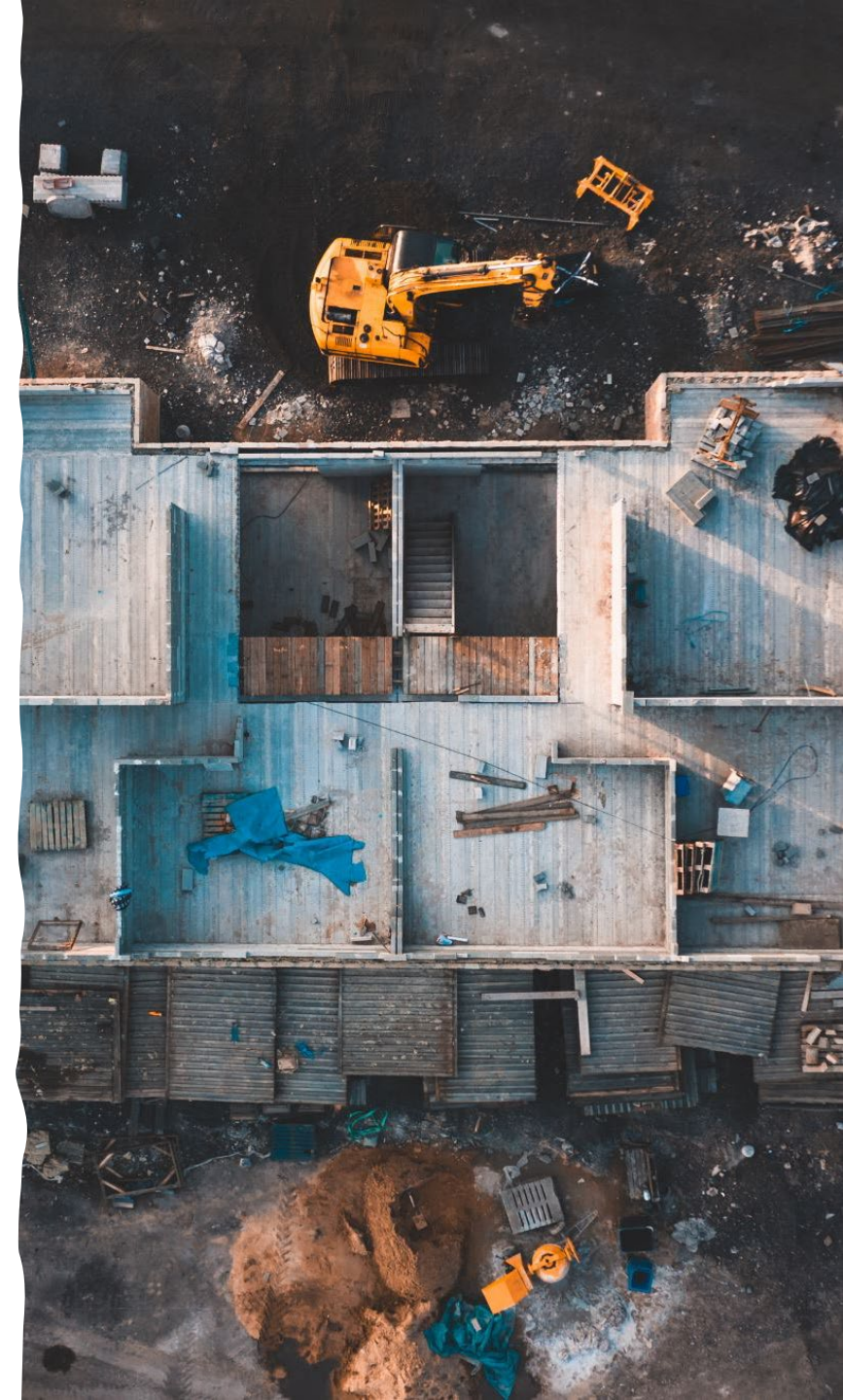


Homelessness and Housing Solutions

Evis Terpollari, Homeless Projects Manager
Richie Gonzalez, Community Navigator & Recovery Coach
Health and Human Services
City of Worcester



City of Worcester Dept. of Health & Human Services (HHS)



Oversees coordination on a variety of homeless initiatives, including



Providing direct information and referral, street outreach



Planning of seasonal protocols



Participation in the Worcester City & County Continuum of Care Advisory Board



Collaboration with community-based providers who offer homeless prevention and rapid re-housing

What is our role?

