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Cost of Oregon Evictions Report

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To evaluate the downstream community costs of evictions in Oregon during the pandemic, PSU's [Homelessness Research & Action Collaborative](#) used a calculator developed by the University of Arizona and estimates of how many renter households are at risk of eviction. The center worked with community partners to gather data from emergency shelters, inpatient and emergency medical services, child welfare, and juvenile justice services. Wherever data were not readily available or did not appear to be tracked in Oregon, the center used national averages.

Approximately 89,000 Oregon households owe back rent, according to the center's analysis of the Census Household Pulse survey of social and economic impacts of the coronavirus. As many as 200,000 have little to no confidence in their ability to pay next month's rent, which suggests that these numbers will continue to grow. More than half of the 200,000 households include children. The [Oregon Renters Survey](#) conducted by Dr. Lisa K. Bates showed that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color were disproportionately at risk of eviction during the pandemic.

To calculate the statewide cost of evictions, the center used the [Cost of Eviction Calculator](#) developed by the Innovation for Justice program at University of Arizona College of Law. The calculator was created to show the aggregate community costs of eviction and promote systemic shifts toward eviction prevention. It allows users to input local data, use national figures, or refer to localized data from other jurisdictions. The calculator was built in Neota Logic, and draws from Neil Steinkamp's work analyzing the costs and benefits of providing a right to counsel in evictions.

Using these sources — the estimates of households at risk of eviction (89,000), the calculator, and statewide health, shelter, child welfare, and juvenile justice data — the center estimates that Oregon might be forced to spend between \$1 billion and \$3.3 billion to respond to displacement of this magnitude in the short term if additional eviction supports are not adopted (Pages 2–4). The estimate does not include costs due to lost income, increase in public assistance, gaps in education, or the long-term impact to health, education, and earnings. Neither does it capture the costs of building new shelters and creating new emergency support as a result of exceeding current system capacity. The estimate also does not include costs associated with possible increased COVID transmission due to evictions. Several studies have linked higher rates of evictions to higher [rates of transmission and deaths](#). Considering these factors, the \$1 billion to \$3.3 billion calculation is likely an underestimate.

In comparison, the total rent arrears owed in Oregon is estimated at \$378 million at the high end, according to [Stout](#), a global investment bank advisory firm. Those costs will continue to rise, but will likely be a fraction of the cost of evictions. This report includes recommended actions such as

fully funding rent supports to meet the scale of the need and extending renter protections including: relief from no-cause evictions, access to mediation instead of eviction, and reasonable repayment periods for arrears to avoid mass evictions in Oregon (Pages 4-7).

Calculation Breakdown (Details and figures from Cost of Eviction Calculator)

The following calculation details and figures were provided by the Cost of Eviction calculator developed by the University of Arizona, [based on inputs](#) gathered and entered by Portland State University’s Homelessness Research & Action Collaborative (HRAC). Portland State calculated a higher and lower total cost based on two major variables: the estimated percentage of evictions that would result in shelter needs, and the cost of a one-day stay in an emergency shelter. National studies cited by the calculator estimate that 25% of evictions result in a shelter stay, but recent surveys in the Seattle area (Seattle Women's Commission and King County Bar Association, "Losing Home: The Human Cost of Eviction in Seattle") estimate that up to 62% of evictions may result in shelter or transitional housing needs (although many of those evictions resulted directly in unsheltered homelessness). The lower estimate of shelter needs was coupled with a pre-COVID shelter cost from a representative shelter in Oregon, while the higher estimate was coupled with a COVID-period shelter cost. A full list of the inputs used and the source for each is available at: bit.ly/CostOfEvictions

Step 1: Shelter Costs

The calculator estimated total shelter costs to be \$1,980,575,740 (high) or \$529,992,775 (low).

The calculator estimates COVID-19 eviction-related shelter costs by multiplying the following five variables: (1) the total number of renter households at risk of eviction; (2) the average number of persons per household; (3) the percentage of evictions that result in shelter needs; (4) the cost of a one-day stay in emergency shelter; and (5) the average number of days per year that a person experiencing homelessness stays in emergency shelter.

	Total Shelter Cost	# HH evicted	# of people/ HH	% needing shelter	costs of a one-day stay	# days stayed per year
HIGH	\$1,980,575,740	89,000	2.5	62%	\$110.0	130
LOW	\$529,992,775	89,000	2.5	25%	\$73.0	130

Step 2: Inpatient Medical Care Costs

The calculator estimated inpatient medical care costs to be \$613,127,524 (high) or \$247,228,840 (low). (Calculation based on pre-COVID costs and does not account for increased COVID transmission due to evictions.)

