

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Deidre Swesnik, dswesnik@nhlp.org, 202-919-9106

Survey Finds Rising Evictions in HUD-Assisted Housing

Washington, DC/San Francisco, CA - A [survey released today of legal aid attorneys](#) around the country finds that, despite \$46.5 billion in federal emergency rental assistance and a federal law protecting tenants from hasty evictions, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) continues to allow public housing authorities and voucher landlords to evict tenants from their homes at high rates, even for not paying rent due to pandemic-related hardship.

In Spring 2022, the National Housing Law Project (NHLP) surveyed 148 legal aid and civil rights attorneys in 39 states, DC, and Puerto Rico, to assess how tenants are faring in HUD-assisted housing, specifically HUD's public housing and Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8) programs at this point in the pandemic.

Top findings include:

- **HUD evictions are returning to pre-pandemic levels or higher.** 83% of attorneys reported rising eviction cases across HUD-assisted housing to be the same or higher compared to pre-pandemic levels. An increase in HUD evictions for non-payment of rent means that families with the lowest incomes – primarily seniors, people with disabilities, and Black and Latino families – are the most at risk of losing affordable housing in the midst of a market with skyrocketing rents.
- **Many public housing authorities (PHAs) ignored strategies for reducing rent that would have helped families.** During the pandemic, HUD tenants, like many Americans, saw their incomes fluctuate greatly. HUD provided PHAs with tools to adjust rents quickly, but many failed to make use of these tools, and HUD never mandated them. Now, tenants are facing evictions for nonpayment of rent that PHAs never should have charged.
- **Tenants with housing vouchers fared worse than tenants in public housing.** 92 percent of attorneys surveyed reported voucher tenant evictions had either increased or returned to pre-pandemic levels. Like public housing tenants, voucher families explicitly qualified for rental assistance, but suffered from some of the same landlord tactics as private tenants, and generally had fewer HUD protections.
- **Many HUD-assisted tenants did not benefit from emergency rental assistance.** Landlords (including PHAs) were able to apply for emergency rental assistance to recover lost rental income. HUD recommended, but never required, PHAs to apply. HUD required even less of voucher landlords.
- **Public housing authorities and voucher landlords continue to violate the CARES Act 30-Day notice requirement and courts aren't enforcing it.** 88% of attorneys reported inconsistent or no court enforcement of the requirement. For many HUD-assisted tenants, a 30-day notice is critical to avoid homelessness by allowing them time to find another place to live with a limited income and preventing the landlord from filing an eviction in court.

“No one should be evicted from HUD-assisted housing for not being able to pay rent,” said Marie Claire Tran Leung, NHLP’s evictions initiative project director. “Evictions should be the last resort, especially at a time when skyrocketing rents and inflation have dramatically reduced the overall availability of affordable housing. To help HUD tenants, HUD and its housing providers must step up.”

The survey offers recommendations for HUD, PHAs, and voucher landlords to improve their practices and keep families in their homes, including: requiring PHAs to apply for rental assistance and retroactively adjust rent to appropriate income levels; and requiring landlords to work with tenants where rental assistance is still available.

“We urge HUD to collect its own data on what is happening in HUD-assisted housing across the country,” said Deborah Thrope, deputy director of the National Housing Law Project. “HUD has the authority to require more of its landlords to improve tenants' lives and prevent needless evictions.”

As the pandemic has progressed, NHLP has released two additional surveys on the state of evictions nationwide, in [July 2020](#) and in [December 2021](#). Today’s survey is available [here](#).

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The **National Housing Law Project**’s mission is to advance housing justice for poor people and communities. We achieve this by strengthening and enforcing the rights of tenants, increasing housing opportunities for underserved communities, and preserving and expanding the nation’s supply of safe and affordable homes. We are committed to an environment of inclusion and equitable opportunity for members of the Housing Justice Network, our partner organizations, clients, staff, and board. (www.nhlp.org)

The **Housing Justice Network** (HJN) is a dedicated community of professionals who serve on the front lines to advance housing rights. HJN is an informal network of more than 1,700 experienced housing advocates and clients from throughout the country. The network is hosted by the National Housing Law Project, but the content, history, and soul of HJN are carried by attorneys and advocates across the country who work on housing rights.