OUTREACH RESPONSE

HARM REDUCTION

CRISIS INTERVENTION

HOMELESS PREVENTION

PEER SUPPORT

LIAISON TO LOCAL SHELTERS



What is homelessness?

- HUD defines **homelessness** as: An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, adequate night-time residence including those living in:
 - Places not meant for human habitation
 - Shelter designated to provide temporary living
 - An institution where they have resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution



Family Homelessness

- ❑ Defined by HUD as any group of persons presenting for assistance together with or without children irrespective of age, relationship, or disability.

Distinctions about family homelessness

- Right to shelter state for families
- Shelters are accessed through DTA/EOHLC
 - Not accessible during weekends and non 'work hours'
 - Families usually get moved outside of the area they were residing in
- A required eligibility criteria that they need to meet before accessing shelter



Individual Homelessness vs Chronic Homelessness



❑ **Individually Homeless:** An unaccompanied adult, or couple who do not have custody of any children

❑ **Chronically Homeless:** An individual who has been homeless continuously for at least one year or at least four separate occasions in the last three years



Sheltered vs Unsheltered (HUD)

- Determined by the location of individuals and families on the night of the point-in-time count:
 - **Sheltered population** are those who on the night of the point-in-time count, are living in shelters, safe havens, or transitional housing designated for the homeless.
 - **Unsheltered population** are those who are living in places not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings, on the street etc.

