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# An Estimated One in Five Renters Feels Pressured to Leave Their Home

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July 3, 2023



Due to coding errors, a previous blog post on this topic, published July 3, 2023, was retracted on November 3, 2023. We corrected those errors, ran the numbers again, and wrote a new analysis.



(kali9/Getty Images)

For the first time, researchers have national data on the prevalence of involuntary moves among renters, and the numbers are larger than expected. New [US Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey](#) data show one in five renter households reported feeling pressure to move from their current home during the past six months. The survey also asked whether people left their homes as a result of the pressure, with 20 percent of households who experienced pressure having moved.

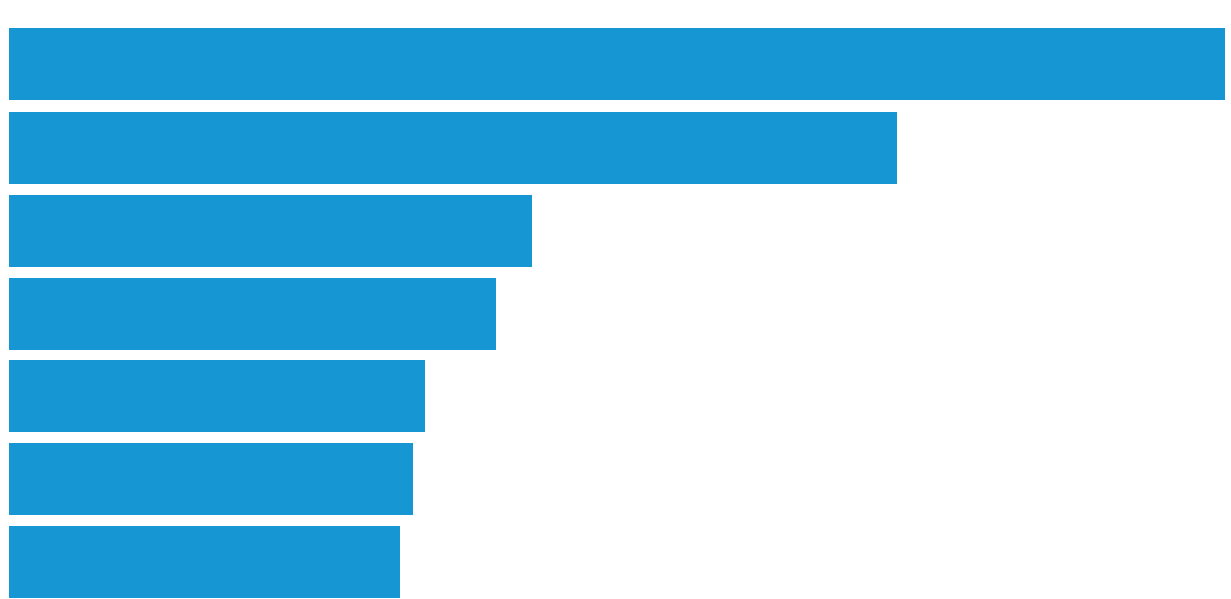
Previously, researchers relied mainly on measuring housing instability using local eviction filings, but these data show that [for every eviction filing](#) (PDF), nearly three additional renters felt pressured to leave their homes.

The reasons renters felt pressured to move highlight the power imbalance between renters and their landlords, especially amid a tight housing market. [Recent inflationary increases](#) in rent and prices for other household goods have hit households hard. Of those who felt pressured to move, 40 percent cited increased rent as the cause. Another 22 percent of renters attributed feeling pressure to move to their landlord not making repairs.

Being threatened with eviction and having the locks changed, possessions removed, or utilities turned off were cited less often as reasons, at 7 percent and 1 percent, respectively. But when these pressures did exist, renters were highly likely to leave their homes, with 44 percent of renter households whose landlords threatened eviction leaving their homes and 61 percent of renters whose landlords changed the locks or turned off utilities leaving their homes.

## Actions Cited That Led to Residents Moving

Of the survey respondents who felt pressured for the following reasons, percentage who left their home



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Source: US Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey week 58.  
Notes: Survey respondents could choose multiple reasons for why they moved.

Latinx and Black renters were more likely to experience these forms of pressure. Nearly one-third of Latinx and Black renters felt pressured to leave their homes compared with 18 percent of white households. For Black households, increased rent, ignored repairs, and missed rent payments were the top reasons for feeling pressured to leave. The top reasons for Latinx households also included increased rent and ignored repairs as well as feeling “other pressures” to move. Of Latinx households who felt pressured to leave their homes, 51 percent attributed the pressure to their landlord increasing rent.

## People of Color Are More Likely to Feel Pressured to Move

Of the Hispanic/Latinx survey respondents, 33 percent said they felt pressured to move



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Source: US Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey week 58.  
Notes: Categories are not mutually exclusive. People identifying as Hispanic may also be represented in other bars. The authors used the category “other races” to align with the data source but recognize aggregating racial and ethnic groups can mask important community differences.

## Charting a new way forward

These data show the stark reality for most renters across the country—very few regulations and laws protect them from destabilizing factors and little financial assistance is available for renters who need it. Even when there are laws, such as those that protect tenants' health and safety, some renters may be unaware of them or may not feel empowered to exercise their rights. Improving renter benefits and protections can improve their well-being and reduce the [many costs of housing loss that communities bear](#).

Some cities around the country are experimenting with rental registries to conduct risk-based property inspections and [ensure rental homes are being kept healthy and safe](#) and [to monitor other forms of compliance with tenant laws](#). Other states and cities have implemented limits on rent increases to prevent rent gouging. California [has capped rent increases on almost all but the newest rental properties throughout the state](#). And states and cities are articulating [just causes for formal eviction](#) that could ensure renters are compensated if a landlord violates the law with an illegal eviction or decides to ask the renters to leave for another reason, such as selling the property. Finally, increasing government benefits for housing – which currently only reach one in five eligible households – could stabilize renters even before other protections are necessary.

With more and more households renting by necessity as [buying a home becomes increasingly difficult](#), it's even more crucial to protect renters from losing their homes. Policymakers should consider strengthening renter protections and increasing rental assistance to both improve the balance of power between renters and their landlords and decrease housing instability for families and communities.

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Housing

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