

## **University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute Housing Poll Executive Summary**

Massachusetts had the singular distinction as the only state in the nation to have lost population between 2003 and 2004, according to the Census Bureau's most recent population estimates.<sup>1</sup> While there are many reasons for this population decline, many observers have speculated that the Commonwealth's high cost of living, particularly its high cost of housing, has caused Massachusetts residents to migrate to other parts of the nation and deterred residents of other states from moving into Massachusetts.

Over the past several years, our public opinion polls have clearly shown that a growing number of Massachusetts households are seriously considering leaving the state because of the high cost of housing. A 1999 University of Massachusetts housing poll found that only 11 percent of Massachusetts residents considered leaving the state due to the high cost of housing.<sup>2</sup> In December 2001 the UMass poll found that 19 percent of all respondents would consider moving out of Massachusetts if economic conditions worsened.<sup>3</sup> By May 2002 a similar poll found that 32 percent of all respondents were prepared to leave the state in the event of an economic downturn. And today, 46 percent of all residents are considering leaving the state due to the high cost of housing--more than four times the number of people from just six years ago.

Recent research on migration patterns in Massachusetts confirms that Bay State residents are in fact leaving the state in significant numbers. A study done by the UMass Donahue Institute for MassINC found that, in every year from 1990 through 2002, Massachusetts lost more people than it attracted, and in that time period lost a total of 213,191 persons to internal domestic migration. In fact, the only factor that kept Massachusetts from losing population in that time was strong international in-migration from other countries.<sup>4</sup>

### **Survey Methodology**

In order to better understand the effect that housing affordability has on migration and to gain insight into current public opinion on a number of housing issues, the UMass Donahue Institute conducted a poll for the Citizen's Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA). During the last two weeks of December 2004 the Massachusetts residents were asked a series of questions about housing issues in Massachusetts. Statewide, 509 residents across the Commonwealth were sampled. Additionally, 460 residents of the MetroWest region of Massachusetts (defined in Appendix B of this document) were surveyed.

These two polls were both conducted in the last two weeks of December, 2004 using the random-digit-dial survey method. Due to the size of the samples for this poll, the margin of error was plus or minus 4.4 percent for the statewide sample and plus or minus 4.7

---

<sup>1</sup> Miller, Sarah. Dubious distinction worries Massachusetts, Christian Science Monitor, January 7, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.mccormack.umb.edu/umasspoll/data/pdf/1999\\_Jun.pdf](http://www.mccormack.umb.edu/umasspoll/data/pdf/1999_Jun.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.mccormack.umb.edu/umasspoll/data/pdf/2001\\_Dec6\\_Dec10.pdf](http://www.mccormack.umb.edu/umasspoll/data/pdf/2001_Dec6_Dec10.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Nakosteen, Robert, Michael Goodman, and Dana Ansel. 2004. *MASS.Migration*, MassINC, p. 4.

percent for the MetroWest sample, meaning that any difference in answers between the statewide and MetroWest samples is only statistically significant if it is greater than the margin of error for both polls. The confidence interval of this poll was 95 percent, meaning that if each poll was repeated 20 times, 19 of the responses would be expected to fall within the margin of error, while one may be outside of that margin.

### **Nearly Half of Households Are Considering Leaving the State**

According to the UMass Donahue Institute housing poll, 56 percent of Massachusetts residents and over 51 percent of MetroWest residents are “very concerned” about the cost of housing in their area. This level of concern may help to explain why nearly 46 percent of all statewide respondents and 45 percent of MetroWest respondents indicated that they or a member of their immediate family is considering leaving Massachusetts because of its high cost of housing. Not surprisingly, over 53 percent of statewide and 52 percent of MetroWest respondents report that the amount of their monthly housing payment makes it hard to make ends meet.

### **High Housing Costs Are Impacting All Populations**

The high cost of housing was seen to be creating many problems for Massachusetts residents. Specifically, a majority of respondents felt that high housing costs:

- Force teachers and firefighters to live outside of the town in which they work (63% statewide, 64% MetroWest)
- Make it more difficult for local businesses to attract workers (62% statewide, 54% MetroWest)
- Prevent young people from residing in the towns in which they were raised (80% statewide, 82% MetroWest)
- Force elderly people to move out of their towns due to high housing costs (75% statewide, 86% MetroWest)

### **Broad Support for State and Local Policies that Increase Affordable Housing**

The poll also finds strong statewide and regional support for affordable housing development and policies. Over 78 percent of statewide and 76 percent of MetroWest respondents would support the creation of affordable housing in their own neighborhoods, while 81 percent statewide and 78.5 percent in MetroWest supported the goals of Chapter 40B and felt that every town should meet its obligation of 10 percent affordable housing. In addition, support for doubling state spending on affordable housing from 1 percent to 2 percent of the state budget received broad support from 76 percent of statewide respondents and 74.5 percent of MetroWest respondents.

