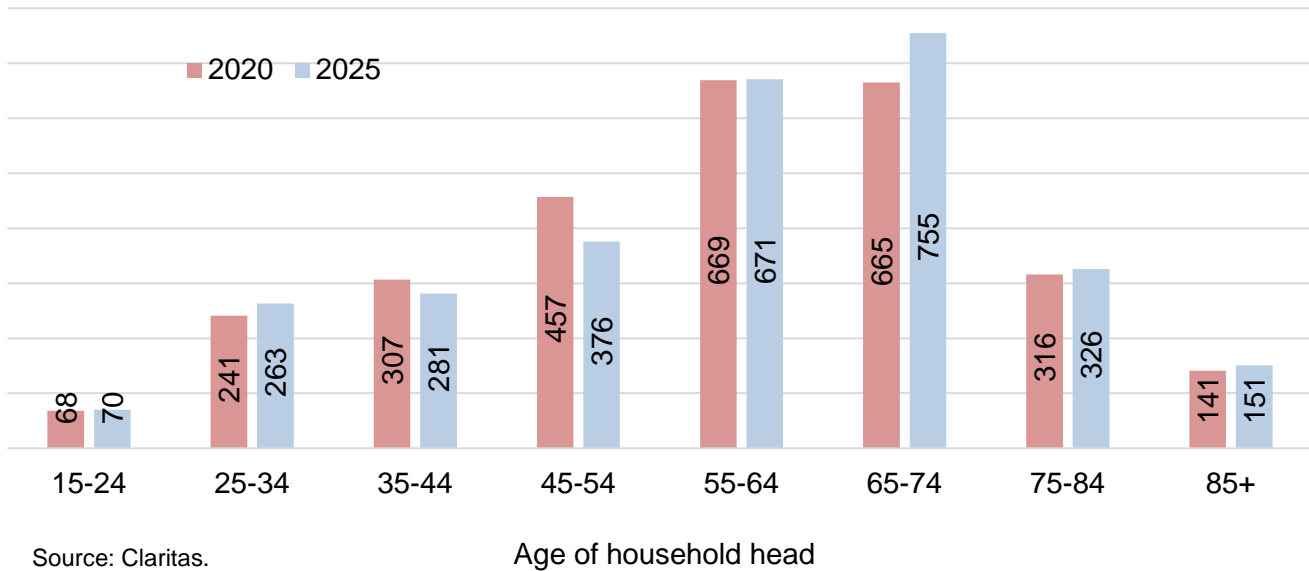
Source: HUD CHAS estimates, 2015, from [housingdata.org](http://housingdata.org). AMI=County median income.

<sup>2</sup> Overcrowding is defined here as having more than one person per room of the unit.