Housing Barriers

Lack of
Affordable
Housing

Lack of
shelters/beds

Availability/
Low Vacancy

High Rents

Rental history
and evictions

Poor credit
score and
insufficient
savings

Unemployment/
Low Income

Serious health
conditions

Mental Health

Lack of social
support

Legal barriers

Language
barriers

Supportive
services

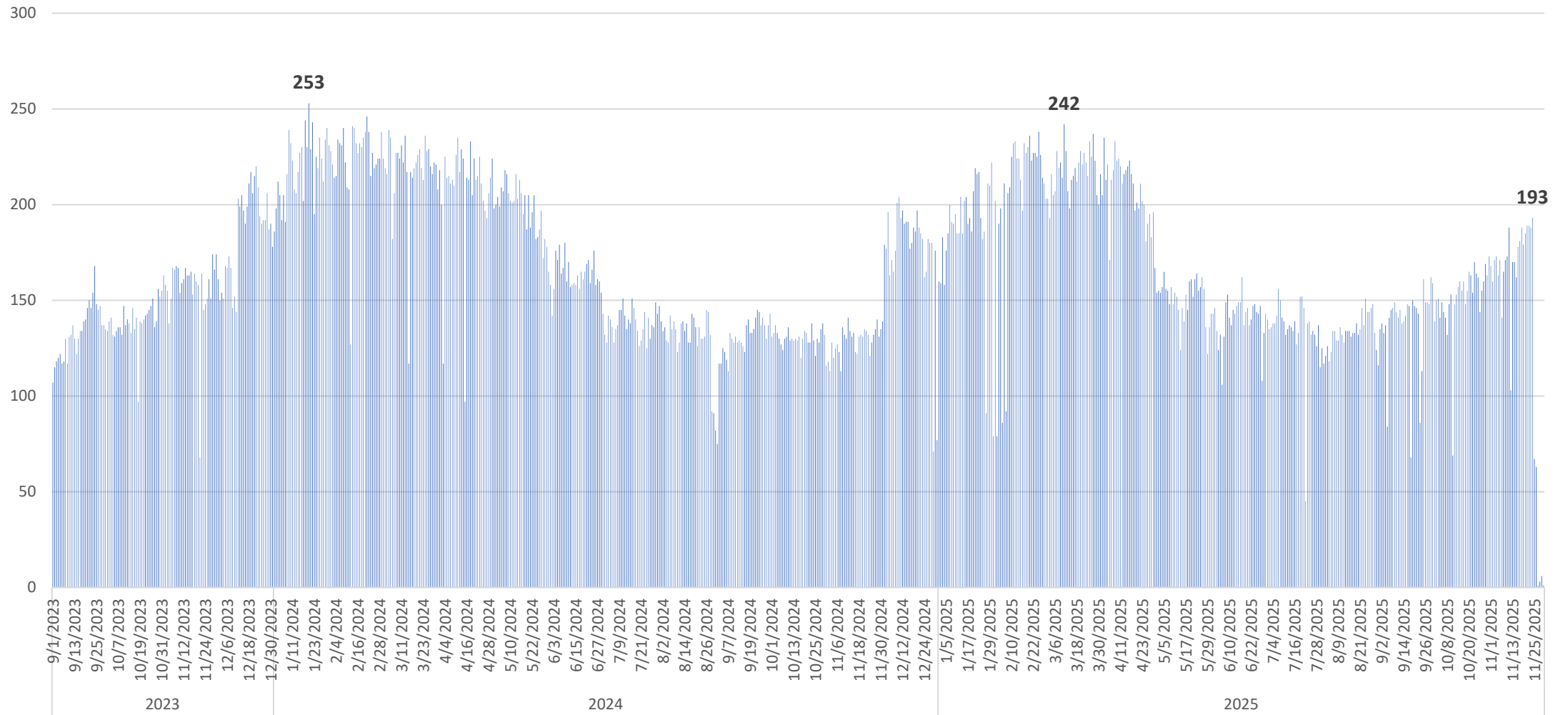
Stigma

Shelters in Worcester

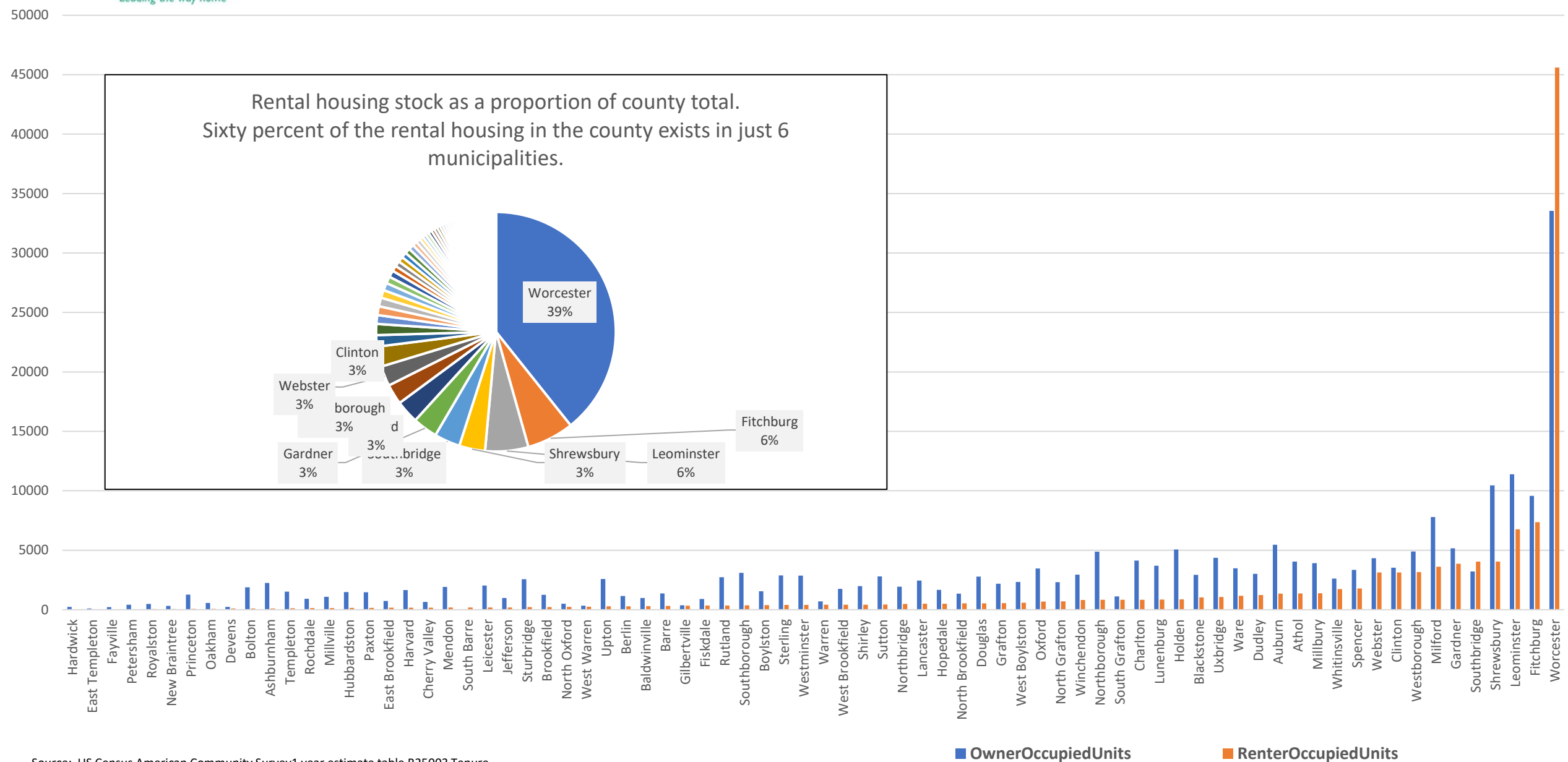
- ❑ 221 adult shelter beds are available in Worcester, not including the SMOC Winter Shelter
- ❑ **15 beds** for trafficked women opened March 17, 2025 Closed in August 2025