## Some Concerns Remain

Respondents also raised some concerns about affordable housing:

- About half of all respondents, both statewide and in the MetroWest region, agreed or strongly agreed that property values may be negatively affected by affordable housing (52% statewide, 52% MetroWest).
- A significant minority of persons agreed or strongly agreed that affordable housing would lead to more crime (48% statewide, 39% MetroWest).
- There were concerns about the physical form of affordable housing, as many agreed or strongly agreed that it may be unattractive (44% statewide, 43% MetroWest).
- Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that affordable housing would increase school costs by placing more children in the school system (54% statewide, 65% MetroWest).
- Finally, slightly over half of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that affordable housing would change the character of their town (54% statewide, 51% MetroWest).

**January 2005 CHAPA/UMass Housing Poll**  
**Housing Poll Questions with Results**

Questions	Statewide Answers (+/- 4.4 Percent)	Metrowest Answers (+/- 4.7 Percent)
<b>1. Are you currently a resident of Massachusetts and over 18 years of age?</b>	If no, politely discontinue the interview.	If no, politely discontinue the interview.
<b>2. Do you own or rent your home?</b>		
Own	77.4	77.2
Rent	22.6	22.8
<b>3. How concerned are you about the cost of housing in your area? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not concerned.</b>		
Very concerned	55.8	51.4
Somewhat concerned	23.3	23.8
Not concerned at all	21.0	24.7
<b>4. Does the amount of your monthly housing payment make it hard for you or your family to make ends meet?</b>		
Yes	53.5	52.0
No	46.5	48.0
<b>5. Have you or members of your immediate family seriously considered moving out of Massachusetts because of the cost of housing?</b>		
Yes	45.6	44.9
No	54.4	55.1
<b>6. I'm going to read a series of statements, and after each one, I will ask you whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.</b>		
<b>a. The cost of housing in my town prevents teachers, firefighters, police, and other municipal workers in my community from living in the town they serve.</b>		
Strongly agree	21.9	17.0
Agree	41.5	47.2
Disagree	35.2	34.9
Strongly disagree	1.4	0.9
<b>b. The cost of housing in my town is hurting our local economy because businesses are having a harder time finding and keeping workers.</b>		
Strongly agree	17.3	11.7
Agree	44.9	42.6
Disagree	36.2	44.3
Strongly disagree	1.6	1.3

Questions	Statewide Answers (+/- 4.4 Percent)	Metrowest Answers (+/- 4.7 Percent)
<b>c. The cost of housing in my town prevents young families from living in the town in which they grew up</b>		
Strongly agree	31.7	28.5
Agree	48.4	53.5
Disagree	18.7	17.6
Strongly disagree	1.2	0.4
<b>d. The cost of housing in my town is preventing elderly residents from continuing to live in my town</b>		
Strongly agree	36.4	30.5
Agree	39.0	51.0
Disagree	23.2	18.1
Strongly disagree	1.4	0.4
<b>7. People use a variety of terms to describe housing issues. I am going to read some of these terms and ask you how you feel about them.</b>		
<b>a. What comes to mind when you hear the term “affordable housing?” Does it mean something, positive, negative, or neither positive or negative?</b>		
Positive	39.1	45.7
Negative	34.8	32.9
Neither positive nor negative	26.0	21.3
<b>b. What comes to mind when you hear the term “workforce housing?” Does it mean something positive, negative, or neither positive or negative?</b>		
Positive	66.0	53.8
Negative	16.0	25.6
Neither positive nor negative	17.9	20.6
<b>c. What comes to mind when you hear the term “community housing?” Does it mean something positive, negative, or neither positive or negative?</b>		
Positive	35.6	42.0
Negative	46.9	39.8
Neither positive nor negative	17.5	18.3
<b>d. What comes to mind when you hear the term “housing choice?” Does it mean something positive, negative, or neither positive or negative?</b>		
Positive	52.8	55.8
Negative	34.2	28.9
Neither positive nor negative	13.0	15.3
<b>8. Would you support building more affordable housing in your neighborhood?</b>		
Yes	78.4	76.6
No	21.6	23.4

