



The Institute for  
Urban Policy Research  
at The University of Texas  
at Dallas

# The Impact of COVID-19 Eviction Protections in Dallas, Texas

With the Texas Tenants Union  
And

Supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation\*

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The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Foundation.



# Introductions





# About Eviction in Dallas and in Texas

# Important Dates

March 11, 2020

- World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic

March 12, 2020

- Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins issued a Declaration of Local Disaster. Governor Greg Abbott issued his disaster declaration the following day.

March 18, 2020

- Dallas County Justices of the Peace issued the first order to suspend eviction cases. The initial order was for 60 days.

March 22, 2020

- Judge Jenkins issued a countywide shelter-in-place order effective March 23. The initial order was to April 3.



# Threats

"...we understand that most of you are with out a job. With that being said that doesn't give you the right to not pay rent...Those of you who don't pay rent you will be evicted. Court will be back open soon."

## Letter to all Tenants

Dear tenants, due to the current events with the covid-19 we understand that most of you are with out a job. With that being said that doesn't give you the right to not pay rent. I still have a job to do, my office isn't closed and wont close. Those of you who don't pay rent you will be evicted. Court will be back open soon I've done talked to them. Most of you have been past due since before all this has started.

Those of you how are out of work we got a tip that there are stores hiring on the spot. So please get your rent caught up. I know this event is making people crazy but the world doesn't stop.

All of you know we have an assistant manager is only 4 months old so if you happen to come in here, please don't touch her or get close keep you distance.



# Threats

"... late fees start on the 4<sup>th</sup>. If rent is not paid by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, we will be filing eviction..."

Dear Tenants,

We realize that things are less than normal and hope that you and your family are all keeping well during this very difficult time.

All of us share in this worldwide problem and we all hope and pray it ends soon and we can all return to our normal, every day lives.

[REDACTED] pays for Water and communal electric bills and these are still owed by the apartment complex to cover those costs. We are not a Government subsidized property and we do not receive or qualify for any Government assistance. We do not want water, electricity, gas to be turned off and the garbage not to be picked up and if rent is not paid the complex can't pay these important bills.

Many of you have tried to come into or call the office to ask if your rent is due April 1<sup>st</sup> and per the lease you signed, the answer is: YES, it is. Per your lease, we do give a grace period up until the 3<sup>rd</sup> and late fees start on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

If rent is not paid by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, we will be filing eviction on those tenants who have not paid or who have not contacted the office by calling 2-[REDACTED]

Until further notice, the office is closed to personal visits and no tenant is allowed in the office.

Therefore, rent can be made in one of the following ways:

- Rent payments can be made in the drop box at any time of day or night.  
Money Order: Please make sure that you write the **property name and your FULL NAME AND APARTMENT NUMBER on the money order**. Please make sure that your money order is **pushed all the way down into the drop box**. We do not take and will return any personal checks.  
Money Orders can still be purchased at all banks as well as grocery or convenient stores.
- Credit or Debit Card: you can call the office and make payment using your credit or debit card.

Once again, we wish you and your family all the best during these trying times. We know we will all get through this and hope it is sooner rather than later.

We appreciate you being a tenant at [REDACTED]



# Opportunity to Cure a Default Grace Period to Pay Rent

Most states require landlords to accept rent after the due date, and not evict.

Texas law allows landlords to evict when rent is not paid on time.





# Notice to Vacate, April 5, 2020

Note the \$100 late fee.

