



AGENDA

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY Advisory Council on Aging

Monday, September 15, 2025

10:00 AM

**500 Ellinwood Way, Pleasant Hill, CA
Classroom**

Housing Committee

<https://cccouny-us.zoom.us/j/81296954794>

PUBLIC ACCESS AND PUBLIC COMMENT INSTRUCTIONS:

The public may attend this meeting in person at the above location. The public may also attend this meeting remotely via webinar. Login information is provided above. ACOA members will also be participating from the following locations: Center for Elders' Independence, 1465 Civic Ct., Concord, CA 94520 | Mira Flores Senior Housing, 150 S. 45th St., Community Rm., Richmond, CA 94804 | Contra Costa Senior Legal Services, 2702 Clayton Rd., #202, Concord, CA 94519 | 14720 Byron Highway, #4, Bryon, CA 94514

10:00 Call To Order / Welcome – Kevin Donovan, Chair

Introductions

Review/Approve: Agenda and Minutes

08.18.25 Draft Minutes

[25-3753](#)

Attachments: [08.18.25 Draft Minutes](#)

10:10 Presentation: Bay Area Eviction Study – Alex Werth, Research Consultant for Raise the Roof Coalition and Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) Eviction Study

Evictions in the Nine County Bay Area - BAHFA 7-27-2025

[25-3744](#)

Attachments: [Evictions in the Nine County Bay Area - BAHFA 7-27-2025](#)

Tenant Legal Services July 2025 - BAHFA 7-27-2025

[25-3745](#)

Attachments: [Tenant Legal Services July 2025 - BAHFA 7-27-2025](#)

11:10 Update: “No Place to Call Home” Outreach Presentations – Kevin Donovan

11:15 Update: Home Match – Logan Robertson, Director, Home Match Contra Costa

11:20 Discuss: Support letter for Fast Track Housing Package – Kevin Donovan

Fast Track Housing Packet Letter 9-6 (004)

[25-3746](#)

Attachments: [Fast Track Housing Packet Letter 9-6 \(004\)](#)

11:30 Information Sharing

11:50 Plan Next Meeting

Adjourn

The Committee will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities planning to attend the Committee meetings. Contact the staff person listed below at least 72 hours before the meeting. Any disclosable public records related to an open session item on a regular meeting agenda and distributed by the County to a majority of members of the Committee less than 96 hours prior to that meeting are available for public inspection at 500 Ellinwood Way, Pleasant Hill during normal business hours. Staff reports related to items on the agenda are also accessible online at www.contracosta.ca.gov. If the Zoom connection malfunctions for any reason, the meeting may be paused while a fix is attempted. If the connection is not reestablished, the committee will continue the meeting in person without remote access. Public comment may be submitted via electronic mail on agenda items at least one full work day prior to the published meeting time.

For Additional Information Contact:

Nhang Luong at 925 655-1385 or nluong@ehsd.cccounty.us



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

1025 ESCOBAR STREET
MARTINEZ, CA 94553

Staff Report

File #: 25-3753

Agenda Date: 9/15/2025

Agenda #:



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

Committee Meeting Minutes - Draft

Advisory Council on Aging

Monday, August 18, 2025

10:00 AM

500 Ellinwood Way, Pleasant Hill, CA
"The Classroom"

Housing Committee

<https://cccouny-us.zoom.us/j/81296954794>

PUBLIC ACCESS INSTRUCTIONS:

The public may attend this meeting in person at the above location. The public also may attend this meeting remotely via Zoom. Login information is provided above.

Remote locations: Center for Elders' Independence, 1465 Civic Ct., Concord, CA 94520; Mira Flores Senior Housing, 150 S. 45th St., Community Rm., Richmond, CA 94804; Contra Costa Senior Legal Services, 2702 Clayton Rd., #202, Concord, CA 94519; 14720 Byron Highway, #4, Bryon, CA 94514

10:00 Call To Order / Welcome – Kevin Donovan, Chair

10:05 Roll Call

Present

Roger Boaz, Kevin Donovan, Marilyn Fowler, and Logan Robertson

10:07 Review and Approved May 2025 Minutes

Correction noted: Senior Legal Services was listed twice in the minutes.

Hou05-19-25DraftMinutes

[25-3354](#)

Attachments:

[Hou05-19-25DraftMinutes](#)

Motion:

Fowler

Second:

Robertson

Aye:

Boaz, Donovan, Fowler, and Robertson

Result:

Passed

10:10 Update: Zoom Webinar Format – Nhang Luong

10:15 Update: "No Place to Call Home" Outreach Presentations – Kevin Donovan

On July 17, 2025, Kevin Donovan and Nhang Luong presented to approximately 18 participants at the San Pablo Senior Center.

Marilyn Fowler is scheduled to present to the Concord Rotary Club on October 22, 2025.

- 10:20 Update: Home Match – Logan Robertson, Director, Home Match Contra Costa
Program currently has 17 rooms available for rent—the highest monthly total to date. Rent ranges from \$900–\$1,800 per month.
Completed the first family match in El Sobrante.
Secured a partnership with the City of Pinole.
Program featured on the cover of Marketplace magazine.
- 10:25 Update: Centers for Elders’ Independence – Uche Uwahemu, Director of Government & Community Affairs
Three new PACE centers have opened in Livermore, El Sobrante, and Oakland.
- 10:30 Presentation: Fast Track Housing Package – Steve Wertheim, Housing Policy Consultant, Office of Assemblymember Buffy Wicks
A legislative package designed to remove barriers and accelerate housing development in California.
Assembly Bills 130 and 131 were fast-tracked and signed into law by the Governor.
Key provisions include streamlined permitting and CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) exemptions for qualifying housing projects.

Legislative Press Release 5-15-25

[25-3355](#)

Attachments:

[Legislative Press Release 5-15-25](#)

- 11:00 Presentation: Housing Market Update – Oscar Wei, Deputy Chief Economist, California Association of Realtors
Housing sales are in a slump: -0.4% year-to-date; statewide median sales price is \$884,050 (-0.3% year-over-year). Sales remain stagnant due to high interest rates.
Inflation is accelerating as tariff impacts take effect; Consumer Price Index expected to continue rising.
In Q2 2025, only 15% of California households could afford a median-priced single-family home; in Contra Costa, 23% could afford.
Minimum annual income needed: \$359,200 (SF Bay Area), \$234,800 (Contra Costa).
Median home price in Contra Costa: \$915,000.
Insurance premiums in California are expected to increase by 21% by year-end.
Contra Costa property taxes have risen for three consecutive years since COVID.
One-third of older households are cost-burdened (spending more than 30% of income on housing). Adults 75+ are more likely to be cost-burdened than younger seniors.
California: 51% of low-income older adult households spend more than half of their income on housing (2023).
Bay Area: 43% (2023).
Contra Costa: 44% (2023).
Contra Costa is short of approximately 32,000 affordable housing units.
- 11:50 Next Meeting: Monday, September 15, 2025 - guest presenter will be Alex Werth with Research Consultant for Raise the Roof Coalition and Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA)

Public comment

Adjourn

For Additional Information Contact: Nhang Luong nluong@ehsd.cccounty.us (925) 655-1385

DRAFT



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

Staff Report

1025 ESCOBAR STREET
MARTINEZ, CA 94553

File #: 25-3744

Agenda Date: 9/15/2025

Agenda #:

Evictions in the Nine-County Bay Area

July 2025



ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Acknowledgments

The Bay Area Eviction Study was commissioned by the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA). Research and analysis for this report were conducted by Catherine Guimond of Centro Legal de la Raza and Terra Graziani, Dan Sakaguchi and Arushi Gupta of the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project. The study team also included Erin McElroy, Nitin Mogral and Alex Werth. Allison Chan of the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project provided graphic design. BAHFA staff authored all final reports with support from the study team.

The research was supported by a Tenant Legal Services Advisory Group comprised of representatives from tenant legal services organizations in each county. We thank the Advisory Group members for their time and expertise.

We are grateful to the dozens of public and nonprofit entities that provided eviction-related data for use in this study. This includes staff in city and county housing departments, sheriff offices and Superior Courts who compiled quantitative data from their public records in response to our requests. It also includes staff from tenant legal services organizations and other nonprofit social service organizations who contributed their knowledge and experience by participating in a survey and interviews that have added valuable context to the public quantitative data.

This study was funded in part by the San Francisco Foundation.

Contents

1	Introduction
7	Evictions in the Bay Area
18	Disproportionate Rates of Eviction in the Bay Area
21	Conclusion
23	Endnotes

Introduction

The Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) commissioned the Bay Area Eviction Study to better understand the current eviction landscape across the region as part of its mandate to advance affordable housing across Production, Preservation and Protections (the “3Ps”)¹. The research team collected and studied data from county Superior Courts, sheriffs’ offices, local agencies (as available by jurisdiction), the California Judicial Council and legal service organizations. Tenant legal services organizations provided in-depth data through a survey, and other tenant serving organizations provided information through interviews from across the region. The findings are organized into multiple regional and local reports and an interactive data tool that are available on the BAHFA website.

There are no national requirements for how courts maintain or share data.² Eviction data is known to be difficult to obtain in California due to state law that protects tenants by automatically sealing most eviction court records unless the landlord obtains a judgment in their favor within 60 days of filing.³ This means that eviction filings where the tenant prevailed or reached a settlement, or where the landlord dropped the case, cannot be discovered during background or credit checks. This protects tenants from being denied housing simply because a case has been filed against them.⁴ It also means that such cases are generally not available in the public record. While these protections are vital for tenants to secure new housing, they complicate the ability of researchers to analyze the trends and impacts of evictions based on court records.⁵

There have been several efforts to obtain eviction data in a few counties within the Bay Area.⁶ However, this report is the first known attempt to bring together eviction data from state, county and local data sources across the nine-county Bay Area.

Overall, the study found that rates of court evictions have returned to or surpassed pre-pandemic levels in eight of the nine counties. Such formal evictions are only part of a broader landscape of housing instability that encompasses both court proceedings as well as informal evictions. The study also found that tenants' need for support significantly outstrips legal services capacity regionwide. These findings reinforce the importance of tenant protections as a regional issue affecting housing stability and as a core part of BAHFA's founding mission.

Key Findings

- **Approximately 21,767 eviction lawsuits (formal court evictions) were filed in the region from July 2023-June 2024, meeting or exceeding pre-pandemic levels in eight of the nine counties.** The data indicate a sustained increase beyond the spikes seen when pandemic-era eviction moratoria ended in 2022-23.⁷
- A key research question was to understand variation across the nine counties. At a regional level, **the eviction rates in fiscal year 2023-24 were variable, with the highest rates in Solano, Contra Costa and Alameda counties.** Eviction rates were particularly high in gentrifying urban areas and eastern suburban areas that have seen increasing rates of poverty over the past decade.
- Regionwide data about the causes of eviction could not be obtained. However, data available from some cities and counties show that **inability to pay rent is cited as the legal cause of eviction in 85-97% of eviction notices.** This finding highlights the role of the region's housing affordability challenges in eviction risk.
- Similarly, regional data about default judgements in eviction lawsuits where a court rules in favor of a landlord because a tenant failed to respond — rather than based on the merits of the case — is difficult to obtain in consistent and reliable formats. Nonetheless,

after reviewing default rates from multiple data sources, the study found default rates in nearly every county between 30-50%. This indicates that **roughly one-third to half of tenants lose their eviction cases without the opportunity to present a defense.**

- While also unavailable for the region, two counties' data on tenant and landlord representation show a large gap. In San Francisco, which is the only jurisdiction in the region with a tenant "right to counsel," 45% of tenants were represented compared to 96% of landlords. In San Mateo County, only 4% of tenants facing eviction were represented compared to 93% of landlords. **This generally follows the rate found at the national level, where on average 4% of tenants and 83% of landlords are represented in eviction cases.**⁸
- Consistent with local and national research, **census tracts with high proportions of renters of color, households with children and female headed households faced higher rates of eviction across the region.**

These findings contribute to a growing body of research at the national level to understand the prevalence, causes and consequences of evictions.⁹ At the same time, the study highlights limitations on the availability and quality of eviction data, including the lack of consistent and detailed case-level data across geographies. This points to a need for structural improvements to enhance eviction data collection and management systems. The findings also suggest an ongoing role for BAHFA to support cross-jurisdictional efforts that enable data-driven policy and investment decisions to address housing instability across the Bay Area.

About the Eviction Process

Eviction lawsuits, legally known as “unlawful detainers,” follow a process primarily governed by state law.¹⁰ Each step in this process generates specific documentation (bolded below):

1. The landlord sends a **notice of termination of tenancy** to the tenant. State law does not require tracking of eviction notices. Ten jurisdictions in the Bay Area collect some data about eviction notices at the local level and seven of these collect all notice data.¹¹ Not all eviction notices result in eviction lawsuits. The tenant may resolve the issue stated in the notice, for example, by paying the rent they owe within the specified period (typically three days). Alternatively, tenants may move out upon receiving an eviction notice, before the matter proceeds to the court process.
2. Following the notice deadline, landlords can file an **eviction lawsuit** with the county Superior Court. Eviction lawsuits are accelerated proceedings that typically move through the court system in a matter of weeks, with a median duration of six weeks (including default judgments) in the Bay Area based on court records. This is significantly faster than other types of court cases, which often take years rather than weeks.
3. Upon receiving formal lawsuit notification, tenants have a brief window to file an **answer or other responsive pleading**. Historically, tenants had only five days to respond; state law was amended recently to extend the timeline to 10 days, effective January 1, 2025.¹² Failure to respond results in a **default judgment** against tenants, and they generally lose the opportunity to contest the eviction.¹³
4. If the tenant files an answer or other pleading, the case will make its way through the legal process and will ultimately be resolved by a **trial, dismissal or settlement agreement** (settlement agreements are the most frequent outcome). Settlements can be either move-out or stay agreements that resolve the case through negotiation rather than a judicial decision.¹⁴

5. If a case is decided against the tenant — via a default judgment or a judgment later in the process — the court rules to return possession of the unit to the landlord and issues a **writ of possession**.
6. If the tenant does not move out, the **sheriff will execute the writ** and lock the tenant out.

There is little officially collected data on what happens to tenants following an eviction court proceeding. Previous research has found that when tenants must move out due to eviction, there are long-term negative effects on the household's social and economic status, health, housing quality and housing stability, up to and including homelessness.¹⁵

Informal Evictions

The court system only includes formal eviction lawsuits. However, national studies have found that informal evictions are two to three times more common than court evictions.¹⁶ Informal evictions can take many forms: abusive or harassing behavior from property managers, refusal to repair health and safety violations like severe leaks and mold, or illegally shutting off utilities like hot water. What makes them informal is that they do not follow the required court process, making them difficult to track.

According to Judicial Council data between July 2023 and June 2024, 21,767 eviction lawsuits were filed across the Bay Area. Combining local eviction data with the national studies of informal eviction rates, an estimated 43,000 to 65,000 informal evictions may have taken place in the Bay Area in the same period. As such, **court eviction data may represent a significant undercount of the total scale of displacement occurring across the region.**

Methods

BAHFA requested eviction data from January 2001 through December 2023 through email and public record requests to each county Superior Court, county sheriff's office, and where available, local city agencies. However, the quality of data from before 2015 was not high enough to conduct reliable analyses at the regional level.

Methodology Report

For more details on methods and limitations, view the separate report on the [BAHFA website](#).

The study team was unable to secure usable eviction lawsuit data from the Superior Court in Santa Clara County. The study team received only limited data from the courts in Marin, Napa and Solano counties. BAHFA and the study team attempted to secure data from every court through repeated requests and outreach over a period of nine months. Given the lack of adequate court data from Marin, Napa, Santa Clara and Solano counties, some analyses in this report that require specific fields and case data do not include these counties.

To supplement or replace data provided to the research team by county courts, the study uses aggregate data from 2015 through the first half of 2024 on eviction lawsuits collected by the California Judicial Council (CJC). In addition to filling in gaps in court-provided data, CJC data from 2023-24 allows analysis that gives a fuller picture of evictions after the end of pandemic-era eviction moratoria. These data account for limited unlawful detainer cases (cases involving less than \$35,000) and do not include unlimited cases.

Data available from the Superior Courts and CJC do not include information about the causes of eviction lawsuits. For this study, the only available data on the reported causes of eviction come from city administered programs in Berkeley, Hayward, Mountain View, Oakland, Richmond and San Jose.¹⁷

The findings collected from the survey of tenant legal service providers and interviews with tenant-serving organizations are documented in companion reports found on the BAHFA website. These data are referenced in this report as appropriate to add context and nuance to the court eviction findings.

