

## Evictions In Memphis

America is facing a housing crisis and Memphis is not immune. According to a Zillow report in 2018, Memphis is the fastest growing rental housing market in the country (56%). In December a Washington Post article brought to light the Wall Street Investment actors who are driving Memphis' single family rental housing boom. All of this points to a serious need for Memphis to begin getting their arms around the eviction crisis that continues to impact so many of our neighborhoods and destabilizes families and communities. This brief seeks to begin the conversation around the scope of evictions in hopes of bringing focus

### HOW MANY?

We cannot defeat our enemy until we know what we are up against. To that end, this research brief aggregated eviction filing data from the Shelby County General Sessions Civil Court, known as Forced Entry Detainer (FED), from 2016 to April of 2019. There were a total of **105,338 eviction filings** during that time. *In short, 1 in 4 renting Memphians have an eviction filed against them each year.* To put this into perspective see a comparison of similar cities below.

TABLE 1

CITY	EVICTIONS FILED *	% OF RENTERS
NEW ORLEANS	4,593	4.93%
BIRMINGHAM	5,909	5.97%
LOUISVILLE	11,081	10.48%
RICHMOND	17,169	30.95%
MEMPHIS	31,633	20.54%

\*Evictions Filed in 2016 from EvictionLab at the county level

All of this data, except for Memphis, was pulled from Matthew Desmond's Eviction Lab data set. In Desmond's ranking it is important to note that Richmond was ranked the second highest city in America for eviction rate. Memphis and Shelby County are far higher than peer cities and not far from Richmond.

### WHO?

Next Question to ask is, "who are our most frequent evictions?" The table below is a Top 10 list of the most frequent plaintiffs in FED cases in Shelby County. It is important to note that these are often not the property owners but a third party management firm or property manager for an apartment complex and these numbers are not controlled for total number of units managed, so this could be a function of large property management portfolios as much as serial evictions.

EVICTION FILING PLAINTIFF	# OF EVICTIONS FILED (2016 - 04/2019)
MAKOWSKY RINGEL GREENBERG, LLC	3,232
CRESTCORE REALTY LLC	2,675
EDEN AT WATERSEdge APARTMENTS	1,879
WATERVIEW APARTMENTS (fka MADISON CYPRESS LAKES)	1,697
GREENBROOK @SHELBY FARMS f/k/a ARIUM SHELBY FARMS	1,566
THE WOODS AT RIDGEWAY	1,495
SUNSHINE CORPORATION	1,436
MAIN STREET RENEWAL LLC	1,417
NEW HORIZON APARTMENTS	1,233
FIRST KEY HOLDINGS-MEMPHIS	1,194

Aside from the apartment complexes and the apartment complex managers, this Top 10 list does have some familiar names to the single family rental conversation. First Key Holdings was the subject of the Washington Post article, Main Street Renewal is also a known single family rental company that is publicly traded on Wall Street through the company name, Front Yard Residential. Let it be known that there are numerous reasons that prompt a landlord to evict, this list is not meant to shame the hardworking property managers into evicting less, but instead start a local conversation with them about why and how they are evicting in hopes of creating a more just and efficient rental housing market.

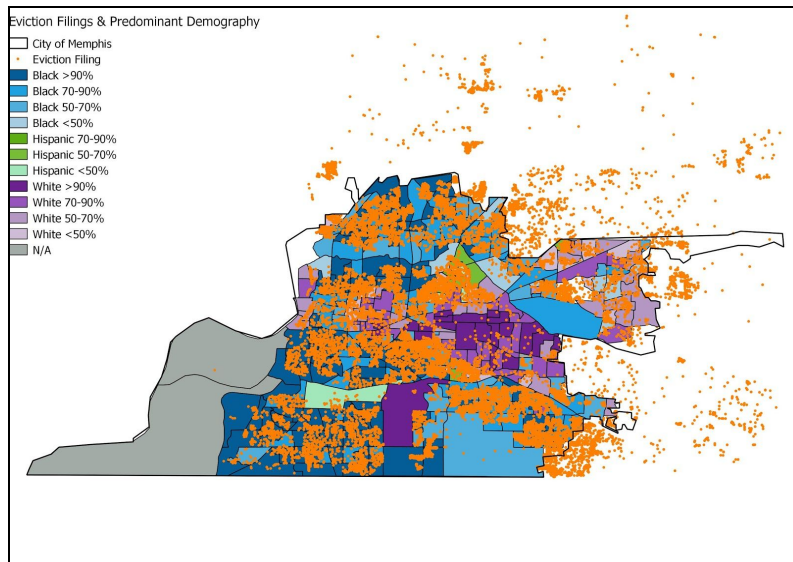
**WHERE?**

The map below objectively reveals a sobering truth. Eviction filings are being concentrated in areas predominantly African-American or Latinx. In zip codes 38115, 38116, and 38118, south and southeast Memphis, 1 in every 3 renting Memphians have an eviction filed against them each year, much higher than the city average of 1 in 4. In 38115 specifically the eviction filing rate is at almost 40%. This is reasonable given the fact that the “inner-ring suburbs” have seen an influx of population over the past decades as we have sprawled. This is also the areas where the foreclosure crisis hit the hardest and subsequently investors became the most active in the years following 2008. Bottom line is: evictions are becoming part of the property management system and it’s time we take a good hard look at how we’re doing business in Shelby County.

## RESEARCH 2 ACTION BRIEF # 1

BY | AUSTIN HARRISON

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PolicyMap's Predominant Race/Ethnicity Data  
2016 -2019 Shelby County General Sessions Court FED Filings

### **WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

Other cities have shown that the key to solving any eviction crisis is the political will to devote the resources necessary to begin solving the problem. Anyone who is passionate about this issue should advocate for the City of Memphis and Shelby County government to do the following:

1. Standardize FED Forms in General Session Court to include key information, specifically requiring landlords to give a reason for evicting the tenant
2. Build a coalition of stakeholders interested in overseeing the creation of a more detailed eviction report
3. Devote resources to protecting tenants facing eviction in court. Currently, almost no one has legal representation and tenants are forced to represent themselves if they take time out of their day to show up, while the property management firms are almost always legally represented.
4. Support the creation of a systemic tenant organizing and educating process to make sure tenants facing evictions know their rights

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Austin Harrison is an independent neighborhood and housing consultant who has been in the community development field for years, having worked in cities all over the country he is proud to call Memphis home. He has a B.A. in History from Mercer University, an M.P.A from the University of Memphis, and is currently pursuing his Ph.D. in Urban Studies at Georgia State University.

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