



Housing Issues during COVID-19

October 15, 2020

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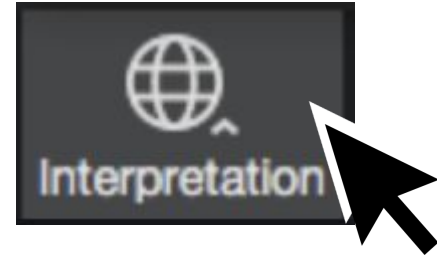
Interpretation



Para escuchar en español, siga estas instrucciones:

1. En los controles de su reunión / seminario web, haga clic en "Interpretación".
2. Haga clic en "español".
3. (Opcional) Para escuchar solo en español, haga clic en "Silenciar audio original".

Due to a technical issue, we are unable to provide live closed captioning for tonight's meeting. A fully transcribed video will be available on the City YouTube channel tomorrow. We apologize for the inconvenience.



Panelists



Mayor Joe Curtatone

At Large City Councilor Kristen Strezo

Ward 2 City Councilor JT Scott

Ellen Shachter | Director of the Office of Housing Stability

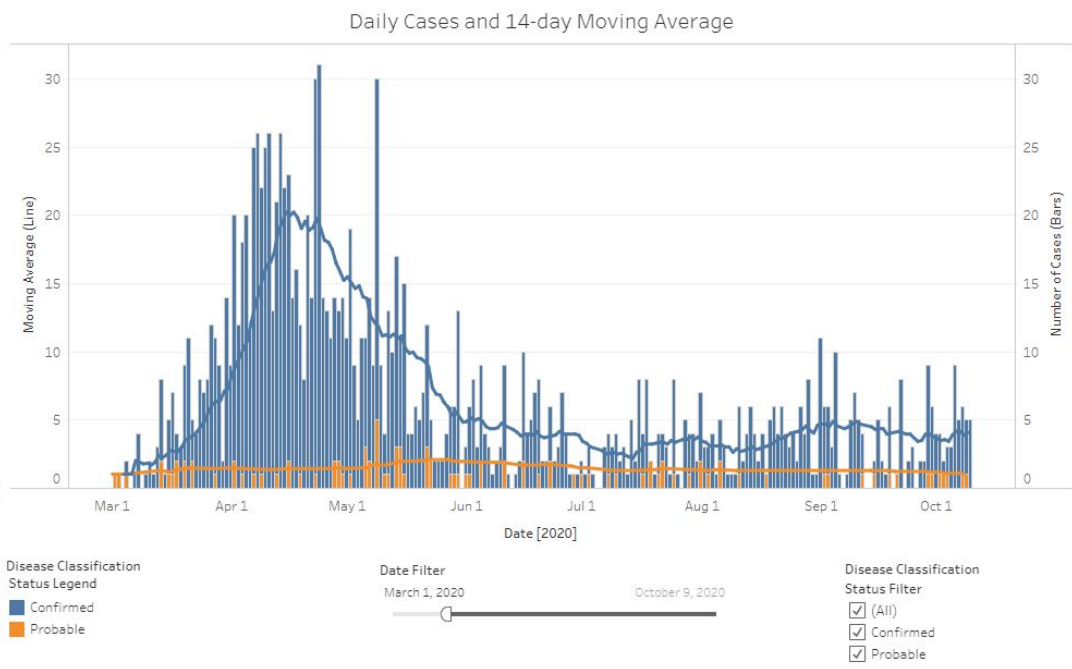
Mike Feloney | Director of Housing

Ithzel Polanco-Cabadas | Inclusionary Housing Program Manager

