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# Full Count of Eviction Cases Filed in Oregon Available for the First Time

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**Authors**

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# *Full Count of Eviction Cases Filed in Oregon Available for the First Time*

## *Summary & Key Findings*

Residential eviction cases can be filed in two court types in Oregon, circuit courts and justice courts. Up until now, statewide research on evictions has only included filings in circuit courts, because those court records are accessible through a centralized online database run by the judicial department. Eviction cases can be filed in fourteen justice courts in Oregon. Because each justice court maintains their court's records onsite, these eviction cases have previously been invisible to researchers and policymakers.

This study reports the first-ever full accounting of the number of eviction cases filed in Oregon, including cases filed in both court systems.

**> 90% of the eviction cases filed in Oregon in 2022 and 2023 were filed in a circuit court.** The remaining 10% were filed in a justice court.

**> In 2022, 20,841 eviction cases were filed in Oregon's circuit and justice courts.** Approximately one in thirty renter-occupied households had eviction cases filed against them that year.

**> In 2023, 24,860 eviction cases were filed in Oregon's circuit and justice courts.** One in twenty-five renter-occupied households in Oregon had eviction cases filed against them that year.

## *Introduction*

Residential eviction cases can be filed in two court types in Oregon, circuit courts and justice courts. All thirty-six counties in Oregon are served by a local circuit court. Evictions can also be filed in a justice court in fourteen Oregon counties. Up until now, research and reporting on the number of evictions filed statewide in Oregon has only included circuit court data. Although we knew that relying on circuit court data meant we were undercounting the true number of evictions being filed in Oregon, we did not know by how much. This report provides new insight into our understanding of evictions in Oregon by calculating all of the eviction cases filed in 2022 and 2023. Including eviction cases filed in justice courts in Oregon's annual eviction case count improves our understanding of the eviction landscape in the counties where a high volume and/or a high proportion of that county's eviction cases are filed in a justice court, most notably Clackamas county.

## Background

The eviction process in Oregon is a multi-step legal process outlined by statewide landlord-tenant law. The first step in the process requires the landlord to serve the tenant with a notice of termination. This step in the process is unrecorded, meaning there is no publicly available recordkeeping system that tracks the number of notices of termination that are issued in Oregon. If the tenant does not cure the notice or vacate the unit by the date listed on the notice, the landlord may file a civil lawsuit against the tenant in court. It is at this point when the eviction becomes an *eviction case* that is recorded in the court records.

General information about eviction cases, including party names, case number, motions, orders, court appearances, and dispositions should be available to the public under Oregon's public record laws.<sup>1</sup> However, accessing this information is easier in some cases than others, depending on which court the eviction case was filed in.

Eviction cases can be filed in two court systems in Oregon, circuit courts and justice courts. Circuit courts are a part of the state's unified system of courts that also includes appellate courts and the tax court. All thirty-six counties in Oregon are served by a local circuit court. Eviction cases that are filed at any circuit court statewide are digitized and stored in a centralized data system called Oregon Judicial Case Information Network (OJCIN). General information about these cases, including party names and case outcomes, are accessible to the public through a free online user interface. Certain details are omitted from the public-facing interface, but available to lawyers, researchers, and companies who pay for access.

Justice courts are established by county governments and have limited jurisdiction, meaning they can only process certain types of cases, including evictions. Some counties operate multiple justice courts in different locations across the county. Currently, there are thirty-two justice courts operating in twenty-one counties in Oregon.<sup>2</sup> Fourteen of these justice courts process evictions. They are located in Baker, Clackamas, Douglas, Gilliam, Harney, Lane, Linn, Malheur, Marion, Morrow, Sherman, Tillamook, and Wheeler Counties.

Each of the justice courts operates independently and keeps their court records onsite. They do not store court records or court documents in a central location like circuit courts do. Some of the justice courts maintain digitized court records while others maintain paper court records.