NOTICE TO VACATE FOR NON-PAYMENT OF RENT, UTILITIES OR OTHER SUMS

April 5, 2020

TO: \_\_\_\_\_

FROM: \_\_\_\_\_

The Notice to vacate for non-payment of rent, utilities or other sums TAA Lease Contract signed \_\_\_\_\_ On File between the residents named above and Vineyard Trace Apartments

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Responder(s):

Because you have not paid  rent,  allocated or sub-metered utilities,  a utility bill for which you are responsible and/or  other sums due under the lease on your dwelling unit, your rights of occupancy and possession are hereby terminated under the provisions of your lease. You are still liable for rent and other charges you may owe under the TAA Lease Contract. Details of unpaid sums due are as follows:

Amount Owed: April 1st 2020 Late Fee 100

Vineyard Trace 25

Demand for possession is hereby made. You are hereby given notice to vacate the dwelling on or before 11:59 p.m. on the 8 day of April 2020. If you fail to move out by that time, we will file an eviction against you in violation of 000 of the Texas Property Code. The court will then schedule a hearing to consider the facts in the case. Delay or postponement by us to take such action does not waive our rights. This notice to vacate is unconditional.

If you wish to discuss the notice or you vacating the dwelling, please contact us: \_\_\_\_\_

04/05/2020



# Notice of Intent to Exercise Lockout Rights

April 5, 2020

ADVANCE NOTICE OF INTENT TO EXERCISE LOCKOUT RIGHTS  
(required by statute)

APRIL 5, 2020

1. Other Occupants

Date

Re: Advance notice of intent to exercise lockout rights  
TAA Lease Contract dated \_\_\_\_\_ On \_\_\_\_\_  
between the residents named above, and  
**Vineyard Trace Apartments**

(owner)

resident(s):  
If you are delinquent in rent, notice is hereby given that we intend to exercise our statutory lockout right  
to perform the lockout by changing the locks no sooner than: (check one)  
to you personally; or



# Key Tenant Protections in Policy

March 27, 2020

- Congress passed the CARES Act – Eviction moratorium on properties with federal assistance through July 24.

April 22, 2020

- Dallas passed COVID-19 Eviction Ordinance – Landlords required to give a Notice of Possible Eviction before a notice to vacate/21 days to respond/60 day grace period.

September 4, 2020

- CDC issued Eviction Moratorium. Protection is not automatic. Must be triggered by the tenant.



# The Face of Eviction





# Three Studies in One

## The Big Picture



## One Court In Depth



## Words with Friends





# Dallas County Eviction Filings -by Court and Year

<b>Court</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>Court 1-1</b>	7,916	8,337	7,093	3,378	633
<b>Court 1-2</b>	1,495	1,873	2,177	881	113
<b>Court 2-1</b>	2,381	2,553	2,211	1,142	208
<b>Court 2-2</b>	2,799	2,777	1,981	680	110
<b>Court 3-1</b>	1,952	1,923	1,892	1,179	406
<b>Court 3-2</b>	5,345	5,349	6,086	2,663	199
<b>Court 4-1</b>	3,230	3,386	3,976	1,359	224
<b>Court 4-2</b>	1,352	1,688	2,505	939	190
<b>Court 5-1</b>	1,036	975	890	273	67
<b>Court 5-2</b>	4,426	4,767	5,891	2,634	287
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,932</b>	<b>33,628</b>	<b>34,702</b>	<b>15,128</b>	<b>2,437</b>



# Eviction Filings -by City and Year

At the margin, case filings in Dallas County fell by 56% from 2019 to 2020.

Some cities saw an even steeper decrease.

Ten cities realized a decrease of 60% or more.

