

Bay Area Housing Finance Authority

Advisory Committee

August 28, 2025

Agenda Item 7.a.

Bay Area Eviction Study

Subject:

Update on the findings from BAHFA's regional eviction study, which offers the first comprehensive, multi-county analysis of eviction trends and tenant legal services across the Bay Area

Background:

The Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) is guided by the 3Ps framework: protection of tenants, preservation of existing affordable housing, and production of new affordable housing. In response to the lack of consistent regional data, and as part of its Anti-Displacement Pilot, BAHFA commissioned a study in spring 2022 to investigate trends in regional evictions and access to legal services. Following a public request for proposals, BAHFA selected a research team led by Centro Legal de la Raza with the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project and independent consultant Alex Werth.

The study aims to inform local and regional anti-displacement strategies by analyzing court-based eviction data, tenant legal services capacity, and geographic and demographic disparities in evictions. The first tranche of deliverables, released in July 2025, includes the *Evictions in the Nine County Bay Area* report, the *Tenant Legal Services in the Nine County Bay Area* report, and an interactive data dashboard that allows users to examine eviction data by county and ZIP code. BAHFA held two webinars on July 29 and 31 to review the findings; both were well attended with strong engagement from approximately 300 participants over both days. A second tranche, expected in September 2025, will include reports on methods, informal evictions and specific reports for each of the nine counties. All materials will be posted [on a dedicated page of the BAHFA website](#).

Key Findings on Evictions in the Bay Area

The study found that approximately 21,767 eviction lawsuits were filed across the region from July 2023 through June 2024, meeting or exceeding pre-pandemic levels in eight of the nine counties. Eviction rates were highest in Solano, Contra Costa, and Alameda Counties, particularly in gentrifying urban areas and eastern suburban communities that have experienced rising poverty rates.

The most common cause of eviction notices was nonpayment of rent, cited in 85–97% of notices in cities that track this data. Default judgments—where tenants lose their cases without presenting a defense—occurred in 27 to 47% of cases across nearly every county. This means that in these instances, tenants were evicted without the opportunity to contest the case in court.

The findings also highlight stark disparities in legal representation, consistent with national trends. In San Francisco, which has a tenant right-to-counsel program, 45% of tenants were

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represented compared to 96% of landlords. In San Mateo County, only 4% of tenants had legal representation, while 93% of landlords did. The research also found correlation between representation and case outcomes: in San Francisco and San Mateo, eviction orders were issued in 48% of cases where tenants lacked representation, compared to just 17% when tenants had legal counsel.

Finally, the research found that Bay Area evictions disproportionately occur in neighborhoods with a high proportion of tenants of color, female-headed households and households with children, which is consistent with national data. Evictions disproportionately affect Equity Priority Communities (EPCs), with disproportionate rates of sheriff lockout in EPCs in every county except Marin and Napa. Specifically, renters of color were 78% more likely to experience sheriff lockouts than white renters. Black renters were 63% more likely, Latino/a/e/x renters 65% more likely, female-headed households 65% more likely, and households with children 35% more likely to be locked out by the sheriff.

Key Findings on Tenant Legal Services in the Bay Area

Tenant legal services (TLS) refer to legal assistance provided to renters facing eviction or other housing-related legal issues such as code violations or harassment. These services can include legal advice, brief consultations, limited-scope representation, and full legal representation in court. TLS providers play an important role in helping tenants understand their rights, navigate the legal system, and avoid displacement.

This research found providers across the Bay Area are significantly under-resourced and constrained relative to the scale of need. On average in fiscal year 23-24, there were 166 eviction cases per TLS attorney across the region, far exceeding the recommended caseload of 40–50 cases. This disparity is far greater in some counties: in Santa Clara County, there were 480 filings per attorney, in Solano County 447 filings per attorney, and in Contra Costa County 328 filings per attorney. The report also highlights substantial variation in local government investment in TLS. San Francisco allocated approximately \$21 million to tenant legal services in FY 2024–25, while Oakland and San José allocated \$1.5 million and \$655,000, respectively.

This funding shortage results in most tenants receiving only limited support: 73% of TLS clients received brief consultations or limited-scope services, while only 27% received full representation. TLS providers often must triage cases based on urgency and various legal characteristics of the case, balancing the depth and breadth of services they offer to try to serve as many clients as possible.

Additionally, the report identifies specific service gaps for undocumented residents and geographically isolated communities, such as rural and coastal areas. These populations face barriers including language access, fear of engaging with legal systems, and limited access to technology or transportation.

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Conclusion and Next Steps for BAHFA

The Bay Area Eviction Study highlights the need for local and regional solutions to better track evictions across the region and to help tenants secure and remain in safe and affordable housing. This research also highlights the need to increase the quality, quantity and availability of court eviction data, and to improve coordination and communication across government agencies and the courts to support data-driven programs.

BAHFA's legislative authority includes the ability to raise funds through regional ballot measures to support affordable housing, including tenant protections. At least 5% of revenue from eligible measures would fund tenant protection programs like emergency rental assistance, legal services, education, technical assistance, and data tracking. Prior to a successful measure, BAHFA aims to support regional coordination, data tracking and technical assistance, as funding allows. As part of the current resource-constrained environment and the resource-intensive process to develop the studies, BAHFA does not have funding to regularly update the data nor to conduct specific follow-up investigations on areas identified for further research. The details of BAHFA's near-term activities on this topic will be finalized as part of Module 4 of BAHFA's Strategic Planning process, which is expected to conclude by January 2026.

Issues:

None

Recommended Action:

Information

Attachments:

A. Presentation

Reviewed:



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