

[The State of Eviction](#)

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The Heartland Center for Jobs and Freedom is releasing a report detailing the current state of evictions in Kansas City. When cities pass Right-to-Counsel, evictions typically decline as a deterrent effect sets in. Tenants being sued often have defenses and counterclaims, which they had not been able to assert without a lawyer. Some tenants sued for rent walk away getting paid a settlement due to their landlord's malfeasance. This newfound accountability helps deter eviction filings, especially by those whose operations are not legal.

However, in Kansas City, the eviction rates have risen instead of fallen since the passage of Right-to-Counsel. Our attorneys are seeing more tenants struggle to keep up with ever-rising rents. We are seeing speculators purchase large swaths of properties followed by a slew of evictions in order to remove current tenants and replace them with those who can pay more. These developments, as well as policy solutions, are detailed in the Heartland Center for Jobs and Freedom "State of Evictions" report.

Below is the Executive Summary:

Kansas City has long been known as a more affordable place to live than other parts of the country, but that is rapidly changing. This year, Kansas City ranked number one nationwide in steepest rent increases. It is no wonder that eviction filings are now higher than pre-pandemic levels – higher than we have seen in years, maybe even ever. As poor and working-class tenants struggle to pay rent, they find themselves in eviction court more frequently. And, as the real estate speculators exploit a profitable rental landscape, they are evicting tenants en masse and replacing them with those who can eek by paying even more. We also know that wages are not increasing at the same rate as rents. Without unions, fast-food, healthcare, custodial, warehouse, restaurant, service, gig workers, and many other low-wage workers cannot keep up.

In this report, we detail the present housing landscape and put forward how we can support movements for change. Improving conditions at work and fighting for affordable housing is clearly a pressing need. Here is what can and should be done, with urgency:

1. Defeat state laws prohibiting cities from increasing wages, enacting paid sick leave, and controlling rents;
2. Bolster Right-to-Counsel;
3. End voucher discrimination;
4. Ensure that the affordable housing we have is livable and its structural integrity is preserved;
5. Generate affordable housing at scale and at a rapid pace;
6. Organize unions in the workplace and at home.

Problems such as these change only through broad, democratic movements for change. Please stay tuned as we work alongside our allies to win the gains workers and tenants need and deserve.