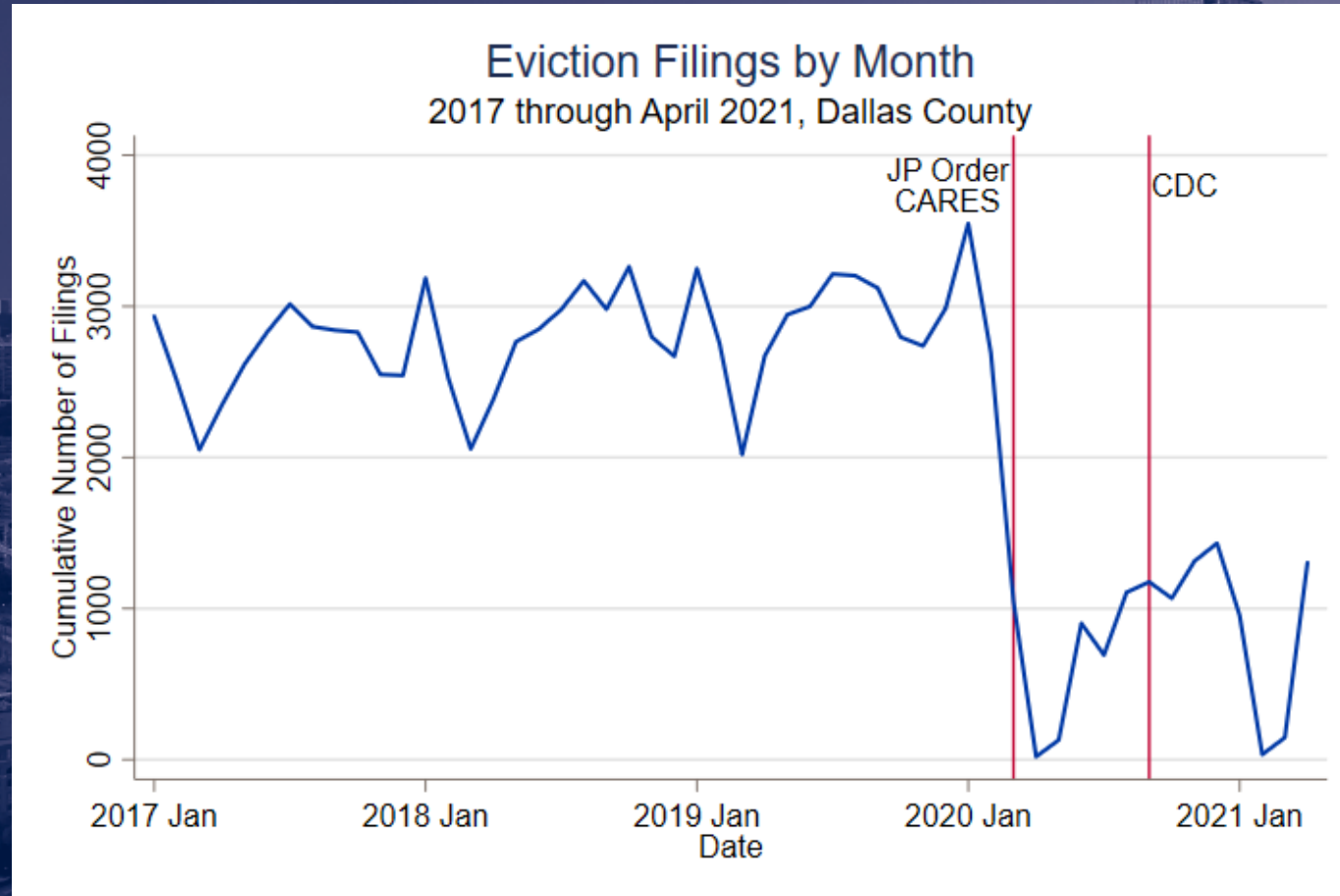
City	2019	2020	Difference
Dallas	21,660	9,874	-54%
Addison	322	198	-39%
Balch Springs	308	111	-64%
Carrollton	331	154	-53%
Cedar Hill	564	165	-71%
Cockrell Hill		1	
Coppell	43	17	-60%
Desoto	918	333	-64%
Duncanville	500	189	-62%
Farmers Branch	406	242	-40%
Garland	1,443	680	-53%
Glenn Heights	80	29	-64%
Grand Prairie	1,052	367	-65%
Highland Park		3	
Hutchins	117	16	-86%
Irving	3,358	1,211	-64%
Lancaster	713	282	-60%
Mesquite	1,734	722	-58%
Richardson	642	296	-54%
Rowlett	98	76	-22%
Sachse	19	6	-68%
Seagoville	133	76	-43%
Sunnyvale	6	1	-83%
University Park	7		-100%
Wilmer	235	68	-71%
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,689</b>	<b>15,117</b>	<b>-56%</b>



# The Big Picture



# Monthly Eviction Filings – 2017-2021





# The County-wide Story

## Spring Interventions

- Monthly filings dropped significantly.
- No change in day to day variability.

