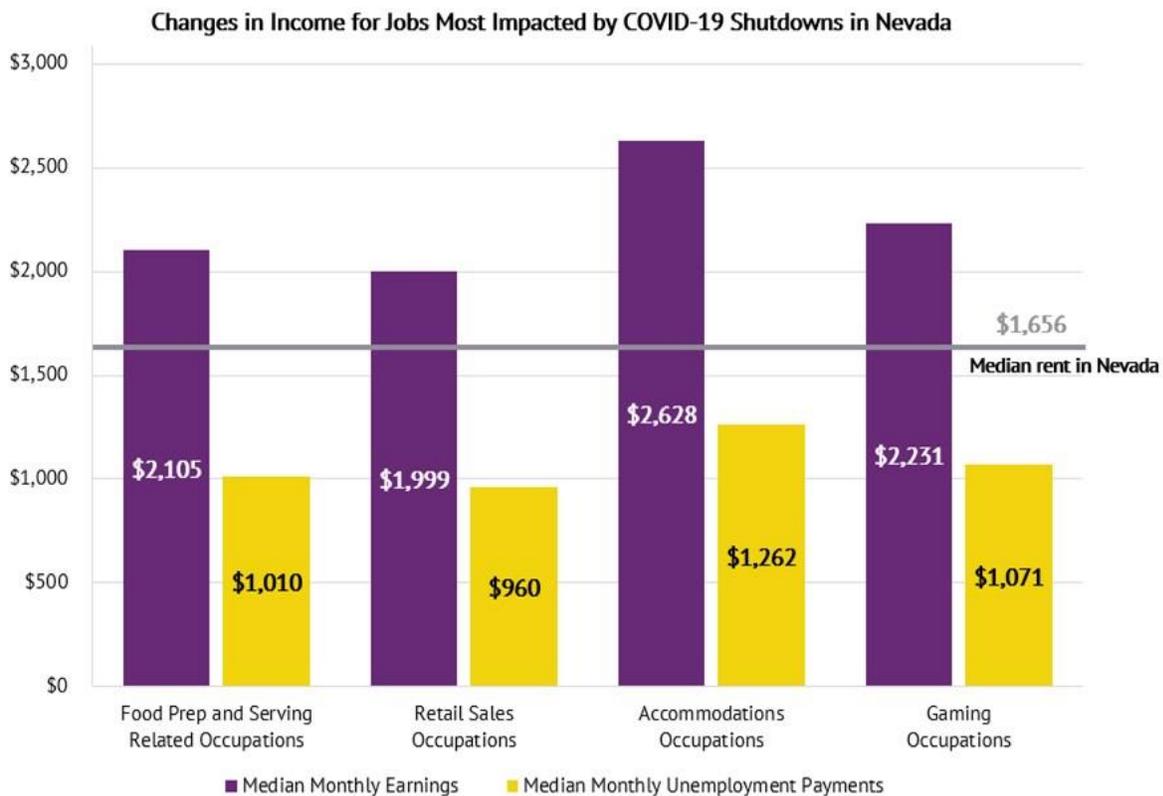


COVID-19 Affects Housing Security in Nevada

Background

In recent weeks, many workers have lost their jobs or experienced reduced income as businesses shut down to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Workers in Nevada may be hit especially hard: according to a [recent Economic Policy Institute post](#), in Nevada, “two out of every five jobs are in leisure, hospitality, or retail.” Many of these workers will find themselves without income during the ongoing health crisis. Figure 1 details the median monthly earnings for workers in the most vulnerable industries (food service, retail sales, accommodations, and gaming) comparing those earnings against median monthly unemployment payments and the median rent in Nevada.

Figure 1: Changes in Income for Jobs Most Impacted by COVID-19 Shutdowns in Nevada



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and National Low Income Housing Coalition; calculations by the Guinn Center.

Note: **Food Prep and Serving Related Occupations** are cooks, bartenders, servers, dishwashers, etc. (chefs are excluded). **Retail Sales Occupations** are managers, cashiers, and retail salespersons. **Accommodations Occupations** are hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks. **Gaming Occupations** are managers, gaming dealers, gaming and sports book writers and runners, and gaming service workers (all other).

With reduced income – or no income at all – housing may become unaffordable for many Nevadans, placing them at an increased risk of eviction. Many federal, state, and local decision-makers have discussed the implications of COVID-19 on housing stability, resulting in a [patchwork response](#) to this problem across the country. Some jurisdictions have placed a moratorium on evictions during the outbreak while, in others, eviction proceedings continue as before. This inconsistent response is also occurring in Nevada. For example, eviction proceedings in much of Clark County have been suspended, but the Reno Justice Court is still conducting evictions. The Nevada Housing Rights Coalition and the Nevada Coalition of Legal Service Providers [have both requested](#) a statewide moratorium on evictions.