SMOC 25 Queen St	All Genders	83 Beds
SMOC MLK	All Genders	64 Beds
Abby's House	Female	18 Beds
Oriol Drive	All Genders	36 Beds
Veterans Inc Canterbury	Male	20 Beds
Total Worcester Adult Shelter Beds		221 Beds

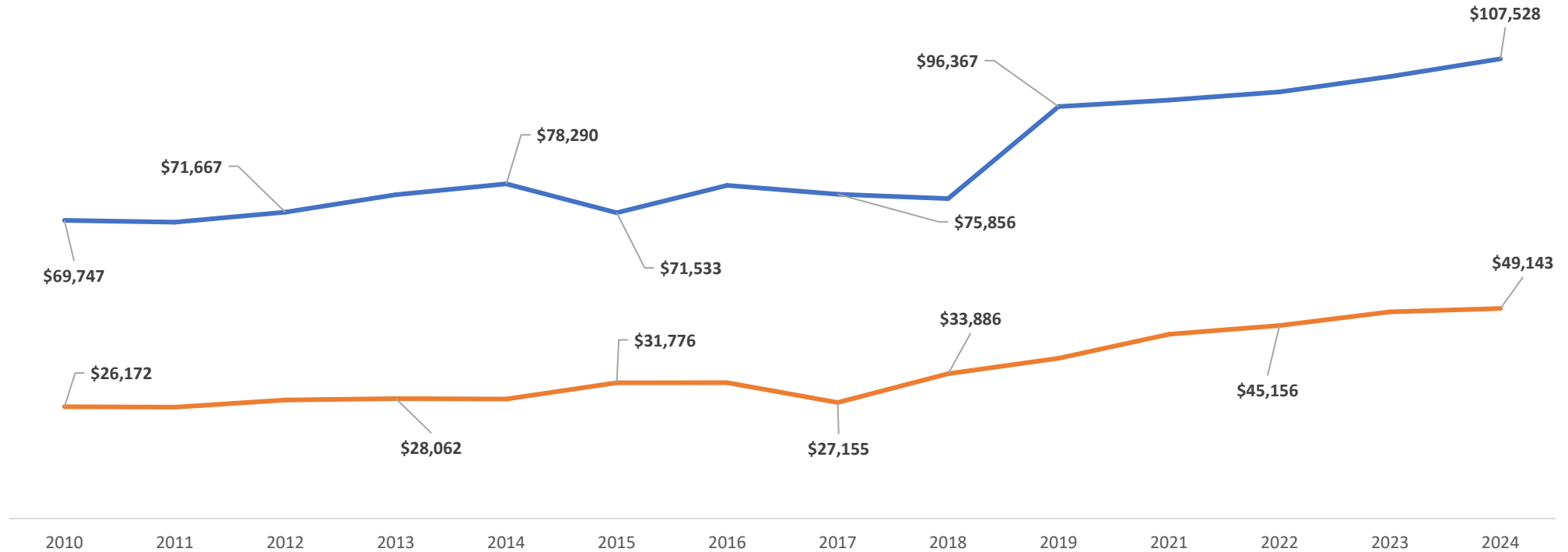
City Adult night by night shelter attendance.
Includes SMOC's Queen St, MLK and any any available winter shelter in the city.
Peak attendance is about 250 concurrent shelter occupants.