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<sup>1</sup><https://oregoncourtreports.us/civil-court-records/#:~:text=to%20the%20Public%3F-,As%20provided%20by%20Oregon's%20public%20record%20laws%2C%20civil%20court%20records,these%20rights%20are%20not%20absolute.>

<sup>2</sup> According to Oregon Blue Book  
<https://sos.oregon.gov/blue-book/Pages/state/judicial/justice-courts.aspx#:~:text=Thirty%2Dtwo%20justice%20courts%20currently,criminal%20prosecutions%2C%20except%20felony%20trials.>

These records are not available through OJCIN. Although eviction cases that are filed in justice courts are officially recorded in the court record, practically speaking they are invisible to researchers and policymakers.

Court records and documents include important information that is of interest for eviction researchers and policymakers, including information about the reason why the landlord is seeking to evict the tenants, if a stipulated agreement was filed, which parties had legal representation, and the legal outcome of the case. Without access to the court records, the amount of information we have about the cases that are processed in justice courts is severely limited.

## Methods

We collected the number of eviction cases filed in circuit courts using the Oregon Judicial Department's online court records service, OJCIN OnLine. We collected the number of eviction cases filed in justice courts by individually contacting each justice court and requesting the number of cases filed in 2022 and 2023. We submitted requests by phone and email, depending on the preference of the court. Phone calls and emails were made in October of 2023 and again in January of 2024.

The figures in this report only include eviction cases that have been filed with a court. Because the first step in the eviction process, when a landlord serves a tenant with a notice of termination, is not recorded anywhere, we are not able to count all of the eviction *attempts* in the state. We can only count the number of eviction attempts in which the landlord filed a lawsuit with a court. These figures undercount the number of instances in which the eviction process was initiated. We do not know how many people were displaced by the eviction process, including displacements that occurred after a notice of termination was sent to the tenant, but no court case was filed. Therefore, we recognize that these figures undercount evictions taking place in the state.

## Findings

**1. 90% of the eviction cases filed in 2022 and 2023 were filed in a circuit court. The remaining 10% were filed in one of the fourteen justice courts that process evictions.**

Table 1. Number of Evictions Filed by County in 2022

County	Filed in Circuit Court	Filed in Justice Court	Total Number of Filings
Baker	4	71	75
Benton	327	-	327
Clackamas	289	1,185	1,474
Clatsop	189	-	189
Columbia	168	-	168
Coos	350	-	350
Crook	61	-	61
Curry	92	-	92
Deschutes	420	-	420
Douglas	524	47	571
Gilliam	1	7	8
Grant	-	25	25
Harney	1	22	23
Hood River	28	-	28
Jackson	1,046	-	1,046
Jefferson	71	-	71
Josephine	292	-	292
Klamath	529	-	529
Lake	26	-	26
Lane	1,642	27	1,669
Lincoln	191	-	191
Linn	496	95	591
Malheur	50	66	116
Marion	1,494	429	1,923
Morrow	25	7	32
Multnomah	6,609	-	6,609
Polk	370	-	370
Sherman	-	3	3
Tillamook	44	44	88
Umatilla	337	-	337
Union	82	-	82
Wallowa	7	-	7
Wasco	60	-	60
Washington	2,689	-	2,689
Wheeler	1	-	1
Yamhill	-	298	298
<b>All Counties</b>	<b>15,826</b>	<b>5,015</b>	<b>20,841</b>

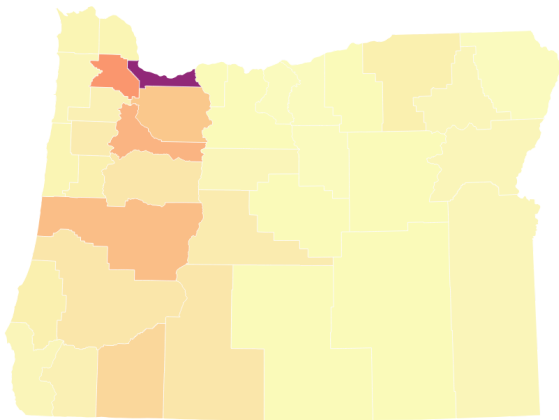
Table 2. Number of Evictions Filed by County in 2023