Evictions in the Bay Area

Evictions Post COVID-19 Pandemic

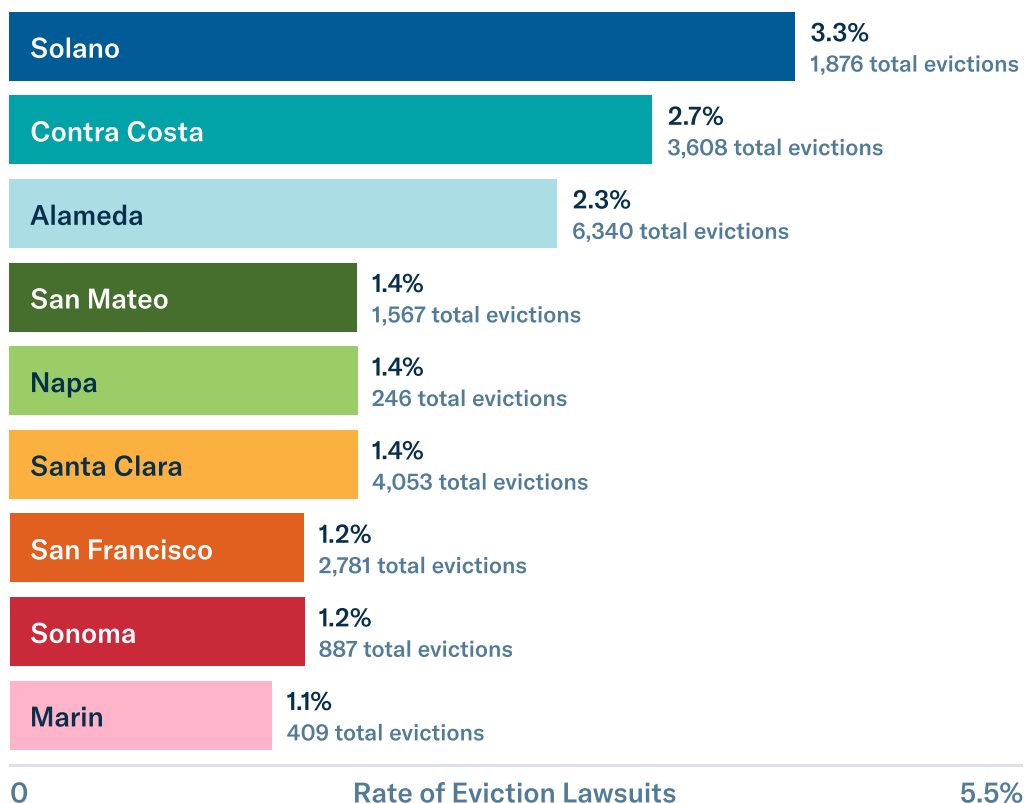
Approximately 21,767 eviction lawsuits were filed in the region from July 2023 through June 2024.¹⁸ Contra Costa and Alameda were among the top three counties for the highest rates and highest absolute numbers of eviction. When adjusted for renter population, Solano, Contra Costa and Alameda counties had the highest rates of eviction lawsuits compared to other counties. Alameda, Santa Clara and Contra Costa counties had the highest absolute numbers of evictions, closely followed by San Francisco, Solano and San Mateo counties (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

Eviction Lawsuit Rates and Totals by County: Jul 2023-Jun 2024

Sources: California Judicial Council 2025 Court Statistics Report, 2019-2023 American Community Survey Census

Rate is calculated by dividing the number of eviction lawsuits by the total number of renter households in each county. For example, a rate of 3.3% means that 1 in 30 renter households faced an eviction.



Eviction Rates Over Time

Trends over time show a dramatic drop in evictions when various COVID-19 eviction moratoria and emergency rental assistance programs were in effect, followed by a rapid increase as these moratoria phased out and available rental assistance has declined (Figure 2).

In the period from July 2023 to June 2024 evictions matched or exceeded pre-pandemic levels in eight of the nine counties (Figures 2 and 3). Sonoma was the only county with a lower rate and the difference is small. San Mateo, Santa Clara and Napa counties had higher post pandemic rankings compared with other counties. Figure 3 below illustrates the differences between years and counties.

FIGURE 2

Eviction Lawsuit Filed by County: Jul 2015-2016 to Jul 2023-Jun 2024

Sources: California
Judicial Council Court
Statistics Reports

Top to bottom:

- Napa
- Marin
- Sonoma
- San Mateo
- Solano
- San Francisco
- Contra Costa
- Santa Clara
- Alameda

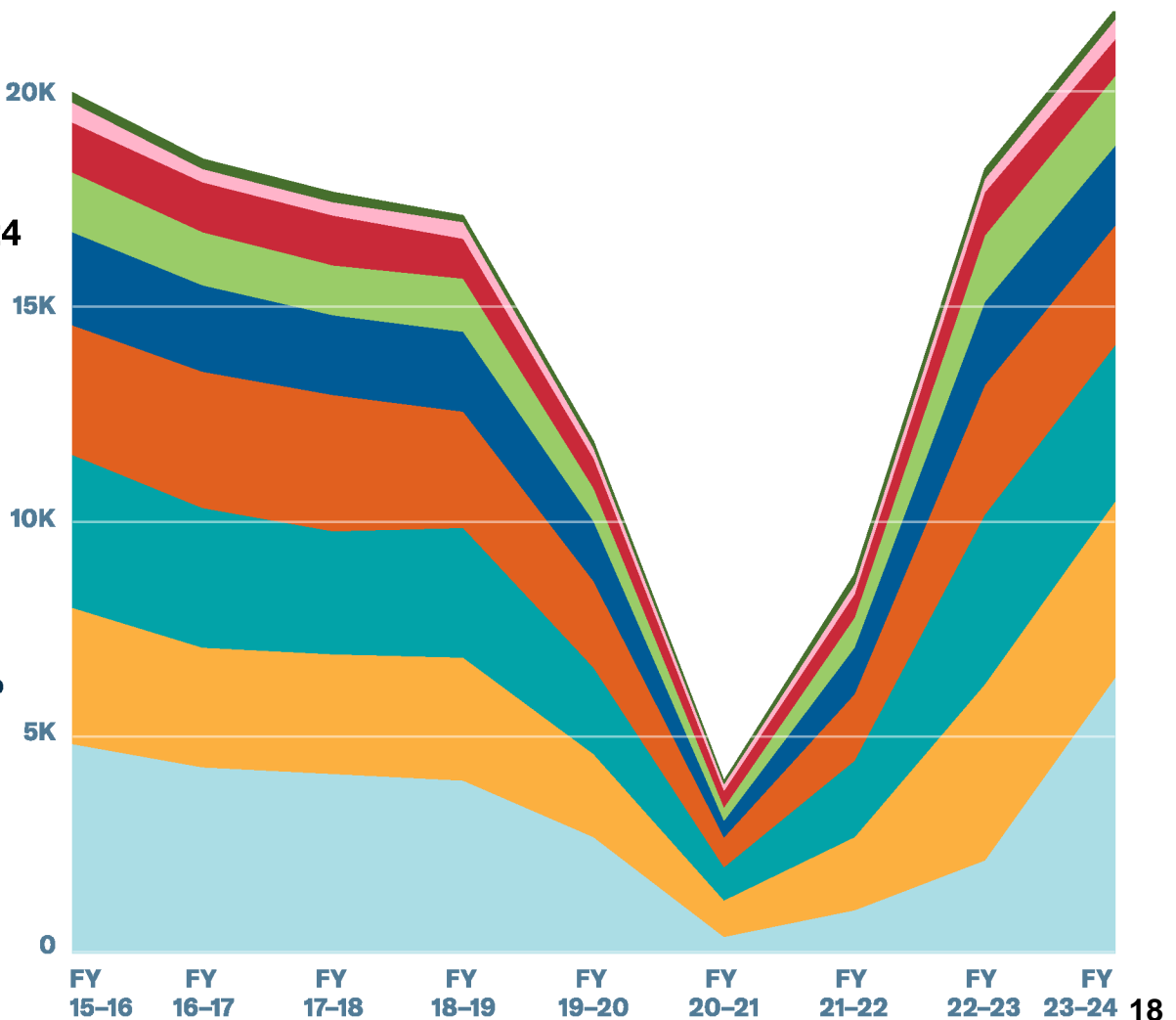
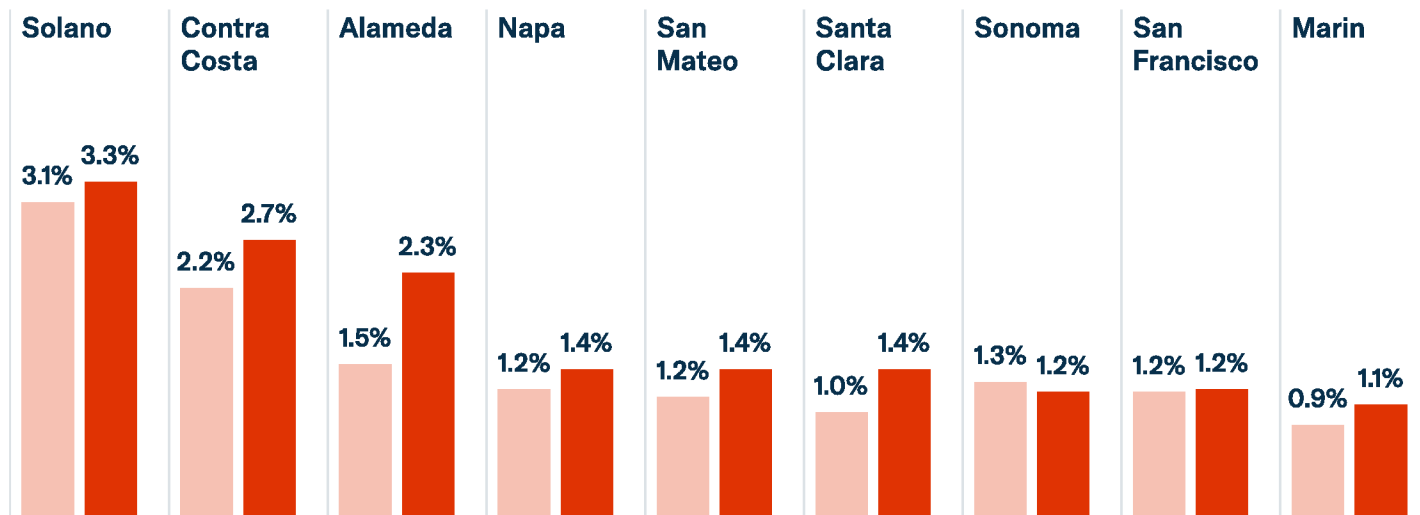


FIGURE 3

**Eviction Lawsuit
Rates by County:
Jul 2018–Jun 2019 vs
Jul 2023–Jun 2024**

Sources: California Judicial Council
2020, 2025 Court Statistics
Reports, CJC Court Statistics
Dashboard; 2019–2013 American
Community Survey Census

Jul 2018–Jun 2019
Jul 2023–Jun 2024



It remains unclear whether the spike in eviction lawsuits represents a continuation of a post-pandemic adjustment due to temporarily suppressed evictions or a longer-term trend. However, tenant legal service providers surveyed for this study reported that in most counties, eviction patterns have changed beyond landlords “catching up” on evictions post moratoria. Tenant legal aid organizations reported that many tenant households they serve have not recovered financially from the pandemic, and that some landlords are less willing to negotiate if a tenant falls behind on rent than they were prior to the pandemic. Rental assistance and emergency housing vouchers, which became more widely available during the pandemic due to federal emergency funds, are running out throughout the state.¹⁹ Legal aid providers report that together these factors make it more challenging to help tenants who are behind on rent to remain in their homes. The long-term effects of these pandemic-related disruptions continue to evolve.

Geographic Distribution of Evictions

A goal of this research was to understand the prevalence of eviction lawsuits based on location. As referenced above, BAHFA received limited data from the courts in Marin, Napa, Santa Clara and Solano counties — and thus cannot track eviction lawsuits in these counties by ZIP code. This lack of standardized locational data limits the ability to fully understand regional geospatial trends in eviction lawsuits.

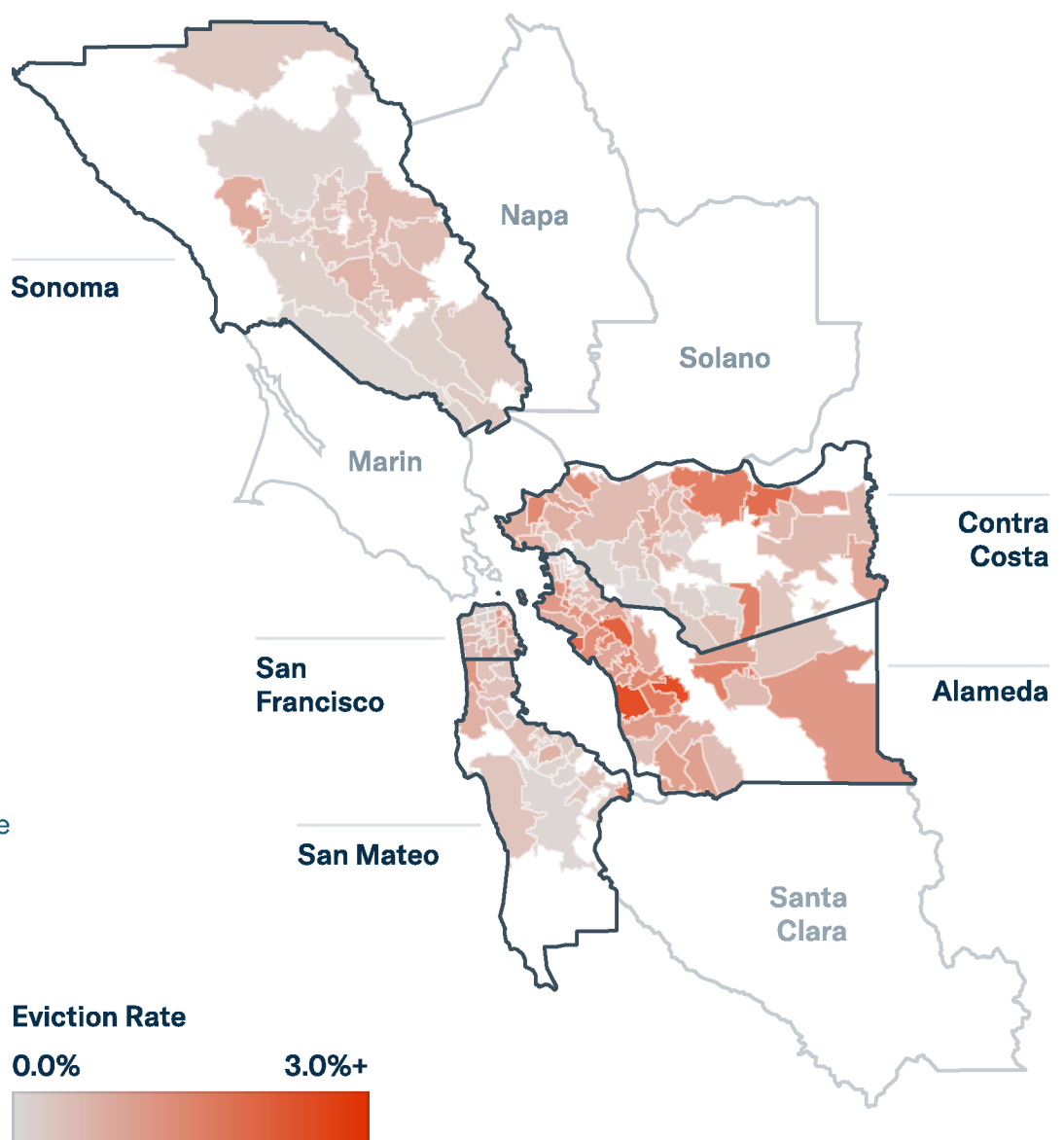
FIGURE 4

Eviction Lawsuit Rates by ZIP Code: Jul-Dec 2023

Sources: County Superior Court Administrative Data

Includes ZIP codes with at least 500 renter households. Time period chosen due to eviction moratoria ending in summer 2023 in Alameda County and San Francisco. Santa Clara, Marin, Solano and Napa counties did not submit requisite data to be included.

White sections of the map correspond to areas where no ZIP codes-level was provided or where a ZIP code contains below 500 renter households.



Data in the counties included in this analysis indicate potential trends that merit further research pending additional data availability. Historically low-income areas such as Richmond, Daly City, East Palo Alto, the South of Market neighborhood of San Francisco and East Oakland show higher rates of eviction in the map above (Figure 4). This finding could reflect a general correlation between eviction rates and ZIP codes with gentrification pressures and lower-than-average incomes.

