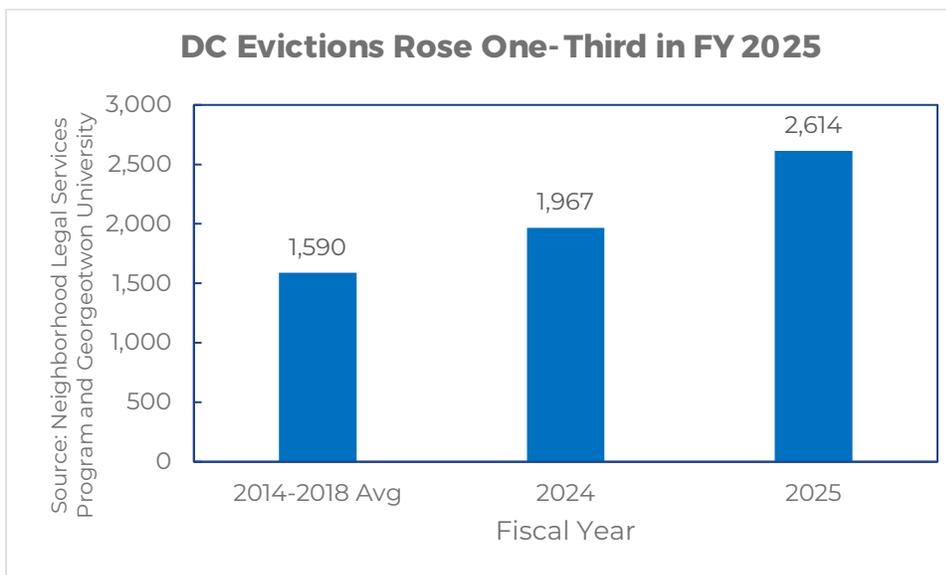




Evictions in DC Jumped Sharply in 2025: Budget and Policy Choices Contributed to the Largest Number of Evictions in More than a Decade

2,614 DC renter households were evicted from their homes in Fiscal Year 2025, a jump of one-third from 2024 when 1,967 households were evicted. Evictions in Fiscal Year 2025 were the highest level in at least a decade and 64% higher than the 1,590 average number of evictions in the five years before the pandemic, 2014-2018.¹



Eviction is a highly traumatic event. Beyond the risk of homelessness, it often forces families to lose material items and move to less desirable housing and neighborhoods. It often leads to job loss and damages a family's credit history. It is considered an "adverse childhood experience" because of the long-term damage it has on a child's mental well-being and educational success.

The high rate of evictions reflects severe housing cost pressures faced by renters with low incomes. There are 41,000 DC renter households with incomes under \$50,000 who spend more than half of their income on housing. Some 65% of renter households with incomes under \$50,000 had housing cost burdens this severe in 2024, up from 50% in 2014.ⁱⁱ This suggests that housing cost pressures are growing for many DC residents with limited incomes

A high and rising rate of poverty among Black DC residents also is likely to have contributed to the increase in evictions.

- Some 30.5% of Black DC residents had incomes below the poverty line in 2024, up from 21% in 2022. The poverty threshold in 2024 was \$15,940 for a single person and \$25,270 for a family of three.
- Nearly half of Black children – 45.8% – were in a poor family in 2024, up from 28.5% in 2023.ⁱⁱⁱ

Policy and Budget Changes Have Contributed to Evictions Increase

DC's leaders have greatly reduced funding for eviction prevention through the ERAP program in recent years, and they also have adopted policy changes that make it harder for residents to avoid eviction. The budget cuts and policy changes continued in FY 2026, suggest that evictions will likely continue at historically high levels.

- Funding for Emergency Rental Assistance was \$63 million in FY 2024, a combination of local funds and federal pandemic funds
- Funding fell to \$27 million in 2025 and to just \$8.6 million in FY2026. That's a reduction of 84%.