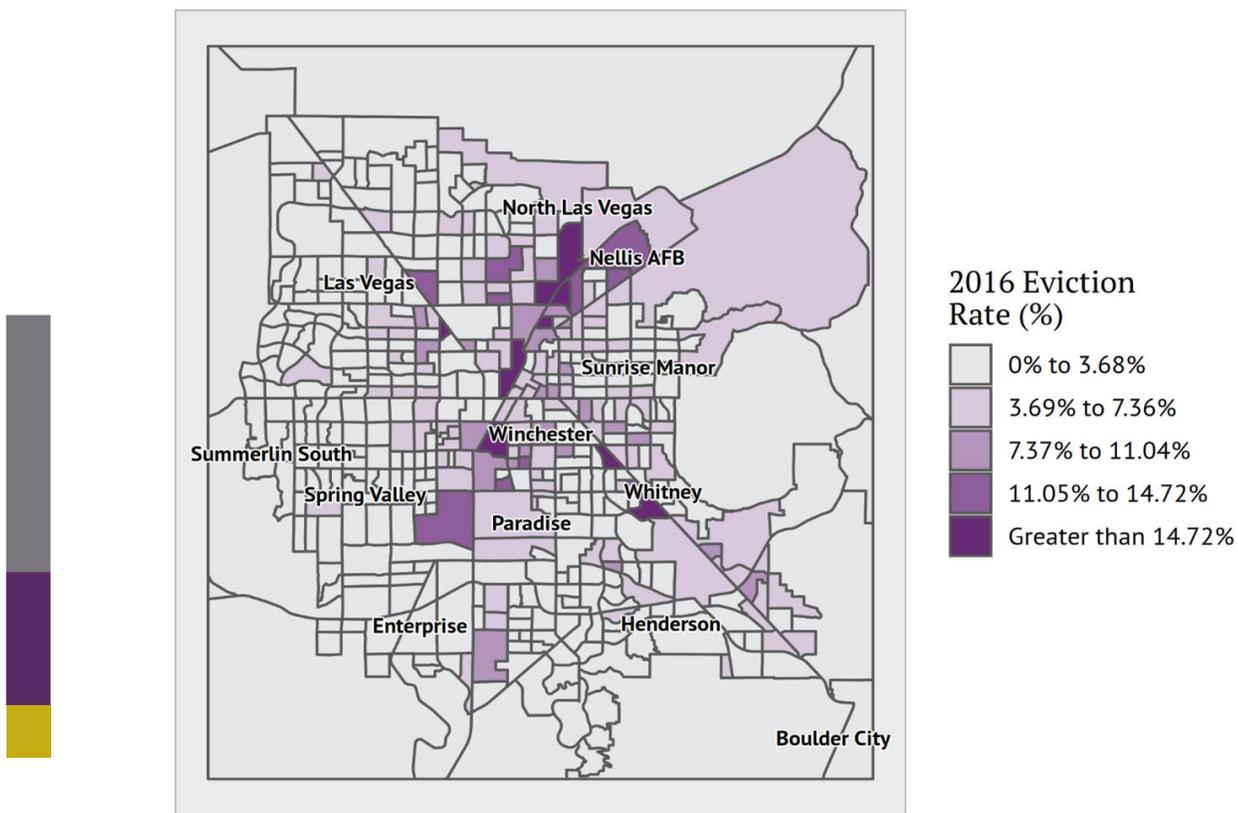
Evictions in Nevada Prior to the COVID-19 Outbreak

Using data from [Eviction Lab](#), we found that Nevada’s eviction rate in 2016 was approximately 3.4 percent, or around 13,500 evictions (though Eviction Lab notes that this is probably an underestimate); and the eviction rate for Clark County was 3.68 percent. In contrast, [the national eviction rate was 2.34 percent](#). Some of the highest eviction rates in Nevada were concentrated in parts of the Las Vegas metro area (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Eviction Rates in Las Vegas Census Tracts (2016)

Source: [EvictionLab.gov](#)

2016 Eviction Rates in Las Vegas by Census Tract



Data from EvictionLab.org

According to the Eviction Lab data, more than one in ten renters in some Clark County census tracts experienced evictions in 2016. Many Nevadans had precarious housing situations even before the significant upheavals caused by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Though evictions in Henderson, Las Vegas, and North Las Vegas have been temporarily suspended, there are many renters throughout the state still facing the threat of eviction. This issue is especially pressing for those dealing with a loss of income related to COVID-19 closures, such as workers in the jobs included in figure 1. Eviction Lab data were not available in some areas of the state (such as Reno), so other data sources are necessary to estimate the risk of eviction for renters elsewhere in the state.

