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For Immediate Release

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**Survey of Oregon Tenants Shows Increasing Housing Insecurity Amid Pandemic
*Community Alliance of Tenants Urges Legislative Action Now to Prevent Housing Disaster***

A new study by the Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT) and Portland State University shows that more than one in three Oregon renters surveyed during the pandemic owe back rent that they are unable to pay. The findings reveal an escalating problem that risks a wave of evictions when the current moratorium expires at the end of September.

As many as 35% of those surveyed owe back rent. That number increases to 56% for people of color. Even with an extension of the current moratorium, Oregon will likely only delay the evictions unless the move comes with significant rent relief.

“Oregon tenants are trying to do the right thing, paying rent as best they can and even sacrificing other essential purchases to stay in their homes. But the economic hardship of this pandemic is making it impossible for renters to keep up,” said Claire Rudy Foster, a Tenant Leader with the Community Alliance of Tenants. “Legislative action to provide renters relief is urgently needed now to avoid a new housing crisis for renters across the state.”

“Tenants are struggling to maintain shelter, one of our most basic needs. The scale of the assistance available so far might seem significant, but it is not even close to meeting needs,” said Dr. Lisa K. Bates, associate professor of Urban Studies and Planning at Portland State University who led the study.

The survey of 460 Oregon tenants highlights the growing impact of the pandemic on renters.

- 53% of renters cut back on food and medications to pay rent. Half dipped into savings.
- At least two-thirds reported paying their rent in full each month since March. But the number has declined from over 90% in March to 67% in July.
- 34.8% of tenants now owe back rent and 56% of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) tenants owe back rent.
- Among those owing back rent, half have made partial payments during the pandemic.
- 84% of tenants are experiencing mental or physical stress due to housing insecurity.

A full analysis of the survey is available at pdx.edu/homelessness/housing-insecurity-report.

Oregon's eviction moratorium, enacted in April and extended through the end of September, temporarily prevents evictions and extends the period under which renters must repay landlords. But as the economic crisis continues, tenants continue to accrue debt that will likely be impossible for many to repay.

"By waiting until the last second to renew important measures like the foreclosure moratorium or the eviction moratorium, legislators are not protecting renters and landlords alike," said Coya Crespín, Portland Metro Organizer with the Community Alliance of Tenants. "We are in the middle of a housing emergency and this is not the time for our elected officials to be dragging their feet."

"Leaders must respond in moments of crisis, taking bold action to protect the people they serve," said Mariah Alyn Claire, a longtime Tenant Leader with the Community Alliance of Tenants. "Oregon has been confronting a housing insecurity crisis for several years and this pandemic has accelerated that crisis to a disturbing degree. We call on our Legislative leaders to meet this challenge by providing those across Oregon in need of rent relief."

To address this crisis, the **Community Alliance of Tenants** has proposed the Cancel the Rent package to provide relief to renters and landlords alike. It would include:

- **Cancel all rent**, late fees, and rent debt for the duration of the pandemic.
- **Freeze all rent** and **extend the eviction moratorium** for the duration of the pandemic. Protect tenants against retaliation and harassment.
- **Suspend mortgage payments** for vulnerable homeowners and for small landlords and extend the foreclosure moratorium for the duration of the pandemic.
- **Increase emergency housing** for anyone who is or becomes houseless. Must be safe and high quality housing with access to food, support services and health care.
- **Invest in community-owned housing**: Stop private equity takeovers, create Community Land Trusts, and support safety, health and accessibility improvements

The complete proposal is available at <https://www.oregoncat.org/cancel-the-rent-campaign>.

[Renter's Rights](#) Under the Current Moratorium from Oregon Law Center and Legal Aid Services of Oregon.

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