

To stem the tide of evictions threatening Mountain View residents, the city created an eviction help center. So far, it seems to be working.

by [Kate Bradshaw](#) / Mountain View Voice

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When California's ban on evictions of renter households impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic ended Sept. 30 last year, many predicted that an "[eviction cliff](#)" was looming or that an "[eviction tsunami](#)" would sweep through communities, forcing people whose lives have already been upended by the coronavirus to move out of their homes.

But in Mountain View, the big wave hasn't struck – yet.

In Mountain View, in apartments that are subject to the city's rent stabilization program, property owners have to submit follow-up notices with the city if someone leaves a unit after a termination notice is served, according to city spokesperson Lenka Wright.

Since last July 1, there has only been one eviction or unlawful detainer notice uploaded to the city's system from a property owner, and, according to the system, the tenant did not move out of the unit, she said.

At the same time, landlords have submitted more than 200 "failure to pay rent" notices in the last two quarters of 2021; with 250 notices submitted between July and September and 229 between October and December last year, according to the city. The city has typically received about 250 such notices per quarter, according to Wayne Chen, assistant community development director at the city of Mountain View.

One reason for the lower than expected number of evictions may be the investment the city has put toward a program providing [rent relief](#) to eligible households impacted by the pandemic, according to Chen.

The city has invested about \$3.8 million in the program, supplemented by an additional [\\$1.2 million raised by the Community Services Agency of Mountain View](#) (which administers the program), but now those funds have just about been depleted.

Through the program, between April 2020 and when the eviction ban ended in September 2021, the city of Mountain View was able to provide support to 1,043 households, or 3,089 individuals, of up to three months of rent relief, according to Wright.

When the eviction ban ended, Mountain View also created a help center for residents struggling with the threat of eviction to access legal resources. The city partnered with organizations such as [Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto](#), also known as CLSEPA, and the [Law Foundation of Silicon Valley](#).

Since the center was launched on Aug. 14 last year, the program has served 313 tenants and four landlords at 24 pop-up clinics, according to city data. Of those, 203 applied for rental assistance through the program. On average, households have received about 2.3 months' worth of rent assistance.

Within Mountain View, there are typically about 250 eviction notices given to tenants each quarter. "That's not too far off of what we've seen in the past year," according to Chen.

Mountain View also has a dedicated staff that works on the city's rent stabilization policy, with five staffers who implement the policies developed by the city's rental housing committee. The eviction help center was developed in response to work by the rental housing committee, according to Chen.

Staff members at the help center have also done community outreach via webinars to inform residents about available resources, he said.

One point Wright highlighted was that the city's communications and outreach has involved providing language services, with multilingual flyers and webpages.

"You can see the robust approach the team has done supplemented by our multicultural engagement team with getting the word out to the community," Chen added.

Ongoing needs

What's still not clear is what will happen once the funding to support rent relief runs out in Mountain View.

Generally, not paying rent is one of the main reasons why a household in Mountain View would face the threat of eviction, Chen said.

While the city's rent relief funds may have been depleted, that doesn't mean there's no help available, according to Tom Myers, executive director at Community Services Agency (CSA). Besides administering the city's program, the agency has been serving in the community for more than 60 years, he said. "We've always got several different buckets of rent relief available."

That's not to say there's an endless supply of funding, and distributing those funds can be complicated because funders may have different rules about how it can be used, Myers said. But the message is that people should still reach out to CSA if they're struggling so that they can get connected with case managers who will do what they can to help.

"Right now there's a lot of need out there. A lot of people were absolutely decimated by the pandemic," he said.

If you need help

Mountain View's [Eviction Help Center](#) is now virtual. Bilingual clinics are offered every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and every Thursday from 1 to 5 p.m. through March. Language translation support may be requested by email at MVRent@mountainview.gov 48 hours in advance. Contact the help center at 650-903-613 or mvrent@mountainview.gov.

Si necesita ayuda

Reúnase con el personal de la ciudad y socios comunitarios para obtener ayuda virtual todos los martes de 10 a.m. a 2 p.m. y los jueves de 1 a 5 p.m. hasta marzo de 2022. Las clínicas son bilingües en inglés y español. Por favor, envíe un correo electrónico a MVRent@mountainview.gov para solicitar traducciones en otros idiomas con 48 horas de antelación. Contacto 650-903-6132, mvrent@mountainview.gov o mountainview.gov/ayudaviviendasCOVID19. Más información [aquí](#).

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