



CHICAGO HEALTH JUSTICE FORUM: HOUSING EQUITY AND JUST CAUSE FOR EVICTIONS

Health & Medicine Policy Research Group

February 25, 2021

Land Acknowledgement

Health & Medicine recognizes and acknowledges that we live and work in the land of the Peoria (Pea-Or-E-ah), Miami (My-Am-E), Kickapoo (KICK-a-poo), Potawatomi (Pot-tah-WAH-tah-mee), Nations.

These lands were the traditional territory of these Native Nations prior to their forced removal. They continue to carry the stories of their struggles for survival and identity today on these and other lands.

As an organization located in Chicago within the state of Illinois, we are obligated to hold these histories and contemporary struggles in our mind today as we talk about community, belonging, and health.

Housekeeping

- Forum is being recorded and will be available afterward
- We will share materials after the forum
- Please sign up for Health & Medicine's newsletter to hear about upcoming forums and events at <http://bit.ly/3dJbqpu>
- Share your information in the chat if you would like:
 - *Your name, gender pronouns, title & organization*
- Please place any questions for the Q&A in the Q&A section and not the chat.
 - *We will answer as many as possible during the last 15 minutes of the forum.*

Agenda

- Forum introduction
- Summary of links from eviction and housing insecurity to public health
 - *Speaker: Wesley Epplin*
- Centering discussion in personal experience with eviction
 - *Speaker: Margie O'Neal, student at National Louis University*
- Review of the *Just Cause to Evict* ordinance
 - *Speaker: Frank Avellone, Senior Attorney and Policy Coordinator, Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing*
- Action Opportunities with the Chicago Housing Justice League to advance this ordinance
 - Antonio Gutierrez, Anti-Displacement Organizer, Autonomous Tenants Union
- Q & A

About Health & Medicine



Health & Medicine's mission is to promote the health of all Illinoisans by advancing health equity.

Follow us on social media:

[Facebook.com/HMPRGChicago](https://www.facebook.com/HMPRGChicago)

[Twitter.com/HMPRG](https://twitter.com/HMPRG)

[LinkedIn.com/company/HMPRG](https://www.linkedin.com/company/HMPRG)

Health & Medicine and the Collaborative for Health Equity Cook County support of Chicago Southeast Side hunger strikers:

- **Sign-on letter for organizations and individuals** to Mayor Lori Lightfoot, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), and relevant officials
 - Available: bit.ly/DenyPermit (sign by 3/1)
- **One-day solidarity fast** this Friday, February 26.
 - *Zoom check-in at 12:00 noon for fast participants and supporters.*
 - Available at: bit.ly/SolidarityFastFeb26

More information:

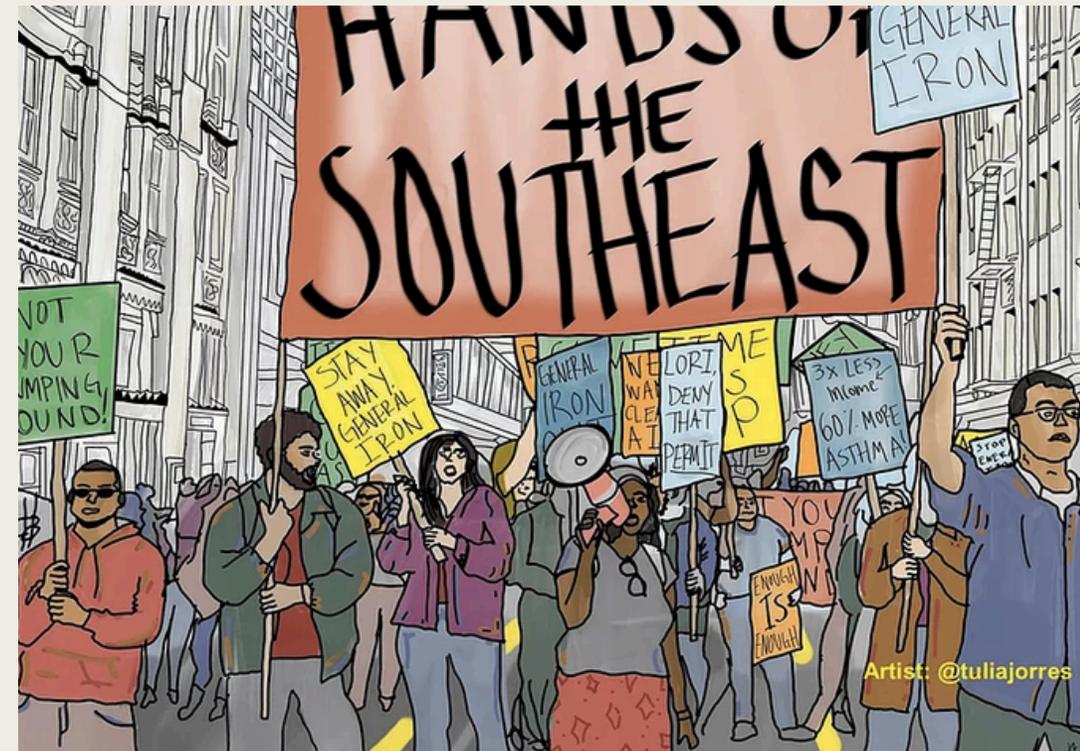
<https://www.checookcounty.org/stopgeneraliron-denythepermit>