This likely means that 8,000 fewer households will get eviction prevention help in FY 2026 than in FY 2024.^{iv}

It is important to note that several policy changes were adopted in 2025 that will make it harder for DC households behind on rent to avoid eviction. The Emergency Rental Assistance Reform Amendment Act reduced eligibility for emergency rental assistance and limited the ability to use ERAP to avoid eviction in court proceedings.^v

- It eliminated an automatic judicial stay of eviction when a tenant had a pending ERAP application. As a result, some DC residents are evicted while their ERAP application is being processed.
- It eliminated provisions to allow applicants to self-certify some portions of their application, even when access to documentation is difficult. This could include, for example, a victim of intra-family violence who cannot access all of their financial information.
- It requires applicants to show that their need for ERAP resulted from unusual and unforeseen factors rather than simply facing rents that are unaffordable. For example, a household that falls behind because their rent increased cannot qualify to receive ERAP.

The RENTAL Act changed eviction policies to reduce protections for tenants, with new policies going into effect January 2026.

- It allows landlords to sue for eviction for non-payment of rent after 10 days of notice, down from 30.
- It allows judges to require tenants to set aside the full amount of their rent each month (a “protective order”) while an eviction case is in court. Under a protective order, an eviction could go forward if the tenant doesn’t fully comply with monthly payments. Previously, the protective order amount could be reduced if the tenant claimed they should not pay full rent due to major housing code violations. The RENTAL Act allows judges to enter protective orders before tenants can present evidence of housing code violations in their apartment.

- It allows evictions to proceed even if landlord failed to properly notify tenants of the alleged lease violation.

The ERAP budget cuts and policy changes are likely to contribute to a further increase in evictions in FY 2026.

DC Should Expand ERAP and Assess Impacts of Reduced Eviction Prevention Policies

With evictions rising sharply, Mayor Bowser and the DC Council should increase funding for ERAP and programs that provide ongoing affordable housing in the budget for FY 2027.

The Urban Institute estimates that ERAP needs \$100 million in funding to limit evictions.^{vi} While this would represent a substantial increase in funding at a time when DC's overall finances are declining, this level of need is a direct reflection of the severe affordability challenges faced by residents with the lowest incomes that must be addressed. Notably, the District also could address this issue by enhancing funding for affordable housing programs that meet the needs of residents with extremely low incomes.

In addition, the District should explore the impacts of changes to ERAP eligibility and eviction protections to assess whether families are facing inappropriate evictions. This should include tracking ERAP applications denied due to lack of documentation or failure to demonstrate an unforeseen circumstance, as well as data on evictions resulting from criminal arrests of household members.

In addition, the District should increase funding and support for legal services so that all tenants facing eviction have access to legal representation. Evidence shows that legal assistance significantly reduces the likelihood of eviction and can help tenants navigate complex court proceedings.

ⁱ The FY 2024 and FY 2025 eviction data were collected by Neighborhood Legal Services program. The US Marshals Service shares information on all scheduled evictions, and NLSP obtains the outcomes of those scheduled evictions (executed, quashed, cancelled, or expired) by reviewing publicly available court dockets through Odyssey, the D.C. Superior Court's online docket system. The data within this document are not

presented or endorsed by D.C. Superior Court in any way. Data on evictions between 2014 and 2018 are from Figures for 2014 through 2018 provided by Brian McCabe, McCourt School of Public Policy, Georgetown University.

ⁱⁱ United Planning Organization, “DC Is Not Making Progress on Affordable Housing for Those Who Need It Most,” September 2023. See <https://www.upo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Publications-Policy-Paper-Affordable-Housing-in-DC-2023.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Connor Zielinski, “DC Child Poverty Back to Extreme Level after Short-Lived Progress,” DC Fiscal Policy Institute, February 19, 2026. Retrieved on February 24, 2026 from <https://www.dcfpi.org/all/dc-child-poverty-back-to-extreme-level-after-short-lived-progress/>

^{iv} The DC Department of Human Services noted in responses to DC Council questions that the District provided roughly \$7,000 on average to ERAP recipients. Retrieved on March 23, 2026 from <https://lms.dccouncil.gov/Hearings/hearings/2104>

^v Council of the District of Columbia, Emergency Rental Assistance Reform Amendment Act of 2025. Retrieved on March 23, 2026 from <https://lms.dccouncil.gov/Legislation/B26-0046>

^{vi} Elizabeth Burton, Leah Hendey, Peter A. Tatian, “Combating Rising Evictions in the District of Columbia with Housing Subsidies,” Urban Institute, June 2024. See <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/combating-rising-evictions-district-columbia-housing-subsidies>