Separately, there are higher eviction rates in some suburban eastern and northeastern areas of the region that have also experienced increasing suburban poverty rates. Over the past 25 years, poverty rates in some Bay Area suburbs have been on the rise as low-income people have left high cost areas of the region.²⁰ Increasing costs of living have spurred this demographic shift as people seek lower rents in outer areas like Solano, Contra Costa and more affordable parts of Alameda County. However, these areas often have fewer tenant protections and services for tenants. According to Judicial Council data, Solano County has the region's highest eviction rate (3.27%), followed by Contra Costa (2.71%). One quarter of the region's evictions were in Solano and Contra Costa counties from July 2023-June 2024, even though these two counties house only 16% of the region's renter households.

Causes of Eviction Notices

This research sought to understand the rationale for why tenants are being evicted across the region. The “cause” of an eviction is the legal reason cited by the landlord to evict the tenant.²¹ Generally, eviction lawsuits must state the cause for the eviction alleged by the landlord; however, Bay Area courts do not record the stated cause as a separate field in their data management systems and thus regionwide cause data could not be analyzed for this study.

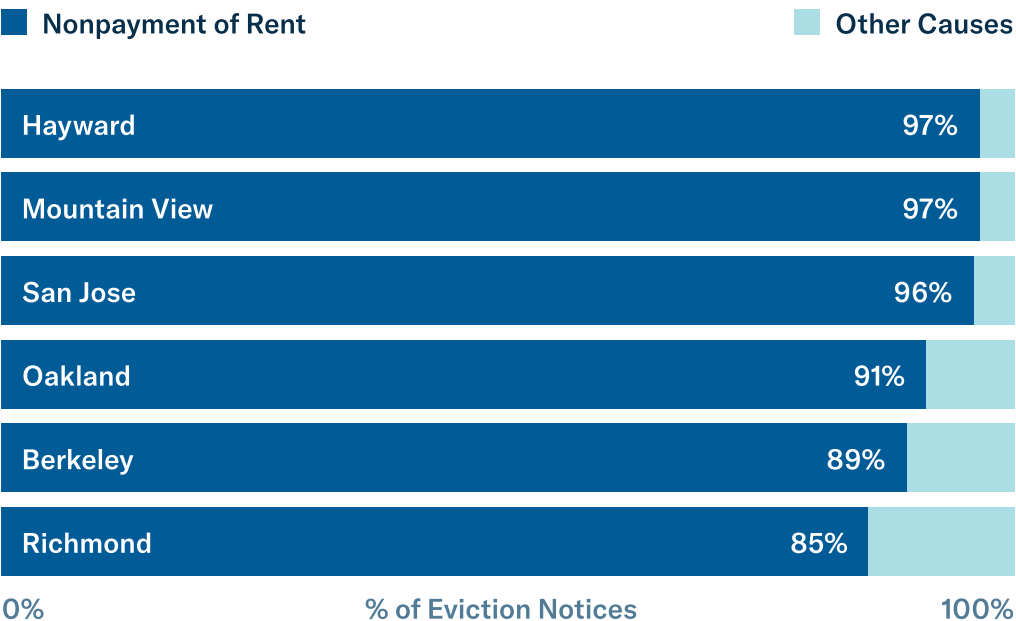
The only comprehensive data on eviction causes obtainable at the time of the study comes from locally administered programs in Berkeley, Hayward, Mountain View, Oakland, Richmond and San Jose.²² These cities require landlords to file all eviction notices with local agencies, who record and track

both the number and causes stated in the notices. Reliable data from all cities was not provided for the pre-pandemic era, and some (but not all) of these jurisdictions had local eviction moratoria that extended until summer 2023; therefore, the data in Figure 5 below encompass only July through December 2023 to ensure appropriate cross-jurisdictional comparison.²³ Given data limitations and the predominance of non-payment notices, this report distinguishes only between nonpayment and all other causes for eviction. Other causes include both at-fault and no-fault evictions such as owner move-ins, removal of a unit from the rental market (Ellis Act) and substantial renovations.

FIGURE 5

Causes of Eviction
in City Notice Data:
Jul-Dec 2023

Sources: San Jose, Mountain View, Hayward, Oakland, Berkeley, and Richmond Housing Departments



As seen in Figure 5, nonpayment was the cause cited in most eviction notices in these cities, representing 85-97% of all notices. Only two of the cities tracked the amount of rent demanded in nonpayment eviction notices: San Jose and Hayward. The median amount of rent demanded in the nonpayment notices (\$2,469 in San Jose and \$2,307 in Hayward) was slightly less than the median cost of one month’s rent in each city. Because not every eviction notice proceeds to an eviction lawsuit, these data do not necessarily demonstrate precise rates for which nonpayment is the cause of eviction lawsuits. These local eviction notice data are, however, some of the best available indicators of the relative causes of eviction activity at a multijurisdictional scale across the Bay Area.

The predominance of nonpayment in local eviction notice data is consistent with a 2025 report from the Stanford Community Law Clinic analyzing eviction lawsuits between 2019 and 2023 in San Mateo county.²⁴ Stanford researchers obtained special permission from the court to confidentially access case-level data for every eviction lawsuit filed in the county. Researchers coded and compared case data from the year prior to COVID-19 (2019) to the year after the expiration of eviction moratoria in the county (2023) to understand pre- and post-pandemic trends. In both years, nonpayment was by far the most common cause of eviction, and the rate of nonpayment cases rose significantly over time: 78.4% in 2019 vs. 85.5% in 2023.

Research from other parts of the state and nation has found that nonpayment of rent is the most common reason cited for evictions.²⁵ For example, in Los Angeles between February 2023 and November 2024, 94% of eviction notices filed with the city were for nonpayment of rent.²⁶ The high prevalence of nonpayment in the reported data and the consistency with which this finding is made across geographies point to macro socio-economic trends linking the unaffordability of housing to evictions.

Rate of Default Judgments

Default judgments occur when a tenant does not formally respond to the notification of an eviction lawsuit. Tenants who fail to respond generally lose the ability to contest the eviction. There are a variety of reasons why a default may occur. Interviewees from legal aid providers and tenant service organizations cited several common reasons, including tenants lacking knowledge of their rights, lacking the resources to respond, fearing engagement with the legal system, or time constraints due to work, childcare or other barriers.²⁷

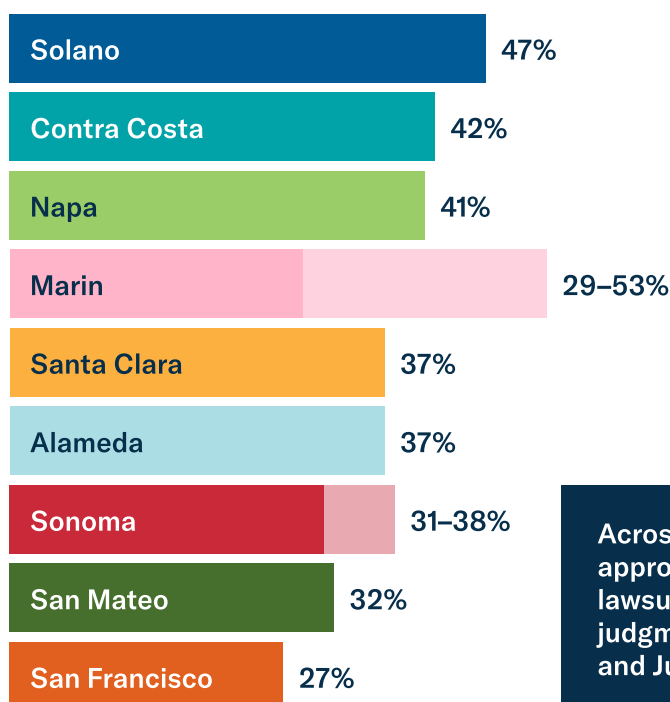
The primary “outcome” data recorded by courts is whether a judge issues a writ of possession to return the property to the landlord. **According to eviction lawsuit data in five of the nine counties, 95% of default judgments resulted in a writ of possession issued versus 21% of cases where a tenant responded.**²⁸ Because default judgments tend to occur **23**

within 60 days of filing an eviction lawsuit, they are not subject to state eviction sealing laws and are typically reported on the tenant's record,²⁹ making it more difficult to find new housing.

FIGURE 6

Estimated Eviction Lawsuit Default Rates by County: Jul 2022-Jun 2023

Sources: California Judicial Council (Santa Clara, Sonoma); Stanford Community Law Clinic (San Mateo); County Superior Court Administrative Data (Sonoma, Marin, Solano, Contra Costa, Napa, Alameda, San Francisco). Ranges used where data sources conflict (Sonoma) or are ambiguous (Marin).³⁰



Across the region, on average approximately 37% of eviction lawsuits resulted in default judgments between July 2022 and June 2023.

Across the region, on average approximately 37% of eviction lawsuits resulted in default judgments between July 2022 and June 2023. Default rates ranged from 47% in Solano county to 27% in San Francisco.

Tenant legal services capacity appears correlated with the rate of default judgment in each county. San Francisco has the highest investment in tenant counseling and rental assistance in the region, and it is the only jurisdiction in the Bay Area with a “right to counsel” in eviction cases; it also has the lowest default rate.³¹ At the opposite end of the spectrum, Solano County’s default rate is the the highest in the region and Solano has among the lowest percentage of low-income renter households served by tenant legal services. It is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate whether there is a causal relationship between the availability of tenant legal services and default rates in eviction lawsuits, but the strong correlation may warrant future local and regional consideration.

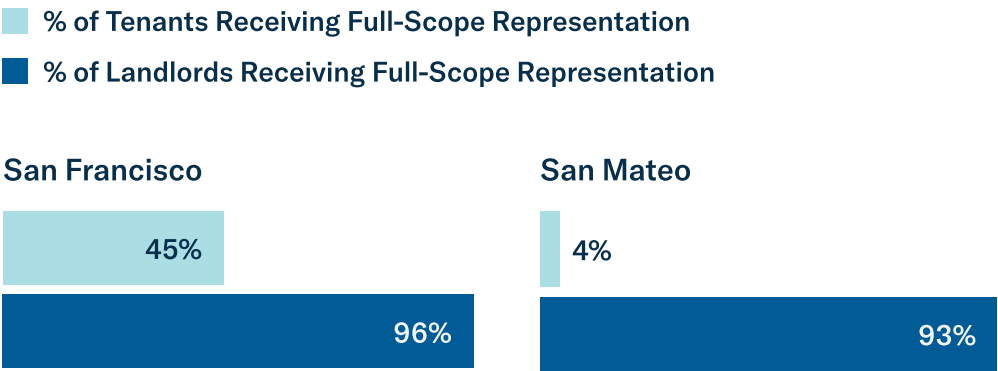
Rates of Landlord and Tenant Representation in San Francisco and San Mateo

Given the complexity of housing law and accelerated pace of eviction proceedings in California, attorneys are important for both landlords and tenants to navigate the process. Court data in each county theoretically tracks whether tenants and landlords were represented in an eviction lawsuit,³² however the data received for this study generally were not reliable enough to conduct this analysis at the regional level. While five counties — Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo and Sonoma — provided data on representation, this report only used data from San Francisco and San Mateo in this analysis.³³ The data from Alameda, Contra Costa and Sonoma counties were excluded due to issues with inconsistent field values, ambiguous data definitions and procedural differences, respectively.

In San Francisco and San Mateo County, landlords were far more likely to be represented than tenants (Figure 7). In San Francisco, 45% of tenants were represented compared to 96% of landlords. The relatively high rate of tenant representation in San Francisco is attributable to the tenant right to counsel program, which is the only such program in the region.³⁴ In San Mateo, only 4% of tenants facing eviction were represented compared to 93% of landlords. This aligns with national rates of representation, where on average 4% of tenants and 83% of landlords are represented in eviction cases.³⁵

FIGURE 7
Tenant & Landlord Representation in Eviction Lawsuits in San Francisco and San Mateo: Jul 2022-Jun 2023

Sources: County Superior Court Administrative Data



Eviction Outcomes and Tenant Representation

Data from San Francisco and San Mateo reveal a correlation between the likelihood that a judge issues a court order for eviction and whether a tenant receives legal representation (Figure 8). **From July 2022-June 2023, judges in these counties issued court orders for eviction 48% of the time when the tenant was not represented, and 17% of the time when a tenant did have representation.** Most cases that do not end in court orders for eviction are resolved through alternative means, most commonly settlement agreements that either allow tenants to stay in their homes or provide more favorable terms for moving out.

FIGURE 8

Eviction Lawsuit Outcomes by Tenant Representation in San Francisco and San Mateo County: Jul 2022-Jun 2023

Sources: County Superior Court Administrative Data



Such correlation, while notable, does not necessarily prove causation. In San Mateo County, there are not enough tenant legal service providers to offer representation in all eviction cases. Providers report that they often triage by offering full scope representation in cases where tenants have the strongest legal defenses and the efforts of legal aid attorneys are more likely to make a difference in preserving tenancies. This triaging practice could skew the data and contribute to the correlation. In contrast, however, San Francisco data do not contain the same selection bias because the right to counsel program does not prioritize cases based on merit. Further research is warranted to better understand the impact of tenant legal services on eviction case outcomes, diving deeper into the strong correlation found in these data.³⁶

Disproportionate Rates of Eviction in the Bay Area

Bay Area Evictions Disproportionately Occur in Neighborhoods with High Proportion of Tenants of Color, Female-Headed Households and Families with Children.

Prior local and national studies have found that women and people of color are disproportionately impacted by eviction regardless of income. A 2016 San Mateo County study based on case data from local legal aid organizations found that while Latino/a/e/x people comprised 25% of the population, they represented 49% of those who received eviction-related legal services; similarly Black residents comprised 2.5% of the population but represented over 21% of those who received eviction-related legal services.³⁷ Nationally, the Eviction Lab at Princeton University has published evidence that tenants of color, especially Black tenants, are the most disproportionately impacted by evictions, and all indigenous and non-Black people of color are also disproportionately impacted.³⁸ The Center for American Progress has also reported on these trends and found that Black women are at the highest disproportionate risk of eviction.³⁹

The data used for this study does not include per-case demographic information. Instead, the study compares eviction rates in census tracts to the demographic makeup of that census tract, setting thresholds to understand whether eviction rates were correlated with demographic indicators. Sheriff lockout data was used as it is the only source available for all counties with full addresses, allowing for a more precise analysis at the census tract level (more granular than at the ZIP code level). Because not all eviction cases make it to this lockout stage, these data represent a subset.

Findings from this analysis were consistent with previous local and national research. Bay Area census tracts with high proportions of renters of color, female-headed households and households with children face higher rates of eviction by sheriff lockout.

Disparities by Race and Ethnicity	<p>Renters in census tracts with majority renters of color were 78% more likely to experience a sheriff lockout than those in white-majority renter census tracts.</p> <p>Renters in census tracts with a higher proportion of Black renters (more than 14%) were 63% more likely to experience a sheriff lockout than those in other tracts.⁴⁰</p> <p>Renters in census tracts with a higher proportion of Latino/a/e/x renters (more than 40%) were 65% more likely to experience a sheriff lockout than those in other tracts.⁴¹</p>
Disparities by Gender	<p>Renters in census tracts with a higher proportion of female-headed renter households (more than 25%) were 65% more likely to have a sheriff lockout than those in other tracts.⁴²</p>
Disparities by Family Status	<p>Renters in tracts with a higher proportion of renter households with children (more than 30%) were 35% more likely to have a sheriff eviction than those in other tracts.⁴³</p>

Source: Sheriff Lockout Data, 2019-2023 American Community Survey

Evictions in the Bay Area Disproportionately Occur in MTC Equity Priority Communities.

The study also compared eviction rates in and outside of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Equity Priority Communities (EPCs).⁴⁴ EPCs are census tracts that have a significant concentration of underserved populations due to their socioeconomic status or identity. Prevalence of eight demographic variables are combined to construct this index: people of color, low-income, limited-English proficiency, seniors 75 years and over, zero-vehicle households, single-parent families, people with a disability and rent burdened households.