Contact me with questions: wepplin@hmprg.org

Action Announcement

#DenyThePermit

#StopGeneralIron



Chicago Housing Justice League

- The Chicago Housing Justice League is collaborative of 37 groups, organizing for just housing since January 2018
 - *Convened by the Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing*
- One effort is to pass the Just Cause to Evict / Just Cause for Evictions Ordinance in Chicago
 - *More information available at:*
<https://www.justcausechicago.org/>

Forum Objectives

After this forum, we hope participants will be able to:

- Describe the eviction problem in Chicago and its relationship to public health
- List the main components of the *Just Cause to Evict* ordinance
- Engage in advocacy activities in support of the Just Cause to Evict Ordinance

Why focus on evictions as a public health issue?

- Housing is a key social determinant of health
- Evictions result from and worsen structural racism, class inequity, and gender inequities, among other forms of oppression and discrimination, root causes of health inequities
- To advance health equity, we need housing that is:
 - *accessible*
 - *equitable*
 - *safe*
 - *healthy*
 - *affordable*

- Health & Medicine developed a public health-focused fact sheet on the *Just Cause for Evictions Ordinance* (summer 2020)
- Fact sheet will be shared after the event
- Sums up research on impacts of evictions on public health

PASS THE JUST CAUSE FOR EVICTIONS ORDINANCE.

PROTECT AND PROMOTE PUBLIC HEALTH BY REDUCING EVICTIONS IN CHICAGO.

The Just Cause for Evictions ordinance (02020-3449) will help reduce evictions in Chicago. Homes provide an essential element of human flourishing, safety, health, community, and a base for living a happy and fulfilling life.

Evictions are a public health crisis. Nationwide, up to 40 million people are at risk of eviction, a long-term problem that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis and will have drastic effects for thousands of Chicagoans if and when the Illinois moratorium is lifted.^[1] The health of people who experience eviction is harmed through various mechanisms, and evictions are linked to broader health inequity.

Like health, housing should be guaranteed as a human right. Evictions and the threat of being removed from one's home infringe on the right to housing, which undermines the human right to health.

Health is a value shared across communities. Do you care about improving people's opportunities for good health and advancing health justice? Join the Chicago Housing Justice League's to help pass the Just Cause for Evictions ordinance to help protect public health!

Evictions contribute to the public health problems and health inequities, listed below. The Just Cause for Evictions ordinance is one part of the policy remedy to health inequities in Chicago.