<b>County</b>	<b>Filed in Circuit Court</b>	<b>Filed in Justice Court</b>	<b>Total Number of Filings</b>
Baker	7	50	57
Benton	302	-	302
Clackamas	278	1,315	1,593
Clatsop	172	-	172
Columbia	155	-	155
Coos	335	-	335
Crook	84	-	84
Curry	79	-	79
Deschutes	485	-	485
Douglas	555	33	588
Gilliam	-	3	3
Grant	-	18	18
Harney	2	28	30
Hood River	17	-	17
Jackson	1,118	-	1,118
Jefferson	72	-	72
Josephine	305	-	305
Klamath	417	-	417
Lake	33	-	33
Lane	2,041	18	2,059
Lincoln	202	-	202
Linn	526	162	688
Malheur	73	109	182
Marion	1,497	580	2,077
Morrow	18	16	34
Multnomah	8,894	-	8,894
Polk	394	-	394
Sherman	-	5	5
Tillamook	47	50	97
Umatilla	278	-	278
Union	113	-	113
Wallowa	14	-	14
Wasco	71	-	71
Washington	3,556	-	3,556
Wheeler	1	3	4
Yamhill	329	-	329
<b>All Counties</b>	<b>22,470</b>	<b>2,390</b>	<b>24,860</b>

## 2. 20,841 eviction cases were filed in Oregon in 2022.

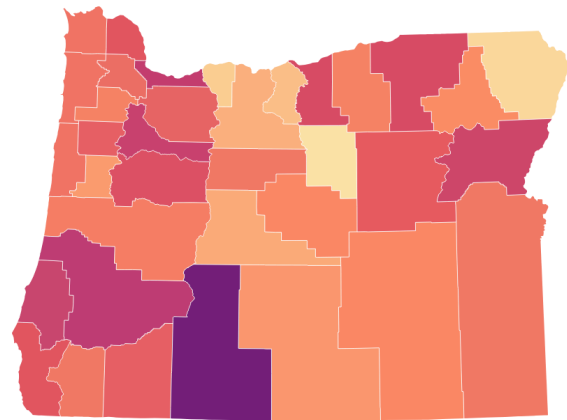
18,812 eviction cases were filed in circuit courts and 2,029 eviction cases were filed in justice courts in Oregon in 2022. For every one hundred renter-occupied housing units, 3.4 eviction cases were filed. In other words, one in thirty renter households had an eviction filed against them in 2022.<sup>3</sup> See Appendix for data table to see figures by county.

**Eviction Cases Filed in Oregon in 2022**



Map: Evicted in Oregon • Created with Datawrapper

**Eviction Cases Filed per 100 Renter-Occupied Households in 2022**



Created with Datawrapper

## 3. 24,860 eviction cases were filed in Oregon in 2023.

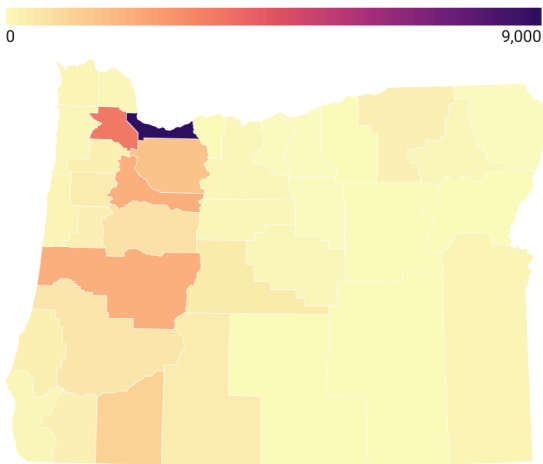
22,470 eviction cases were filed in circuit courts and 2,390 eviction cases were filed in justice courts in Oregon in 2023. For every one hundred renter-occupied housing units, four eviction cases were filed. In other words, one in twenty-five renter households had an eviction filed against them in 2023.<sup>4</sup> See Appendix for data table to see figures by county.