Nearly 40% of the rental housing in Worcester County is located in the City of Worcester



City of Worcester
Homeowner income vs Renter income

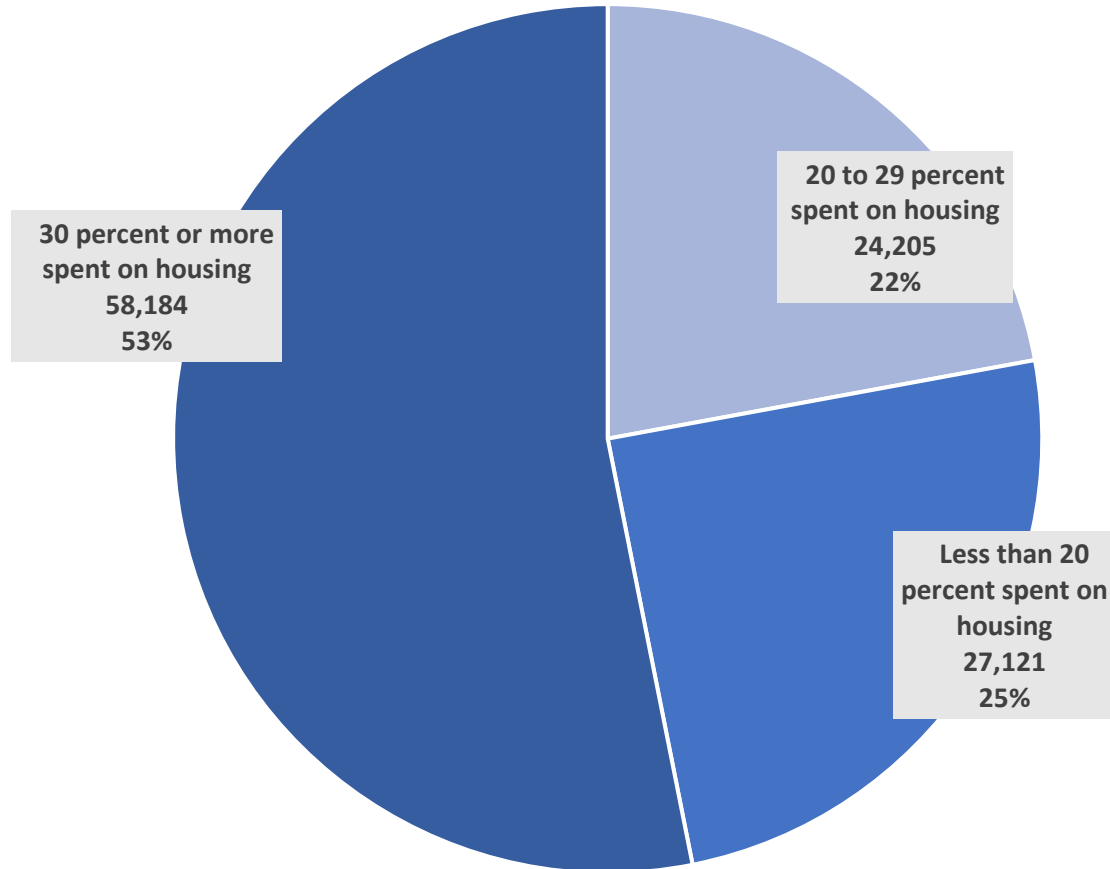


Source: US Census American Community Survey 1 year estimate table B25119 Median household income in the past 12 months

