

Leading Indicators Housing Instability in Chicago: November 2022 Update

BACKGROUND: ABOUT THE DASHBOARD

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, policymakers in Chicago have been trying to understand how to best design supports and target resources to bolster housing stability, but local housing data is often limited and out of date. The [Chicago Housing Stability Dashboard](#) is a tool from the Inclusive Economy Lab that sought to fill this gap by constructing a set of key leading indicators of housing instability across our city, combining administrative, commercial, and survey data.¹ This update describes key findings from the most recent data available through summer 2022. This release will be our last update to the Chicago Housing Stability Dashboard.

QUARTERLY UPDATE: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Evictions were predicted to steeply increase after moratoria expired in October 2021. While **eviction filings** have still not reached pre-pandemic levels, they have steadily increased over the past year. The number of cases filed for service with the Cook County Sheriff's Office was a little more than 600 per month in late summer 2022, as compared to about 700-800 per month over the same period in 2019.² The zip code containing South Shore and parts of Woodlawn (60649) has the highest level of evictions filed for service, with three out of every 1,000 households facing an eviction filing in recent months. Similarly, foreclosure filing rates have steadily increased. In the second quarter of 2022, foreclosure filing rates were almost as high as the same quarter in 2019.

Consistent with national trends, many Chicago households' consumer **credit scores** improved during the pandemic. However, credit card delinquencies have risen slightly across the South and West sides of the city in recent months.

A newly added **housing affordability** leading indicator shows that the median rent has climbed dramatically in the City and outlying suburbs, reaching nearly \$2,000 a month in August 2022. Since the start of the pandemic, rents have already increased about 12-15% overall and show no signs of stabilizing. Communities in the South, West, and Northwest side have seen the most dramatic changes since the start of the pandemic.

In this context, many Chicagoans continue to struggle to meet monthly rent obligations. In mid-June 2022, one out of five Chicago-area renter households self-reported that they remained **behind on rent**. Among these renters who are behind on payments, more than half are "very" or "somewhat" worried about eviction.

The number of Chicagoans **reaching out for short-term housing assistance** from the Homeless Prevention Call Center remains about 50% above pre-pandemic levels. Due to limited funding or insufficient personnel to process requests, just over two-thirds of eligible callers continued to be turned away in the most recent quarter.

¹ The dashboard currently draws from the following data sources: Homelessness Prevention Call Center records in partnership with All Chicago, eviction case filings in partnership with the Cook County Sheriff's Office, foreclosure case filings in partnership with the DePaul Institute for Housing Studies, the U.S. Census Household Pulse survey, rental affordability data from Zillow, consumer price data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and consumer credit data from TransUnion®.

² Analysis compares total filings in the city of Chicago during the most recent three-month period for which data is available (July 2022 through September 2022) to the same months of the year in the pre-pandemic period (July - September 2019).

KEY TAKEAWAYS AT-A-GLANCE, OCTOBER 2022

<p><i>Who is at-risk of missing rent payments?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As of June 2022, 29 percent of Chicago metro area renter households self-reported low levels of confidence in paying future rent, about the same share as one year earlier.³ Hispanic and Black renter households self-report more uncertainty about paying rent than white renter households: 44 percent of Hispanic households and 38 percent of Black households have low confidence in paying rent next month, compared to 12 percent of white households.⁴ <p>Falling behind on a debt payment is what credit reporting companies call a “delinquency” – it is one indication that a household is experiencing financial distress. The share of consumers with one or more delinquencies has increased by up to 10% on the West and South sides of the city since the pandemic started, whereas the North, Northwest, and Southwest sides of the city have seen slight decreases in the share of consumers with one or more delinquencies.</p>
<p><i>Who is already behind on rent?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> About one out of five renters (23%) self-report being behind on housing payments in June 2022. Over half of renters who are behind on payments (55%) believe they are somewhat or very likely to be evicted. Overall, owners have fared better than renters during the pandemic. They report being more confident in their ability to make future housing payments and are more likely to be caught up on payments. Throughout the pandemic, the share of Black and Hispanic renters who self-report being behind on payments has consistently been two to five times higher than the share of white renters who self-report being behind on payments.
<p><i>How far behind are those with rental debt?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In June 2022, callers to the Homelessness Prevention Call Center (HPCC)⁵ requested a median amount of about \$1,650. The median request for assistance has hovered between about \$1,600 to \$2,000 since the start of the pandemic. However, the median request

³ All references to “Chicago area” or “metro area” refer to U.S. Census Household Pulse Survey data. The most recent survey data available at the time of writing was available up to June 13th, 2022. For exact survey questions and more details about the Household Pulse Survey, please visit the [dashboard online](#) or the [U.S. Census website](#).

⁴ Publicly released Household Pulse data files include one variable on ethnicity, which indicates whether a respondent is of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin, and one variable on race, which has four options: Asian alone, Black alone, white alone, any other race alone, or races in combination. In this document, “Hispanic” refers to respondents who identified as Hispanic of any race, “Black” refers to respondents who self-identified as “Black alone” and not of Hispanic origin, and “white” refers to respondents who identified as “white alone” and not of Hispanic origin. Because not all groups have a sample size allowing us to confidently track survey results over time, we chose to highlight estimates for Black, Hispanic, and white households here.

⁵ Any Chicagoan at risk of homelessness can call the HPCC, which serves as a central hub for the city’s rental assistance programs.

	<p>for assistance masks great variation in the amount of funding being requested, with the top 10 percent of requests exceeding \$7,200.</p>
<p><i>Who is reaching out for assistance?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Homelessness Prevention Call Center has experienced a significant increase in caller volume since the start of the pandemic. In summer 2022, call levels remain about 50% above pre-pandemic levels, after rising to as high as two- to three-times pre-pandemic call volume earlier in the pandemic. • In addition to facing higher call volume, a higher ratio of callers are being found eligible for funds - about three out of four callers (77.1%) in the summer of 2022 were deemed eligible for funds, as compared to approximately one in four callers (26%) just prior to the pandemic. • Just over two-thirds of these eligible callers (68.7%) continue to be turned away in the most recent quarter due to limited funding or insufficient personnel to process requests.
<p><i>Who is experiencing formal eviction?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In recent months, eviction filings have continued to increase and are now starting to approach pre-pandemic levels. There were a little more than 600 cases per month in late summer 2022, as compared to 700-800 per month over the same time period in 2019. • Though eviction rates still remain lower across the city than prior to the pandemic, the ZIP code containing South Shore (60649) has consistently experienced the highest level of evictions filed with the sheriff's office. About three out of every 1,000 South Shore households faced an eviction filing in recent months.
<p><i>How have rents changed?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing rents are currently about 12 – 15 percent higher than in March 2020. The average rent has recently risen to \$1,981 in August 2022. • While rents have increased in all zip codes that Zillow tracks since the start of the pandemic, rents have risen more steeply on the South, West, and Northwest side.

LEARN MORE

To learn more about the Chicago Housing Stability Dashboard, please contact Emily Metz at ekmetz@uchicago.edu. To learn more about the work of the University of Chicago Inclusive Economy Lab, please visit inclusiveeconomy.uchicago.edu.