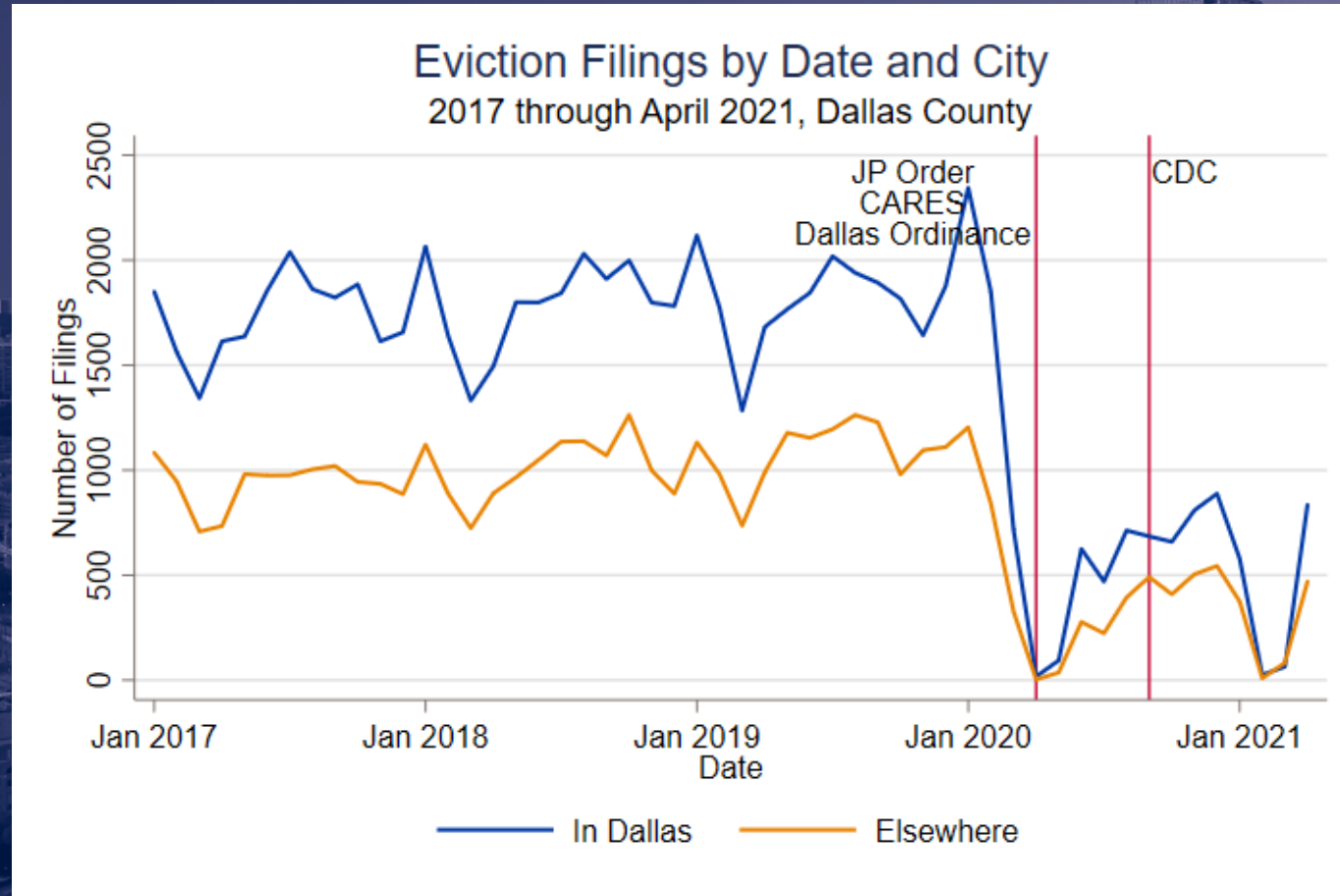
## CDC Moratorium

- Monthly filings remained down (no larger drop).
- Significant drop in the daily rate of increase.

