COST OF EVICTION CALCULATOR

OVERVIEW

The Cost of Eviction Calculator empowers housing advocates to leverage local and national data to demonstrate the number of people at risk of eviction in their community and the estimated costs of providing emergency shelter, inpatient and emergency medical services, child welfare, and juvenile delinquency services to evicted community members who experience eviction-related displacement. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Calculator was modified to enable users to estimate the number of renters at risk of eviction and the community cost of COVID-19 evictions.
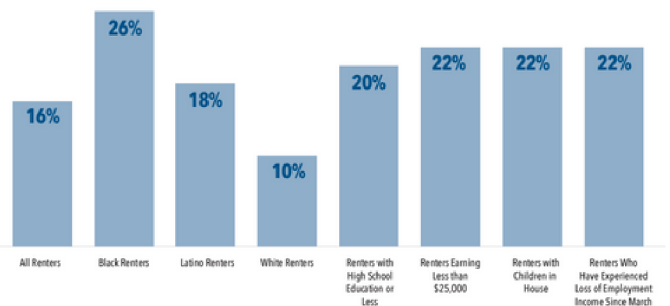
The Calculator was a finalist in the Georgetown IronTech Lawyer Competition, an international, technology-based, access-to-justice competition in March 2020, and has since been user-tested and redesigned to be more usable and useful, and a stronger advocacy tool. It has been featured by The New York Times, CBS News, the Associated Press, Shelterforce Magazine, Arizona Public Media, the Arizona Daily Star, the Arizona Republic, KJZZ, and Buffalo News.

Project Problem Statement:

Create an online tool that quantifies the downstream societal costs associated with high rates of eviction in a way that is informative and actionable.

FIGURE 1. SHARE OF RENTERS BEHIND ON RENT IN LATE OCTOBER

Category	Share
All Renters	16%
Black Renters	26%
Latino Renters	18%
White Renters	10%
Renters with High School Education or Less	20%
Renters Earning Less than $25,000	22%
Renters with Children in House	22%
Renters Who Have Experienced Loss of Employment Income Since March	22%

Source: US Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey Week 17 (October 14-26, 2020).

OBJECTIVES

1 Identify existing data regarding the downstream societal costs of eviction across sectors.

2 Design an online tool that can aggregate that data for policy advocates across the country.

3 Conduct usability testing of a beta version of the Cost of Eviction Calculator to ensure it meets user needs.

4 Generate national, regional and localized case studies that apply the Calculator methodology.

PROCESS

01 — Research
The research team identified existing cost benefit analyses of investing in eviction prevention versus bearing the downstream costs of eviction.

02 — Design & Build
The research designed and built the Calculator in Neota Logic, an online interactive tool. The Calculator was designed to take users through the step-by-step process of identifying eviction costs in their community.

03 — Case studies
The research team used national, regional and localized data to generate case study examples of eviction costs in various jurisdictions. The national data was reported in a joint report with the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

04 — Usability Testing
Two years after initial design and testing, the research team used heuristic evaluations to identify potential vulnerabilities in the existing platform's UI design. The team also reviewed the original research and methodology for possible updates or expansion.

HOW DOES THE COST OF EVICTION CALCULATOR WORK?

5 COSTS ARE CALCULATED TO DETERMINE THE COST OF EVICTION:

1. Emergency Shelter Costs
2. Inpatient Medical Care Costs
3. Emergency Department Costs
4. Foster Care Costs
5. Juvenile Delinquency Costs

DATA INPUT:
Following on screen prompts, users can use default federal data or supply data from their local communities for each of the calculator's cost categories.

DATA CALCULATION:
Data provided by users is calculated to provide a total cost for each cost category, as well as a total cost for evictions in the user's selected community.

TOTAL COST OF EVICTION SUMMARY REPORT:
The Cost of Eviction Summary Report provides the bottom-line financial impact of evictions. Based on the user's data, the calculator provides: the total cost of evictions for the selected community, a breakdown of the costs in each cost category, and the calculator's methodology.

The report is designed to help legal advocates, policy advocates, local government decision-makers, educators, or others working to shed light on the significant financial impact evictions have on communities. Reports generated by the Calculator are easy to share and provides evidence-based support for change. In addition to bottom-line costs, the report suggests next steps, eviction-prevention strategies, and provides an example of the cost-savings a community could expect by providing families with pre-eviction assistance.