EVICTIONS HARM HEALTH BY WORSENING LIVING CONDITIONS

- Evictions lead to reduced quality housing or homelessness and increases the likelihood of multiple moves. The evidence is clear: Living conditions are a critical factor in people's health. Homelessness, which can result from eviction, has dire consequences for people's health.^{[2][3]}

EVICTIONS CAUSE STRESS AND SERIOUS HEALTH PROBLEMS

- Experiencing an eviction and worrying about the possibility of eviction are stressful for individuals and families and contributes to mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression.^[4]
- Evictions intensify stress and associated negative health outcomes like high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, and obesity.^{[5][6]}

EVICTIONS HARM MOTHERS, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN

- Maternal depression rate is twice as high for evicted mothers compared to non-evicted mothers, even controlling for socioeconomic factors.^[7]
- Evictions harm academic performance and lead to worse educational attainment and exacerbate behavioral problems. Getting a good education is crucial to people's health and ability to succeed.^[8]
- Evictions and frequent moving impact the health and wellness of children. 11% of mothers who experienced eviction reported that their children were in poor or fair health, compared to only 4% of mothers who had not experienced eviction.^[9]

EVICTIONS EXACERBATE FINANCIAL INSTABILITY

- Economic wellbeing is important to health. Evictions lead to loss of belongings, increased costs of living, and other costs associated with moving. This harms the financial stability of individuals and families.^[10]
- Eviction pushes families out of their community and often into homelessness or neighborhoods that may have fewer resources essential to health and wellbeing, such as transportation networks, jobs, grocery stores, and health and social safety nets.^[11]

Public health and evictions

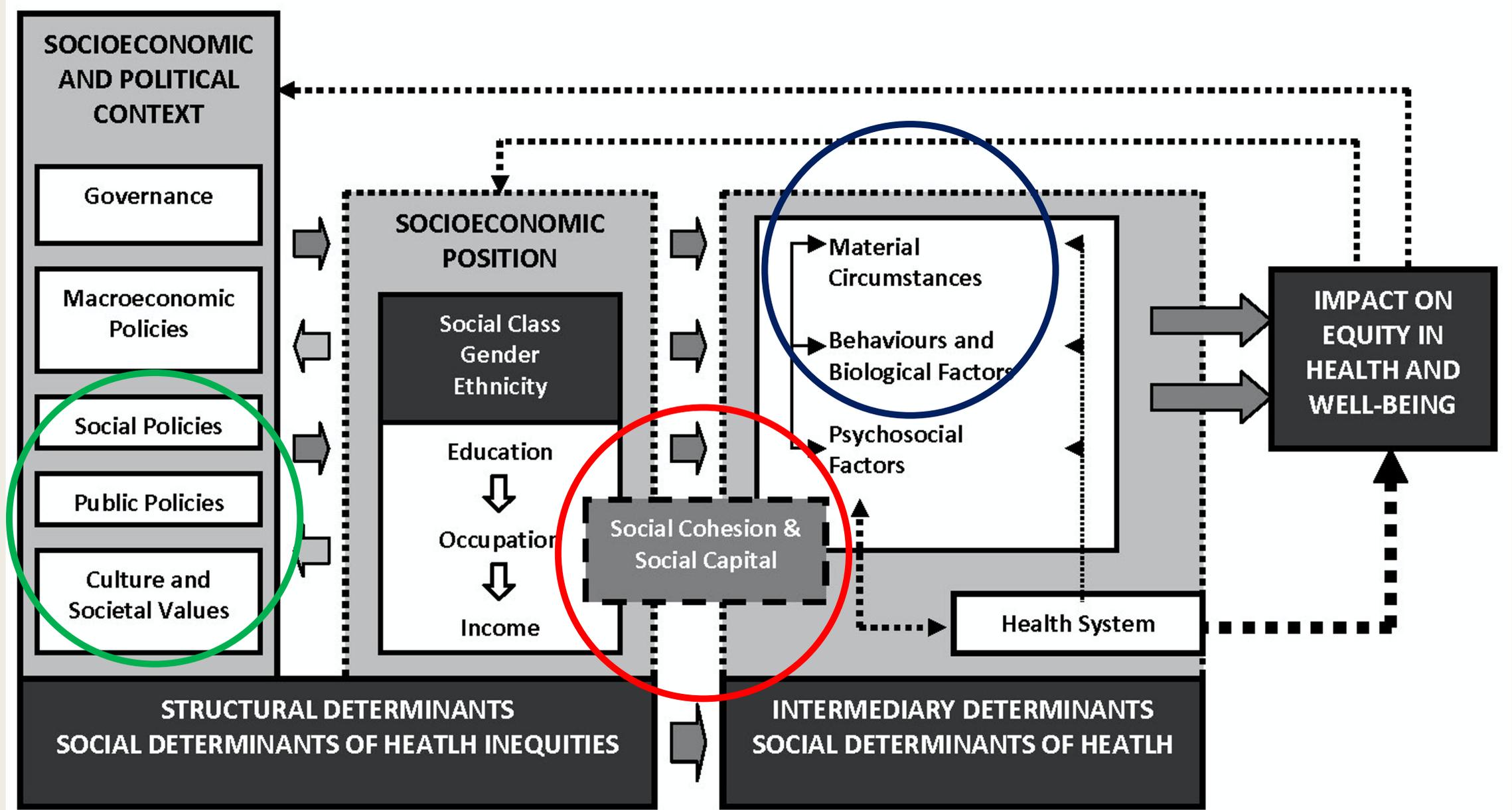
- Evictions lead to worsened living conditions, including poorer quality housing and homelessness
- Eviction patterns reflect structural racism, class inequity, and other forms of injustice
 - *These are root causes of health inequity*
- Experiencing and worrying about the possibility of eviction are stressful and can contribute to mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression
- Evictions are linked to and can exacerbate financial instability
 - *The costs of losing belongings, moving, and furnishing a new home*
- People who experience evictions have an increased risk of homelessness, with dire impacts on health