	Model 1 Coef. (Std. Err.)	Model 2 Coef. (Std. Err.)
<b>Monthly Increase</b>	12.013 *** (2.056)	12.013 *** (2.100)
<b>Spring Interventions</b>	-2348.275 *** (175.490)	-2607.884 *** (156.521)
<b>Spring Interventions * Daily Increase</b>	6.491 (22.970)	76.302 (47.271)
<b>CDC Moratorium</b>		304.150 (169.355)
<b>CDC Moratorium * Daily Increase</b>		-183.981 ** (54.676)
<b>Constant</b>	2,580.449 *** (42.054)	2,580.449 *** (42.958)
<b>N</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>52</b>



# Monthly Eviction Filings – 2017-2021 By City





# The Story in Dallas

## Spring Interventions

- Had a bigger impact in Dallas

## CDC Moratorium

- Also had a bigger impact in Dallas
- Significantly decreased the daily rate of change in Dallas.

	<b>Model 3</b> Coef. (Std. Err.)	<b>Model 4</b> Coef. (Std. Err.)
<b>Monthly Increase</b>	2.787 (2.808)	2.787 (2.868)
<b>Dallas</b>	794.100 *** (64.877)	794.100 *** (66.273)
<b>Dallas * Monthly Increase</b>	-1.216 (4.068)	-1.216 (4.155)
<b>Spring Interventions</b>	-845.313 *** (96.192)	-1056.282 *** (76.356)
<b>Spring Interventions * Monthly Increase</b>	12.174 (14.866)	94.113 *** (3.767)
<b>Spring Interventions * Dallas</b>	-557.322 ** (168.450)	-709.284 *** (108.355)
<b>Spring Interventions * Dallas * Monthly Increase</b>	3.578 (26.472)	81.116 *** (10.056)
<b>CDC Moratorium</b>		26.533 (29.339)
<b>CDC Moratorium * Monthly Increase</b>		-137.888 *** (10.280)
<b>CDC Moratorium * Dallas</b>		-181.483 ** (65.599)
<b>CDC Moratorium * Dallas * Monthly Increase</b>		-93.590 *** (22.354)
<b>Constant</b>	940.372 *** (41.936)	940.372 *** (42.838)
<b>N</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>104</b>



# The Bottom Line

Spring Interventions had a significant impact in Dallas County.

Greater impact in the City of Dallas suggests support for an effect of the Dallas Eviction Ordinance

The impact of the CDC Moratorium was less immediate, and instead slowed the pace of growth in eviction filings.



# One Court in Depth



# The Process

Institute Staff visited one Dallas County Justice of the Peace Court in late November, 2020.

Staff randomly selected 200 cases and digitized the entire case file.

Staff reviewed the files, and coded them for several attributes.



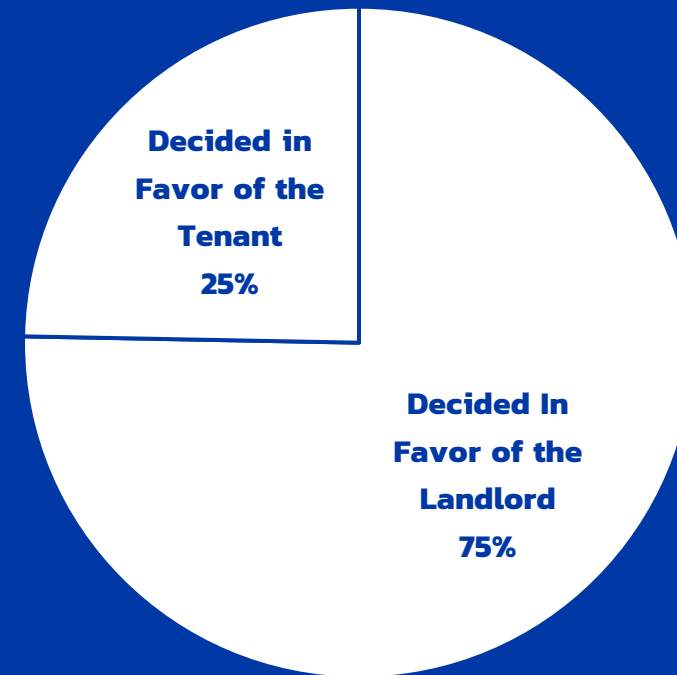


# A General Review

Most non-payment cases were decided in favor of the landlord.