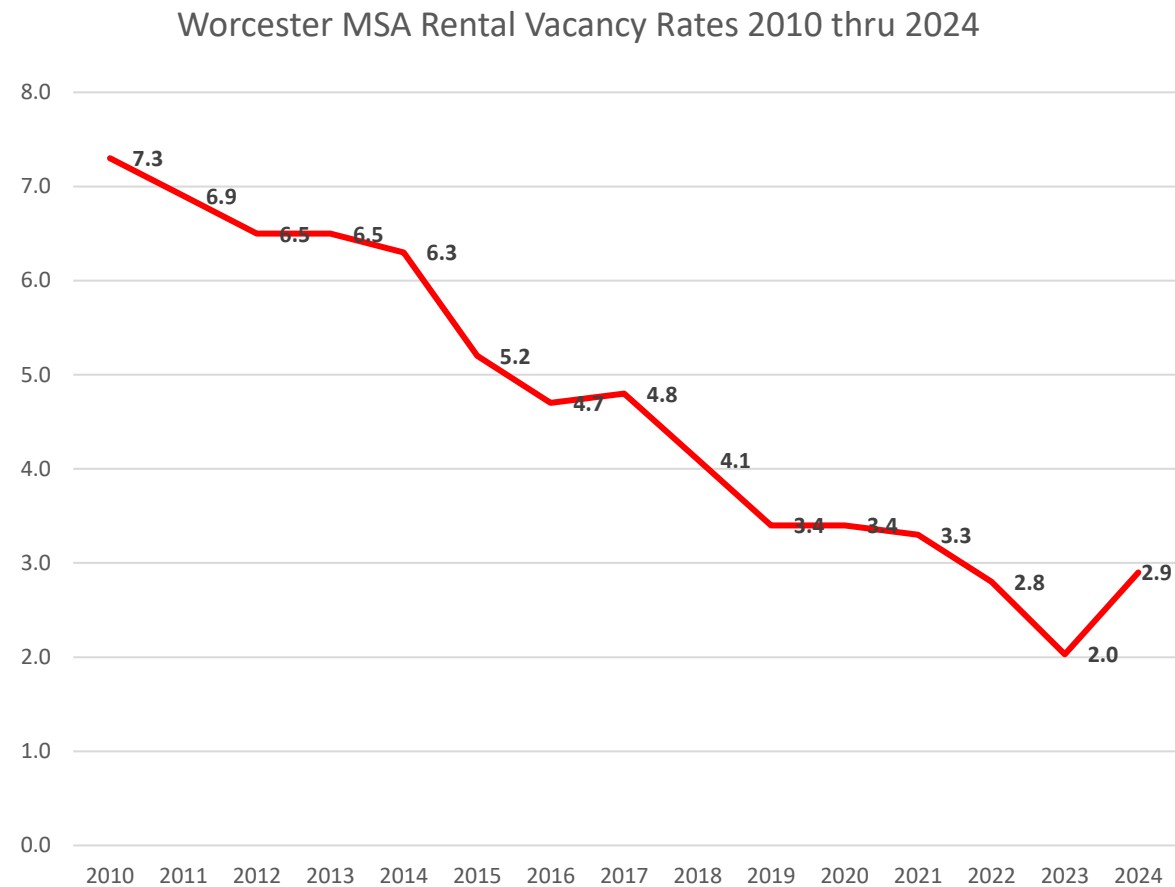
— Owner occupied median household income