Questions	Statewide Answers (+/- 4.4 Percent)	Metrowest Answers (+/- 4.7 Percent)
<b>9. I'm going to read you some of the points that people who oppose affordable housing often make. I will then ask you if you agree or disagree with each of these statements:</b>		
<b>a. Having affordable housing in my neighborhood will lower property values.</b>		
Strongly agree	8.3	3.7
Agree	43.4	48.0
Disagree	47.9	45.2
Strongly disagree	0.4	3.0
<b>b. Affordable housing in my neighborhood will lead to more crime in my neighborhood</b>		
Strongly agree	7.9	4.6
Agree	39.7	34.1
Disagree	52.5	55.7
Strongly disagree	0.0	5.7
<b>c. The physical design of affordable housing in my neighborhood will be unattractive.</b>		
Strongly agree	10.2	3.9
Agree	34.2	39.3
Disagree	54.4	52.6
Strongly disagree	1.2	4.1
<b>d. Affordable housing in my neighborhood will increase the costs of public schools because too many kids will move in.</b>		
Strongly agree	1.1	0.5
Agree	53.2	64.5
Disagree	45.7	32.6
Strongly disagree	0.0	2.4
<b>e. Affordable housing will change the character of my town</b>		
Strongly agree	16.5	10.4
Agree	37.5	40.9
Disagree	46.0	46.7
Strongly disagree	0.0	2.0
<b>10. The state has a law that establishes a goal that each community set aside 10% of its housing for low and moderate income households. Do you support the idea that every community should be required to meet this 10% goal in order to provide affordable housing for local residents?</b>		
Yes	81.1	78.5
No	18.9	21.5

Questions	Statewide Answers (+/- 4.4 Percent)	Metrowest Answers (+/- 4.7 Percent)
<b>11. Currently, our state government spends about 1% of the state budget on affordable housing programs. Would you support a proposal to double the amount of state tax dollars spent on expanding affordable housing programs if you believed it would help low and moderate income people to buy or rent a home?</b>		
Yes	76.1	74.5
No	23.9	25.5
<b>And finally, I have a few quick questions for statistical purposes only. Your responses will remain completely confidential.</b>		
<b>12. Which of the following categories contains your age?</b>		
18-24	7.7	6.7
25-34	14.9	12.4
35-44	19.6	24.4
45-54	21.8	26.6
55-64	14.3	12.6
over 65	21.8	17.3
<b>13. Which of the following categories contains you annual household income?</b>		
Under \$20,000	6.1	8.3
Between \$20,000 and \$40,000	32.4	24.8
Between \$40,000 and \$80,000	40.1	33.1
Between \$80,000 and \$100,000	9.1	15.6
Over \$100,000	12.3	18.1
<b>14. Which of the following categories describes your current level of education?</b>		
Less than high school	0.0	0.0
High school graduate	34.1	23.0
Some College	22.4	18.1
College graduate	27.9	40.9
Graduate or professional degree	15.7	17.9
<b>15. Note Gender of Respondent (ask only if necessary)</b>		
Male	40.6	37.7
Female	59.4	62.3

## **Appendix B – MetroWest Towns**

Acton	Maynard
Ashland	Medfield
Bellingham	Medway
Berlin	Milford
Bolton	Millis
Boxboro	Natick
Foxboro	Norfolk
Framingham	Northborough
Franklin	Sherborn
Harvard	Shrewsbury
Holliston	Southborough
Hopedale	Stow
Hopkinton	Sudbury
Hudson	Wayland
Littleton	Westborough
Marlboro	Wrentham

## Appendix C: Cross-Tabulations by Age, Income, and Education

Cautionary Note: Due to the small size of the sub-samples of these surveys, caution should be used in interpreting the results. Note the margins of error for each sub-sample listed in the next table are different from each other and from the error for the entire sample.