This was often due to default – the tenant did not appear.

## DECISIONS IN NON-PAYMENT CASES



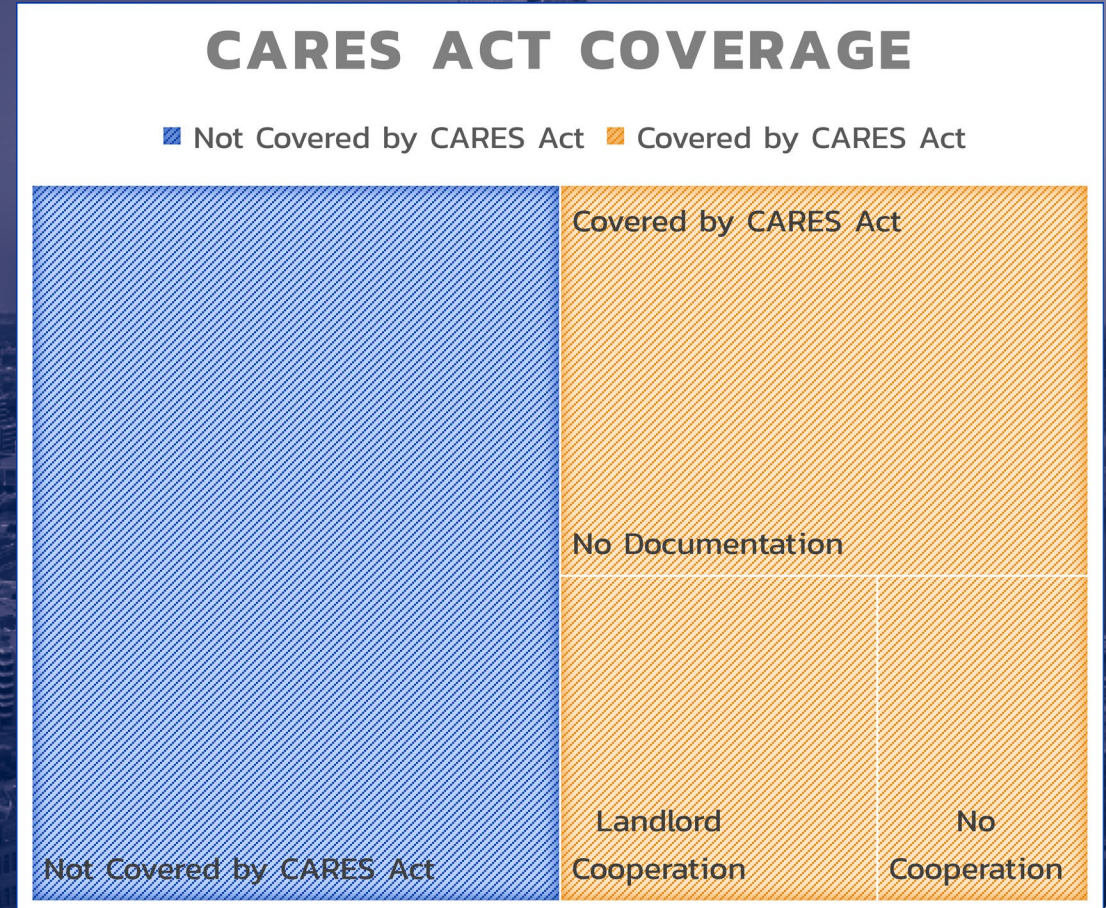


# What About the CARES Act?

The CARES Act became law on March 27, 2020.