The calculator estimate for inpatient medical care costs is the product of the following seven variables: (1) the total number of renter households at risk of eviction; (2) the average number of persons per household; (3) the percentage of evictions resulting in homelessness; (4) the percentage of individuals experiencing homelessness that use inpatient medical care services; (5) the estimated share of these individuals who would not be utilizing these services if they were not experiencing homelessness; (6) the average costs of one inpatient hospital visit; and (7) the

average length of a hospitalization for someone experiencing homelessness.

	Total Inpatient Cost	# HH evicted	# of people / HH	% needing shelter	usage rate	use due to homelessness	cost of one visit	length
HIGH	\$613,127,524	89,000	2.5	62%	23%	80%	\$3,437	7
LOW	\$247,228,840	89,000	2.5	25%	23%	80%	\$3,437	7

Step 3: Emergency Room Care Costs

*The calculator estimated emergency medical care costs to be **\$239,597,034 (high) or \$96,611,707 (low)**. (Based on pre-COVID costs and does not account for increased COVID transmission due to evictions.)*

The calculator estimated COVID-19 eviction-related emergency department (ED) costs by multiplying the following seven variables: (1) the total number of renter households at risk of eviction; (2) the average number of persons per household; (3) the percentage of evictions resulting in homelessness; (4) the percentage of individuals experiencing homelessness that use emergency department services; (5) the estimated share of these individuals who would not be utilizing these services if they were not experiencing homelessness; (6) the average costs of one emergency department visit; and (7) the average number of times per year that a homeless person uses emergency department services.

	Total ER Costs	# HH evicted	# of people/ HH	% needing shelter	usage rate	Use due to homelessness	cost of one visit	# of visits per year
HIGH	\$239,597,034	89,000	2.5	62%	32%	75%	\$1,802	4
LOW	\$96,611,707	89,000	2.5	25%	32%	75%	\$1,802	4

Step 4: Foster Care Costs

*The calculator estimated foster care costs to be **\$318,922,998 (high) or \$128,597,983 (low)**.*

The calculator estimated the costs of foster care due COVID-19 eviction-related homelessness by multiplying the following eight variables: (1) the total number of renter households at risk of eviction; (2) the percentage of evictions resulting homelessness; (3) the share of all households that are families with children; (4) the average number of children in families with children; (5) the percentage of homeless families who receive child welfare services in the form of out-of-home placements; (6) the average cost of foster care placements per month; and (7) the average number of months a child remains in foster care.

	Total Foster Care Cost	# of HH evicted	% needing shelter	% families w/children	# of children per family	% entering FC	Monthly cost of FC	# of months in FC
HIGH	\$318,922,998	89,000	62%	27.0%	1.9	16%	\$3,483	19.8
LOW	\$128,597,983	89,000	25%	27.0%	1.9	16%	\$3,483	19.8

Step 5: Child Delinquency Costs

The calculator estimated child delinquency costs to be **\$191,045,909 (high)** or **\$77,034,641 (low)**.

The calculator estimated juvenile delinquency costs due to COVID-19 eviction-related homelessness by multiplying the following eight variables: (1) the total number of renter households at risk of eviction; (2) the percentage of evictions resulting in homelessness; (3) the share of all households that are families with children; (4) the average number of children in families with children; (5) the share of all children who are ages 12-17; (6) the percentage of homeless youth who are first arrested after becoming homeless; (7) the average cost of juvenile detention per day; and (8) the average number of days a child remains in detention.

	Total Delinquency Cost	# of HH evicted	% HH w/ children	# of children per HH	% ages 12-17	% needing shelter	% arrested	Daily rate of detention	# of days in detention
HIGH	\$191,045,909	89,000	27.0%	1.9	34.2%	62%	25%	\$308	251
LOW	\$77,034,641	89,000	27.0%	1.9	34.2 %	25%	25%	\$308	251

Next Steps

Provided by the Innovation for Justice program at University of Arizona College of Law

How can I use this report?

Housing and civil legal advocates: Advocates can use this report to encourage local decision-makers to take action and reduce evictions. By demonstrating the scope of the downstream costs of evictions, advocates can persuade local leaders to consider shifting funds to earlier intervention.

Local governments and decision-makers: Legislators and officials can utilize this report to determine how much spending on eviction-related costs could be shifted to eviction prevention programs.

