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on housing, neighborhoods,
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School of Law
Wagner School of Public Service

Media Contact:

Charles McNally
charles.mcnelly@nyu.edu
917-512-1571

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, June 16, 2020

New York City Eviction Filings Decline Dramatically Through 2019

Significant Neighborhood Disparities Remain, While COVID-19 Poses Risk of Spike

New York, NY — A [new report](#) from the NYU Furman Center shows that eviction filings in New York City continued their dramatic decline over the last two years and are down nearly 30 percent from 2013. Researchers point to a strengthening economy and state and local policies protecting renters as likely factors contributing to the drop. They also note the possibility of a spike in filings later this summer due to the economic shock of COVID-19. At the neighborhood level, areas with disproportionate shares of Black and Hispanic residents see 2019 filing rates nearly seven times higher than those in whiter areas. At the extreme, in the most impacted zip codes, nearly one in four households face the prospect of eviction. [Read the full State of New York City's Housing and Neighborhoods report.](#)

The areas with the highest filing rates for 2019 were concentrated in the Bronx, eastern Queens, and eastern Brooklyn, with a few areas also in northern Manhattan and northern Staten Island. Conversely, the areas with the lowest filing rates were mostly located in lower Manhattan, western Brooklyn, western Queens, and lower Staten Island; none were in the Bronx. Strikingly, the share of the population that is Black in the areas with the highest filing rates (40.6%) was almost eleven times the share in areas with the lowest filing rates (3.9%) and almost twice the share in the city as a whole (21.9%). Similarly, although less dramatic, the share of the population that is Hispanic in the highest filing areas (39.6%) was over twice the share in the lowest filing areas (18.9%).

"These numbers show that housing instability and eviction proceedings were already disproportionately concentrated in neighborhoods where Black and Hispanic New Yorkers lived, even prior to COVID-19," said Kathy O'Regan, Faculty Director of the NYU Furman Center.

“Given this disturbing baseline, policy makers should be moving aggressively in light of the racially disparate health and employment impacts of COVID-19.”

A moratorium on new filings in the wake of the devastating COVID-19 pandemic might temporarily keep filing rates low, at least through the first half of 2020, but [a separate Furman Center analysis](#) of Unemployment Insurance (UI) filings shows hundreds of thousands of households at risk of unsustainable rent burdens when enhanced benefits expire in July. And while eviction filings went down by greater absolute numbers in neighborhoods with the highest 2013 rates, these declines were insufficient to substantially narrow the gaps between those neighborhoods and neighborhoods with lower initial filings.

“The persistent disparities in certain neighborhoods, and the risks presented by the economic shocks of COVID-19 suggest the need to more explicitly target interventions to advance racial justice,” said Ingrid Gould Ellen, Faculty Director of the NYU Furman Center

The downward trend in filings in New York occurred in three other cities examined: Chicago, Philadelphia, and Washington DC. The consistent pattern points to the strong economy as a common factor in the decline, though one likely to reverse as the nation recovers from the COVID-19 shutdowns. As housing courts begin to reopen across the country and in New York later this summer, a spike in new filings could overwhelm systems with limited capacity due to public health measures.

In addition to its Focus on Eviction Filings, the State of New York City’s Housing and Neighborhoods release also contains citywide analysis and findings related to renters, homeowners, and construction across the five boroughs. It concludes with a detailed statistical reference guide for each of New York City’s 59 Community Districts, available at furmancenter.org/neighborhoods.

“The data and analysis in this volume offer a final snapshot of the city as it was prior to the upheaval we have all experienced in 2020,” said Matthew Murphy, Executive Director of the NYU Furman Center. “It is a powerful illustration of what has changed, but it also highlights the persistent inequalities that are reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic. The report’s geographic profiles are also a useful tool to better understand the neighborhoods that make New York New York.”

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About the NYU Furman Center: The [NYU Furman Center](#) advances research and debate on housing, neighborhoods, and urban policy. Established in 1995, it is a joint center of the New York University School of Law and the Wagner Graduate School of Public.