— Renter occupied median household income

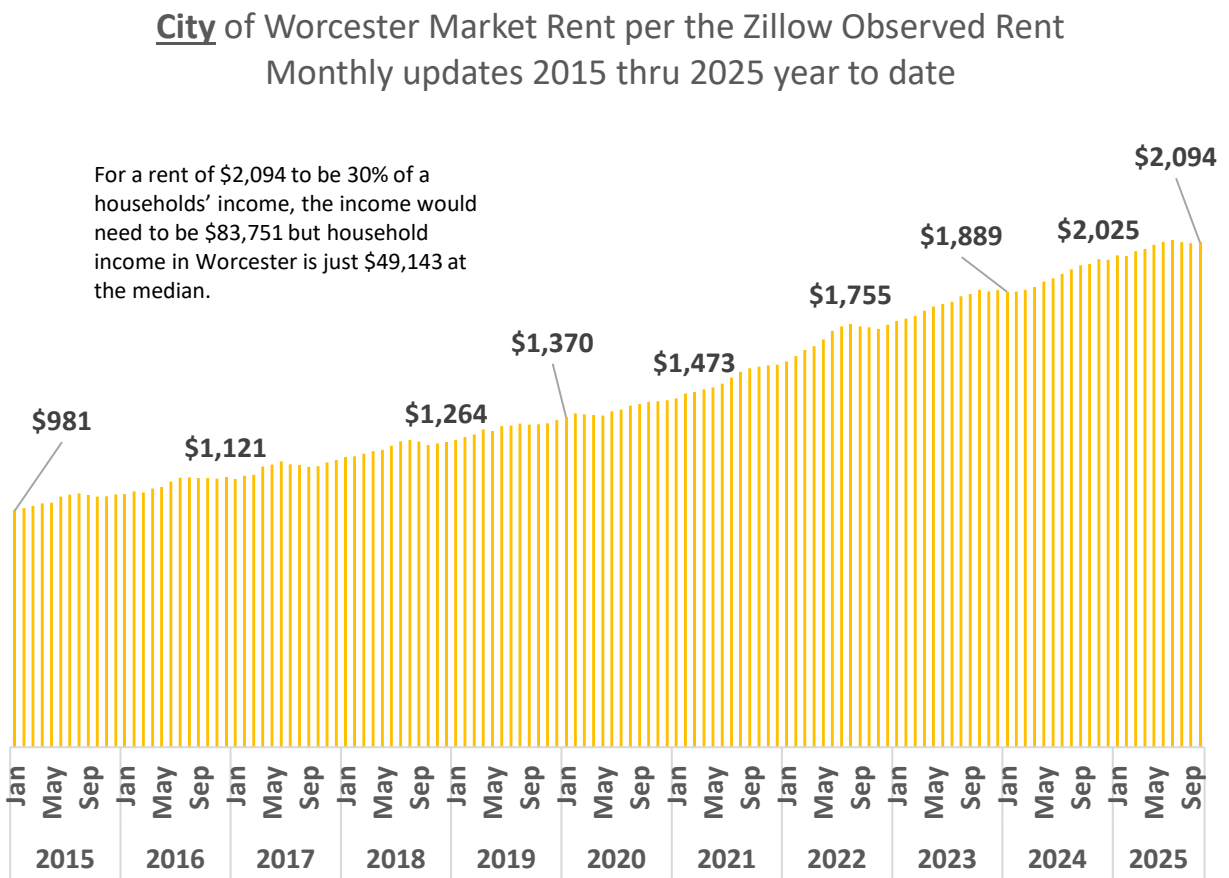
Over half of *renter households* in Worcester County spend more than 30% of household income on housing.



Low rental vacancy rate and high rents continue to challenge those looking to rent a home in Worcester.