Educators: Teachers and professors can use this report as an awareness-raising tool in their classrooms and communities.

Social Service Providers: Social service providers can use this report to support grant applications for eviction-prevention and eviction-reduction services.

What can I do next?

Set up a meeting with local decision-makers: Meet with legislative representatives or city officials to bring these costs to their attention. Tell them what eviction prevention policies are on the table and how these policies could actually save community resources.

Convene stakeholders: The Cost of Eviction Calculator aggregates the downstream costs of eviction across the silos of homelessness services, medical care, emergency medical care, child welfare and juvenile delinquency services. Now that you have information about the costs those systems are incurring as a result of evictions, bring together stakeholders from these spaces to discuss how they can work together to prevent eviction and reduce those downstream costs.

Get involved: Create or join a local housing coalition to advocate for eviction prevention. Volunteer with local legal aid or housing advocacy organizations.

Eviction-Prevention Strategies

Now that you know how much Oregon might spend on just some of the after effects of eviction due to the pandemic, you can use this information to identify ways Oregon could allocate resources to prevent evictions before they happen. This is a short list of eviction strategies compiled by the Innovation for Justice program at University of Arizona Law. Visit <http://evictioninnovation.org/> for additional strategies.

Eviction Prevention Policy Strategies

Provide legal advice and assistance in eviction court: New York and San Francisco have implemented tenant's right to counsel programs. Tenants represented by counsel in eviction proceedings tend to have better outcomes and are more likely to avoid evictions. Similarly, some jurisdictions have created non-lawyer assistance programs where "Navigators" help unrepresented litigants navigate eviction court.

Emergency rent assistance programs: Provide emergency financial assistance to tenants facing the possibility of an eviction. Many tenants only owe \$600 dollars when eviction proceedings begin. Evictions can be reduced if decision makers create robust emergency rent assistance programs to help tenants experiencing housing instability. (During the pandemic and recovery, renters also need repayment schedules that allow them to pay back arrears at a rate that they can afford).

Adopt "Just cause" standards: Advocates suggest implementing "just cause" standards that require landlords to show just cause—such as non-payment of rent or violation of lease terms—before being able to file an eviction. These initiatives aim to reduce the number of eviction actions brought in a bad faith or arbitrary manner.

Landlord-tenant mediation: Communication and relationship-building can prevent an eviction notice from ever being stuck to a tenant's door. Creating opportunities for landlords and tenants to

work together on payment plans and conflict resolution without resorting to the legal system can reduce evictions and deliver community cost-savings. Check out the legislative proposal, The Eviction Prevention Act, for an example of this strategy: [Text - S.2486 - 116th Congress \(2019-2020\): Prevent Evictions Act of 2019](#).

Tenant education and self-help: Some communities have launched tenant's education programs that help tenants know their rights and responsibilities before a rental issue leads to an eviction. See the Tucson RENT project for an example: tucsonrentproject.org. Self-help tools can also empower tenants to informally resolve disputes with landlords before resorting to court proceedings. To see an example, check out this letter-writing tool for tenants to communicate with their landlords: <https://hellolandlord.org/about/>.

Affordable housing initiatives: The cost of rent steadily continues to rise, leaving people with few affordable housing options. For the lowest-income renters, affordable housing is particularly absent. This could be addressed by advocating for more inclusionary zoning policies, which increase capacity for more affordable housing construction. Communities can also help local housing non-profit organizations fund their own affordable housing programs. Local and state leaders can be encouraged to support the addition of affordable housing and fund non-profit organizations affordable housing initiatives.

Report Authors

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Community Partners

This work would not be possible without the help of more than a dozen individuals representing organizations across the state who provided data for the calculation. Sources include but are not limited to Abby Ahern, Clackamas County Community Development; Megan Bolton, Oregon Housing & Community Services; Katie Cadigan, Health Share of Oregon; Katharine Cahn, PSU Center for Improvement of Child & Family Services; Anna Cox, Department of Human Services; Ryan Deibert, Health Share of Oregon; Brian Glass, Oregon Department of Human Services; Kathryn Helms, The Geospatial Enterprise Office; Jimmy Jones, Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency; Judy Kuper, Department of Human Services; Stephanie Renfro, OHSU Center for Health Systems Effectiveness; Charles Rynerson, PSU Population Research Center; Shannon Singleton, Office of Governor Kate Brown; Lisë Stuart, Lane County Homeless Information Management System. We apologize to anyone we may have missed. We appreciate all of your work.

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