



City of Oakland Rent Adjustment Program Tenant/Property Owner COVID-19 Impact Survey Results

The City of Oakland’s Housing and Community Development Department’s Rent Adjustment Program (RAP) administered its first “pulse survey” to assess the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on tenants and property owners from late March to September 2020. The survey was designed to capture a snapshot, or pulse, from Oaklanders as they manage through the pandemic. The survey was translated into Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese; posted on the City’s website; and socialized throughout the community using outreach efforts that included partnering with key stakeholder agencies to distribute to and share with their communities.

The Survey

The final sample for the survey included **1,095 total respondents**; of which, **690**, or 63%, identified as **tenants**; and **405**, or 37% identified as **property owners/landlords**. The analysis includes:

- Demographics of the survey respondents.
- An analysis of tenants’ ability to pay rent.
- Tenant and property owner knowledge of the City’s existing emergency ordinances regarding COVID-19.
- Tenant reported instances of evictions.
- Property owner ability to meet their own financial obligations, particularly mortgage.
- Property owner deferred maintenance.
- The extent of tenants reporting difficulty to pay rent.

The City worked with the University of Pennsylvania’s *Housing Initiative At Penn* to analyze the results of this survey. Their report can be found [here](#).

The Pulse At a Glance

Tenant Responses:

- Approximately two-thirds were aware of the City’s Emergency Eviction Moratorium.
- Nearly 90% had not received financial rental assistance.
- Approximately one-third reported an inability to pay rent.
- A slight increase in reported landlord harassment and/or threats of eviction compared to before the local emergency declaration.

Property Owner Responses:

- More than three-quarters reported knowing about the [City's Emergency Eviction Moratorium](#).
- Difficulty paying mortgage ranged drastically across racial ethnic groups.
- Approximately 25% reported deferring maintenance.
- Approximately 20% reported eliminating staff.

Notes & Next Steps

There were limitations to this survey, including its small sample size in proportion to the City's population of tenants/property owners; those facing the highest levels of housing instability may be less likely to respond to a survey; and the survey did not ask whether property owner was a small owner or corporation.

The City hopes to continue this collaborative work with the University of Pennsylvania to create, administer and analyze another survey that explores the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on tenants and property owners in Oakland. The City will once again partner with key stakeholders to encourage broad community participation.

The City looks forward to using the results from this survey covering the period of March through September 2020 to inform future efforts and engagement.