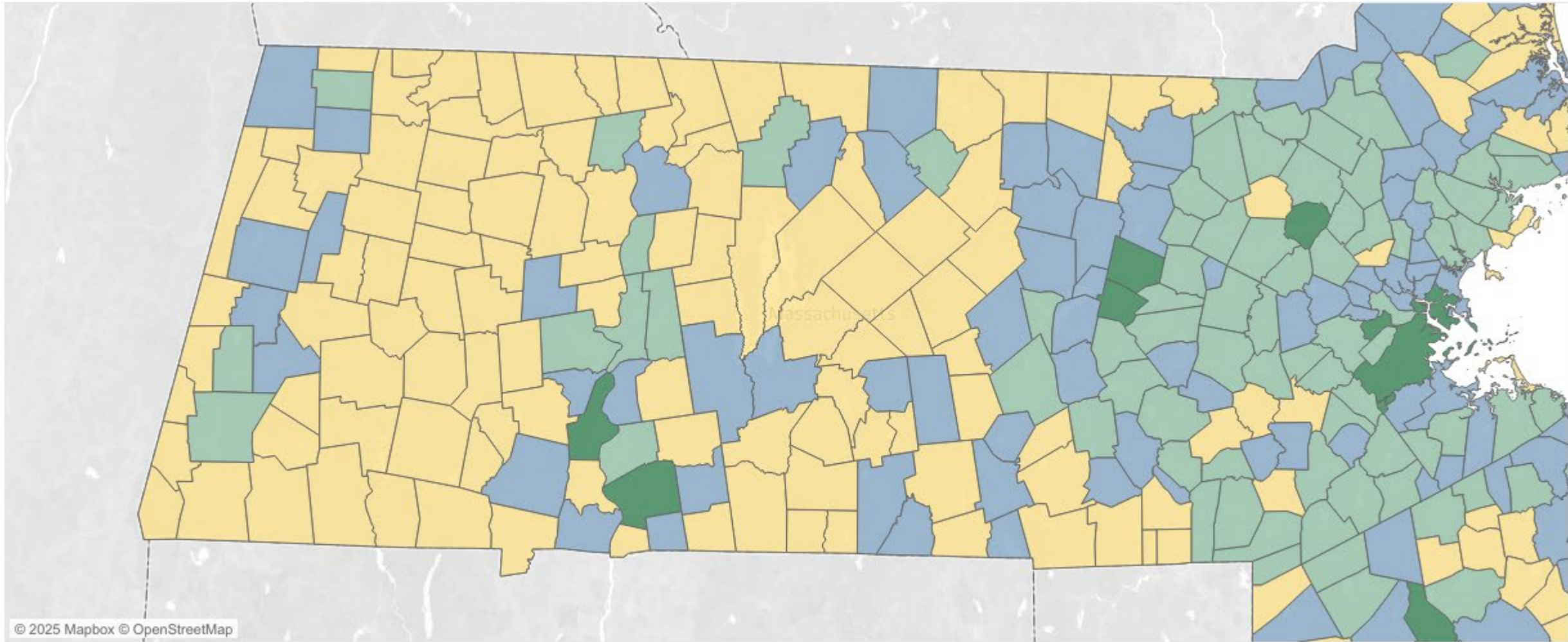


*<https://www.census.gov/housing/hvs/data/rates.html>



**<https://www.zillow.com/research/data/>

Subsidized housing inventory per community



Subsidized Housing Inventory as a Share of Total Year-Round Housing Units

Less than 5% 5% to 9.99% 10% to 14.99% 15% or above



Who are the residents of Worcester encampments?



Significant
increase in
encampments
across **Worcester
city**, particularly
during the
warmer weather





Encampments raise issues of:

Safety

Poor health outcomes

Inadequate sanitation





Housing Projects

- ❑ **Quality Inn Hotel by Worcester Community Housing Resources (WCHR):** Currently underway to convert a hotel into 90 units of permanent supportive housing, scheduled for completion by 2026-2027
- ❑ **Claremont Street Pilot Project** Developing 4 Tiny homes for Seniors in collaboration with United Way and Worcester Community Housing Resources, Open Sky and other community partners
- ❑ **SMOC: MLK** Developing 20 single occupancy housing units at their Martin Luther King (MLK) site, also set to be completed by 2026
- ❑ **Worcester Community Housing Resources:** Developing 18 tiny homes , set to be completed by 2027
- ❑ **Worcester Housing Authority:** Curtis apartments are going from 372 to 527 units expected by 2026-2027



Completed Projects

- ❑ **Lewis Street:** Successfully finished 24 single occupancy housing units on October 31st, 2023.
- ❑ **SMOC: 30 Winfield St:** Three-story building featuring 18 studio micro-units, completed August 2025
- ❑ **Southern Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC)** at 6 Wyman St: Completed 16 single occupancy housing units on February 1, 2024.



Affordable Tiny Homes

- ❑ Developing 4 tiny homes for homeless seniors by Fall of 2025
- ❑ Create a sense of homeownership, independence, and dignity in our community



What can I do?

- **Decrease Stigma:** Check your own biases and see the homeless as humans
- **Social Determinants of Health:** Include housing issues and homelessness in conversations
- **Community Approach:** Homelessness and housing impacts us all
- **Stay Informed and Educate** yourself on current policies and initiatives
- **Empathy and Compassion:** Care about people
- **Advocate and Show Up**

Questions?

