

EVICCTIONS IN OHIO CITIES DOWN IN 2020, UNCERTAINTY AHEAD

BY DEVIN KEITHLEY

Last year, eviction filings in the Franklin County, Hamilton County and Cleveland Municipal Courts were down 32, 35 and 51 percent, respectively, from the average over the prior five-year period. This is due in part to eviction moratoria intended to protect vulnerable renters from becoming homeless in the face of unemployment and other economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Local moratoria on eviction proceedings in the spring were followed by a federal eviction moratorium issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in September. In addition to these measures, rental forbearance agreements with landlords and financial assistance from both the federal government and local organizations have also likely played a role in limiting Ohio eviction filings in 2020.

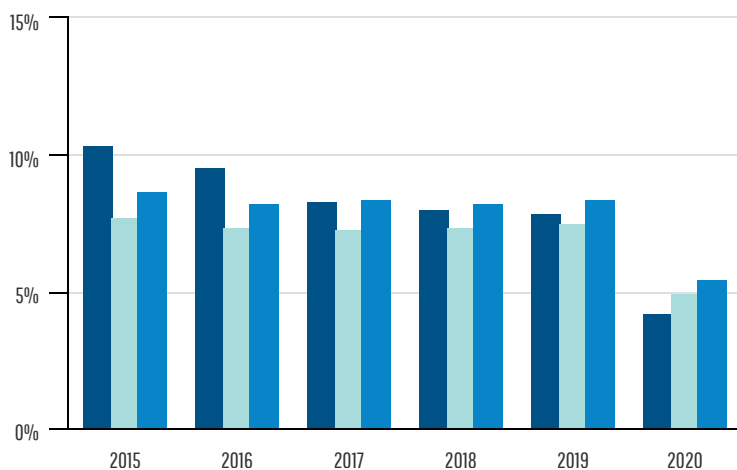
While eviction filings in Ohio's three major cities were generally below average last year, the December 2020 filing rate in Franklin County was above average. This indicates that current measures to prevent evictions may be losing their effectiveness in some places.

The current CDC order is in effect through the end of January 2021 and prohibits eviction filings under certain circumstances, such as income limits and lack of rental assistance. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues into 2021, barring an extension of the federal moratorium and additional rental assistance, Ohio's most vulnerable renters face a potentially insurmountable backlog of rent payments and a subsequent wave of evictions. At the same time, landlords unable to evict nonpaying tenants are also struggling financially and may require an additional economic stimulus to account for lost rent payments.

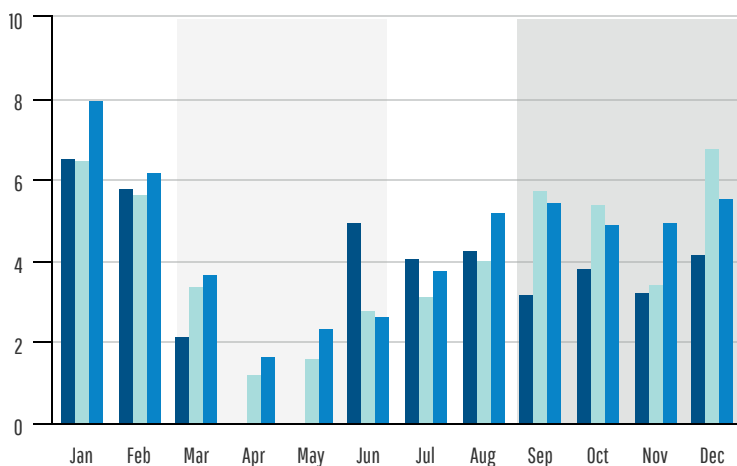
Lastly, while evictions are obviously a negative consequence for struggling tenants trying to avoid homelessness, they do play a role in rental market turnover when a lack of affordable housing exists. As such, preventing evictions can have a counterintuitive side effect in limiting the supply of available rental units for low-income Ohioans who are simply trying to relocate or find an affordable place to live. This highlights the ever-present need to develop more affordable rental housing, while still providing a safety net to those at risk of homelessness.

Eviction Filing Rates by Select Municipal Court

Annual Eviction Filing Rate



2020 Monthly Eviction Filings per 1,000 Renters

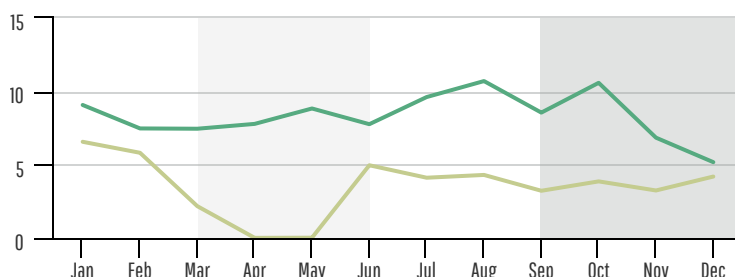


● Cleveland ● Franklin Co. ● Hamilton Co.

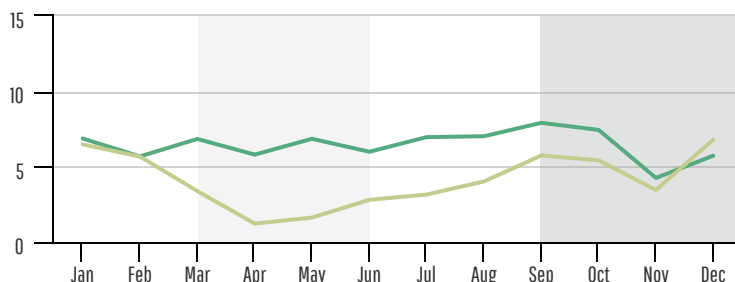
Local Moratoria
Mar 16–Jun 15 (Cleveland), Mar 16–Jun 31 (Franklin & Hamilton Co.)

Monthly Eviction Filings per 1,000 Renters, 2012–2016 vs. 2020

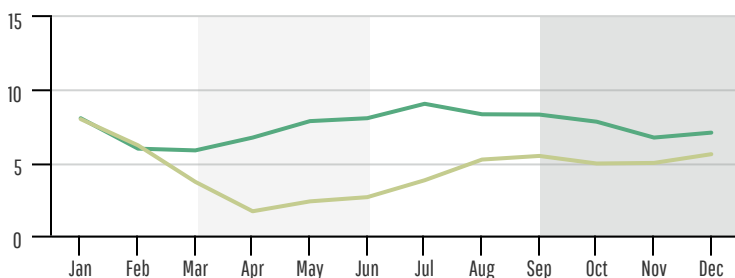
Cleveland Municipal Court



Franklin County Municipal Court



Hamilton County Municipal Court



— 2012–2016 (Average) — 2020

Federal Moratorium
Starting Sep 4