

The Coming Wave: Covid-19 Evictions

A Growing Crisis for Families In California

Nearly half of Californians are renters, including the majority of Black, Latinx, and multiracial residents. Many were already facing a crisis due to soaring rents before the pandemic, and they have been hit hard by the virus and its economic impacts. Without eviction protection, debt relief, and financial support, these renters risk being caught in a coming wave of evictions which could force them out of their neighborhoods or even onto the street — increasing exposure to Covid-19. These protections are economic and public health necessities.

Renters who have experienced job or income losses are especially vulnerable. With little to no savings, they face mounting debt and the risk of eviction and homelessness.

1.1 million

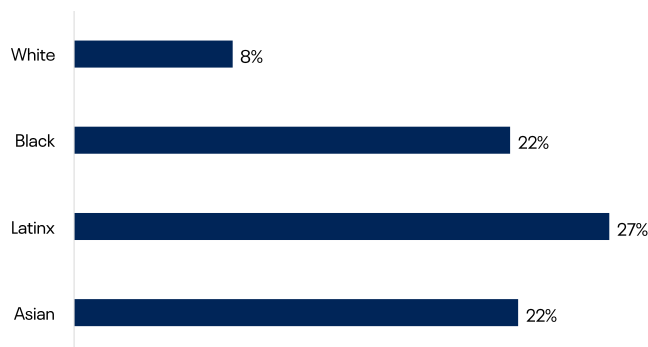
households were behind on rent in late December: 19% of all renter households.

\$3.7B

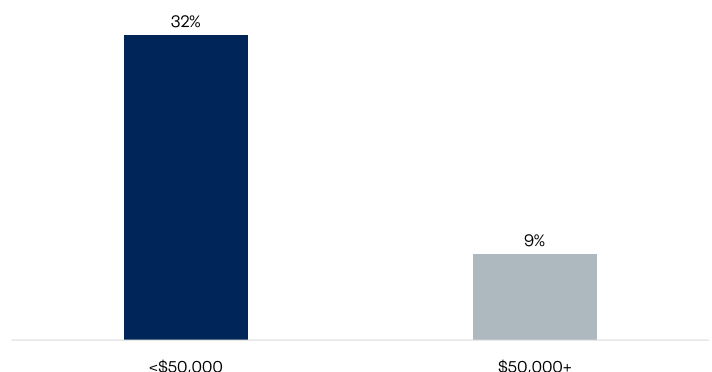
estimated rent debt for households, approximately \$3,400 per household.

People of color and low-income households have been disproportionately impacted by the recession and are more likely to be behind on rent.

Share of renter households behind on rent by race/ethnicity



Share of renter households behind on rent by income



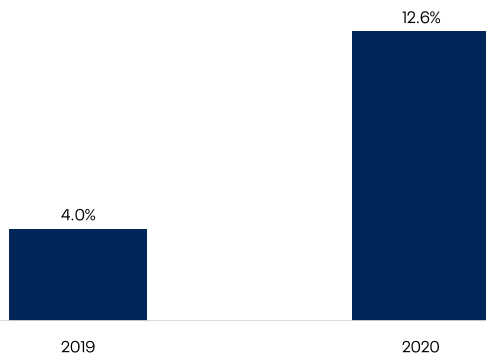
“My husband, children, and I were laid off of work when the pandemic hit. We were not able to pay rent nor could we receive unemployment benefits due to our status. The management company harassed us and used intimidation tactics to force us to pay rent. Without statewide protection for tenants, we fear eviction once the state of emergency is lifted.”

— Cecilia



Job loss is a key predictor of rent debt: workers who've experienced job losses are twice as likely to be behind on rent as those who've not.

Unemployment rate, April through November



Percentage point change in unemployment rate by race/ethnicity, Q1 2020 to Q2 2020



Forcing renters out of their homes would further exacerbate the public health crisis, leading to unnecessary illnesses and loss of life.

186,000

Covid-19 cases prevented by the eviction moratorium from March to September 2020.

6,500

Covid-19-related deaths prevented.

California can only thrive if its renters thrive. It is time for our elected leaders to pass a relief package that adheres to common sense principles:

- 1) No California renter should be evicted** or burdened with years of debt for rent that they were unable to pay during the pandemic.
- 2) Rent debt due to the pandemic should be fully forgiven** and should not be conditioned on landlords' acceptance of funds.

- 3) Financial assistance to landlords** should address the fiscal needs of landlords in danger of going out of business due to lost rent, with a particular focus on keeping small community-based landlords and nonprofit affordable housing operators solvent.
- 4) Local municipalities' authority** to pass stronger eviction and debt protection should be preserved.
- 5) Landlords should continue to fulfill their legal obligations** to tenants regardless of receiving assistance, including maintaining habitable premises, refraining from harassment and retaliation, and respecting tenants' legal rights.

The **Bay Area Equity Atlas** is a partnership between PolicyLink, the USC Equity Research Institute (ERI), and the San Francisco Foundation. www.bayareaequityatlas.org

Housing NOW! California is a coalition of over 60 organizations and led by tenants with the mission that everyone should have the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, affordable home. Launched in the spring of 2017, Housing NOW! California is a broad and diverse movement building power to make housing affordable and to combat the displacement crisis that is disproportionately impacting working class communities of color.