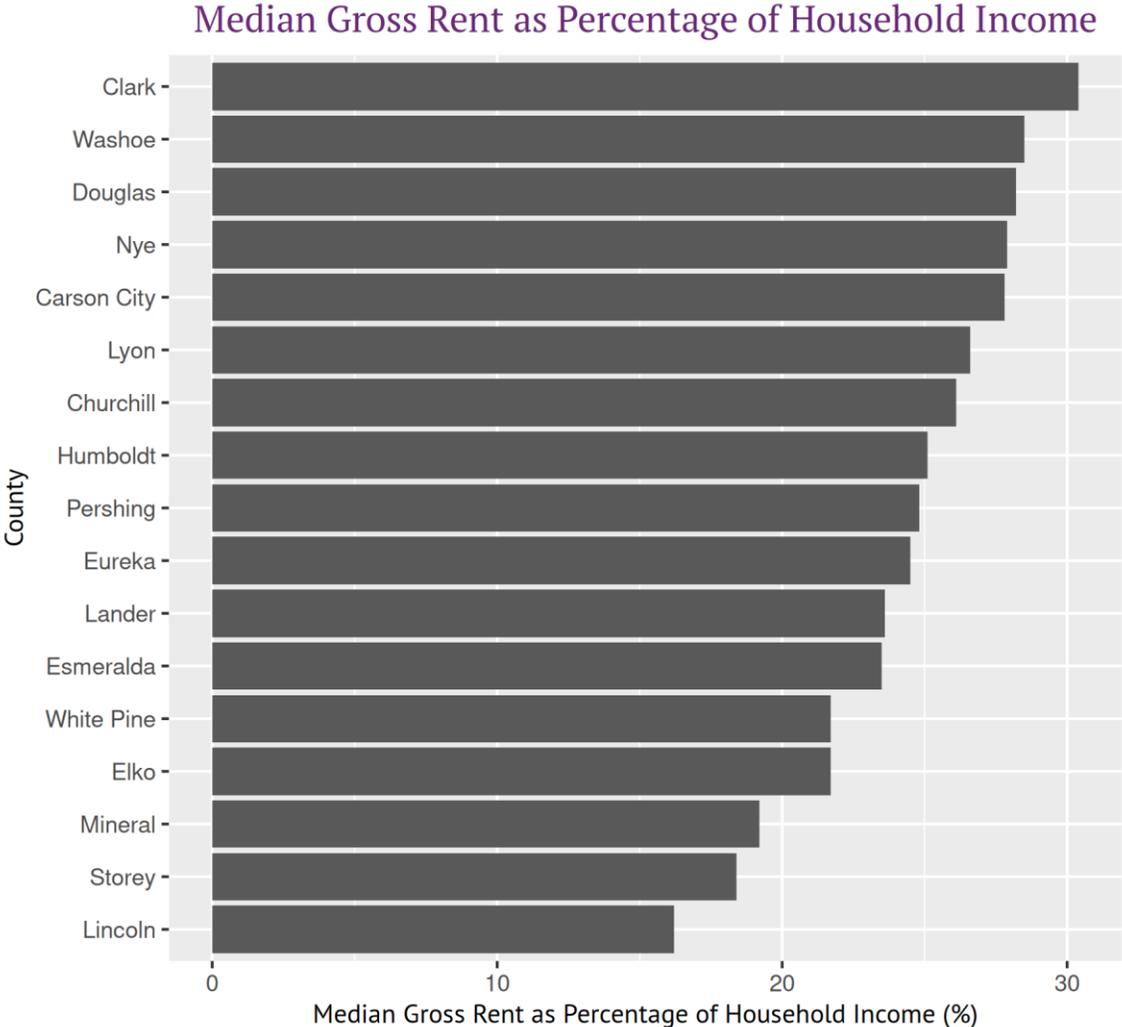
Rent as a Proportion of Income throughout Nevada

Eviction Lab notes that nonpayment of rent is the reason behind most evictions. According to 2014-2018 data from the American Community Survey (ACS), in Clark County, the median rent as a percentage of household income is 30.4 percent. That is, half of households in Clark County who rent their homes pay more than 30.4 percent of their incomes in rent (Figure 3). According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, housing is considered a “cost burden” if a family pays more than 30 percent of its income for housing. By this criterion, housing is a cost burden for more than half of Clark County residents.

Residents of Clark County pay a greater share of their incomes in rent than residents of other counties in Nevada, but this does not mean that other counties’ residents are not also burdened by rent payments. The median gross rent as a percentage of household income is above 27 percent in Washoe County, Douglas County, Nye County, and Carson City: more than half of the renters in these counties pay more than 27 percent of their household incomes in rent (Figure 3). Job loss or reduced income will significantly increase the burden of housing costs for many Nevadans. Those who were already struggling to pay the rent could find themselves at risk of eviction.

