Stout’s Independent Evaluation of RTC-C – Key Findings

July 1, 2020 – December 31, 2022

January 31, 2023
Key Findings – July 1, 2020 to December 31, 2022

• Cleveland Legal Aid attorneys were overwhelmingly able to assist their clients in achieving their eviction case goals.

• The percentage of Cleveland residents facing eviction who were represented has increased 8x since 2020.

  • In 2022, we estimate that approximately 79% of RTC-C eligible residents were able to access legal representation.

• Children in RTC-C client households are attending Say Yes schools, and certain RTC-C clients may be living in homes that qualify for Cleveland’s Lead Hazard Control Program.

  • Demonstrating how households experiencing eviction may need other supportive services or are living in potentially unsafe housing.
Key Findings – July 1, 2020 to December 31, 2022

• Emergency rental assistance was crucial to effectively and efficiently resolving certain RTC-C cases and likely prevented a significant number of eviction filings in Cleveland.

• Although emergency rental assistance was an important component of resolving certain RTC-C cases (and likely prevented a significant number of evictions), no new applications were being accepted as of December 2, 2022.

• COVID-19 continues to impact RTC-C clients’ employment and is a common reason cited by clients for non-payment of rent.

• Fewer hours were required by Cleveland Legal Aid to assist RTC-C case clients in 2022 while maintaining a high percentage of client goals achieved by recognizing efficiencies through staffing, management, and program improvement.
Key Findings – July 1, 2020 to December 31, 2022

• RTC-C creates economic and fiscal benefits that significantly exceed the estimated cost of providing the services.

• Rental property owners may consider changing their business practices to minimize financial risk.
  
  • More robust tenant screening requirements, higher security deposits, more stringent employment verification processes.
  
  • Not necessarily in direct response to RTC-C but as a reaction to their experiences during the pandemic.
Key Findings

**Cleveland Legal Aid Attorneys Were Overwhelmingly Able to Assist Clients in Achieving Their Eviction Case Goals**

- Cleveland Legal Aid assisted clients in achieving 79% - 94% of their case goals since July 2020.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client Goal</th>
<th>Frequency Goal was Achieved</th>
<th>Since July 2020</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prevent eviction judgment or involuntary move</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td># of RTC-C Clients with Goal [a]</td>
<td>% of RTC-C Clients with Goal [b]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure time to move (30 days or more)</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>1,687</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure rent assistance</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitigate damages</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure monetary relief</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>225</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[a] Clients can have multiple goals for their case.  
[b] Total will be greater than 100% because clients can have multiple goals for their case.

- Approximately 65% - 75% of client goals are achieved in Connecticut and Milwaukee where Stout is also evaluating eviction RTC implementation.
Cleveland Legal Aid Significantly Increased Access to Legal Representation

• From January 1 to September 30, 2022, 16% of all tenants in eviction cases in Cleveland had legal representation reflected in court records.
  • From 2011 to 2019, only 2% of tenants had legal representation reflected in court records.

• Stout estimates that Cleveland Legal Aid represented approximately 79% of RTC-C eligible clients from January 1 to December 31, 2022.
  • An increase of 19 percentage points from Stout’s 2021 estimate.
    • Court-based intake, increasing awareness over time, outreach efforts of United Way and Cleveland Legal Aid, door-to-door canvassing.
Key Findings

Cleveland Legal Aid Significantly Increased Access to Legal Representation

Cleveland Eviction Data
Eviction Filings with Representation

Launch of RTC-C
Key Findings

There is an intersection between RTC-C clients, their children attending Say Yes schools, and Cleveland’s Lead Hazard Control Program.

• In 2022, Cleveland Legal Aid added a question to the RTC-C client interview regarding where clients’ children were attending school.

• Approximately 57% of children in RTC-C client households were attending Say Yes schools.
  • Many students attending Say Yes schools live in households with lower incomes and may need supportive services.

• Of RTC-C clients indicating their home had defective conditions, approximately 5% identified lead as a defective condition.
  • However, this metric could be significantly understated as many tenants may not be aware of the presence of lead in their home.
  • Of the 5% of RTC-C client households with lead as a defective condition in their home, approximately 55% had at least 1 child under the age of 6.
Key Findings

*Emergency rental assistance was crucial to effectively and efficiently resolving certain RTC-C cases and likely prevented a significant number of eviction filings.*

• CHN received nearly 27,000 unique applications for emergency rental assistance from July 1, 2020 – November 30, 2022.

• From July 1, 2020 to November 30, 2022, nearly 9,000 Cleveland residents who applied for emergency rental assistance received emergency rental assistance from CHN.

• Approximately 15% of emergency rental assistance applicants living in Cleveland had received a 3-day notice or an eviction court date when they applied for emergency rental assistance.

• Median amount owed by applicants without a 3-day notice or an eviction court date - $1,600

• Median amount owed by applicants with a 3-day notice or an eviction court date - $2,000
Emergency rental assistance was crucial to effectively and efficiently resolving certain RTC-C cases and likely prevented a significant number of eviction filings.

- Cleveland Legal Aid referred at least 239 people to CHN from January 1 – November 30, 2022.
  - Median rent owed by Cleveland Legal Aid referrals - $2,935.
  - Median rent owed by non-Cleveland Legal Aid referrals - $2,000.
    - Indicating Cleveland residents seeking legal assistance from Cleveland Legal Aid may be more likely to owe higher amounts and are experiencing or could imminently experience an eviction filing
- Legal aid organizations and rental property owners around the country continue to emphasize the importance of rental assistance in efficiently and effectively resolving (and preventing) eviction cases.
COVID-19 continues to impact RTC-C clients’ employment and is a common reason cited by clients for non-payment of rent.
Fewer hours were required by Cleveland Legal Aid to assist RTC-C case clients in 2022 while maintaining a high percentage of client goals.

- Increased efficiency as staff becomes more experienced, working relationships that have been fostered with rental property owners and/or their counsel, and the availability of emergency rental assistance.

![](image)

*Does not include unrecorded time.
RTC-C creates economic and fiscal benefits.

- Stout estimates the total economic and fiscal benefits of RTC-C to be $11.8 million to $14 million from July 1, 2020 through December 31, 2022.
  - Economic value preserved by retaining residency in Cleveland - $4.3 million to $5.1 million.
  - Housing social safety net responses - $2.9 million to $3.5 million.
  - Sustained education funding for children in CMSD - $2.4 million to $2.9 million.
  - Foster care savings for children experiencing homelessness – $1.7 million to $2 million.
  - Cost savings related to Medicaid spending on health care - $400,000 to $500,000.
- Total investment in RTC-C since July 2020 - $4.5 million.
  - Estimated return on investment of $2.62 to $3.11.
- Benefits and ROI are likely understated but consistent with other jurisdictions.
Key Findings

Qualitative feedback from the rental property owner community continues to be impactful and informative.

- Appreciation that representation for tenants is helpful in many circumstances and a preference for interacting with attorneys rather than a pro se tenant.

- Importance of pre-filing eviction diversion, mediation, and sustained, efficient emergency rental assistance as essential complements to eviction right to counsel programs and the ability to promptly resolve cases.

  - Some frustrations with the emergency rental assistance process.

- Adoption of more stringent and robust tenant screening requirements.

  - Not necessarily as a direct response to eviction right to counsel programs, but rather in response to their experiences during the pandemic.

    - Income 3x rent, credit and criminal background checks, employment verification, increasing amounts of security deposits, not renting to tenants with previous eviction filing regardless of the outcome of the case.