FIGURE 9

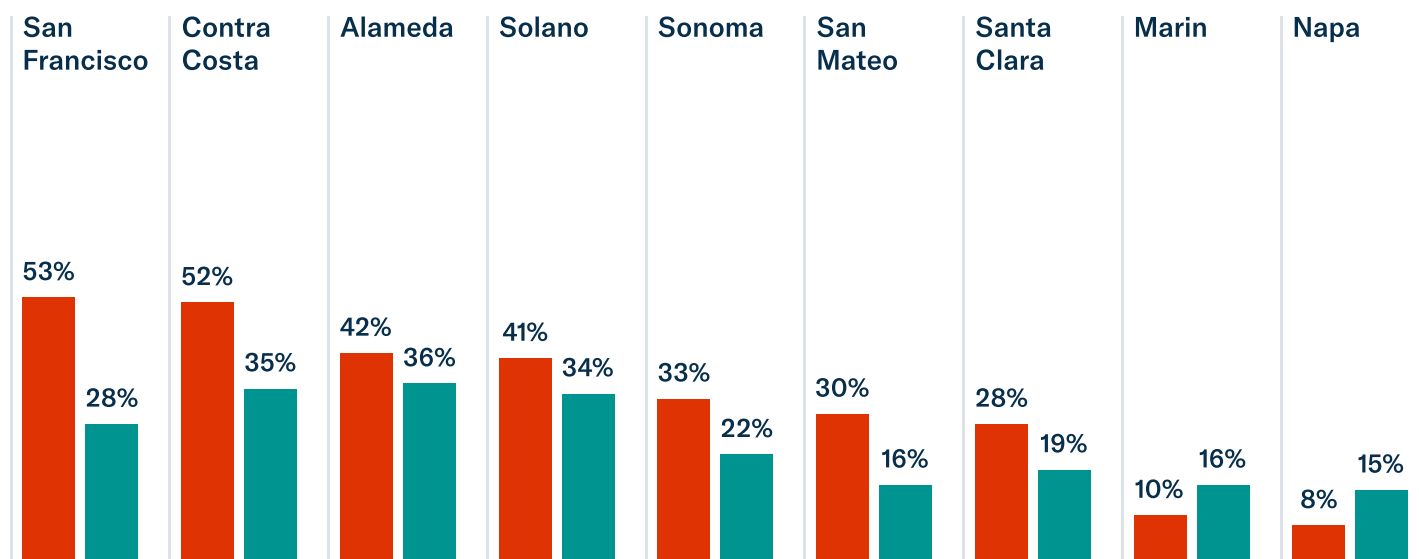
Sheriff Lockouts in MTC Equity Priority Communities: 2023*

Sources: MTG Plan Bay Area 2050+ Equity Priority Communities, Sheriff Lockout Data

*2022 data used for San Francisco due to data availability. 2023 data used for all other counties

■ % of Total Lockouts Located in EPC Tracts

■ % of Total Renter Households Located in EPC Tracts



Sheriff lockouts are disproportionately located in EPCs in seven of the nine counties — all but Marin and Napa (Figure 9). While only 27% of all Bay Area renter households live in Equity Priority Communities, 39% of sheriff lockouts happened in them. For example, 53% of sheriff lockouts in San Francisco happened in EPCs, where only 28% of renter households live. In Contra Costa County, even though only 35% of renter households live in EPCs, 52% of all sheriff lockouts in the county occurred in these areas.

Conclusion

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.

Improvements to Data Collection and Availability

The partial, inconsistent and occasionally unreliable data collected from a variety of sources for this study underscore the need for significant improvements in eviction data collection and management in the Bay Area.⁴⁵ High-quality data is important to ensure that policymakers can evaluate the scale and nature of eviction pressures in their communities. It is also needed to design, implement and evaluate local and state-level tenant protection programs. Two areas for improvement identified through this study include:

- 1. Increase the quality, quantity and availability of court eviction data.** The California Judicial Council already serves as a centralized reporting agency for the County Superior Courts but the data it receives is significantly limited. Efforts could be made to include more detailed and consistent case information including geography (e.g., ZIP code, city, etc.), whether the parties had legal representation, the stated cause of eviction, case dispositions and timing of filings by date or month. Such improvements to data collection and management would require investments to enhance the reporting capabilities of the courts and the Judicial Council, including additional staff positions and/or technology upgrades.

2. Improve coordination and communication across government agencies and courts to support data-driven policy and programs.

For example, improved coordination would allow housing departments formulating anti-displacement interventions to communicate with court administrators (and vice versa) to design and evaluate programs that are appropriate for the unique needs faced by renters in their communities.

Role for Regional Leadership

BAHFA's legislative mandate includes the ability to raise resources through voter-approved ballot measures across the nine counties to advance affordable housing production, preservation and tenant protections. From such a regional measure, at least 5% of revenue would fund tenant protection programs,⁴⁶ including emergency rental assistance, tenant legal services, tenant education, technical assistance and data tracking. Such programs could directly address eviction challenges and gaps identified in this report. Prior to a successful revenue measure, BAHFA can continue to play a leadership role at the regional scale in coordination with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments by providing technical assistance, coordinating across jurisdictions and tracking information.

Endnotes

- 1 The Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) was established by the California Legislature in 2019. See California Government Code section 64500 et seq.
- 2 Fung, L., Remor, I., Fallon, K. & Holland N. (2023). [Masking the Scarlet ‘E’](#). Urban Institute.
- 3 See California Code of Civil Procedure section 1161.2.
- 4 Tenant screening companies commonly scrape public eviction data that include eviction filings, even if a tenant was not found at fault. Such screening companies then package the data and sell it to landlords who are considering applicant pools for a particular rental unit on the market. See: Dada, T. & Duarte, N. (2022). [Tenant Screening Companies Profit from Eviction Records, Driving Housing Insecurity](#). Shelterforce.
- 5 Cheng, F. (2021). [Why It’s So Hard to Gauge the Extent of California’s Eviction Crisis](#). New America; Mello, F. (2025). They tried to pay their overdue rent. Their landlord wouldn’t accept it. CalMatters.
- 6 See, e.g., Brodie, J., & Zack, L. (2025). [Evictions in San Mateo County: 2019 and 2023](#). Stanford Community Law Clinic, Stanford Law School; Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County; Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto, & The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project. (2016). [San Mateo County Eviction Report: 2016](#). San Francisco Foundation; Werth, A. (2022). [Unrepresented: A Report on Eviction Court Watch in Contra Costa County](#). East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy.
- 7 During COVID-19, eviction moratoria were temporarily implemented across the nation as a public health measure to facilitate compliance with “shelter in place” orders and reduce disease transmission that could have been caused by court processes and relocations. See, e.g., Leifheit et al. [Expiring Eviction Moratoriums and COVID-19 Incidence and Mortality](#). American Journal of Epidemiology. 2021 Dec 1; 190(12):2503-2510. In California, this resulted in multiple overlapping eviction moratoria at the statewide, county, and in some cases the city level. The patchwork of pandemic-related eviction moratoria applicable in the Bay Area wound down between 2022 and 2023. Specifically, the statewide eviction moratorium ended in June 2022. The last remaining local eviction moratorium, in Alameda County, San Francisco and Richmond extended until summer 2023. By the end of summer 2023, all pandemic-related eviction moratoria in the Bay Area had ended.

- 8 National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel. (November 2024). [Eviction Representation Statistics for Landlords and Tenants Absent Special Intervention](#).
- 9 See, e.g., Waldinger, D. (2024). [Regulating Evictions: The Role of Landlords](#). Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research, Gromis, A., Fellows, I., Hendrickson, J. R., Edmonds, L., Leung, L., Parton, A., & Desmond, M. (2022). [Estimating eviction prevalence across the United States](#). Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 119(21).
- 10 The judicial proceedings for “unlawful detainers” have their own special state statutes: California Code of Civil Procedure Sections 1159 to 1179a. Local “just cause for eviction” laws can regulate the substantive bases for eviction but generally cannot alter the state-determined court eviction process. See [Birkenfeld v. City of Berkeley \(1976\) 17 Cal.3d 129](#). Similarly, federal law offers certain rights to tenants who receive some form of federal assistance, though these protections generally do not alter the procedural requirements of state eviction statutes. While the technical legal term of an eviction case is “unlawful detainer,” this report uses the terms “eviction lawsuit” and “court eviction” for ease of understanding.
- 11 The City of Alameda, Berkeley, East Palo Alto, Hayward, Marin County (for unincorporated areas), Mountain View, Oakland, Richmond, San Francisco, and San Jose collect notice data. However, comparable cause of action data from four of these jurisdictions was not available. The City of Alameda and San Francisco do not collect data on nonpayment notices. East Palo Alto digitized their data to share for this study; however, when it was entered electronically cause data were omitted from the notices. Marin County unincorporated area data were too small of a sample size to be used.
- 12 See Assembly Bill 2347 (Kalra, 2024). During the study period, the operative timeline was five days.
- 13 With legal representation it is technically possible to successfully argue a Motion to Set Aside the Judgment, but this is not a typical outcome.
- 14 Less often, a case will be resolved by a dispositive motion before trial.
- 15 Van Dijk, W, Humphries J, Collinson R, Mader N, Reed D, Tennenbaum, D. (2024). [Eviction and Poverty in American Cities](#). Tobin Center for Economic Policy; Ramphal B, Keen R, Okuzuno SS, Ojogho D, Slopen N. (2023). Evictions and Infant and Child Health Outcomes: A Systematic Review. JAMA Network Open. 6(4):e237612; Hoke N, Boen C. (2021) [The health impacts of eviction: Evidence from the national longitudinal study of adolescent to adult health](#). Social Science and Medicine, Elsevier.
- 16 These estimates come from the Milwaukee Area Renters Study, designed by eviction researcher Matthew Desmond, and American Housing Survey, administered by the U.S. Census Bureau. See Sabiha Zinulbhai and Nora Daly. January 20, 2022. [Informal Eviction: Measuring Displacement Outside the Courtroom](#). New America.
- 17 For more information about the local regulatory and administrative landscape for eviction data in the Bay Area, see endnote 11.

- 18 This analysis uses California Judicial Council data for fiscal year 2023-24 (July 2023 to June 2024) to capture the landscape after the end of eviction moratoria, some of which extended into the summer of 2023.
- 19 The California Rent Relief Program closed on March 31, 2022. Other programs continued locally, however as reported in CalMatters in March 2025, emergency housing vouchers and other resources funded by the federal government during the COVID-19 pandemic will not be renewed.
- 20 Soursourian, M. (2012). [Suburbanization of poverty in the Bay Area](#). Community Development Research Brief, San Francisco Federal Reserve. (January), 1-17; Samara, T. R. (2016). [Race, Inequality, and the Resegregation of the Bay Area](#). Urban Habitat. Pan, A. Q., Deakin, E., & Shaheen, S. A. (2023). [Crabgrass confinement: Housing and transportation challenges of low-and moderate-income suburban residents in the San Francisco Bay Area](#). Case Studies on Transport Policy. Vol 14.
- 21 Previously, landlords did not always have to state the rationale for an eviction; absent local just cause for eviction laws, landlords could issue “no cause” eviction notices with 30-60 days’ notice. This changed with the Tenant Protection Act of 2019, which imposed a statewide just cause for eviction requirement on qualifying tenancies.
- 22 For more information about the local regulatory and administrative landscape for eviction data in the Bay Area, see endnote 11.
- 23 At the time of information requests for this study, data from all city programs was only consistently available through the period ending December 2023.
- 24 Brodie, J, & Zack, L. (2025). [Evictions in San Mateo County: 2019 and 2023](#). Stanford Community Law Clinic, Stanford Law School.
- 25 Waldinger, D. (2024) [Regulating Evictions: The Role of Landlords](#). Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research; see also Groomis, A. et al., (2022). [Estimating eviction prevalence across the United States](#). Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 119, e2116169119.
- 26 Cited in Stanford Law School Law and Policy Lab. (2025). [WIN-WIN Paying Landlords & Keeping Californians Housed](#).
- 27 See also Brenner, R, Gould, I, House S, Lochlead E, O’Regan E. (2023). [Half the Battle is Just Showing](#). New York University Furman Center.
- 28 Due to incomplete datasets Marin, Napa, Solano and Santa Clara counties were not included in this analysis.
- 29 See endnotes 4 and 5.
- 30 The Santa Clara Superior Court did not provide a complete dataset (e.g., missing half of expected cases and several key fields) and thus the Judicial Council was the only source available. For San Mateo County, the rate is taken from the 2025 Stanford Community Law Clinic study given the unique dataset their researchers obtained. Note that in fiscal year 2022-23, San Mateo Superior Court reported a 43% default rate to the Judicial Council. For Sonoma County, a range is provided based on the 30% default rate reported in Superior Court data vs. 43% reported to the Judicial Council. In Marin, a range has been estimated from Superior Court data because the court’s

disposition categorization system could not be easily attributed to default judgments. Rates for all other counties (Solano, Contra Costa, Napa, Alameda and San Francisco) are as reported by the local Superior Courts. All rates are for fiscal year 2022-23 except for San Mateo County, which is for calendar year 2023.

- 31 The impact of right to counsel on default rates has been seen elsewhere. In New York City, default rates decreased 34% from 2013-19; right to counsel was passed in 2017 and was phased in over subsequent years. See [NYC Office of Civil Justice 2019 Annual Report](#). (2019). New York City Human Resources Division, Department of Social Services.
- 32 Representation in this context refers to full scope representation. Many tenant legal services organizations also provide limited scope representation in court for specific aspects of a case, and this more limited form of representation is generally not reflected in court data.
- 33 San Francisco's robust services ecosystem and right to counsel program have enabled more reliable data on representation rates. Representation rates for San Mateo County as provided by the Superior Court were deemed reliable given consistency with independent verification from the 2025 Stanford Community Law Clinic Report. Stanford researchers determined a tenant representation rate of 4.8% in calendar year 2023 (compared to 4% from court-provided data for fiscal year 22-23) and landlord representation rate of 92.7% in calendar year 2023 (compared to 93% from court-provided data for fiscal year 22-23). See Brodie, J, & Zack, L. (2025). [Evictions in San Mateo County: 2019 and 2023](#). Stanford Community Law Clinic, Stanford Law School. The rates provided by the Superior Court are used in Figure 6 to enable consistency of data sources across San Mateo and San Francisco.
- 34 Note that while San Francisco's tenant right to counsel program might suggest near-universal representation, 27% of cases in San Francisco result in default judgments and, based on data from the Eviction Defense Collaborative, most of the remaining 28% of cases received limited scope representation due to lack of capacity for full-scope representation. Limited scope representation is not recorded in court data in San Francisco.
- 35 National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel. [Eviction Representation Statistics for Landlords and Tenants Absent Special Intervention](#). Last updated November 2024.
- 36 The 2025 Stanford Community Law Clinic study of evictions in San Mateo County includes a similar finding that may extend to limited scope (vs. full-scope) legal services. Stanford researchers found that the likelihood of a writ issuing decreased substantially when default judgments were removed. The Stanford study observes that "[t]he implications of this could be significant from an access to counsel perspective, because presumably access to an attorney, even a limited scope attorney who helps only with response paperwork, increases the chance that a tenant will file a response. In turn, that filing of a response dramatically decreases the chances of a writ being issued." Brodie, J, & Zack, L. (2025). [Evictions in San Mateo County: 2019 and 2023](#). Stanford Community Law Clinic, Stanford Law School.

Evictions in the Nine-County Bay Area

- 37 Created in collaboration with the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County, Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto (CLSEPA) and the Anti Eviction Mapping Project. (2016). [San Mateo County Eviction Report: 2016](#). San Francisco Foundation.
- 38 Heburn, P, Louis R, & Desmond, M. (2020). [Racial and Gender Disparities Among Evicted Americans](#). The Eviction Lab.
- 39 The Center for American Progress. (2023). [The Disproportionate Burden of Eviction on Black Women](#).
- 40 Census tracts with more than 14% Black renters are in the top 20th percentile for this demographic in the Bay Area.
- 41 Census tracts with more than 40% Latino/a/e/x renters are in the top 20th percentile for this demographic in the Bay Area.
- 42 Census tracts with more than 25% female-headed renter households are in the top 20th percentile for this demographic in the Bay Area.
- 43 Census tracts with more than 30% renter households with children are in the top 20th percentile for this demographic in the Bay Area.
- 44 The Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Association of Bay Area Governments Executive Board jointly govern the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority. The EPC framework is utilized by both agencies in making policy and funding decisions and is updated every four years based on data from the American Community Survey. Note that the EPCs are being updated as part of Plan Bay Area 2050+; this study utilizes EPC layers developed using the American Community Survey vintages 2014-2018 (for Plan Bay Area 2050 & 2050+) and 2018-2022 (for Plan Bay Area 2050+ only). For more information, review the [2050+ EPC Update website](#).
- 45 The data quality challenges with eviction court data are not unique to the Bay Area. See, e.g., Parton, A., Gromis, A., & Desmond, M. (2020). Inaccuracies in Eviction Records: Implications for Renters and Researchers. *Housing Policy Debate*, 31(3-5), 377-394. [doi.org/10.1080/ 10511482.2020.1748084](https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2020.1748084).
- 46 Funding is contingent upon eligibility in the underlying revenue source. For example, BAHFA has authority to propose a general obligation bond, which, pursuant to the state constitution, cannot be used to fund most services and therefore has limited applicability to the enumerated tenant protection programs.



ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Bay Area Housing Finance Authority

Bay Area Metro Center
375 Beale Street, Suite 800 | San Francisco, CA 94105

Tel: 415.778.6700
Email: info@bayareametro.gov
Web: mtc.ca.gov/bahfa



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

Staff Report

1025 ESCOBAR STREET
MARTINEZ, CA 94553

File #: 25-3745

Agenda Date: 9/15/2025

Agenda #:

Tenant Legal Services in the Nine-County Bay Area

July 2025



ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Acknowledgments

The Bay Area Eviction Study was commissioned by the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA). Research and analysis for this report were conducted by Alex Werth with support from Catherine Guimond of Centro Legal de la Raza. The study team also included Terra Graziani, Dan Sakaguchi, Arushi Gupta and Erin McElroy of the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project and Nitin Mogral. Allison Chan of the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project provided graphic design. BAHFA staff authored final reports with support from the research team.

The research for this report was supported by a Tenant Legal Services Advisory Group comprised of representatives from tenant legal services organizations in each of the Bay Area's nine counties. We thank the Advisory Group members for their time and expertise. We are also grateful to the staff from the tenant legal service organizations in the region who took the time to complete surveys, respond to questions and share internal datasets to inform our understanding of the legal services landscape across the region.

This study was funded in part by the San Francisco Foundation.

Contents

4	Introduction
6	About This Report
7	Key Findings
9	Methods
11	Tenant Legal Services in the Bay Area
12	About Tenant Legal Services
13	Tenant Legal Services Coverage
22	Types and Levels of Service
27	Staff Hiring and Retention Challenges
29	Conclusion and Areas for Further Research
31	Appendices
32	Appendix A: Design and Service Delivery Models for Tenant Legal Services
39	Appendix B: Tenant Legal Services Staffing in the Region
41	Endnotes

Introduction

The Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) commissioned the Bay Area Eviction Study to better understand the current eviction landscape across the region as part of its mandate to advance affordable housing across production, preservation and protections (the “3 Ps”).¹ The research team collected and studied data from county Superior Courts, sheriff’s offices, local agencies (as available by jurisdiction), the California Judicial Council and legal service organizations. Tenant legal services organizations provided in-depth data through a survey, and other tenant-serving organizations provided information through interviews from across the region. The findings are organized into multiple regional and local reports and an interactive data tool that are available on the BAHFA website.

As revealed in the companion report *Evictions in the Nine-County Bay Area*, the study found that the rates of court evictions have returned to or surpassed pre-pandemic levels in eight of the nine counties. Such formal evictions are only part of a broader landscape of housing instability that encompasses both court proceedings as well as informal evictions.

Given the complexity of housing law and accelerated pace of eviction proceedings in California, both tenants and landlords can benefit from legal representation to navigate the legal eviction process.² Nationally, approximately 4% of tenants and 83% of landlords are represented in eviction cases.³ Available regional data indicate that Bay Area tenants have significantly lower representation rates than landlords as well.⁴ Understanding the ecosystem of tenant legal services, and where more support is needed, is one component of advancing strategies and programs to help prevent displacement in the Bay Area.

About This Report

This report examines the landscape of tenant legal services (TLS) in the Bay Area and its capacity to meet tenants' legal needs when facing eviction and other housing security and quality issues. The focus on tenant legal needs is driven by the large gap in tenant representation rates compared to landlords in eviction cases. This is the first-known project to survey tenant legal service organizations in each of the Bay Area's nine counties about their capacity and services.

The report begins by defining TLS and providing a brief background into how these services are administered. Then, it reviews the coverage of services — the extent to which legal service organizations exist and have the capacity to serve clients — across the region. The third section looks more closely at the depth and quality of services: Once a tenant has reached out to a service organization, what level of services do they receive, and what programmatic decisions do organizations make to maximize their impact given capacity constraints? The final section examines the dynamics of sector-wide staffing challenges that impact sustainable service delivery. The conclusion describes areas for further research. More details on program models and staffing levels are included in the appendices.

Key Findings

Overall, this report found that the Bay Area's nonprofit tenant legal services sector is strained. There are gaps in the coverage of services across the region due to insufficient attorney capacity, limited local investments, and challenges hiring and retaining staff:

- In each county, there are not enough TLS attorneys to represent every household facing an eviction lawsuit. Legal aid providers estimate that a manageable eviction caseload per year is 40–50 cases per attorney; from July 2023–June 2024, the Bay Area averaged 166 eviction filings per TLS eviction defense attorney.
- Service gaps are particularly pronounced in some Bay Area counties, with notably higher-than-average levels of eviction filings per available attorney in Contra Costa (328 filings per attorney), Solano (447 filings per attorney) and Santa Clara (480 filings per attorney).
- City and county funding has emerged as an important resource and driver of TLS capacity, and investment levels vary widely across the region. Notably, of the three largest cities between July 2024 and June 2025, San Francisco budgeted approximately \$21 million, Oakland budgeted approximately \$1.5 million and San José budgeted approximately \$655,000.
- Nearly every TLS provider surveyed reported challenges with staff recruitment and retention due to a combination of modest pay and high stress, further constraining organizational capacity to serve tenants.

The study also found that resource-constrained providers triage the type and level of services they offer. As a result, some low-income tenants facing eviction are not able to receive legal services at all, while others receive a limited set of triaged services.

- Of the approximately 20,810 clients who received some form of TLS in 2023, nearly three-quarters (73%) received only a brief service or consultation, and the remaining 27% received some form of representation.⁵
- On average across the region, providers reported that 68% of their services were dedicated to clients facing an active eviction lawsuit given the urgency and impact of evictions. Based on limited capacity, tenants with other issues related to housing rights and stability may be referred elsewhere, given a lower level of service than they need or not served at all.

Methods

The study team designed and administered a survey in summer 2024 to the 26 legal service organizations that provide most tenant legal services in the Bay Area and received a 92% response rate.⁶ The survey asked each organization a series of almost 50 questions about the scale, scope, capacity and impacts of their services in each Bay Area county where they provided TLS, including but not limited to eviction-related services. This report details the most significant findings of that survey. TLS attorneys in eight of the nine counties reviewed a draft of the report for accuracy.⁷

To compare conditions across counties, which differ by size, demographics and percentage of renters, this report standardizes data about number of households served, the number of TLS staff and funding according to the number of low-income renter households in each county as reported in HUD's Comprehensive Housing Affordability Survey (CHAS). This study focuses on lower-income households because TLS providers are generally restricted by their funders and/or driven by their mission to serve lower-income clients.⁸ Other regional standardization criteria are used where possible — for example, to determine the number of eviction filings per available TLS attorney per county. Because data collection and tracking practices vary across organizations and geographies, any attempt to regionally standardize the data will have limitations. The methods used in this report are offered as a first step toward enabling a regional, comparative analysis of tenant legal services and should be interpreted alongside other local data for appropriate context.

While these findings provide an in-depth review of TLS across the Bay Area that contributes first-of-its-kind data to the field, this research was limited to self-reported data from TLS organizations. To ensure TLS-reported funding data aligned with local government sources, BAHFA contacted jurisdiction staff to validate the local funding information reported by TLS organizations and was able to verify the accuracy in nearly every city and county. The research team did not conduct a full budget analysis of each legal aid organization, nor an analysis of all local resources available for

other non-legal housing services, such as tenant/landlord mediation or fair housing counseling and testing. If local agency staff specified that funds were used for non-legal housing purposes in a budget, they were omitted. Given these nuances, data about local government funding for TLS should be interpreted as approximate figures for July 2024–June 2025.

Finally, this report describes the landscape of services and their perceived benefits, according to surveyed providers, but it does not attempt to independently evaluate their efficacy.

Tenant Legal Services in the Bay Area

About Tenant Legal Services

Throughout this report, the term tenant legal services (TLS) is used to encompass a range of free legal support for rental housing issues. These services can include educating tenants about their rights, assessing and seeking remedies when tenants' rights are violated, and responding to and defending against court evictions. Depending on their needs and the local availability of services, tenants may receive legal advice, brief/one-time services or some form of representation (characterized by more extensive services). These service variations are explored in the "Types and Levels of Service" section of the report.

Throughout this report, the terms **court eviction**, **eviction case** and **eviction lawsuit** are used to distinguish evictions that occur through a legal process from those that occur "informally" or outside of the legal system. Statutorily, eviction lawsuits are known as unlawful detainers or UD's.

Tenant legal services are intended to improve renters' housing outcomes such as helping tenants remain in their homes, address habitability violations and/or avoid homelessness when they are required to move out. For example, in an eviction case, TLS attorneys can negotiate "pay and stay" agreements that allow renters to remain in their home as long as they resolve any underlying issues and pay rent going forward. Alternatively, TLS attorneys can help to negotiate "move out" agreements, which typically

include additional time to move and a clean eviction record, increasing the chances that a tenant is able to find suitable replacement housing.

In the Bay Area, TLS are provided primarily by a patchwork of mission-driven and nonprofit legal service organizations.⁹ While there is wide variation in the focus and capacity of TLS providers across the region, there is at least one provider in all nine Bay Area counties. Some are dedicated tenants' rights organizations with a mission specifically to defend tenants in eviction cases, such as Eviction Defense Collaborative in San Francisco. Others serve specific populations (e.g., seniors, people with disabilities) and provide TLS along with legal services on other issues such as public benefits, employment and healthcare. Providers generally only practice in a specific county or counties and do not provide services to residents in other jurisdictions, with a few limited exceptions.

Tenant Legal Services Coverage

One of the fundamental research questions of this study was to determine the extent to which legal service organizations exist and have the capacity to serve clients across the Bay Area. When a tenant is seeking help, are there tenant legal services organizations and staff available to provide any level of services? To quantify the ability and capacity of TLS providers in each county to meet the demand, the survey administered to legal service providers asked about three metrics:

- 1. The number of households served.**
- 2. The number of attorneys and other staff available to provide legal services.**
- 3. The local city and county investments in tenant legal services.**

Households Served Relative to the Need

Across the Bay Area, approximately 20,810 households received TLS support in 2023, ranging from brief or one-time services to some form of representation.¹⁰

To estimate the number of households served relative to those who might need services, the study compared the total served to the number of low-income renter households in each county. The purpose of this standardized rate was to enable comparison across counties; it should not be interpreted in isolation as the true percentage of tenants in need who receive services, as not every low-income renter household will need tenant legal services.

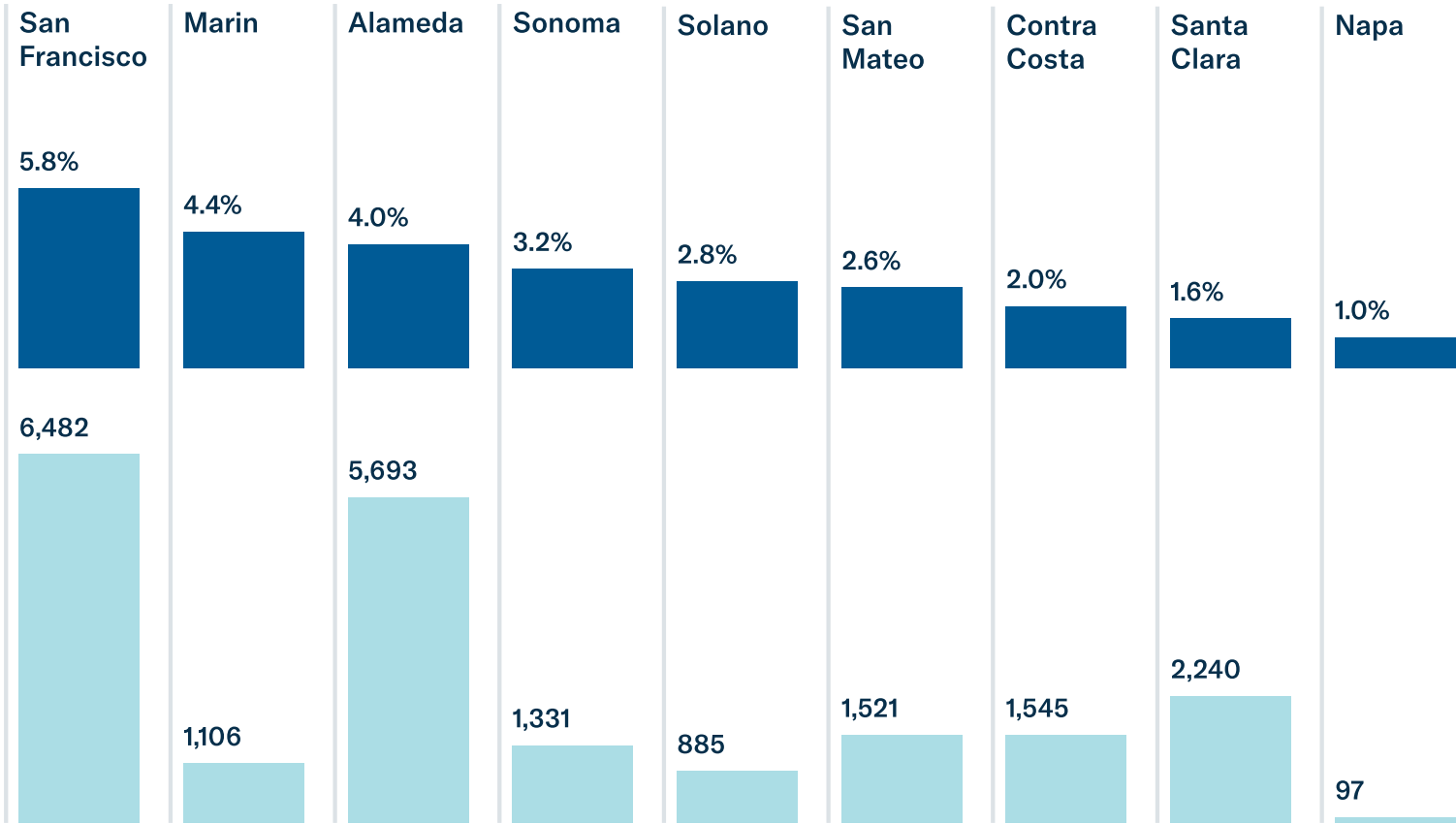
San Francisco featured the highest number and rate of lower-income households served (Figure 1), likely because it is the only jurisdiction with a tenant right to counsel in eviction cases combined with significantly higher levels of public investment. Marin and Alameda counties had the second and third highest rates of low-income renter households served. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Santa Clara and Napa counties had the lowest rates of low-income renter households served.

FIGURE 1

Estimated Percentage of Low-Income Renter Households Served by TLS Providers: 2023*

Sources: BAHFA Survey of TLS Providers, HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data based on 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

- % of Low-Income Renter Households Served
- Total Number of Renter Households Served



*Respondents were asked to provide an estimated number of households served per year as of summer 2024. These estimates likely represent an estimate for 2023, the year prior to when the survey was administered.

Attorney and Staff Capacity Relative to the Need

The research explored two ways of thinking about staff capacity relative to need. The first looks at attorney capacity specifically for eviction cases, where the data are adjusted to show a ratio of eviction filings per attorney to allow for cross-county comparison. The second examines overall staff capacity (attorneys and non-attorneys), shown as a ratio of TLS staff to low-income renter households. Low-income renter households were used for the second analysis to include the broader potential pool of tenants seeking services with any housing-related issues, such as habitability issues or assistance negotiating changes in a lease, in addition to eviction lawsuits.

While attorneys are essential to tenant legal services, most providers also employ a range of non-attorney personnel, including intake coordinators, paralegals and social workers (see Appendix B for a detailed breakdown of staff roles and numbers by county). Providers reported that such non-attorney personnel are an important complement to lawyers, increasing the depth and efficacy of litigation services, enhancing capacity of providers to take on legal issues other than eviction (e.g., habitability, discrimination, etc.), and providing wraparound support to clients.

Attorney Capacity to Represent Eviction Cases

By absolute numbers, San Francisco had the most full-time equivalent staff attorneys and managing attorneys who represent tenants in eviction cases (41.5), followed by Alameda (24.3) and Contra Costa (11). The remaining counties, including Santa Clara, all had fewer than 10 attorneys, and Napa only had one. **When compared to the volume of evictions, there was a significant gap between eviction filings and the numbers of TLS attorneys involved in eviction defense in every county (Figure 2).**

The disparity in attorney availability between counties means that where a renter lives may impact their likelihood of receiving needed legal services when facing eviction. Another potential implication is that the county where a TLS attorney is employed may impact the need to triage services and the stress of their working environment. TLS providers who responded to the survey consistently shared that they consider approximately

40-50 eviction representations per year to be a manageable caseload for an attorney. In 2024, San Francisco was the only county that approached this balance of staffing for eviction-related services.¹¹

The gap between attorneys and the estimated need was particularly large in Contra Costa, Santa Clara and Solano counties, which had among the highest volumes of eviction filings in the region. Santa Clara County had almost 50% more eviction filings than San Francisco, but only one-fifth the number of TLS attorneys who can represent tenants in eviction cases. Based on these data, tenants in Santa Clara were approximately seven times less likely to receive representation from a TLS provider in an eviction case than those in San Francisco.