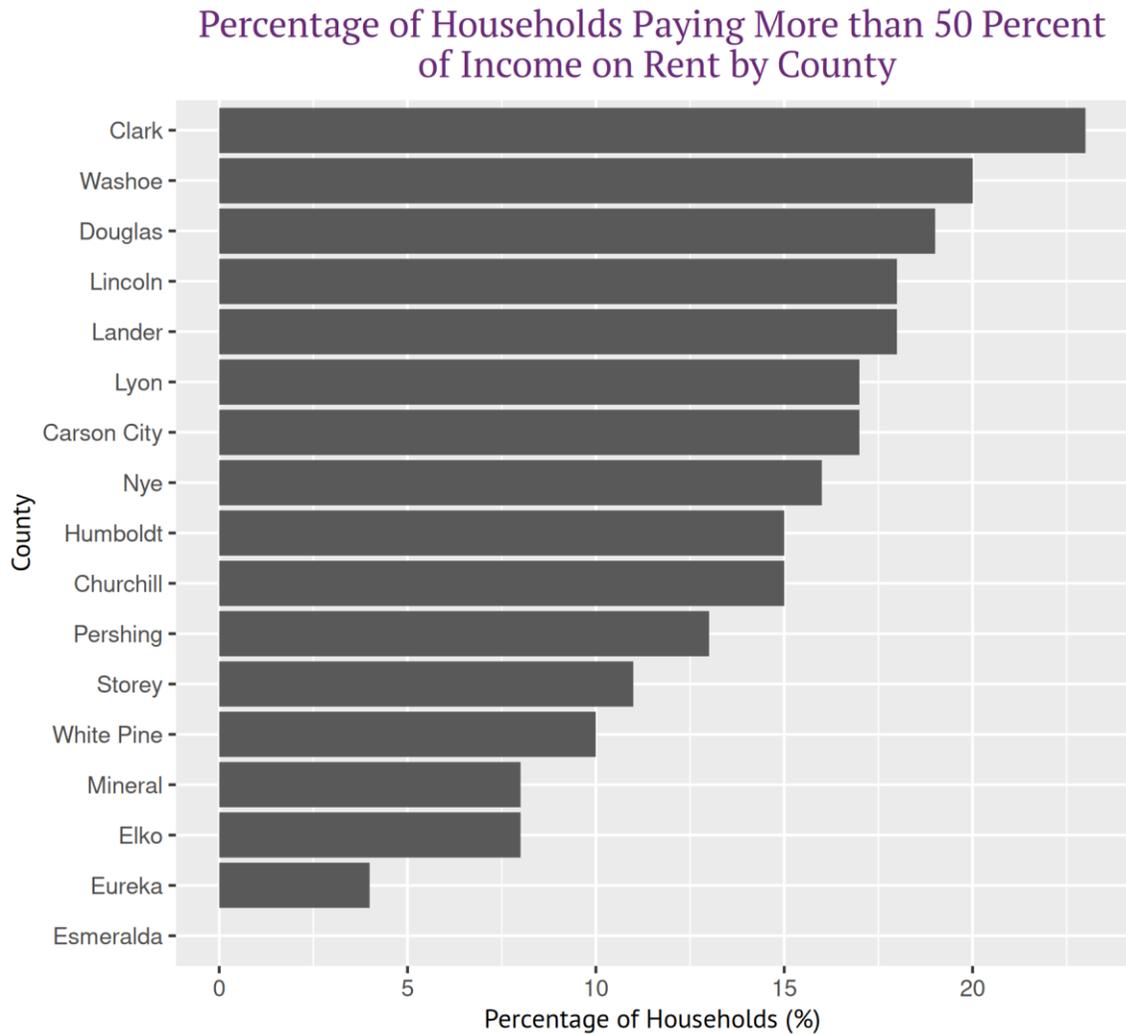


Figure 3: Median Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income. Source: American Community Survey 2014-2018.



For many Nevadans, rent affordability is an especially pressing question as a majority of their household incomes go to rent payments. Figure 4 shows the proportion of households in each of Nevada’s counties who rent their homes and whose rent exceeds 50 percent of their household income.

Figure 4: Percentage of Households Paying More than 50 Percent of Income on Rent. Source: American Community Survey 2014-2018.



Job loss or income reduction places households already experiencing a considerable cost burden related to housing in a very difficult position. As nonpayment of rent is the cause of most evictions, households in Nevada who were already paying more than half of their household incomes in rent are likely to struggle to make ends meet if they have lost income because of COVID-19. While some Nevadans have received a short reprieve from eviction proceedings, others still face the threat of eviction. A statewide policy on evictions during the ongoing health crisis would provide some much-needed stability for families facing significant rent burdens. Such stability is also important for public health. Nevadans are [advised](#) to stay home and avoid contact with others during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially when ill. For this to be feasible, Nevadans need stable housing.