### Margins of Error (plus or minus the value in the appropriate cell)

Region	All	Age				Income			Education	
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	4.4	9.4	10.2	9.7	7.5	8.3	8.2	11.2	6.4	7.3
Statewide Sample Size	509	112	97	107	179	144	150	80	204	141
MetroWest	4.7	10.8	9.5	9.1	8.6	9.6	9.6	9.5	7.8	6.6
MetroWest Sample Size	460	86	110	120	135	108	108	110	177	253

2 Do you own or rent your home? Answer = Yes

Region	All	Age				Income			Education	
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	77.4	68.8	75.3	80.4	82.7	72.9	80.7	81.3	77.9	81
MetroWest	77.2	58.1	77.3	85.8	80.7	62	75	88.2	75.7	80.6

3 How concerned are you about the cost of housing in your area? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not concerned.

Answer = Very Concerned

Region	All	Age				Income			Education	
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	55.8	56.9	54.6	54.7	56.8	63	57.8	50	56.9	56.9
MetroWest	51.4	44.9	46.8	48.7	63.4	59.8	57	39.1	57.1	49

January 20, 2005

4 Does the amount of your monthly housing payment make it hard for you or your family to make ends meet? Answer = Yes

Region	All	Age				Income			Education	
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	<b>53.5</b>	54.6	59.6	58.5	47.4	63.5	57.9	40	58	47.5
MetroWest	<b>52</b>	55	50.9	50	53.1	65	67.9	33.9	58.4	47.6

5 Have you or members of your immediate family seriously considered moving out of Massachusetts because of the cost of housing?

Answer = Yes

Region	All	Age				Income			Education	
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	<b>45.6</b>	53.2	48.9	49.1	38.1	51.1	45	47.5	50.8	42.6
MetroWest	<b>44.9</b>	47.6	40.4	51.7	41.7	48.1	50.9	35.8	46.5	44.6

6a. The cost of housing in my town prevents teachers, firefighters, police, and other municipal workers in my community from living in the town they serve. Answer = Agree or Strongly Agree

Region	All	Age				Income			Education	
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	<b>63.4</b>	67.9	62.9	64.8	61.2	75	61.3	62.6	63.7	65.4
MetroWest	<b>64.2</b>	53.5	61.1	69.1	68.9	67.3	71.3	69.1	61.9	66.7

6b. The cost of housing in my town is hurting our local economy because businesses are having a harder time finding and keeping workers.

Answer = Agree or Strongly Agree

Region	All	Age				Income			Education	
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	<b>62.2</b>	65.2	62.9	65.7	59	69.4	60.7	57.5	66.6	57
MetroWest	<b>54.3</b>	57	53.7	54.1	54.1	59.3	56.5	50.9	61.6	49.4

January 20, 2005

6c. The cost of housing in my town prevents young families from living in the town in which they grew up. Answer = Agree or Strongly Agree

Region	All	Age				Income			Education	
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	<b>80.1</b>	82.1	77.3	81.5	80.4	81.2	80.7	77.5	77.5	81.3
MetroWest	<b>82</b>	88.4	75.4	82.5	84.4	81.4	79.7	86.4	83	81.5

6d. The cost of housing in my town is preventing elderly residents from continuing to live in my town. Answer = Agree or Strongly Agree

Region	All	Age				Income			Education	
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	<b>75.4</b>	75.9	75.3	79.6	76.4	77.1	75.4	71.3	76.4	72.9
MetroWest	<b>81.5</b>	83.8	78.2	85.8	81.4	78.7	84.3	80	81.3	82.2

7a. What comes to mind when you hear the term “affordable housing?” Does it mean something, positive, negative, or neither positive or negative?  
Answer = Positive

Region	All	Age				Income			Education	
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	<b>39.1</b>	37.4	48.9	31.7	40.9	44.1	39.9	43.6	37.4	42.1
MetroWest	<b>45.7</b>	45	47.9	39	50.8	51	41.2	50.5	46.5	46.6

7b. What comes to mind when you hear the term “workforce housing?” Does it mean something positive, negative, or neither positive or negative?  
Answer = Positive

Region	All	Age				Income			Education	
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	<b>66</b>	68.7	58.8	67.5	67.4	66	69.7	57.4	64.6	65.5
MetroWest	<b>53.8</b>	55.4	51.6	52.8	54.4	55.7	44.6	50.8	54.2	51.7

January 20, 2005

7c. What comes to mind when you hear the term “community housing?” Does it mean something positive, negative, or neither positive or negative?  
 Answer = Positive

