

A New Normal:

How Eviction Court Filing Data Can Advance a More Stable Housing Ecosystem for all Coloradans

October 2022



Overview

The Covid-19 pandemic illuminated and exacerbated Colorado's housing affordability crisis, prompting historic government interventions and an opportunity to envision a more balanced and equitable housing ecosystem, with greater stability for renters and predictability for landlords.

With temporary legal protections put in place during the pandemic long expired and emergency assistance winding down, policymakers and program implementers need robust, statewide evidence to identify and sustainably scale long-term measures to make that balanced, equitable housing ecosystem a reality.

Eviction court filings are one of the only existing means to quantify housing instability. While they cannot capture the full scope and impact of eviction, the ability to glean and interpret information from these filings would help to effectively target interventions that reduce the incidence and harms of eviction.

[Visit our website to learn more.](https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/resources/new-normal-evictions-colorado)

www.enterprisecommunity.org/resources/new-normal-evictions-colorado

How to Better Utilize Eviction Court Filing Data in Colorado

- Resource all county courts and the State Judicial Department to consistently report and pull key information from eviction court filings
- Provide for clear delineation between commercial and residential evictions
- Enable zip code where eviction occurred to be publicly reportable
- Make aggregate data on number and timing of filings, certain case specifics and outcomes publicly accessible in a user-friendly manner
- Safeguard renters' personally identifiable information from public availability
- Standardize how information for eviction filings is logged and reported across all county courts, including reasons for filing and case outcomes
- Ensure interaction across different state agencies' case management systems to align resources



Findings from Recent Colorado County Court Eviction Filings

July 2017 – June 2021 (CO Fiscal Years 2017-18 through 2020-21)

- More than 148,800 evictions were filed from July 2017 through June 2021.
- Landlords had counsel in 77% of cases, while renters were represented in 1.2% of cases.
- For the few renters who had it, legal representation resulted in better court outcomes.
- From July 2017 through December 2019 (pre-pandemic), about 70% of filings ended in a judgment for possession in favor of the landlord.
- At the start of the pandemic, eviction filings decreased significantly, suggesting a positive impact of pandemic-related interventions like rent payment extensions, resources dedicated to stabilizing renters and landlords and prohibitions on eviction because of nonpayment.
- The average principal that landlords filed over was \$3,325 before the pandemic, increasing to \$5,465 in 2020 and the first half of 2021.
- In Denver, the only county for which zip code-level data was accessible, eviction filings were concentrated in neighborhoods where residents are predominantly lower income, nonwhite, and particularly vulnerable to involuntary displacement.
- Colorado should improve statewide data tracking, consistency, and access to better inform targeted interventions that minimize evictions and their harms, thereby stabilizing renters, landlords and systems.

Source: Colorado Futures Center, "Eviction Cases in Colorado County Courts: A Summary and Limitations of Data Available from July 2017-June 2021." Available at: <https://www.coloradofuturescsu.org/housing-affordability-series/>

