

# THE MOUNTING COST OF COVID INACTION: *RENT*

## COVID-19 On July 16, 2020

U.S. Infections – 3,416,428  
U.S. Unemployment – 11.1 Percent

U.S. Deaths – 135,991  
Since House Passed Heroes Act – 62 Days

### What Is Rental Assistance?

Rental assistance is financial help from a nonprofit organization, state, local or federal government agency to help families and individuals in need of assistance pay their rent and remain in their homes in order to avoid homelessness, which can be far more expensive problem to solve.

### Rental Fact

Our country had an affordable housing crisis even before the pandemic. According to the [Joint Center for Housing Studies](#), an estimated 10.8 million renters in 2017 paid more than half of their income on rent and more than half a million people were without shelter on any given night. Now nearly [20 percent of all renter households](#) had at least one family member experience joblessness between February and April alone.

### What's The Problem?

The pandemic has brought this crisis to the brink of catastrophe. Programs like expanded unemployment insurance and temporary eviction moratoriums allowed families to remain stably housed during the first few months of the pandemic, but these programs are expiring. The additional \$600 a week in unemployment benefits and the national eviction moratorium is set to expire at the end of the month, stimulus checks have long been spent, and 20 states have already lifted restrictions on evictions. While the CARES Act included \$4 billion in Emergency Solutions Grants for both homeless prevention and rental assistance, supportive service and housing providers report this funding will be drastically insufficient to hold back an anticipated August “eviction tidal wave” when these programs expire, and [some estimates place 28 million households at high risk of homelessness](#). The problem of paying rent for many is compounded by the [increased cost of food](#) and [loss of child care options](#), especially among essential workers. And with cases surging across the country, the end to the pandemic is nowhere in sight. Unless something is done, millions could be evicted, exacerbating the homelessness crisis in the middle of a pandemic, resulting in a more costly response to a preventable problem and further straining our public health system to the breaking point as homelessness carries a slew of increased health risks, which are already compounded by COVID-19.

### What Can We Do?

Senate Republicans need to abandon their “wait-and-see” approach to this global pandemic and provide the necessary resources to keep families in their homes by extending unemployment benefits and eviction moratoriums, and increasing funding for homelessness prevention and rental assistance programs.

### Where Can I Read More?

[Sleeping Outside In A Pandemic: Vulnerable Renters Face Evictions  
America's Looming Housing Catastrophe, Explained](#)

\*COVID-19 infection and death rates provided by the CDC.