<sup>3</sup> Based on 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates of renter-occupied units in Oregon.

<sup>4</sup> Based on 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates of renter-occupied units in Oregon.

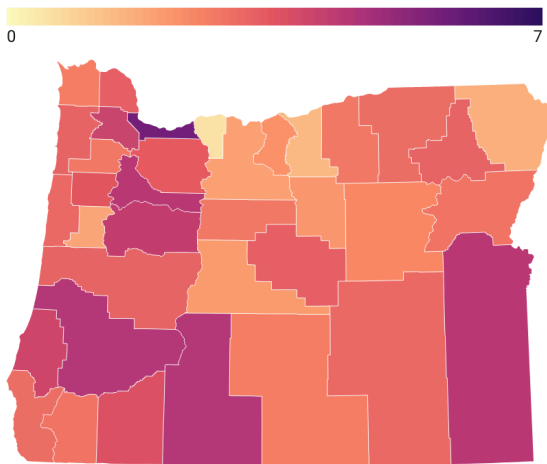


### Eviction Cases Filed in Oregon in 2023



Map: Evicted in Oregon • Created with Datawrapper

### Eviction Cases Filed per 100 Renter-Occupied Households in 2023



Map: Evicted in Oregon • Created with Datawrapper

## Implications

The lack of easily accessible information about the number of evictions filed in justice court hampers our understanding of the eviction landscape in several counties in Oregon, most notably Clackamas County. Both a high volume of cases and a high proportion of Clackamas County's cases are filed at the Clackamas County Justice Court. In 2023, 82% of Clackamas County's eviction cases were filed in the Justice Court. In 2022, 80% of the county's eviction cases were filed in the Justice Court. Therefore, we cannot rely on the county's circuit court data to provide an accurate assessment of the county's evictions.

Marion County had the second highest volume of cases filed in its justice court. 580 cases were filed in the Marion County Justice Court in 2023 and 429 cases were filed in 2022. However, these cases only accounted for 25% of the county's eviction cases over both years. Therefore, the county's circuit court data provides a decent assessment of the county's evictions. The proportion of Marion County's eviction cases filed in the justice court increased from 27% in 2022 to 38% in 2023. If this continues and more of the county's eviction cases are filed in the justice court instead of the circuit court, we will lose visibility and the ability to capture and report on reasons listed on the notice for the eviction, disparities in legal representation, and case outcomes.

The lack of availability also restricts our view of the eviction landscape in Baker, Grant, Gilliam, Sherman and Harney Counties. Although the volume of cases filed in these justice courts are relatively low, they account for over 90% of each of these counties' eviction filings.

## *Conclusions & Further Research*

For the first time ever in Oregon, the number of eviction cases filed in all of the circuit courts and justice courts in a year has been calculated and reported. Previous statewide reporting only reported cases filed in circuit courts because circuit court records are accessible online. Cases filed in circuit courts make up 90% of the eviction cases filed in the state. Even though circuit court data alone does not include all of the eviction cases filed in Oregon, we now know that it provides a good picture of what is happening in eviction cases statewide. However, relying on circuit court data alone will provide an inadequate representation of the number of eviction cases filed in counties where either a high number of eviction cases or a high proportion of the county's eviction cases are filed in a justice court.

Knowing the number of eviction cases filed in circuit courts and justice courts in Oregon is an important first step, but there remains much we do not know about the 10% of cases that are filed in justice courts across the state. Our research team is able to report on many more data points related to eviction cases that are filed in circuit courts, such as case outcomes, legal representation, and the reason for the eviction provided on the notice. We are not able to report any of those additional pieces of information about the cases that are filed in the justice courts without access to those court records or documents.

