

# HOUSING NEEDS AND THE DEMAND FOR HOUSING IN MOULTRIE, GA

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University of Georgia  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2005 the Housing and Demographics Research Center surveyed 515 applicants of a poultry processing plant in Moultrie, Georgia to determine the housing demand, needs and preferences of people living and working in the area. Those applicants surveyed represent a random sample from the 1,500 workers that will eventually be hired. A translator was available for Spanish speaking applicants. This data summary is purely descriptive. Differences in frequencies do not indicate statistical differences. The UGA Office of Vice President for Public Service and Outreach and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs provided funding for this project. Special thanks for Sanderson Farms for their cooperation in conducting this survey.

### **Key Findings: Projections and Implications for the Demand for Housing**

An estimated 28 percent of those surveyed would like to move from their current residence and another 25 percent may be in need of a new place to live because of the condition of their residence. Applying these percentages to the total number of workers to be hired by Sanderson Farms (1,500) yields the following demand projections.

- **Preferences: New demand for housing** – Based on the number of applicants surveyed that expressed a desire to move, about 420 employees hired may be looking for a new place to live in Colquitt County. This would create demand for construction of new housing, purchase/rental of existing houses on the market or rental of apartments with vacancies.
- **Housing condition indicators: New demand for housing** – Of those that did not report wanting to move, 128 had one of the following situations:<sup>1</sup> overcrowded home, dissatisfied with home, lived with non-immediate family members, or had poor physical housing conditions. Therefore, another 375 employees hired

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<sup>1</sup> This represents 128 distinct households and is in addition to the number that expressed a desire to move.

potentially are in need of new housing, due to unfit or undesirable living conditions.

- ***Overcrowding*** – Based on the percentage of surveyed applicants living in overcrowded housing, with more than one person per room, about 510 employees hired may be living in overcrowded conditions.
- ***Home satisfaction*** – Based on the percentage of surveyed applicants who reported not being satisfied with their current housing situation, about 345 employees hired may not be satisfied with their current housing situation.
- ***Living with others*** – Based on the percentage of those surveyed that reported sharing a housing unit with extended family and/or friends, about 375 employees hired (or the extended family/friends that live with them) may be in need of their own place to live. The demand could be for more than this, depending on how many separate households are living together.
- ***Home repairs*** – Based on the percentage of applicants surveyed who reported exterior deterioration or plumbing, heating or electricity problems, potentially 495 employees hired need their house repaired.
  - Based on the percentage of applicants surveyed who reported having (only) one major housing problem, about 300 employees hired may be in need of *house repairs*.
  - Based on the percentage of applicants surveyed who reported having more than one major housing problem, another 195 may be in need of *major home rehabilitation*.
- ***Affordability*** – Based on aggregate survey statistics for housing payments and gross income and average utility costs from the City of Moultrie Utility Department, neither renters nor homeowners were cost burdened. The average renter paid about 19 percent of gross income for rent and utilities, and the average homeowner with a mortgage paid about 18 percent.
- ***Wages and cost of housing*** - Given the wage rate and cost of housing in Moultrie, employees could afford rental of their own unit after their first

year of employment, but probably cannot afford homeownership without additional wage earners in the household.

### **Demographic & Housing Data Profile Summary**

- ***Demographic profile*** - The median applicant age was 32 years old. Two-thirds of the applicants surveyed were female and a majority was black. The age range of applicants surveyed was from 18 to 69 years old.
- ***Housing type*** - Most applicants reported living in either a single-family house (40 percent) or a manufactured (mobile) home (35 percent). About 13 percent lived in an apartment and about eight percent lived in a duplex or triplex.
- ***Homeownership*** - More applicants reported renting than owning. Overall, the homeownership rate for those surveyed was 41 percent. For single-family homes, the homeownership rate was 40 percent. For mobile homes, the homeownership rate was 59 percent.
- ***County of residence*** - A majority of applicants reported living in Colquitt County (67 percent) and more than one-half of all applicants reported living in Moultrie.
- ***Educational attainment*** - Most applicants at least 25 years old (67 percent) had at least a high-school diploma. Whites and blacks were much more likely to report having a high-school diploma than Hispanic applicants.
- ***Household type and size*** - A majority of applicants reported living with only their spouse and/or children (62 percent). Hispanics were most likely to report living with extended family members or friends and most likely to report living in larger households (5 or more persons). Thirty-eight percent of all applicants surveyed were single parents.
- ***Household income*** - About one-half of the applicants surveyed indicated a net monthly household income of more than \$1,500.
- ***Housing payments*** - Three-quarters of renters and 53 percent of homeowners with a mortgage reported a monthly housing payment of \$400 or less. About 50 percent of renters and 25 percent of homeowners paid \$300 or less.

## **Housing Needs & Conditions Summary**

- ***Housing problems*** - About one-third of respondents indicated having at least one major housing problem within the last year. Apartment dwellers were less likely to report having physical housing problems than single family or mobile home residents surveyed. Applicants living in mobile homes were more likely than single family residents and apartment dwellers to report having more than one housing problem.
- ***Overcrowding*** - More than one-third of the applicants surveyed reported living in overcrowded housing conditions. Hispanics were the most likely to report living in overcrowded conditions. Applicants living in apartment units were more likely to report living in overcrowded conditions than single-family or mobile homes.
- ***Home satisfaction*** - Nearly one-quarter of the respondents indicated they were not happy with their current housing unit. Apartment dwellers were more likely than single-family or mobile home residents to report being dissatisfied with their current housing situation. Many reasons were reported for why applicants were dissatisfied with their current house: poor quality, lack of ownership, too small, live with extended family and/or friends, poor neighborhood, and wrong housing type.
- ***Cost burdened*** - Based on aggregate survey statistics for housing payments and gross income and average utility costs from the City of Moultrie Utility Department, neither renters nor homeowners were cost burdened. The average renter paid about 19 percent of gross income for rent and utilities, and the average homeowner with a mortgage paid about 18 percent.