Region	All	Age				Income			Education	
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	<b>35.6</b>	43.6	41.5	28.6	32.2	38.5	29.2	36.9	29.2	41.1
MetroWest	<b>42</b>	45.8	47.3	32.3	43.1	46.7	43.2	36.9	38.7	43.9

7d. What comes to mind when you hear the term “housing choice?” Does it mean something positive, negative, or neither positive or negative?  
 Answer = Positive

Region	All	Age				Income			Education	
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	<b>52.8</b>	67.2	45.7	54.4	47.5	55.3	57.3	51.4	50	57
MetroWest	<b>55.8</b>	64	48.9	62.9	50.6	54.3	50.7	68.8	48.5	62.8

8 Would you support building more affordable housing in your neighborhood? Answer = Yes

Region	All	Age				Income			Education	
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	<b>78.4</b>	75.5	74.5	79.2	83.1	82.2	80.7	79.2	81.4	79.6
MetroWest	<b>76.6</b>	77.1	70.5	81.3	79.8	82.8	79.8	78.8	77.7	79

9a. Having affordable housing in my neighborhood will lower property values. Answer = Agree or Strongly Agree

Region	All	Age				Income			Education	
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	<b>51.7</b>	61.6	56.7	57.4	42.5	50.7	50.7	50.1	45.3	56.6
MetroWest	<b>51.7</b>	48.8	57.2	60.8	42.9	49.1	59.2	47.2	48.6	53.8

January 20, 2005

9b. Affordable housing in my neighborhood will lead to more crime in my neighborhood Answer = Agree or Strongly Agree

Region	All	Age				Income			Education	
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	<b>47.6</b>	50	49.5	57.4	41.9	50	46.7	45	45.7	48.7
MetroWest	<b>38.7</b>	32.6	40	41.6	40.7	43.5	42.6	30	45.2	34.7

9c. The physical design of affordable housing in my neighborhood will be unattractive. Answer = Agree or Strongly Agree

Region	All	Age				Income			Education	
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	<b>44.4</b>	47.3	47.4	52.8	38	45.2	41.4	48.8	41.7	47.1
MetroWest	<b>43.2</b>	40.7	39.1	50	43.7	43.5	52.8	32.7	48	40.8

9d. Affordable housing in my neighborhood will increase the costs of public schools because too many kids will move in. Answer = Agree or Strongly Agree

Region	All	Age				Income			Education	
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	<b>54.3</b>	63.1	54.3	63	46.9	49.6	49.3	59.2	51.3	54.2
MetroWest	<b>65</b>	65.9	58.8	69.2	67.5	57.1	63	67	67.3	62.1

9e. Affordable housing will change the character of my town Answer = Agree or Strongly Agree

Region	All	Age				Income			Education	
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	<b>54</b>	55.3	50.5	62	52.5	59.7	55.4	50	53.9	56.6
MetroWest	<b>51.3</b>	47.7	42.8	56.7	57.8	60.1	48.1	40.9	54.2	50.6

January 20, 2005

10 The state has a law that establishes a goal that each community set aside 10% of its housing for low and moderate income households. Do you support the idea that every community should be required to meet this 10% goal in order to provide affordable housing for local residents?

Answer = Yes

Region	All	Age			Income			Education		
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	81.1	80.2	82.4	77.5	82.9	82.9	87.1	65.8	86.2	73.2
MetroWest	78.5	71.6	81	78.9	80.8	83.3	77.2	80.2	81.7	76.9

11 Currently, our state government spends about 1% of the state budget on affordable housing programs. Would you support a proposal to double the amount of state tax dollars spent on expanding affordable housing programs if you believed it would help low and moderate income people to buy or rent a home? Answer = Yes

Region	All	Age			Income			Education		
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	76.1	77.6	75.3	72.2	78.7	70.6	80.5	78.4	77.2	73.1
MetroWest	74.5	65.4	75.7	74.5	79.3	75	79.8	83.3	73.3	75

#### Demographic Information

Region	All	Age			Income			Education		
		18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Under 40K	40K-80K	Over 80K	Less than College	Bachelors+
Statewide	N/A	22.6	19.6	21.6	36.2	38.5	40.1	21.4	56.4	43.6
MetroWest	N/A	19.1	24.4	26.6	29.9	33.1	33.1	33.7	41.2	58.8