Evictions harm mothers, infants, and children

- Maternal depression rate is twice as high for evicted mothers compared to non-evicted mothers, even controlling for socioeconomic factors.
- Evictions harm academic performance, and can lead to reduced educational attainment and exacerbates behavioral problems.
- Evictions and frequent moving negatively impact children's health and wellbeing.
- Housing insecurity is both a cause and outcome of Adverse Childhood Experiences due to the stress associated with evictions and unaffordable housing.

Evictions, Structural Inequity, and Displacement

- Displacement and community destabilization, and loss of community connections
- Social relationships are crucial to people's health.
 - *Evictions can cut off relationships among trusted neighbors.*
 - *They can reduce people's feeling of belonging and ability to uplift their families' and community's health and wellbeing.*
- Contributes to population loss, with disproportionate impact on people of color and people living in poverty
 - *Again, this is structural racism in action*



Solar O, Irwin A. A conceptual framework for action on the social determinants of health. Social Determinants of Health Discussion Paper 2 (Policy and Practice).

Power as it relates to Social Determinants of Health

“The central role of power ... means that tackling the social determinants of health inequities is a political process that engages both the agency of disadvantaged communities and the responsibility of the state.”

Solar O, Irwin A. A conceptual framework for action on the social determinants of health. Social Determinants of Health Discussion Paper 2 (Policy and Practice).

Summary of Public Health Implications

- Evictions harm the physical and mental health of people directly impacted and the health of their families and communities, contributing to already large health inequities in Chicago
- Evictions disrupt community connections, worsening power inequities, and structural inequities
- This is an urgent public health and housing justice issue
- Without urgent action on evictions, thousands of Chicago residents, children, and families will be displaced and thrust further into poverty, poor health, and food insecurity each year



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The Chicago Housing Justice League is fighting to end no-fault evictions in Chicago.

Illinois and Chicago law allows a landlord to terminate the landlord-tenant relationship for ANY reason or NO reason at all, as long as proper notice is given before an eviction case is filed in court.

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN



[HOME](#) [JUST CAUSE TO EVICT](#) [CHICAGO'S ONGOING CRISIS](#) [SUPPORTERS](#) [MORE...](#)

<https://www.justcausechicago.org>

Just Cause Chicago Campaign Website:
<https://www.justcausechicago.org/>

Federal Jurisdictions with Some Form of Just Cause/Good Cause to Evict

- All conventional public housing units nationwide, including those in Chicago
- All privately owned units receiving “project-based” rental assistance nationwide, including those in Chicago
- All privately owned units receiving assisted through the federal tax credit program, including those in Chicago

States with Some Form of Just Cause/Good Cause to Evict

- California (2019) (permits cities to enact local laws stronger than the statewide law)
- New Hampshire (1985)
- New Jersey (1974)
- Oregon (2019)

Cities with Some Form of Just Cause/Good Cause to Evict

- 18 California cities have enacted local laws, including: Berkley, East Palo Alto, Glendale, Hayward, Los Angeles, Maywood, Mountain View, Oakland, Richmond, San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose, West Hollywood
- Burien, WA
- Federal Way, WA
- New York, NY (for rent-stabilized units)
- Philadelphia, PA
- Portland, OR
- Seattle, WA
- Washington, D.C.