These documents need to be collected court by court in a process that is extremely laborious and expensive. Our research team is currently trying to secure records from Clackamas County Justice Court, Linn County Justice Court, and Marion County Justice court. The courts in Marion and Linn Counties maintain paper records, which means that there is no digital interface that can be used to view cases. Some Justice Courts may be interested in using the Oregon Judicial Case Information Network (OJCIN) or a similar online database, but cannot afford to buy an individual license for their court.

Absent a centralized system, our team has been using public records requests to get access to court documents. The three justice courts have requested between approximately \$1,400 in Linn, to \$22,000 in Marion, to over \$50,000 in Clackamas based on the number of cases and the amount of time they estimate the request will take. Our research team will continue working with the courts to obtain access to some portion of the records from 2022 and 2023, and to provide a full count of cases for 2024, in order to be able to report on additional key information about the eviction cases filed in justice courts in Oregon.

## *EVICTED IN OREGON*

## RESEARCH TEAM

Portland State's Evicted in Oregon research team includes: Dr. Lisa K. Bates, Colleen Carroll, Dr. Alex Farrington, Azad Amir-Ghassemi, Dr. Yi Wang, Dr. Minji Cho, Natalie Cholula, and Andrew Lindstrom. Any errors of interpretation or analysis in this report should be attributed solely to its authors.

## CONTRIBUTOR ROLES

**Colleen Carroll:** Conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, data collection, writing (original draft), visualization, and project administration

**Dr. Minji Cho:** Conceptualization, data analysis, data management, and writing (review and editing)

**Dr. Lisa K. Bates:** Data curation, writing (review and editing), supervision, project administration, funding acquisition, and resources

**Safia Goldsmith:** Data collection

**Azad Amir-Ghassemi:** Data collection

**Dr. Alex Farrington:** Data collection

**Jacen Greene:** Supervision, project administration, and writing (review and editing)

**Dr. Marisa Zapata:** Funding acquisition

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## MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the eviction process, the latest statewide and county-level eviction data, and more visit [evictedinoregon.com](http://evictedinoregon.com).

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Portland State University - Evicted in Oregon

Evicted in Oregon is a research project interested in understanding how evictions happen, for the purpose of eliminating them.

Web: [www.evictedinoregon.com/](http://www.evictedinoregon.com/)

Email: [evicted@pdx.edu](mailto:evicted@pdx.edu)

## Appendix

	2022		2023	
	Eviction Filings	Eviction Filings per 100 Renter-Occupied Households	Eviction Filings	Eviction Filings per 100 Renter-Occupied Households
Baker	75	3.9	57	2.9
Benton	327	2.0	302	1.8
Clackamas	1474	3.2	1,593	3.4
Clatsop	189	2.9	172	2.6
Columbia	168	3.5	155	3.3
Coos	350	4.0	335	3.9
Crook	61	2.4	84	3.3
Curry	92	3.5	79	3.0
Deschutes	420	1.7	485	2.0
Douglas	571	4.3	588	4.5
Gilliam	8	3.7	3	1.4
Grant	25	3.4	18	2.4
Harney	23	2.4	30	3.1
Hood River	28	1.0	17	0.6
Jackson	1,046	3.3	1,118	3.6
Jefferson	71	2.8	72	2.8
Josephine	292	2.7	305	2.9
Klamath	529	5.7	417	4.5
Lake	26	2.1	33	2.6
Lane	1669	2.6	2,059	3.2
Lincoln	191	2.9	202	3.1
Linn	591	3.6	688	4.2
Malheur	116	2.8	182	4.4
Marion	1923	4.1	2,077	4.4
Morrow	32	2.5	34	2.7
Multnomah	6,609	4.2	8,894	5.7
Polk	370	3.3	394	3.5
Sherman	3	1.3	5	2.2
Tillamook	88	2.9	97	3.2
Umatilla	337	3.7	278	3.0
Union	82	2.3	113	3.2
Wallowa	7	0.8	14	1.6
Wasco	60	1.6	71	1.9
Washington	2,689	3.0	3,556	4.0
Wheeler	1	0.5	4	2.1
Yamhill	298	2.5	329	2.8