

San Francisco

	2006	2010	2014	2014 Ranking
Renter Households				
Share of Population Renting				
Metro Area	37%	42%	44%	3
Central City	54%	57%	55%	
Suburbs	33%	39%	41%	
Share of Renter Households in Single-Family Homes				
Metro Area	26%	28%	29%	7
Rental Vacancy Rate				
Metro Area	8%	6%	4%	10
Average Renter Household Size				
Metro Area	2.0	2.2	2.3	2
Median Renter Household Income				
Metro Area	\$55,100	\$53,400	\$57,000	2
Affordability				
Median Gross Rent				
Metro Area	\$1,420	\$1,460	\$1,520	2
Median Gross Rent for Non-Recently Available Units				
Metro Area	\$1,390	\$1,420	\$1,460	2
Median Gross Rent for Recently Available Units				
Metro Area	\$1,550	\$1,550	\$1,750	1
Share Rent Burdened (Moderate + Severe)				
Metro Area	50%	52%	50%	8
Central City	42%	46%	43%	
Suburbs	53%	54%	53%	
Share Severely Rent Burdened				
Metro Area	26%	26%	25%	7
Central City	20%	22%	21%	
Suburbs	28%	28%	26%	
Share Severely Rent Burdened - Lowest Income Quartile				
Metro Area	72%	73%	70%	10
Share Severely Rent Burdened - Lower-Moderate Income Quartile				
Metro Area	30%	34%	29%	7
Share of Recently Available Rental Units Affordable to 25th Percentile Metro Area Renter				
Metro Area	6%	5%	5%	2
Share of Recently Available Rental Units Affordable to Median Metro Area Renter				
Metro Area	39%	34%	31%	6

The growth in renter population grew faster in the San Francisco suburbs than in the city proper between 2006 and 2014. While the share of San Franciscans (living within city limits) who rented their homes rose slightly from 2006 (54%) to 2014 (55%), in the parts of the San Francisco metro area outside of the city and county of San Francisco, the share of the population who rented their homes rose by eight percentage points, from 33 percent in 2006 to 41 percent in 2014. Overall, the population of renters in the San Francisco metro area grew by 33 percent between 2006 and 2014.

Rental housing stock in the San Francisco metro area did not keep pace with the rise in renter population between 2006 and 2014. During the same period, the growth rate for the rental housing stock, in contrast, was just 15 percent, less than half that for the renter population. This disparity in the rate of growth in the demand for and supply of rental housing was higher than in any of the other 10 metro areas we studied. As a result, the rental vacancy rate was halved, from eight percent to four percent, between 2006 and 2014. As the rental market tightened considerably, renter households got larger, as renters doubled and tripled up. The average household size for renter households increased by 15 percent, the largest increase among the 11 largest metro areas and three times the increase in metro areas nationwide.

Median gross rents and median rents in the San Francisco metro area were substantially higher than those of metro areas nationwide in 2014. The median gross rent in the San Francisco metro area in 2014 was over \$1,500—56 percent higher than the median gross rent in metro areas nationwide. Dampening the effects of such high rents, however, was the metro area's very high median renter household income, which was 59 percent (or more than \$21,000) higher than the median renter household income for metro areas nationwide. Even with such high incomes, however, renters in the San Francisco metro area faced a highly unaffordable rental market.

Of the 11 largest metro areas, San Francisco metro area saw the steepest decline in affordability to median renter households between 2006 and 2014. In 2014, the median metro area renter could have afforded just 31 percent of recently available rental units, a sharp 8-percentage-point decline between 2006 and 2014—the steepest decline in affordability among any of the 11 largest metro areas. Between 2006 and 2014, the real median gross rent increased both within San Francisco proper and in the surrounding areas. Between 2013 and 2014, the median rent in the metro area increased 4.5 percent, more than in any other metro area in our sample.

Rent burdens were not as high in the San Francisco metro area as in many other large metros. Among the lowest-income quartile of renters, the share severely rent burdened in 2014 (70%) was lower than all but one of the 11 largest metro areas. Among the next-lowest quartile of renters by income, earning more than the 25th percentile metro area renter and no more than the median metro area renter, 29 percent were severely rent burdened in 2014, a lower share than in many metro areas with lower median rents but also lower median incomes, such as the Miami, Boston, and Philadelphia metro areas.

Renters in San Francisco metro area needing to move faced a 20 percent premium for recently available units. Units that had been on the market in the past year in 2014 commanding rents nearly \$300 higher than units that had not been on the market. Indeed, the median rent for recently available units in 2014 was \$1,750, the highest among the metro areas in our study.