

**Homelessness Research & Action Collaborative  
Portland State University**

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Earlier this year, 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 to evaluate the downstream community costs of evictions in Oregon during the pandemic. In light of the state eviction moratorium that is set to expire this month and the CDC moratorium that expires at the end of July, the center is once again looking at the number of households at risk of eviction and the downstream costs.

The data gathered from emergency shelters, inpatient and emergency medical services, child welfare, and juvenile justice services remain the same. Wherever data were not readily available or did not appear to be tracked in Oregon, the center used national averages.

The center did use a different metric to estimate those at risk of evictions. In the original study, the center calculated the downstream costs if rent arrears, or past due rent, would become due immediately, using an analysis of figures from the Census Household Pulse survey of social and economic impacts of the coronavirus. This time, given the expiration of the state eviction moratorium for renters, we analyzed system costs for renters who had little to no confidence in paying next month's rent. This estimate, therefore, cannot be compared with the previous one.

Approximately 59,400 Oregon households have no confidence in their ability to pay next month's rent, according to the center's analysis of the latest [Census Household Pulse](#) survey of social and economic impacts of the coronavirus. An additional 66,000 have slight confidence in their ability to pay rent for a total of 125,400 households at risk of eviction. We used our analysis to develop high and low estimates of the systemwide costs of displacement at this scale. It is unclear how many of these households will receive rent assistance in time to avoid eviction or how many will apply for assistance in time to qualify for the 60-day extension granted by the Oregon State Legislature to households awaiting assistance.

Previous studies show that Black, Indigenous, and Other People of Color in Oregon face a higher risk of eviction. The [Oregon Renters Survey](#) conducted by Dr. Lisa K. Bates showed that BIPOC renters were disproportionately at risk of eviction during the pandemic.

To calculate the statewide cost of these evictions moving forward, the center again 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 (59,400 to 125,400 households), the calculator, and statewide health, shelter, child welfare, and juvenile justice data — the center estimates that Oregon might be forced to spend between \$720 million and \$4.7 billion to respond to displacement of this magnitude in the short term if additional eviction supports are not adopted (Pages 3–5).

The estimate does not include how many people received or will receive rent support. Neither does it capture the downstream eviction costs from lost income, increase in public assistance, gaps in education, or the long-term impact to health, education, and earnings. It does not include the costs of building new shelters and creating new emergency support as a result of exceeding current system capacity. And it 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](#) and a [recent study](#) shows that neighborhoods with the highest eviction filings have the lowest rates of COVID vaccination, which means residents will be more likely to contract and spread COVID. Considering these factors, the \$720 million to \$4.7 billion calculation is likely an underestimate.

### **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 three major variables: the estimated percentage of evictions that would result in shelter needs, the cost of a one-day stay in an emergency shelter in Oregon, and renters with no confidence or slight and no confidence in their ability to pay next month's rent. National studies cited by the calculator estimate that 25% of evictions result in a shelter stay, but 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 households at risk of eviction and lower estimate of shelter needs were coupled with a pre-COVID shelter cost from a representative shelter in Oregon, while the higher estimate of households at risk and shelter needs were coupled with a COVID-period shelter cost. A full list of the inputs used and the source for each is available at: [bit.ly/OregonEvictionsCost](https://bit.ly/OregonEvictionsCost)

#### **Step 1: Shelter Costs**

*The calculator estimated total shelter costs to be **\$2,790,608,964 (high) or \$353,725,515 (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
<b>HIGH</b>	<b>\$2,790,608,964</b>	125,400	2.5	<b>62%</b>	<b>\$110.0</b>	130
<b>LOW</b>	<b>\$353,725,515</b>	59,400	2.5	<b>25%</b>	<b>\$73.0</b>	130

### Step 2: Inpatient Medical Care Costs

The calculator estimated inpatient medical care costs to be **\$863,889,793 (high) or \$165,004,417 (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
<b>HIGH</b>	<b>\$863,889,793</b>	125,400	2.5	<b>62%</b>	23%	80%	\$3,437	7
<b>LOW</b>	<b>\$165,004,417</b>	59,400	2.5	<b>25%</b>	23%	80%	\$3,437	7

### Step 3: Emergency Room Care Costs

The calculator estimated emergency medical care costs to be **\$337,589,529 (high) or \$64,480,173 (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
<b>HIGH</b>	<b>\$337,589,529</b>	125,400	2.5	<b>62%</b>	32%	75%	\$1,802	4
<b>LOW</b>	<b>\$64,480,173</b>	59,400	2.5	<b>25%</b>	32%	75%	\$1,802	4

### Step 4: Foster Care Costs

*The calculator estimated foster care costs to be \$449,358,920 (high) or \$85,828,317 (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
<b>HIGH</b>	<b>\$449,358,920</b>	125,400	<b>62%</b>	27.0%	1.9	16%	\$3,483	19.8
<b>LOW</b>	<b>\$85,828,317</b>	59,400	<b>25%</b>	27.0%	1.9	16%	\$3,483	19.8

### Step 5: Child Delinquency Costs

*The calculator estimated child delinquency costs to be \$269,181,540 (high) or \$51,414,131 (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
<b>HIGH</b>	<b>\$269,181,540</b>	125,400	27.0%	1.9	34.2%	<b>62%</b>	25%	\$308	251
<b>LOW</b>	<b>\$51,414,131</b>	59,400	27.0%	1.9	34.2%	<b>25%</b>	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**

*Extend the Full Eviction Moratorium:* The impacts of the global pandemic continue to impact low-income Oregonians and communities of color the hardest. Extending the full eviction moratorium would give rental assistance programs time to serve those who need it the most and add additional protections to avoid mass evictions.

*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](http://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**

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