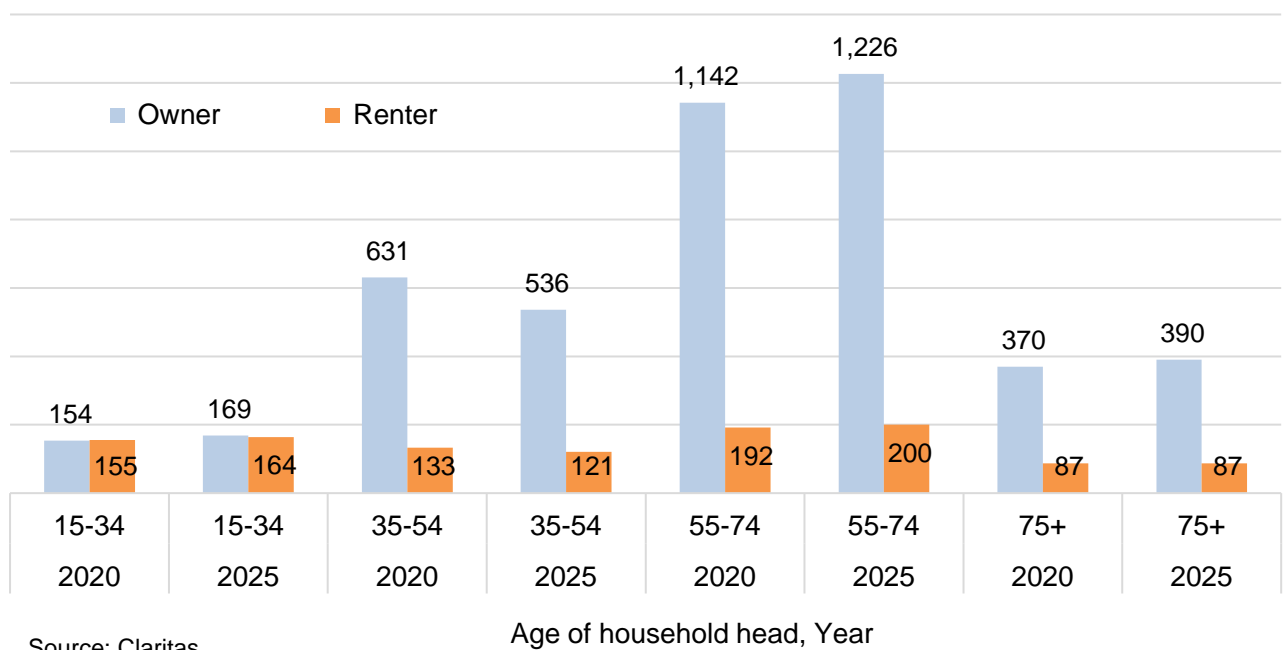
## Householder age

Between 2020 and 2025, the median age of the head of an Essex County household will inch up from 61 to 63 for owners and 54 to 55 for renters. An estimated 43% of all householders in the county will be at least 65 years old and 5% will be at least 85 years old.

**Figure 15-15: Essex County households by age, 2020-2025**

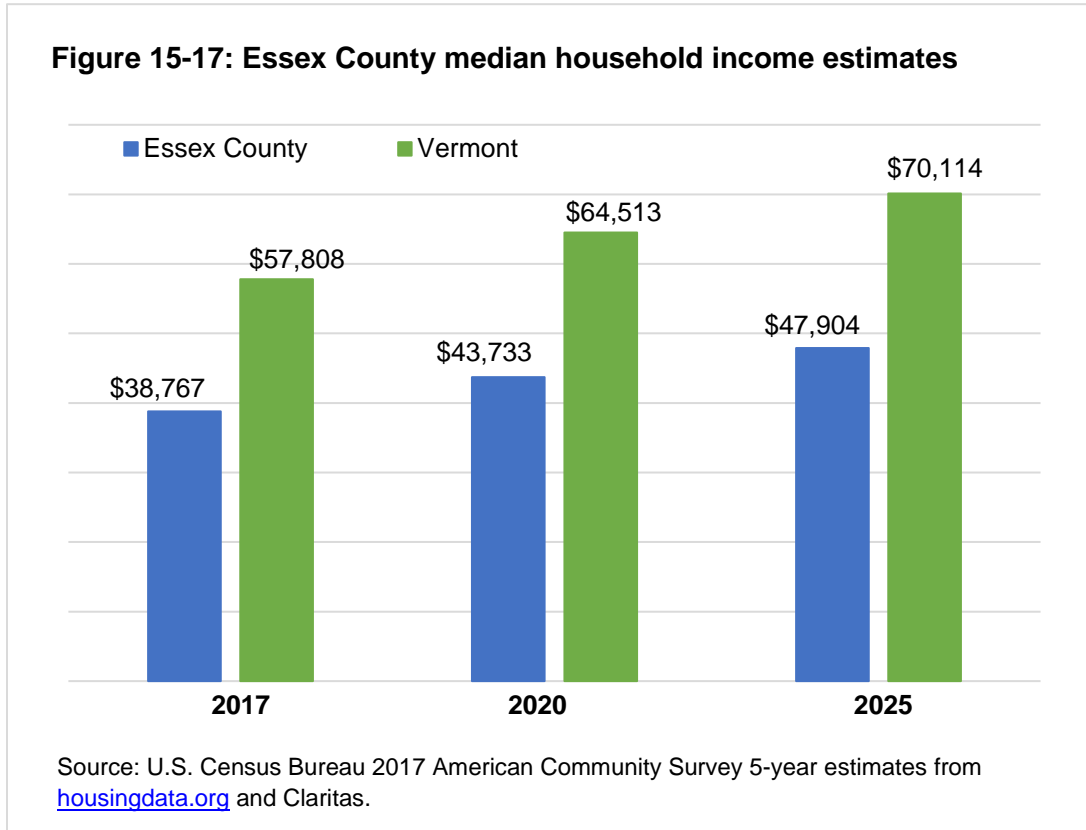


**Figure 15-16: Essex County households by age and tenure, 2020-2025**



## Household income

The median income among all households in Essex County is expected to increase from \$43,733 to \$47,904 between 2020 and 2025. Essex County has the lowest household median income in the state.



