



# Hoosier Housing Needs Coalition

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## Coalition Calls for COVID-19 Housing Stability Dashboard, Court Order for Renter Protections as Governor's Eviction Moratorium Ends

INDIANAPOLIS – With Indiana's eviction moratorium ending on August 14, the Hoosier Housing Needs Coalition is calling on Governor Holcomb to include a 'COVID-19 Housing Stability Dashboard' on the state's coronavirus response website to track eviction and rental assistance data. The Coalition also urges the Indiana Supreme Court to strengthen protections for renters facing COVID-19 related evictions in court with an order to uniformly enact recommendations of the Court's Landlord-Tenant Task Force. These recommendations would help inform the state's housing stability policies, in the absence of an articulated plan, and in the face of new data finding that up to 720,000 Hoosiers are at risk of eviction without additional protections.

The Coalition believes that neither the data nor the facts on the ground support lifting the moratorium at this point. Although the Coalition applauds state and municipal leaders for establishing emergency rental assistance programs, the amounts allocated to date are not enough to cover the current list of applicants, much less the [new estimates](#) of up to 313,000 households at risk of eviction in [waves](#) that could last through 2021.

## Eviction Risk in Indiana

Number of Households at Risk of Eviction	Number of People at Risk of Eviction	Percentage of Households at Risk
248,000 - 313,000	569,000 - 720,000	31% - 42%

Source: The COVID-19 Eviction Crisis: An Estimated 30-40 Million People in America are at Risk. August 7, 2020

And while the Coalition's [recommendations](#) for the Governor to appoint a Housing Stability Task Force to ensure an adequate and equitable policy response has so far gone unheeded, the data from a COVID-19 Housing Stability Dashboard could inform future policy decisions in order to mitigate the risks of future evictions and homelessness. The dashboard should include the following updated weekly:

- number of applications to state and city Rental Assistance Programs by county, including by [housing cost-burdened Census tracts](#), compared with the number of requests for housing assistance to the Indiana 211 network
- average amount requested by household per county
- number of applications accepted and denied per county and per reason why rejected, including ineligibility or lack of landlord participation
- number of evictions filed and completed per county and by cost-burdened Census tract
- balance remaining in the state COVID-19 Rental Assistance Fund

Eviction data for Indiana is notoriously difficult and expensive to obtain, with the [most recent](#) publicly-available information from 2016. And because Indiana is largely relying on partners for outreach about the state rental assistance program, it should arm those partners with up-to-date information about eviction filings and outcomes. The COVID-19 Housing Stability Dashboard should also include information directing people to the existing rental assistance programs throughout the state, as well as link to the Supreme Court's [website](#) with advisories and appendices for tenants, landlords and attorneys.

In addition, because the eviction moratorium is being lifted before measures on the Coalition's [Housing Stability Yardstick](#) have been met and the state's mediation program is not yet operational, the Coalition calls on the Indiana Supreme Court to issue a Court Order to ensure uniform application of the [recommendations](#) of the Landlord-Tenant Task Force across the state. A Court Order should elevate the [Guidelines for Judges](#) from suggestions to standard practices and be strengthened where needed to reduce unnecessary evictions, prevent homelessness, and safeguard public health, including:

- Determine if the leased property is governed by rules applicable to federally-backed mortgages, or any previous or future COVID-19 related relief or moratorium
- Separate court sessions for back rent versus damage hearings, and contested claims and other matters
- Establish a procedure where the first hearing is simply for information with courts advising both landlord and tenant to complete an application to the applicable public rental assistance program before proceeding to a possession hearing.
- Prioritize cases by oldest eviction cases first, i.e. the cases that were already scheduled when the moratorium was issued. Also consider situations where a party may have already resorted to impermissible self-help measures since tensions may be heightened.
- Deprioritize cases where, after the initial information hearing, the landlord and/or tenant have sought to create a payment plan, and/or have applied for assistance after the first hearing but have not been granted that assistance.

In part, because demographic information, including disaggregated data on racial disparities, is difficult to obtain, the state should consider appointing a Housing Stability Task Force to monitor the [disproportionate impact](#) of policies and funding decisions on low-income communities and Black and brown Hoosiers across these areas.

“The Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana (FHCCI) implores our state to take the steps as outlined by the HHNC. The FHCCI fears the upcoming eviction pandemic and the long-term and sustained impact upon our Hoosier households. In our state, the filing of an eviction, justified or not, will follow Hoosiers around in their housing search for years to come, impacting their ability to find safe and affordable housing options. Indiana already received national attention, pre-COVID-19, on its high eviction rates. More must be done to address and counteract this crisis,” said Amy Nelson, Executive Director, Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana.

“Unfortunately, the end of the moratorium in no way signals that the threat of evictions and homelessness is now gone. Just the opposite. Not only will the coming tsunami of coming evictions have a long-term impact on renters, it will also cause lasting devastation on the communities that have been hit hardest by the pandemic job and income losses. This type of double-whammy is no jackpot. And the Hoosiers whose lives we are gambling with - hoping this problem will go away without additional, sweeping financial and legal interventions and accountability measures in place - are depending on our state’s leaders to do more,” said Jessica Love, Executive Director, Prosperity Indiana.

Organizations and individuals who wish to join the Hoosier Housing Needs Coalition and receive updates should email [hoosierhousingneeds@prosperityindiana.org](mailto:hoosierhousingneeds@prosperityindiana.org).

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***About the Hoosier Housing Needs Coalition:***

Hoosier Housing Needs Coalition (HHNC) was formed by members of Indiana’s housing security advocacy community in April 2020 to support advocacy and education related to housing and homelessness prevention in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Staffed by Prosperity Indiana through advocacy and coalition building grants from the National Low Income Housing Coalition and the Central Indiana Community Foundation, HHNC convenes partners from across Indiana to advocate for immediate, medium- and long-term housing stability policy solutions and conduct education and research to achieve federal, state, and local policies for an equitable response and recovery to the pandemic and beyond.

The HHNC Steering Committee is comprised of members from AARP Indiana, the Coalition for Homelessness Intervention & Prevention (CHIP), Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana, Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis, Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Indiana Institute for Working Families – INCAA, Prosperity Indiana, and The Ross Foundation.