Sources and notes: 2018 5-Year and 2019 1-Year data from the American Community Survey Integrated Public Use Microdata Series; Week 21 Census Household Pulse Survey; Research Institute for Housing America; Leifheit et al., 2020. Unless otherwise noted, "renters" refers to renter-occupied households. Data by race/ethnicity are determined by the race/ethnicity of the survey respondent. Latinx includes people of Hispanic origin of any race and all other groups exclude people of Hispanic origin. Last updated January 26, 2021. See the methodology at: <http://plcyk.org/stateevictionrisk2021>

County	Renter HH Behind on Rent	Rent Debt per HH	Total Rent Debt (Millions)	LI Renter HH Behind on Rent	Rent Debt per LI HH	Total LI Rent Debt (Millions)
Alameda	41,988	\$4,179	\$175.4	19,513	\$3,169	\$61.8
Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Inyo, Mariposa, Mono & Tuolumne	3,887	\$2,116	\$8.2	3,391	\$2,012	\$6.8
Butte	6,310	\$2,302	\$14.5	5,384	\$2,149	\$11.6
Colusa, Glenn, Tehama & Trinity	2,691	\$1,651	\$4.4	2,294	\$1,556	\$3.6
Contra Costa	21,322	\$4,119	\$87.8	9,638	\$3,169	\$30.5
Del Norte, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas & Siskiyou	2,991	\$1,808	\$5.4	2,647	\$1,748	\$4.6
El Dorado	3,743	\$2,782	\$10.4	3,111	\$2,644	\$8.2
Fresno	31,609	\$2,068	\$65.4	27,528	\$1,979	\$54.5
Humboldt	5,380	\$2,264	\$12.2	4,714	\$2,121	\$10.0
Imperial	5,449	\$1,591	\$8.7	5,082	\$1,549	\$7.9
Kern	26,023	\$1,954	\$50.8	23,262	\$1,863	\$43.3
Kings	4,609	\$1,810	\$8.3	4,011	\$1,730	\$6.9
Lake & Mendocino	4,612	\$2,294	\$10.6	4,012	\$2,239	\$9.0
Los Angeles	383,689	\$3,343	\$1,282.8	298,763	\$3,023	\$903.3
Madera	3,395	\$1,862	\$6.3	2,977	\$1,804	\$5.4
Marin	5,739	\$4,479	\$25.7	2,609	\$3,608	\$9.4
Merced	7,404	\$2,044	\$15.1	6,141	\$1,923	\$11.8
Monterey	11,384	\$3,424	\$39.0	8,445	\$3,133	\$26.5
Napa	2,511	\$3,672	\$9.2	1,799	\$3,231	\$5.8
Nevada & Sierra	2,378	\$2,775	\$6.6	2,057	\$2,649	\$5.4
Orange	81,372	\$4,217	\$343.1	55,346	\$3,821	\$211.5
Placer	6,110	\$3,370	\$20.6	4,224	\$3,068	\$13.0
Riverside	40,834	\$3,012	\$123.0	31,625	\$2,760	\$87.3
Sacramento	45,003	\$2,774	\$124.9	35,985	\$2,606	\$93.8
San Bernardino	46,680	\$2,701	\$126.1	37,719	\$2,504	\$94.4
San Diego	87,970	\$3,732	\$328.3	65,333	\$3,439	\$224.7
San Francisco	31,730	\$4,154	\$131.8	12,987	\$2,487	\$32.3
San Joaquin	17,706	\$2,571	\$45.5	14,013	\$2,404	\$33.7
San Luis Obispo	7,303	\$3,327	\$24.3	5,761	\$3,131	\$18.0
San Mateo	15,119	\$5,462	\$82.6	5,669	\$4,360	\$24.7
Santa Barbara	12,450	\$3,422	\$42.6	9,715	\$3,063	\$29.8
Santa Clara	37,305	\$4,651	\$173.5	22,269	\$3,783	\$84.3
Santa Cruz	6,348	\$3,701	\$23.5	4,736	\$3,330	\$15.8
Shasta	5,152	\$2,061	\$10.6	4,095	\$1,930	\$7.9
Solano	9,065	\$3,419	\$31.0	6,477	\$3,108	\$20.1
Sonoma	10,545	\$3,460	\$36.5	7,325	\$3,009	\$22.0
Stanislaus	14,401	\$2,437	\$35.1	11,944	\$2,330	\$27.8
Sutter & Yuba	4,700	\$2,063	\$9.7	4,046	\$1,954	\$7.9
Tulare	11,900	\$1,958	\$23.3	10,369	\$1,890	\$19.6
Ventura	16,203	\$3,831	\$62.1	11,639	\$3,444	\$40.1
Yolo	7,201	\$3,075	\$22.1	5,946	\$2,956	\$17.6
Total	1,092,209	\$3,358	\$3,667.2	804,601	\$2,924	\$2,352.6

HH: Household

LI: Low-income (<\$50,000)