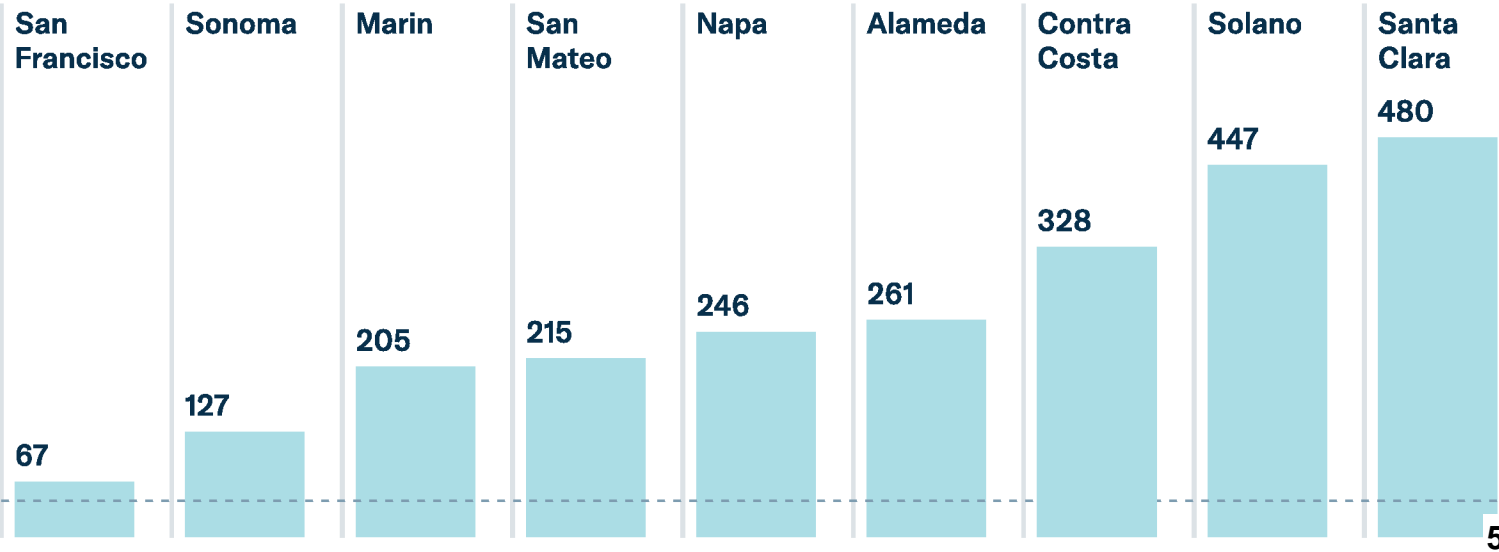
FIGURE 2

Eviction Filings per
TLS Attorneys Who
Represent Tenants in
Eviction Cases: July
2023–June 2024*

Sources: *BAHFA Survey of TLS Providers, California Judicial Council*

*Respondents were asked to provide the number of full-time equivalent attorneys who represent tenants in eviction cases on staff at the time of survey administration in summer 2024. California Judicial Council data on the eviction filings were used for July 2023–June 2024.

----- Recommended client load



Staff Capacity to Provide TLS Broadly

The gap in available support persists when the analysis is expanded to include all TLS staff (including non-attorneys) and is standardized across counties by calculating the ratio of staff per low-income renter households (Figure 3). Counties fell into roughly four tiers regarding staffing ratios when accounting for both attorney and non-attorney staff:

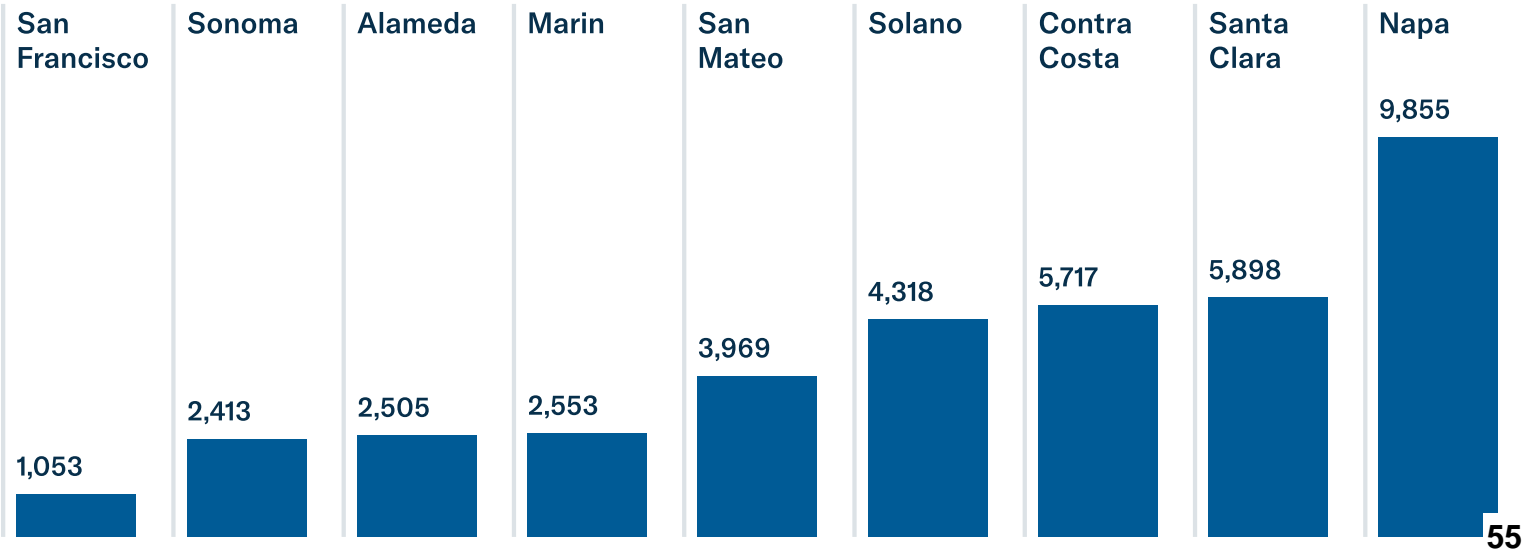
- 1. **San Francisco:** approximately one TLS staff per 1,000 low-income renter households
- 2. **Sonoma, Alameda, Marin:** approximately one TLS staff per 2,500 low-income renter households
- 3. **San Mateo, Solano, Contra Costa, Santa Clara:** approximately one TLS staff per 4,000–6,000 low-income renter households
- 4. **Napa:** approximately one TLS staff per 10,000 low-income renter households

FIGURE 3

Low-Income Renter Households per TLS Staff (Attorneys and Non-Attorneys): 2024*

Sources: *BAHFA Survey of TLS Providers* and *HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS)* data, based on 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

*Respondents were asked to provide the number of full-time equivalent employees on staff at the time of survey administration in summer 2024.



Local Government Investments in Tenant Legal Services

Local government funding has emerged in the field as an important driver of TLS capacity given the limited number, scale and potential instability of other funding sources. Many TLS providers receive baseline funding from the California Bar Association, and three receive funding from the federal Legal Services Corporation. Providers reported that these baseline funds are not sufficient to meet community needs, and therefore they seek additional funding through local government grants and philanthropic contributions.

The TLS survey asked each provider to list the funds they received from local government sources to provide legal services related to evictions, fair housing violations, rent increases, and other “upstream” issues, like habitability and harassment. These data were shared with staff from each of those cities and counties to verify accuracy. The research team did not conduct a full budget analysis of each legal aid organization, nor an analysis of all local resources available for other non-legal housing services, such as tenant/landlord mediation or fair housing counseling and testing. If local staff verifying these budgets specified that funds were for non-legal housing services, they were omitted. These data reflect approximate local investments for July 2024–June 2025.

FIGURE 4

Estimated Local Government Investment in TLS per Low-Income Renter Household: July 2024–June 2025

Sources: BAHFA Survey of TLS Providers, with approximate verification provided by local government staff; and HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data, based on 2017–2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



As shown in Figure 4, San Francisco contributed by far the most local funding toward tenant legal services, which appears correlated to the higher attorney and overall staffing ratios shown in Figures 2 and 3. San Francisco budgeted almost \$21 million between July 2024–June 2025 for eviction defense and other housing legal services, which amounts to an estimated \$188 per low-income renter household.¹² All other counties contributed substantially less per low-income renter household, and Santa Clara, San Mateo, Solano and Napa counties trailed with the lowest investments.

Funding in the region’s three largest cities varied widely from July 2024–June 2025: San Francisco budgeted approximately \$21 million, Oakland budgeted approximately \$1.5 million and San José budgeted approximately \$655,000.

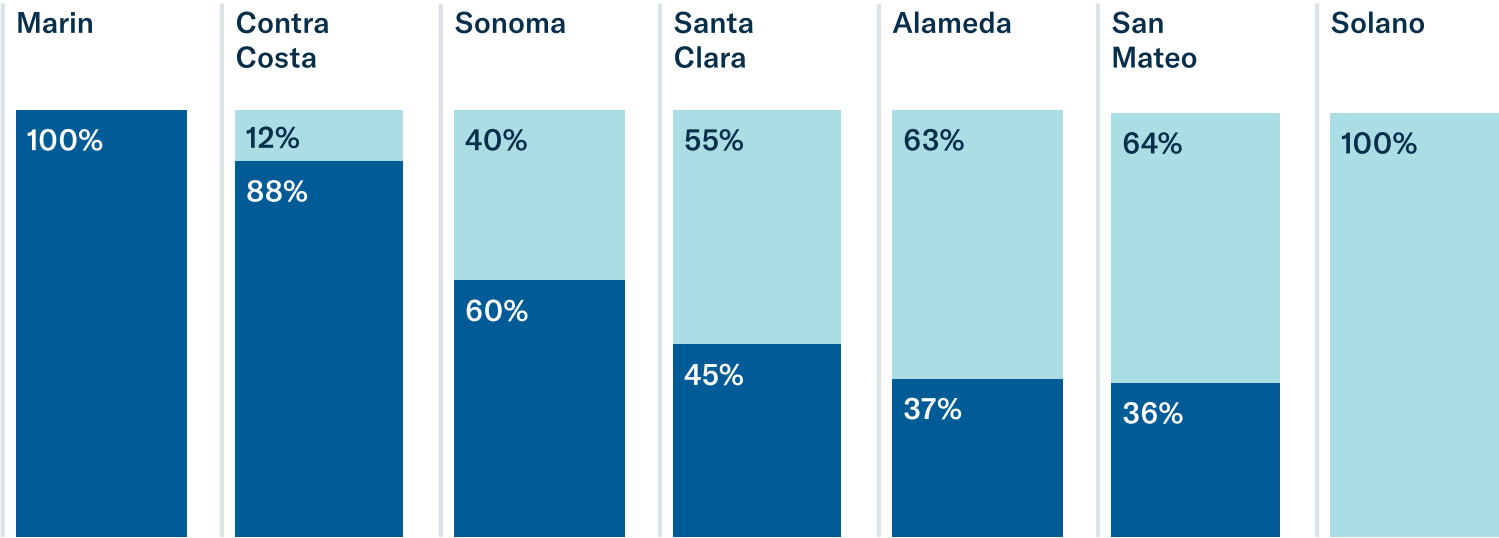
FIGURE 5

Percentage of Local Government Investment in TLS from Cities and Counties: July 2024–June 2025

Source: *BAHFA Survey of TLS Providers*, with approximate verification provided by local government staff

San Francisco was omitted because there is no distinction between city and county. Napa was omitted because there is no local government funding for TLS.

■ % of Investment from Counties ■ % of Investment from Cities



Counties and cities are both important contributors to tenant legal services regionally. On average, county funds represented approximately 51% of local contributions and city funds represented 49%. There was substantial variation across the region: There was no city funding in Marin, and at the other extreme, there was no county funding in Solano. There was neither city nor county funding for tenant legal services in Napa County.

According to TLS providers, the gap in staff capacity shown in Figures 2 and 3 reflects the lack of financial resources to hire and support sufficient attorneys and other staff. TLS providers reported that funding increased dramatically during the pandemic with one-time federal grants but that this support has now waned. TLS providers reported that this fluctuation, combined with the limited dedicated funding streams available for TLS, has made it hard for organizations to build durable, well-staffed and effective legal aid programs.

“The current tenant need is greater than we can handle with current staffing levels. The state and county have both recently ended funding streams that were supporting our housing program, which has left us unable to replace staff when there is turnover.”

— San Mateo County provider

Barriers to Services for Undocumented Residents

Providers reported that undocumented residents face compounding barriers (e.g., limited-English proficiency, limited knowledge of their rights or the legal system) to access support when faced with eviction. When undocumented residents do seek out tenant legal services, they are not always eligible given their status.

Three of the region's TLS providers (approximately 12% of all providers) restrict services based on immigration status because they are funded by the federal Legal Services Corporation (LSC), which generally bars them from providing legal assistance to undocumented residents.¹³ Depending on location, federal eligibility criteria may severely limit the ability of undocumented residents to receive tenant legal services.

“Farmworkers and undocumented/mixed status households are underserved due to a lack of trust and fear of seeking help, language barriers (i.e., indigenous languages), concern that they may be ineligible, and lack of familiarity with us despite our outreach efforts.”

— Sonoma County provider

Undocumented residents in Napa and Solano counties generally cannot receive free eviction-related legal services because all TLS providers who conduct eviction defense are LSC-funded. There is at least one TLS provider who can serve undocumented tenants with eviction cases in every other county. Alameda and San Francisco counties have the highest capacity to serve undocumented tenants.

Barriers to Services in Geographically Isolated Areas

Multiple providers identified geographic isolation as a driver of inadequate services among specific populations. Providers in Sonoma, Marin and San Mateo counties identified that the more rural coastal areas of their counties are underserved, and that it is hard to conduct effective outreach to these more dispersed communities. Providers in Alameda and Santa Clara counties also identified the more rural areas and areas disconnected from public transportation in their counties as underserved. Because people in rural areas are more likely to access services online than go to an in-person location, providers shared that seniors, people with limited-English proficiency, and others who have difficulty using technology and live in rural areas are at a particular disadvantage for accessing help.

“Coastal farmworker communities are significantly unrepresented. These communities are geographically isolated from the offices of legal services providers and have limited access to technology to receive services remotely.”

— San Mateo County provider

Types and Levels of Service

To go beyond the baseline existence and capacity of tenant legal aid organizations, this section examines the types and levels of service a tenant may receive once they locate services, and what factors determine that service level. Analysis of survey responses indicates that there are three key factors that determine whether or not a tenant will receive the type and level of services they need:

1. **The types of cases prioritized** by the TLS provider.
2. The resources available to provide the appropriate **level of services.**
3. **The strength of the TLS ecosystem** in the county where the tenant seeks services.

Each of these factors is described in further depth below.

Types of Cases Prioritized

Given the urgency and prevalence of court evictions, most TLS providers described prioritizing tenants in eviction proceedings; across seven of the nine counties, providers reported that 68% of their services were dedicated to clients facing an active eviction lawsuit (see Figure 6). In most counties, the focus on supporting tenants in active eviction lawsuits results in deprioritizing other issues related to housing rights and stability, including matters that may precede — and could prevent — eviction filings.¹⁴ In those cases, tenants may be referred elsewhere, given a lower level of service than they need or not served at all.

“Being in an unprecedented eviction wave makes it hard to prioritize cases other than evictions.”