**Figure 15-18: Income ranges relative to Essex County median income, 2020**

|                   |           |    |           |
|-------------------|-----------|----|-----------|
| Median income     |           | \$ | 43,733    |
| <=30% of median   |           | <= | \$ 13,120 |
| 31-50% of median  | \$ 13,121 | -  | \$ 21,867 |
| 51-80% of median  | \$ 21,868 | -  | \$ 34,987 |
| 81-100% of median | \$ 34,988 | -  | \$ 43,733 |
| 101-120% median   | \$ 43,734 | -  | \$ 52,480 |
| >120% of median   |           | >  | \$ 52,481 |

Source: Claritas

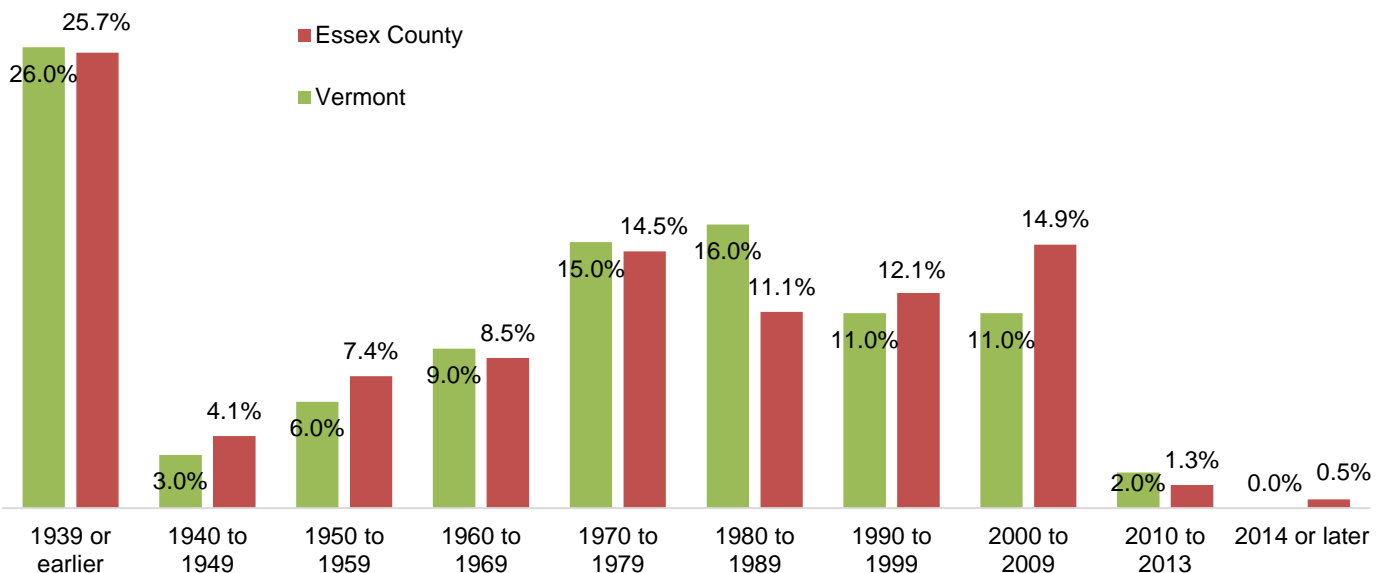
# Homelessness

The 2019 One-Night Count did not find any persons experiencing homelessness in Essex County. Housing for the homeless and special needs population in Essex County are very limited. As a result, rural residents must travel farther to find shelter than in other counties. There are no emergency shelters, transitional housing or permanent supportive housing in Essex County.

# Housing quality

Of all homes in Essex County, an estimated 25.7% were built prior to 1940 – about the same as the statewide average. The median home was built in 1973<sup>3</sup>.

**Figure 15-19: Age of Essex County housing stock**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Table B25034, B25036), 2013-2017 from [housingdata.org](http://housingdata.org)

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Table B25035), 2013-2017 from [housingdata.org](http://housingdata.org)

## Homes in mobile home parks

Essex County has two mobile home parks with 42 lots. There are three vacant lots which results in a 7.2% vacancy rate<sup>4</sup>, compared to Vermont's overall mobile home park vacancy rate of 5.2%. One of the two parks is within the 100-year floodplain<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> [Vermont Department of Housing & Community Development](#), Mobile Home Park Registration Summary, 2019

<sup>5</sup> [Vermont Department of Housing & Community Development](#), Mobile Home Park Risk Assessment Tool: Risk Analysis Tables, 2019