

Central Kentucky tenant advocates, homeless shelters say they're in the middle of an eviction, housing crisis

Margaret Sites, a staff attorney with AppleRed Legal Aid who specializes in housing cases and eviction defense, has tracked each of last year's eviction filings through weekly court dockets.

667 evictions have been filed in Madison County Circuit Court in 2023. Data from the Legal Services Corporation's Eviction Tracker shows that number is a yearly high dating back to 2016.

She says increasing rent prices are the biggest issue. But people are also losing eligibility for state assistance, especially after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"A lot of people who are chronically rent burdened are coming up against the limit of aid that they have been able to get," Sites said. "And so people are starting to run out of options for rental assistance."

Sites says it's also harder for tenants to stay protected. Madison County is one of many counties across Kentucky that hasn't codified the Uniform Residential Landlord Tenant Act as law.

"All of the things that you think of as being inherent to the landlord-tenant relationship, like the landlord has to provide housing of a certain quality, you can withhold rent in order to get repairs done, none of that is actually inherent in the landlord-tenant relationship in Madison County, because we don't have that law," Sites said.

Sites also says out-of-state, corporate landlords purchasing more properties in Richmond and Berea could be an underlying cause.

“We haven't really been seeing that dynamic in Madison County before,” Sites said. “There are some bigger landlords in Madison County, but they tend to be local. They were families that just owned a lot of properties.”

Read or listen to the [full article by Shepherd Snyder at WEKU here](#).

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