Texas' implementation was governed by Supreme Court Emergency Orders.

These provisions varied over time.





# Words with Friends



# The Process

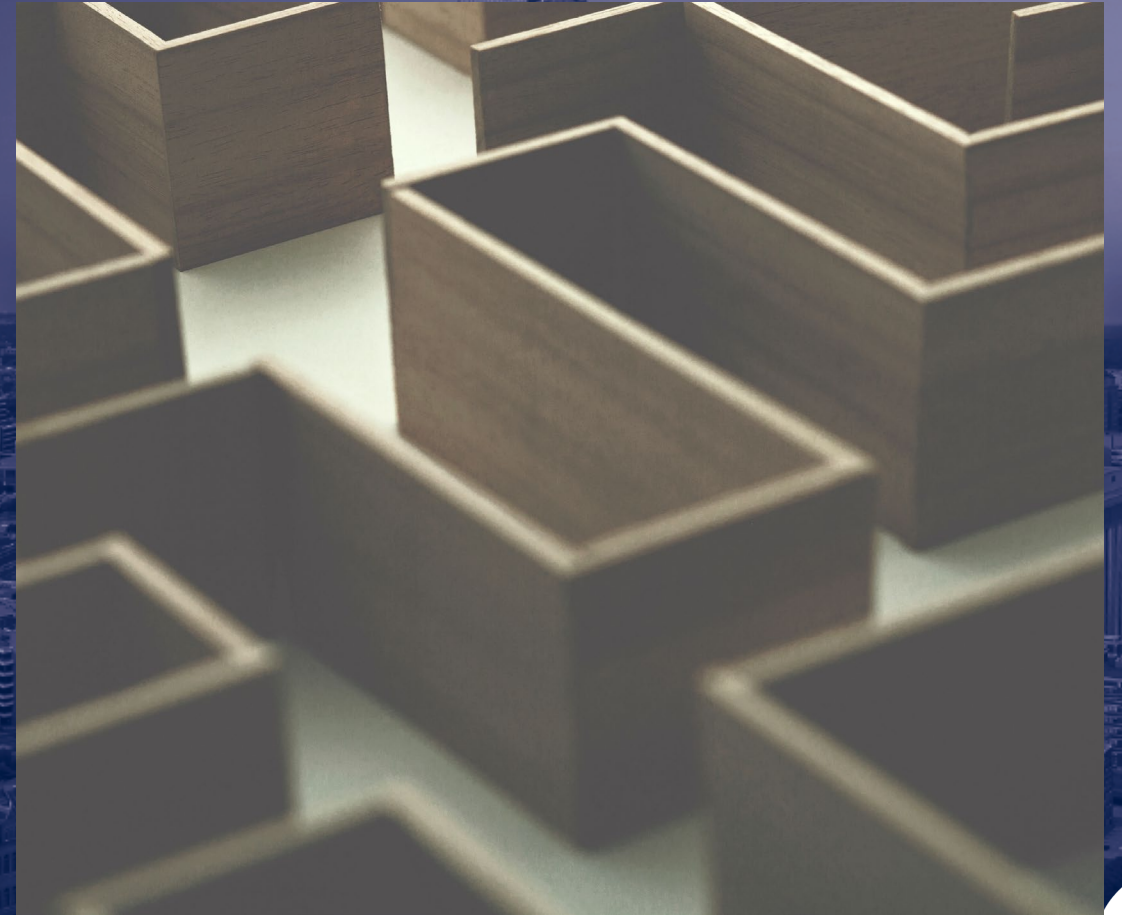
- Using existing networks, we invited tenants, policymakers, and non-profit staff to participate in a series of virtual focus groups.
- Due to scheduling and availability, turnout was better among policymakers and non-profit staff.





# 1. The System is Too Complex

Most tenants and many agency staff struggle with the complexities of who is and who is not protected. As we revisit these policies, we must simplify them and make sure we hem the edges.





