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Multiple families living together continues to be a trend in Illinois

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The number of people living in shared households in Illinois has decreased since 2010, but it continues to stay high.

A recent report by the Census Bureau shows that nearly one million Illinois residents live in a home with multiple families.

According to the report, in 2007 the number of shared households was 18 percent. The number increased in 2010 to 19.4 percent and fell to 18.9 percent last year.

Spencer Cowan is vice president of the Woodstock Institute, an economic research organization.

He said with the recession and the housing crisis, sharing households helps people stay afloat.

"I think this is a trend that would continue for some time until the economy starts to pick up and until people have secure jobs," Cowan said. "I don't think they are going to be as anxious and as willing to get into homeownership."

Cowan said housing cost in Illinois is high, making it more attractive for people to share expenses.

But Jeff Smith, executive director of the Institute for Housing Studies at DePaul University, said there are other long term consequences to a large number of shared households.

He said weak demand in the housing market is amplified when people join or combine households -- like when adult children move in with their parents instead of renting or buying homes.

"This shared household phenomenon has really served to reduce demand on housing market and that's why you see property values declining, why you see a lot of vacant property out there and certainly speaking a weak housing market," Smith said.

He said the recent drop in shared households could boost the housing market.

"We'll have more demand for rental housing and potentially more of a demand for owner occupied housing," he said.