Fact Sheet: Just Cause to Evict

- What is the proposed Just Cause to Evict ordinance?

“Just Cause to Evict” would protect people from losing their homes without a legitimate reason

- What is the current law?

Illinois and Chicago law allows people to lose their home, if they rent, for ANY reason or NO reason at all, as long as proper notice is given.

Chicago Housing Justice League



Just Cause to Evict: Help Chicagoans Keep Their Homes

What is the proposed Just Cause to Evict ordinance?

“[Just Cause to Evict](#)” would protect people from losing their homes without a legitimate reason.

What is the current law?

Illinois and Chicago law allows people to lose their home, if they rent, for ANY reason or NO reason at all, as long as proper notice is given.

How would Just Cause work?

Just Cause allows renters to keep their homes, unless the landlord shows one of the listed good causes to evict. The landlord must prove that the renter violated the rental agreement (non-payment of rent, disturbing neighbors, damaging the property or using the unit for criminal activity). Or, if the tenant has done nothing wrong, the landlord must demonstrate a well-recognized, listed reason to compel the renter to move (renting the unit to a close relative, making major repairs, or taking the unit off the market) and, for these reasons, the landlord would pay relocation assistance. Just Cause will also require advance notice of rent increases: the greater the increase, the longer notice period.

Why is Just Cause necessary?

Housing is a basic human need and should be a human right. Unfortunately, over 10,000 Chicago families are forced to move every year through no fault of their own, leading to housing insecurity, neighborhood instability, and increased displacement and gentrification in many of the city's oldest and most established communities. People cannot find new homes as landlords are reluctant to rent to people with an eviction on their records or credit reports. Also, the top ten Chicago neighborhoods where people are losing their homes to evictions are overwhelmingly Black or Latinx.

Is Just Cause a novel idea?

No, Just Cause for Eviction exists in four states (California, New Hampshire, New Jersey and Oregon) and more than 20 cities, including Los Angeles, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington, D.C., while over 50,000 Chicago subsidized apartments have been under a Just Cause requirement for decades. This is just a common sense, extension of the residential tenant law.

Want to get involved?

Volunteer at www.justcausechicago.org.

How would Just Cause work?

- Just Cause allows renters to keep their homes, unless the landlord shows one of the listed good causes to evict.
- The landlord must prove that the renter violated the rental agreement (non-payment of rent, disturbing neighbors, damaging the property or using the unit for criminal activity).
- Or, if the tenant has done nothing wrong, the landlord must demonstrate a well-recognized, listed reason to compel the renter to move
 - *E.g., renting the unit to a close relative, making major repairs, or taking the unit off the market*
- For these reasons, the landlord would pay relocation assistance.
- Just Cause will also require advance notice of rent increases: the greater the increase, the longer notice period.

Why is Just Cause necessary?

- Housing is a basic human need and should be a human right.
- Unfortunately, over 10,000 Chicago families are forced to move every year through no fault of their own
 - *Leads to housing insecurity, neighborhood instability, and increased displacement and gentrification in many of the city's oldest and most established communities.*
- People cannot find new homes as landlords are reluctant to rent to people with an eviction on their records or credit reports.
- Also, the top ten Chicago neighborhoods where people are losing their homes to evictions are overwhelmingly Black or Latinx.

Top 10 Chicago Community Areas with Highest Number of Eviction Filings (2010-2019)

Rank	Community Area	% of African American	% of Latinx
1	South Shore	93.2	2.3
2	Austin	79.1	14.4
3	Auburn Gresham	96.2	1.9
4	Chatham	95.3	1.3
5	Greater Grand Crossing	96.2	1.2
6	Near North Side	8.1	5.8
7	Rogers Park	26.3	20.6
8	Chicago Lawn	44.6	50.0
9	Humboldt Park	33.1	57.1
10	North Lawndale	87.4	8.8



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