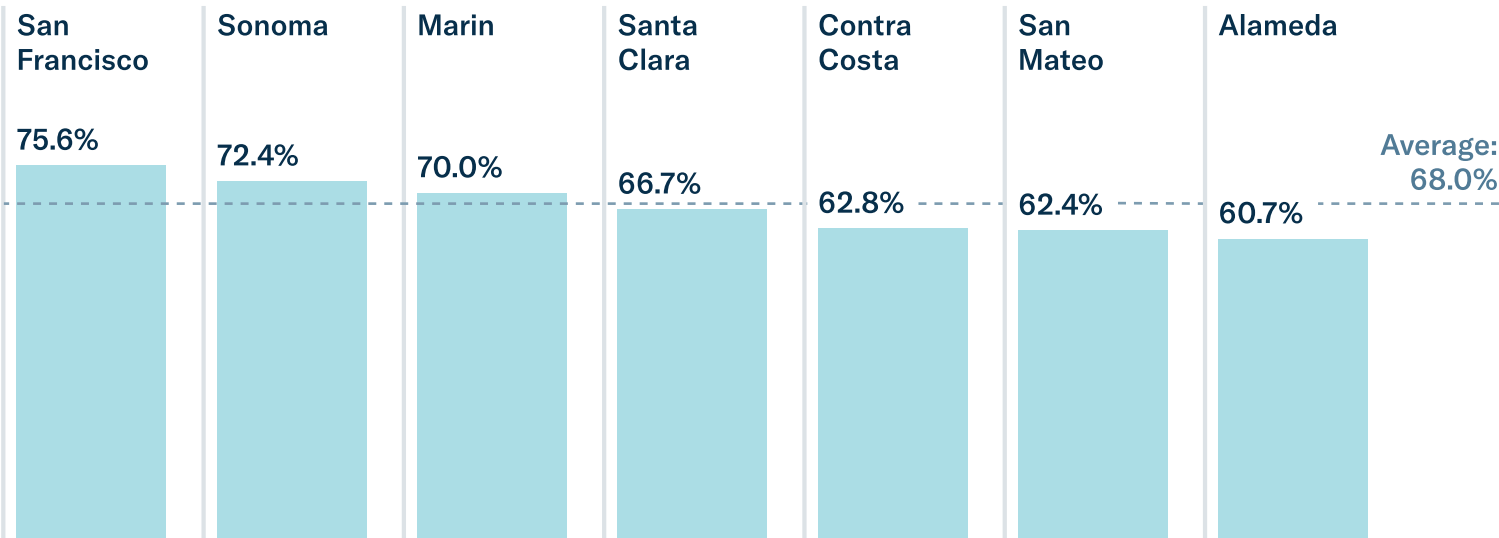
— Alameda County provider

FIGURE 6

Estimated Percentage of Countywide TLS Capacity Dedicated to Clients With Eviction Cases: 2024

Sources: *BAHFA Survey of TLS Providers*

Napa and Solano counties are omitted from this analysis because their legal service organizations did not provide data in response to this survey question.



Level of Service Provided

Of the approximately 20,810 households who received some kind of TLS in 2023, providers reported that 27% received some form representation and 73% received a “consultation” or “brief service.”¹⁵ Consults and brief services include providing legal advice; reviewing and helping tenants respond to notices and contracts; drafting letters; and providing other short-term, limited assistance. Representation services may include representing a tenant in mediation or negotiations aimed at avoiding the filing of an eviction case, representing a tenant in subsidy termination proceedings and/or defending against an eviction case.

Nearly every TLS provider reported a higher demand for services than they could meet with their current financial and staff capacity. Providers reported navigating this constraint by triaging which clients receive services and adjusting the breadth and depth of their services to try to reach the most clients possible.

Triage of Cases

One way providers navigate this constraint is to use additional criteria to triage cases and determine the level of service they will provide a given tenant. While not every tenant seeking services needs full-scope representation, limited provider capacity means that some tenants may receive a lower level of service than would be most appropriate for their needs. Across jurisdictions, providers reported three common prioritization criteria:

- **Merits of the Case:** Providers tend to consider whether a tenant has a meritorious case — one with strong evidence and viable defenses — as these are the most likely to benefit from TLS.
- **Impacts of Services:** Providers tend to consider whether a case is particularly urgent or high stakes. They often prioritize eviction cases that are close to a judgment and involve a high likelihood of tenant displacement. They also consider whether the consequences of losing the case will be particularly severe for the client. For example, providers may prioritize cases that will result in the displacement of large numbers of residents and/or children, or lead to the loss of a rent stabilized or affordable unit or a rental subsidy.¹⁶
- **Capacity for Self-Representation:** Providers tend to consider whether the tenant will face a particular burden or not in trying to assert their rights without representation. This often means prioritizing senior, disabled and/or limited-English proficiency tenants as well as tenants with especially complex cases.

In San Francisco, prioritization decisions are governed by the tenant right to counsel program. San Francisco's tenant right to counsel providers are required, as a group, to provide full-scope representation to any tenant facing a court eviction — regardless of income, grounds for eviction or merits of the case — unless there is a systemwide lack of capacity.¹⁷

Breadth and Depth of Services

Providers also reported trying to meet the need for TLS with limited resources by strategically adjusting the breadth and depth of services. One way that they do this is by prioritizing lighter-touch services, such as consults and brief services, which are less resource-intensive than representation. In Solano County, for instance, Legal Services of Northern California focuses on assisting tenants at the notice stage t

try to resolve tenant/landlord problems before they turn into eviction cases, which often require more extensive services to address. Even when providers do agree to represent a tenant, they may target their services to specific parts of a case by signing on for limited-scope representation. As a contractual relationship, limited-scope representation is less extensive than full-scope representation, in which an attorney agrees to represent a tenant until the underlying issue is resolved, regardless of the amount of time that it takes.

In the Bay Area, some providers seek to maximize breadth by employing a service delivery model that enables limited-scope representation or brief services to many tenants in one place at one time. This model can take various forms depending on the capacity of TLS providers and the local context. For example, some tenant legal services organizations offer “clinics,” where a team of attorneys and other support staff are regularly available at a particular time and location to provide limited assistance to any eligible tenant who walks in with a legal problem. A variation on this model is a clinic for mandatory settlement conferences. These conferences are court proceedings at which judges have scheduled all upcoming eviction cases for in-court settlement negotiations before the cases can proceed to trial. In some counties, attorneys will appear in housing court each week to support any unrepresented tenants in their settlement negotiations. In these clinic models, TLS staff may offer services to tenants during the specified hours of the clinic — serving a large number of tenants for a limited duration. More information about the variations in service delivery models, including clinics and mandatory settlement conferences, is provided in Appendix A.

Strength of County Tenant Legal Services Ecosystem

In counties with multiple TLS providers, organizations have a greater ability to collaborate and refer clients to one another if they are unable to serve a particular person (e.g., due to lack of capacity or the client’s immigration status). Conversely, if a renter is seeking services in a county like Napa or Solano counties with few TLS providers and low staff capacity, they will have few to no alternative options if the existing TLS providers cannot serve them.

In counties with multiple TLS providers, coordinated intake and referral systems may enhance service delivery even further. In Alameda County, several providers share a proactive peer-to-peer referral system, which allows any provider to conduct a basic intake for a tenant, even if they cannot serve them, and then seamlessly relay that data to a provider who can. San Francisco's tenant right to counsel providers use a similar system, with referrals coordinated by the Eviction Defense Collaborative. Providers reported that organizations benefit from reduced redundancy and streamlined transfers of client data.¹⁸ They also reported that tenants benefit from a "no wrong door" approach, which makes it easier to access services, and systemwide efficiencies, which increase the chances that they will be able to receive services.

Staff Hiring and Retention Challenges

Interrelated with TLS capacity issues, providers across the Bay Area reported that limited total budgets, year-over-year budget insecurity, and the mental stress of the work make hiring and retaining staff difficult. In response to the survey, providers rated the lack of public and philanthropic funding and challenges hiring and retaining attorneys as the top barriers to serving more households.

Many providers shared that their staff experience a high emotional toll from their day-to-day work, especially amid the increase in eviction filings across the region post-pandemic. They described their work as “traumatizing,” “stressful” and “grueling” because of the intense pace of eviction litigation and the human suffering they witness. Large caseloads due to low staffing and high community needs also contribute to this strain, and providers reported that the combination leads to high rates of burnout and staff turnover. The stress TLS providers reported is common throughout the social services sector among frontline workers.¹⁹

“Staff vicarious trauma is at an all-time high.”

— Marin County provider

Staff turnover and limited recruitment potential are also driven by modest staff salaries. Compensation for starting TLS attorneys qualifies as low income throughout the region, ranging from approximately \$71,000 in Alameda County to \$85,000 in Marin County, with other counties' rates falling in between.²⁰ While these salaries may increase with more experience, income bands for staff attorneys top out in the \$100,000 range at the highest paying TLS providers — which still qualifies as low income in some counties.

These salaries contrast sharply with what attorneys could earn at for-profit law firms. According to the American Bar Association, the median salary for first-year law firm associates in 2023 was \$200,000 nationally, rising to an average of \$307,500 by an attorney's eighth year of employment. The San José area ranked number one in the country for highest average wages

“It is hard to find attorneys who can afford to work in legal aid.”

— Alameda County provider

for attorneys in 2023, closely followed by the San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward area in fourth place.²¹ To contextualize these salaries further, 71% of law school students graduate with debt, and the average graduate owes \$130,000.²²

Due to these challenges, TLS providers reported spending significant energy continually recruiting, onboarding and training new staff. Because recent law school graduates make up the bulk of new recruits, significant time is needed to train new attorneys. One provider from San Francisco explained that based on the job market, their organization usually hires attorneys with under two years of experience and who typically need six to 12 months of training before they can take on their own cases.

Finally, providers reported that more seasoned lawyers tend to move on to higher paid and lower stress roles, leading to a loss of institutional knowledge. These staffing dynamics further disadvantage organizations and those seeking services, as housing law is complex and requires experience to navigate, especially in counties where there are many cities with their own local policies and procedures. The time spent on recruitment, hiring and training compounds the staffing capacity issues described in the previous sections of this report. Providers emphasized that supporting the TLS workforce is foundational to providing the services tenants need to understand their rights and maintain housing stability.

Conclusion and Areas for Further Research

This research provides a strong grounding in system-wide and county-specific issues that constrain tenant legal services in the Bay Area. Meanwhile, the need for these services is great. As described in the companion report, *Evictions in the Nine-County Bay Area*, evictions met or exceeded pre-pandemic rates in all but one county from July 2023–June 2024, and the prevalence of nonpayment as the cause for eviction illustrates the severe economic challenges many households face.

Tenant legal services are just one intervention among many housing policies and programs that seek to address the Bay Area’s longstanding challenges with affordability and displacement. It was beyond the scope of this study to evaluate the effectiveness of tenant legal services compared to other interventions or to evaluate the impact of other regulatory approaches on the need for or efficacy of tenant legal aid. For example, this study did not evaluate tenant protection policies such as rent stabilization or just cause for eviction, which have emerged as part of a local and statewide policy response to the lack of affordability and prevalence of evictions. Further research on the variations and impacts of anti-displacement policies across the Bay Area would serve as an important complement to this report, as the ability of tenant attorneys to affect case outcomes may relate to the strength of the underlying legal protections available for them to enforce.

Another opportunity for further research relates to the broader ecosystem of programs and services that frequently complement tenant legal aid, such as rental assistance. Nearly every provider surveyed as part of this study cited the importance of rental assistance to help tenants facing eviction due to nonpayment (see Appendix A for more information). Providers also described that resources for rental assistance are waning in the wake of state and federal COVID-19 funding. Local and national research has underscored the importance of rental assistance as a tool for eviction and homelessness prevention,²³ including research showing the efficacy of Santa Clara County’s homelessness prevention system.²⁴ Bay Area policymakers and funders would likely benefit from a comparative analysis of rental assistance and other homelessness prevention programs across the region.²⁵ Further research into these programs, including how to enhance their integration with tenant legal services, would help equip decision-makers with more information to support low-income tenants.

Appendices

Appendix A: Design and Service Delivery Models for Tenant Legal Services

The stages of the legal eviction process are governed by a mix of local, state and federal laws, depending on the type of housing and county court procedures. The strategies of the Bay Area's TLS providers are designed to intervene at key points in this process, varying to account for the local policy and program environment and to maximize limited available resources. This appendix details the variety and availability of different TLS interventions across the region based on survey responses by and interviews with providers.

Outreach and Connection to Services

Providers reported that outreach offers tenants critical resources and information before a crisis. If tenants know that they have rights — e.g., a right to habitable housing, a right to a trial in an eviction case — then they may be less likely to “self-evict” when a landlord threatens them with eviction through a written or verbal notice or other behavior that could lead to informal eviction. Additionally, if tenants know where to receive assistance in the event of an eviction summons, then they are more likely to respond within the tight timeline (10 business days) to avoid a default judgment.

Most TLS providers across the region (86% according to results from the survey used as part of this study) engage in some form of outreach. Outreach activities often include “know your rights” trainings and the distribution of self-help guides with instructions that tenants can use to respond to an eviction notice or summons on their own. Better-resourced organizations engage in proactive marketing and communications, such as tabling at community events, flyers, social media, mailers, text blasts, news and radio advertisements, and ads on public transit

TLS providers reported that they often partner with trusted community-based organizations who work with specific populations like immigrants and formerly incarcerated people to reduce barriers those groups may otherwise face in accessing services.

Across the region, providers reported that direct calls and emails are the main ways that tenants access their services. The next most prevalent access points are referrals from other service providers and walk-in/drop-in clinics. The least prevalent means of access are referrals from official sources like the courts, municipal rent programs and 211.

Tenant Legal Clinics

Clinics are regularly scheduled opportunities for tenants to learn about their rights, ask legal questions and receive brief services. Clinics generally occur at a particular time and location (including some virtual clinics), where multiple clients can be served at the same time by a team of attorneys and support staff. In a resource-constrained environment, many providers considered clinics to be an efficient way to offer breadth of services that can assist as many clients as possible.

Some legal clinics are designed to support tenants with “upstream” matters, such as repairs and harassment, in ways that may prevent the eviction process from ever starting. Other clinics are designed to allow for targeted intervention at key stages of the eviction process, such as responding to an eviction summons to prevent a default. Tenant legal service providers may also use their clinics to conduct intakes and identify tenants who are in need of and eligible for more extensive services.

Across the Bay Area, an estimated 57% of TLS providers run either walk-in/in-person or drop-in/online clinics. In Napa County, there are no clinics. In Solano and Sonoma counties, there are online fair housing clinics but no clinics from eviction defense organizations. The remaining counties all feature one or more clinics. Providers underscored that for clinics to be effective they must be accessible to tenants; several best practices identified by practitioners include allowing tenants to access services without an appointment, offering in-person clinics to enable participation by tenants who do not have reliable internet access and locating clinics in areas that tenants can easily reach.

Walk-In/Drop-In Clinics: Almost all counties have at least one walk-in or drop-in option. In Solano and Sonoma counties, clinics are focused on fair housing rather than eviction-related issues.

■ **In-Person Clinics:** Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties all feature one or more in-person clinic options. In the North Bay, Marin is the only county with an in-person clinic.

■ **Geographic Access:** The accessibility of in-person clinics is a function of geographic distance and transportation options. Counties in the Bay Area differ dramatically by size and geographic features (e.g., bodies of water, mountains). Figure 7 shows the disparities in clinic density across counties, which in some cases is exacerbated by differences in transportation options and population density.

FIGURE 7

In-Person TLS Clinics by Geographic Area: 2024

Sources: *BAHFA Survey of TLS Providers, US Census Bureau*

Three organizations did not respond to this survey question, yielding a possible slight undercount.

County	Organizations that Provide In-Person Clinics	Number of Clinic Sites	Land Area (mi ²)	Land Area per Clinic (mi ²)
San Francisco	4	10	47	5
Alameda	3	7	737	105
Contra Costa	3	5	717	143
San Mateo	1	3	449	150
Marin	1	1	520	520
Santa Clara	2	2	1,291	646
Napa	0	0	752	—
Solano	0	0	822	—
Sonoma	0	0	1,575	—

Eviction Notice-Stage Services

Nearly all evictions in California are required to start with some form of written notice. At the most basic level, providing TLS at the notice stage prevents self-eviction and helps tenants understand their substantive and procedural rights. TLS providers reported that many vulnerable tenants do not understand the language in an eviction notice, which may be written in technical jargon and/or in their non-native language. Similarly, providers reported that some tenants are unaware of their right to a court eviction process and instead move out upon receiving an eviction notice — even if the notice is legally invalid. Clinics and other interactions with TLS providers at the notice stage can help tenants to identify their rights and options, including how to cure a breach of lease or address any underlying issues that led to the notice, and thereby prevent the situation from worsening into a court eviction.

Providers reported that intervention at the eviction notice stage can save resources, reduce stress for tenants and landlords, and create more favorable outcomes for all parties. Because eviction cases move quickly, TLS at this stage can help begin settlement negotiation and applications for rental assistance in ways that may resolve the case. If a case does proceed to court, providers reported that engaging at the eviction notice stage can help to prepare a tenant for a fast-moving procedure.

Eviction Trials and Settlement Negotiation

Trials are rare across the legal spectrum, and eviction cases are no exception. Providers reported that nearly all eviction cases (other than those resulting in default judgements) are resolved through settlements. Through a settlement negotiation, attorneys can achieve better terms for their clients whether the tenant is able to stay or must leave their home.

- **Creating “Pay and Stay” Agreements:** For evictions caused by nonpayment of rent — the most common cause of eviction — attorneys may be able to negotiate repayment plans that allow tenants to stay in their homes and enable landlords to receive the rent owed. Furthermore, tenant attorneys can ensure that tenants understand their obligations under such agreement, increasing the likelihood that tenants comply to the benefit of both parties.

- **Providing “Soft Landing” Terms for Move-Out:** If a tenant wants or needs to move, attorneys can often negotiate for more time to move out, permanent masking of the eviction record, a neutral reference and in some limited cases, relocation assistance. These conditions are meant to give the tenant a better chance to find suitable replacement housing and avoid homelessness.