## 2. We Need an Integrated Approach

In order to help as many people as possible, systems were stood up quickly. But, they don't talk to each other, leaving folks falling through the cracks.





# 3. Landlords are Integral for Success

Landlords provide an important point of access to the tenant population. We need to extend systems like the Texas Rent Relief program, which allow the landlord to apply on behalf of residents.





# 4. We Need Better Awareness

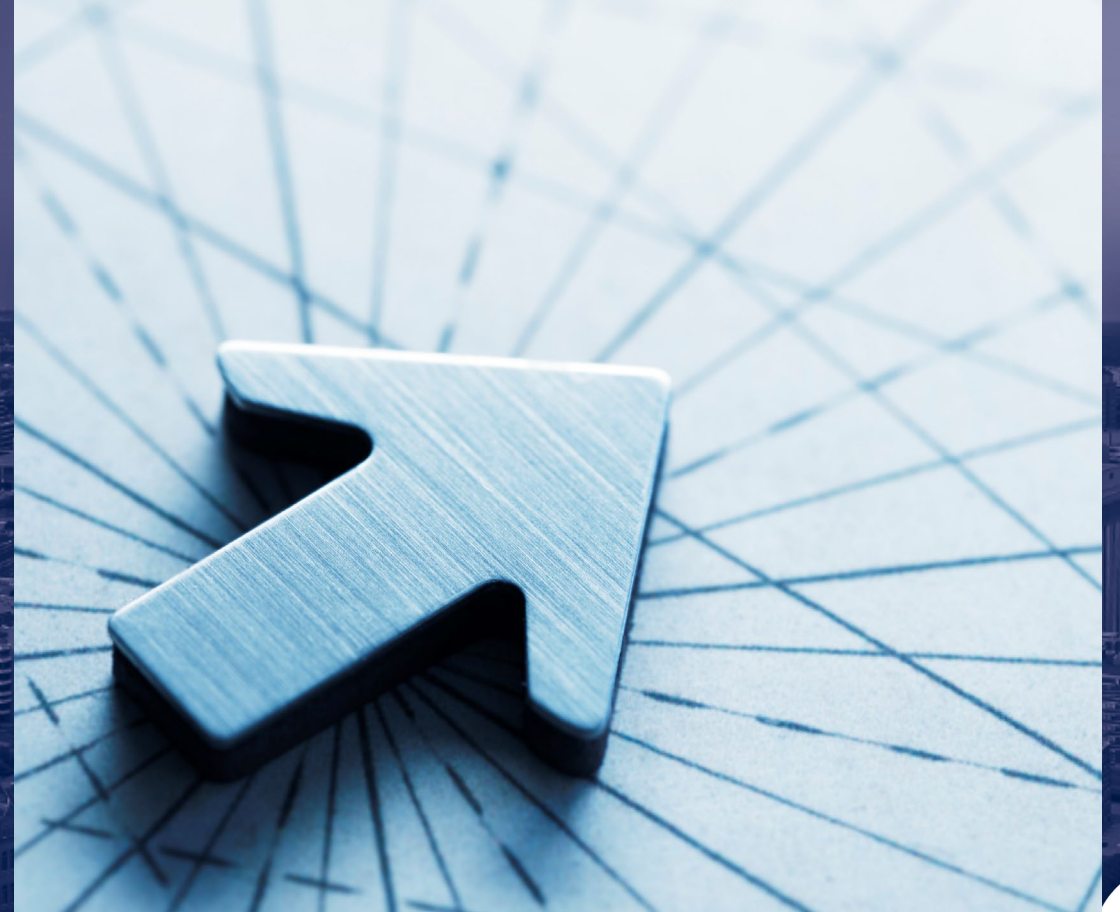
Too many renters are not aware of their rights and where to turn for help. We need a comprehensive approach to engaging tenants before they are in need.





# 5. We Need Clear Implementation Rules

In this quick-moving environment the goalposts keep moving. We need to crystallize our implementation guidelines to create a universal protection.





# Questions

