

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Stefanie Knowlton (503) 871-1216

New PSU Report Calculates Cost of Oregon Evictions

Mass evictions could cost as much as \$3.3 billion after moratorium expires in June

PORTLAND, Ore. — Feb. 9, 2021 — A [new report](#) from Portland State University’s Homelessness Research & Action Collaborative (HRAC) estimates that evictions could cost Oregon as much as \$3.3 billion after the statewide eviction ban expires in June.

The center worked with community partners to gather [data](#) from emergency shelters, inpatient and emergency medical services, child welfare, and juvenile justice services to estimate the downstream costs of evictions using the [Cost of Eviction Calculator](#) developed by the University of Arizona College of Law.

The center’s cost calculation is an estimate of the scale of the crisis that Oregon could face without additional eviction interventions. It does not cover loss of 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 the current system capacity. The estimate also does not include costs associated with likely increased COVID-19 transmission due to evictions.

The current rental support programs are not enough to meet the scale of the need, said Associate Professor and HRAC Researcher Lisa K. Bates. Oregon renters owe as much as \$378 million in back rent, according to a [study by Stout](#) advisory firm. Those costs will continue to rise, but will likely be a fraction of the cost of evictions.

“The programs being implemented will support a substantial number of renters; they will also leave an unconscionable number of people, families and communities behind,” Bates said.

Approximately 89,000 Oregon households owe back rent, according to the center’s analysis of Census data. A disproportionate number of these households are households of color. The center’s [survey](#) this fall showed that 35% of renters were behind on rent, a figure that jumps to 56% for people of color. The report includes recommended actions such as fully funded rent support and renter protections to avoid mass evictions.

“Unprecedented times isn’t just the first line of every email,” Bates said, “it’s a real experience for those living with fear, hunger and harm in almost unfathomable numbers with no real hope of a safety net to catch them.”

###

About PSU's Homelessness Research & Action Collaborative

The [Homelessness Research & Action Collaborative](#) (HRAC) brings together faculty from Portland State University and Oregon Health Science University with expertise in disciplines ranging from psychology and architecture to medicine and linguistics.

We believe that it will take all of us working together to address the issues that lead to and perpetuate homelessness. We work alongside community partners, elected leaders, and those experiencing homelessness to research and create solutions with an emphasis on communities of color.

Researchers

PSU Associate Professor Lisa K. Bates, Ph.D.; PSU Associate Professor Marisa Zapata, Ph.D.; Homelessness Research & Action Collaborative Assistant Director Jacen Greene; and Homelessness Research & Action Collaborative Communications Specialist Stefanie Knowlton.

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.

Media Contact:

Stefanie Knowlton

(503) 871-1216 - cell (text/call)

Sknow2@pdx.edu

[Report Webpage](#)