In the Bay Area, a number of providers leverage limited-scope representation to increase the impact of their resources by providing same-day services at mandatory settlement conferences, a day when all the upcoming eviction cases are scheduled for a settlement negotiation as a prerequisite for trial. Mandatory settlement conferences are often considered co-beneficial for legal service providers and courts as they reduce costly and lengthy trial caseloads.

San Francisco has both broad and deep service offerings, likely due to its higher level of funding and tenant right to counsel. Almost all non-defaulted tenants in San Francisco facing eviction receive representation and about 75% receive full-scope representation. The remainder receive limited-scope representation at mandatory settlement conferences.

The availability of this service model depends on two distinct but related questions. The first is whether the local Superior Court mandates some form of settlement conference for eviction cases.²⁶ If so, the second question is whether local TLS providers are available to assist tenants at the settlement conference. Notably, while Solano County requires settlement conferences, the local eviction defense organization reported that they do not have the resources needed to provide same-day services to unrepresented tenants. The Law Foundation of Silicon Valley

previously operated a legal clinic at settlement conferences in Santa Clara County, but it was discontinued due to a decline in funding and post-pandemic staffing.

Tenant legal services at mandatory settlement conferences are currently only available in Alameda, Marin, San Francisco and San Mateo counties. Alameda, Marin and San Mateo providers offer full-scope representation to a smaller percentage of clients than San Francisco and provide limited-scope representation to most tenants who are unrepresented at their mandatory settlement conferences. Providers in these counties reported that this approach allows them to balance intensive, full-scope cases that lead to better outcomes with high-volume, light-touch services that help as many tenants as possible. With fewer resources than those in Alameda County, providers in Marin and San Mateo counties stretch their capacity further by recruiting *pro bono* private attorneys to assist tenants at mandatory settlement conferences.

Impact of Breadth Versus Depth on Case Outcomes

While light-touch programs like same-day services at mandatory settlement conferences allow providers to have a mitigating impact on as many cases as possible, data from several TLS providers shows that tenants who receive full-scope representation are 39% more likely to remain in their homes than tenants who receive limited-scope representation.²⁷

Providers in counties without mandatory settlement conferences do not have the same opportunities to efficiently reach unrepresented tenants on the same day in court. In Sonoma County, providers estimated that they served about one-third of the tenants who did not default. Contra Costa County providers reported serving slightly fewer.

Providers shared the consequences of not having adequate attorneys to represent tenants when they are attempting to negotiate settlements in court:

“We have seen unassisted tenants regularly waive basic due process rights and sign agreements that they do not understand, both of which cause tenants to be at higher risk of homelessness.”

— Alameda County provider

Rental Assistance and Nonpayment Eviction Cases

Most eviction cases are filed due to nonpayment of rent. Providers reported that rental assistance, when available and accessible in the short timeframe needed for eviction proceedings, is an important tool to help resolve nonpayment cases and keep tenants in their homes.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, significant funds from the federal government for emergency rental assistance made these resources available in every county for the first time. Providers said these resources prevented a “tsunami” of nonpayment evictions and displacement during

the pandemic when many people experienced the health impacts of COVID-19, lost jobs or had hours cut. Emergency rental assistance programs reduced or removed rental debts that would have otherwise been insurmountable while making landlords whole. However, these resources have waned and at the time of this report's publication face potential further cuts in the state and federal budgets.

To the extent that nonpayment evictions are rooted in fundamental economic conditions, providers acknowledged that a more holistic approach is needed — one that goes beyond legal services to include direct rental and other forms of financial assistance, income supplementation through public benefits and/or workforce development, and increasing the supply of permanently affordable housing to enable low-income renters to live more independent and financially stable lives. As referenced in the conclusion of this report, rental and other forms of assistance were not the focus of this research and therefore would be a potentially useful area for future inquiry.

Appendix B: Tenant Legal Services Staffing in the Region

Almost two-thirds (61%) of TLS staff across the Bay Area are attorneys, with a range of non-attorney support staff to complement the role of lawyers. While the availability of these non-attorney staff varies across jurisdictions, providers reported that they help increase attorney capacity and create a more holistic approach to supporting low-income tenant needs. These non-attorney roles include:

- **Outreach and Intake:** Outreach and intake staff augment and streamline the work of attorneys by informing residents about their rights and available resources and getting tenants scheduled for more in-depth legal counsel or services. These roles exist mainly in Alameda and San Francisco counties.
- **Legal Support Staff:** Law fellows, attorneys-in-training and paralegals assist attorneys in providing legal services and representation. These roles are most prevalent in Marin, San Francisco and San Mateo counties and least prevalent in Napa and Santa Clara.
- **Social Services:** Social workers and client advocates help tenants access services meant to promote stability and preserve housing, such as rental assistance and mental health services, and — if needed — relocate to new housing. These roles exist primarily in Alameda, San Francisco, Santa Clara and Sonoma counties.
- **Research and Policy Advocacy:** Policy specialists advocate for public policies and programs meant to promote housing stability for large numbers of renters through a system-wide rather than client-by-client approach. While one or more TLS providers in every county use staff time for policy analysis and advocacy, only two organizations, Legal Aid of Marin and Legal Aid of Sonoma County, dedicate positions to this work.

FIGURE 8

Number of TLS Staff
by Role: 2024

Sources: *BAHFA Survey of TLS Providers*
Respondents were asked to provide the number of full-time equivalent employees at the time of the survey administration in summer 2024.

County	Managing, Supervising, or Directing Attorneys	Staff Attorneys	Paralegals	Social Workers	Policy Advocates	Other	Total Staff	% Attorneys / % Non-Attorneys	Attorneys Who Represent Tenants in Eviction Cases
Alameda	12.2	22.8	6.0	1.0	0.0	15.0	57.0	61% / 39%	24.3
Contra Costa	1.5	10.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.5	85% / 15%	11.0
Marin	1.3	2.7	3.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	9.0	44% / 56%	2.0
Napa	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	100% / 0%	1.0
San Francisco	17.5	49.0	22.0	7.5	0.0	10.0	106.0	63% / 37%	41.5
San Mateo	4.1	4.8	4.7	0.0	0.0	1.0	14.6	61% / 39%	7.3
Santa Clara	2.5	9.7	0.3	2.5	0.0	9.0	24.0	51% / 49%	8.5
Solano	1.0	4.2	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.2	72% / 28%	4.2
Sonoma	2.3	6.7	2.0	4.0	1.0	1.0	17.0	53% / 47%	7.0
All Counties	42.5	110.7	42.0	15.0	3.0	36.0	249.2	61% / 39%	106.8

Endnotes

- 1** The Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) was established by the California Legislature in 2019. See California Government Code section 64500 et seq.
- 2** Tenants often have three days to “pay” or “cure” a lease violation when they receive an eviction notice. Following the notice deadline, landlords can file an eviction lawsuit with the county Superior Court. Eviction lawsuits are accelerated proceedings that typically move through the court system in a matter of weeks, with a median duration of six weeks (including default judgments) in the Bay Area based on court records. This is significantly faster than other types of court cases, which often take years rather than weeks.
- 3** National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel. (November 2024). Eviction Representation Statistics for Landlords and Tenants Absent Special Intervention.
- 4** The companion report as part of BAHFA’s Bay Area Eviction Study, *Evictions in the Nine-County Bay Area*, attempted to quantify legal representation rates in eviction lawsuits across the region. In San Mateo County, only 4% of tenants facing eviction received full-scope representation compared to 93% of landlords. In San Francisco, the only jurisdiction in the Bay Area with a tenant right to counsel, the discrepancy was lower but still persisted with 45% of tenants represented compared to 96% of landlords. While the quantitative data from other counties was not reliable enough to include in the report, TLS providers consistently reported significant representation gaps for tenants in every county within the region.
- 5** Consults and brief services include providing legal advice; reviewing and helping tenants respond to notices and contracts; drafting letters; and providing other short-term, limited assistance. Due to the way providers reported case data, it was not possible to distinguish between more extensive representation rates that could vary between “limited scope” and “full scope” representation; as such, these different levels of representation are grouped together. Such “representation” services may include representing

a tenant in a mediation or negotiations aimed at avoiding the filing of an eviction case; representing a tenant in subsidy termination proceedings; and/or defending against an eviction case. There is some variation in nomenclature and services offered in each county and by each legal service organization, which is part of the challenge with regional-scale analysis that this study seeks to overcome.

- 6 In certain instances, other statewide groups such as the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment, Disability Rights California, and Housing and Economic Rights Advocates provide support to Bay Area tenants. But since they do not form a core or consistent part of the eviction defense ecosystem in any county, they were not included in this study.
- 7 Contacts in Napa County participated in the survey but did not provide a full review of the findings.
- 8 Most state-funded TLS providers are required to serve clients at or below 80% of Area Median Income, and most federally funded providers are required to serve clients at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. However, there are limited exceptions to this focus on lower-income renters. For instance, certain population-specific providers treat other factors, such as age or disability, as their main eligibility requirement, rather than income. And in San Francisco, the tenant right to counsel program mandates that providers serve any tenant facing eviction, regardless of income. Still, in practice, an estimated 95% of tenants served through San Francisco's program are low-income, and 83% are extremely low-income. See: San Francisco Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development. (2024). Tenant Right to Counsel (TRC): 2024 Update to Land Use and Transportation Committee, p. 13.
- 9 There are some private attorneys who charge a fee for service and law firms who represent Bay Area tenants on a *pro bono* basis. However, they only represent a small percentage of the services available to low-income tenants, so they were excluded from this study.
- 10 Respondents were asked to provide an estimated number of households served per year as of summer 2024. These estimates represent an estimate for 2023, the year prior to when the survey was administered.
- 11 Even in San Francisco, however, tenant legal service providers reported gaps in the availability of services to meet the need. Providers reported that San Francisco has not been able to

consistently fund its right to counsel program at the level required to provide full-scope representation to all tenants facing eviction. Further, eviction filings have continued to increase in the period from July 2024 to June 2025 while funding and staffing have remained flat, meaning that this service gap has likely increased since the survey was administered. Local providers reported that, while they can serve a significant percentage of tenants facing a court eviction, they also must deprioritize non-eviction housing cases and preventative services due to capacity challenges.

- 12** For July 2024–June 2025, San Francisco allocated approximately \$18 million for eviction defense through the tenant right to counsel program and an additional \$3 million for other civil legal services. The latter included funding for both non-eviction housing legal matters, like habitability and harassment, and non-housing legal matters, like worker and consumer issues. Staff were not able to disaggregate the funding for housing legal matters from non-housing legal matters, so the overall funding for TLS from San Francisco represents a slight overestimate.
- 13** There are a few, limited caveats. LSC-funded providers can serve undocumented tenants if the case is directly related to preventing or obtaining relief from domestic violence or other specified crimes. In addition, these providers can serve mixed-status households so long as a resident with status is a named party in the case. However, this rule does not apply if the resident with status is a minor, as is the case in many first-generation immigrant households.
- 14** Across the region, over 75% of providers reported being willing to take on non-eviction cases, which include rental voucher or subsidy issues, rent increase or other rent program matters, discrimination/ reasonable accommodation, habitability, harassment, and retaliation. In practice, however, many providers reported that they rarely take on these cases because their scarce capacity is prioritized for eviction cases.
- 15** See endnote 3 for more information about each type of service.
- 16** Rent stabilized and subsidized tenancies are considered particularly high stakes because, if they are displaced, low-income tenants are less likely to be able to find affordable replacement housing.
- 17** The mandate to provide full-scope representation to every tenant in an eviction case operates at a system scale. But individual tenant right to counsel providers are not required to go against their eligibility guidelines. For instance, if a provider is barred from

representing undocumented tenants, then that client will be referred to another provider who can assist them. Furthermore, the mandate only applies if there is capacity among providers, which, given inadequate funding, there often is not. As a result, Eviction Defense Collaborative uses a vulnerability scoring system to determine who will receive full-scope representation across all tenant right to counsel organizations. Tenants scoring lower may receive more limited legal assistance.

- 18 Client data systems require protections to ensure personally identifiable information is safe, and sharing data requires express authorization from tenants for limited sharing of information with other providers.
- 19 Ratcliff, M. (March 29, 2024). Social Workers, Burnout, and Self-Care. Delaware Journal of Public Health; Lamm, S. & Ausmus, S. (2023). Vicarious Trauma in the Department of Social Services Human Services Workforce. Virginia Department of Social Services.
- 20 Low-income is defined as up to 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) and is based on the midpoint of a specific geography's income distribution, meaning that half of all households in that area earn above the AMI, and half earn below it. In the Bay Area for a four-person household, this ranges from approximately \$91,500 in Solano County to \$149,100 in San Francisco, Marin County and San Mateo County.
- 21 American Bar Association. (November 18, 2024). Profile of the Legal Profession: Wages.
- 22 Hanson, Melanie. (October 1, 2024). Average Law School Debt. Education Data Initiative.
- 23 Fischer, W., Rice, D., & Mazarra, A. (December 5, 2019). Research Shows Rental Assistance Reduces Hardship and Provides Platform to Expand Opportunity for Low-Income Families. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.
- 24 Philips, D. and Sullivan, J. (April 2023). Do homeless prevention programs prevent homelessness? Evidence from a randomized controlled trial. University of Notre Dame Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities.
- 25 Numerous efforts are underway across the region to prevent homelessness through targeted financial assistance, legal support and case management. Destination: Home has led this work in Santa Clara County since 2017, and in 2023 the University of Notre Dam~

published the results of a randomized control trial showing the efficacy of their program. A similar program, Keep People Housed, run by Bay Area Community Services (BACS), has spread from its initial pilot in Oakland to multiple locations throughout the region, and published the results from a program evaluation in 2025 by the University of Pennsylvania and Stanford University. San Francisco also has a robust homelessness prevention program administered through their housing department and uses the online prioritization tool created by BACS. Many other local rental assistance programs, guaranteed income pilot programs and homelessness prevention efforts have been undertaken throughout the region to help prevent displacement and homelessness; however, many of these programs do not have ongoing funding streams.

- 26** The term “mandatory settlement conference” is not used consistently in the Superior Courts across all counties; some version exists in some counties with different names and variations in procedure. A key distinction is whether the conference is truly “mandatory” — in some Superior Courts, judges encourage settlement negotiations but without a mandatory conference that serves as a prerequisite for trial.
- 27** The TLS case data demonstrate correlation but do not prove causation. There is a potential that application of prioritization criteria could lead attorneys to offer full scope representation to the “best” cases that are more likely to result in preserving tenancies. This analysis includes data from Alameda and San Francisco counties, and in San Francisco decisions about providing full- or limited-scope representation are not based on the merits of the case. Regardless, these data show that the availability of legal services helps position tenants in meritorious cases to retain their homes.



ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Bay Area Housing Finance Authority

Bay Area Metro Center
375 Beale Street, Suite 800 | San Francisco, CA 94105

Tel: 415.778.6700

Email: info@bayareametro.gov

Web: mtc.ca.gov/bahfa



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

Staff Report

1025 ESCOBAR STREET
MARTINEZ, CA 94553

File #: 25-3746

Agenda Date: 9/15/2025

Agenda #:

Proposed letter stating support for Assemblymember Wicks package of legislation supporting faster processing of housing requests.

To be addressed to all assembly members and state senators representing Contra Costa County.

The Contra Costa County Advisory Council on Aging (ACOA) advises the Board of Supervisors on matters related to the planning, development, and administration of programs for older adults and adults with disabilities. Please note that any comments, recommendations, opinions, or positions expressed by the ACOA or its members do not represent the official position of the County or its officers.

We are writing in support of the package of legislative bills being introduced in the State Senate and Assembly aimed at improving the efficiency of the review, approval, and construction of new housing. Known as the **“Fast Track Housing Package,”** this collection of twenty-two complementary bills is designed to streamline the housing approval process without compromising environmental or safety standards.

Led by Assemblymember Wicks whose recognition that the current approval process is not working is the basis for this “Fast Track Housing Package”. Through a bipartisan and bicameral approach, the strategy is taking meaningful steps to reform the system and accelerate the development of new housing projects. As outlined, the “Fast Track Housing Package” addresses five key bottlenecks in the approval process—application, CEQA compliance, entitlement, post-entitlement, and enforcement. These bills aim to eliminate inefficiencies at each of these stages, thereby reducing project timelines, lowering costs, and enabling faster housing development.

The lack of affordable housing is a critical issue affecting communities across California, particularly in Contra Costa County. The package of bills reflects a deep understanding of the housing development and approval process and it is a bold initiative to “reset” the system that is both far-reaching and well-supported on both sides of the aisle.

The Advisory Council on Aging appreciates Assemblymember Wicks for sponsoring and organizing this comprehensive legislative effort to increase the availability of new and affordable housing in our county and across the state and we are requesting your support in voting for this package of legislation.

Respectfully,

Lorna VanAckeren

President