Lydia Lopez | Office of Housing Stability, Case Manager

Situational Update on COVID-19

The Current COVID Situation in Somerville

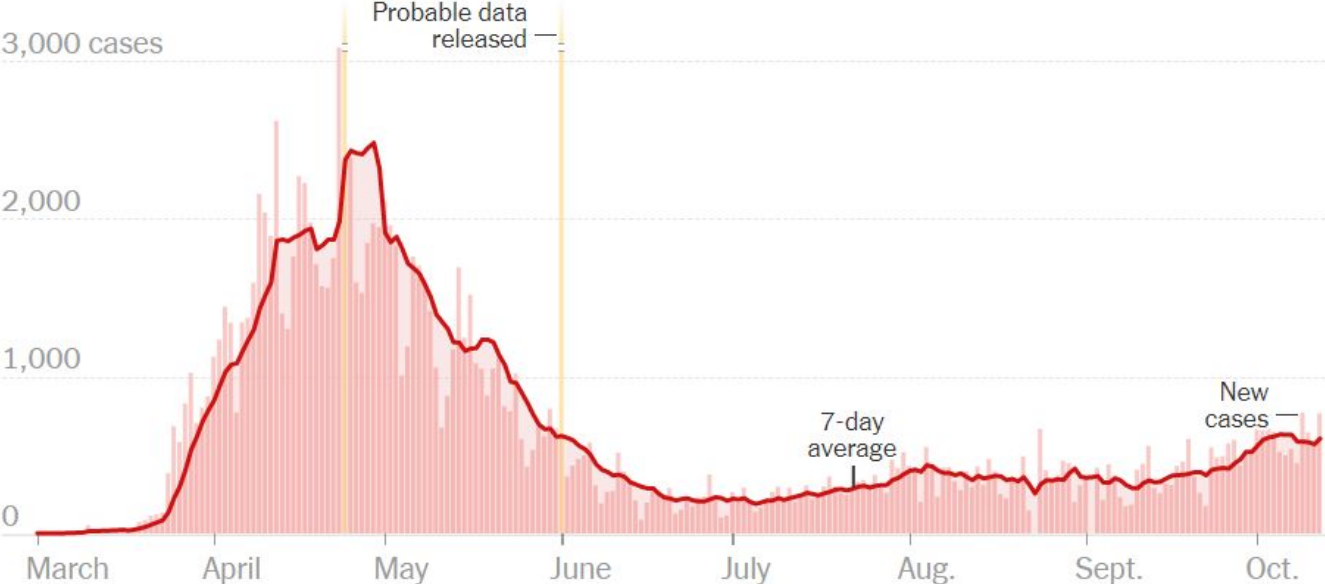


Stay up to date at somervillema.gov/covid19dashboard

The Current COVID Situation in Massachusetts



New reported cases by day in Massachusetts



Source: New York Times

Housing Impacts of COVID-19

Somerville & MA Unemployment During COVID-19

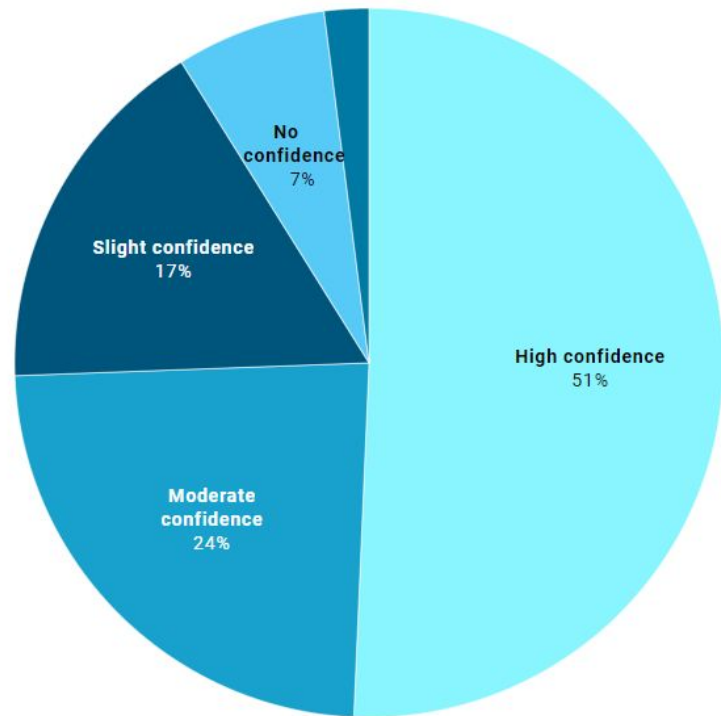


24% of MA renters have “slight confidence” or “no confidence” in their ability to pay next month’s rent

Based on survey data available as of 9/28/20 from the US Census Bureau

MA Renters' Confidence in Ability to Pay Next Month's Rent

High confidence Moderate confidence Slight confidence No confidence Other

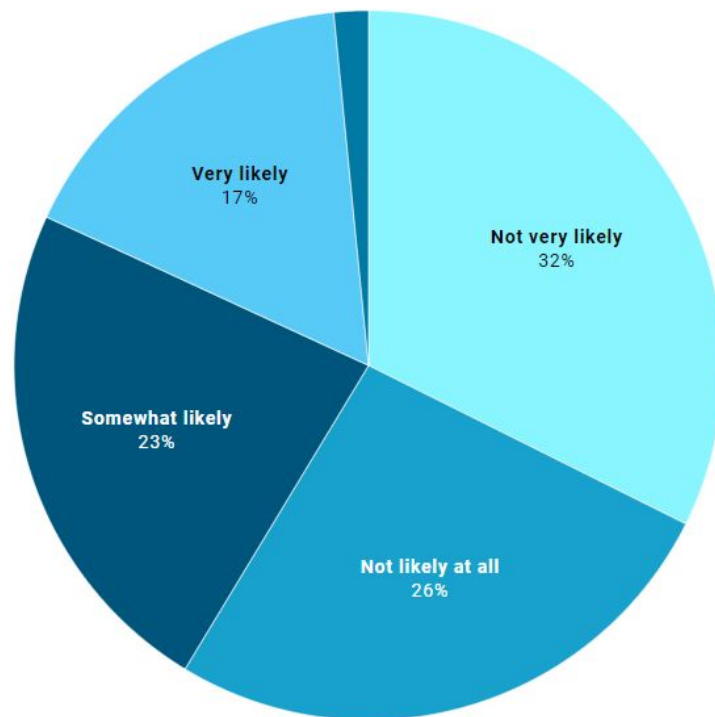


Among renters in MA who are behind on paying rent, 40% expect to be evicted within the next 2 months

Based on survey data available as of 9/28/20 from the US Census Bureau

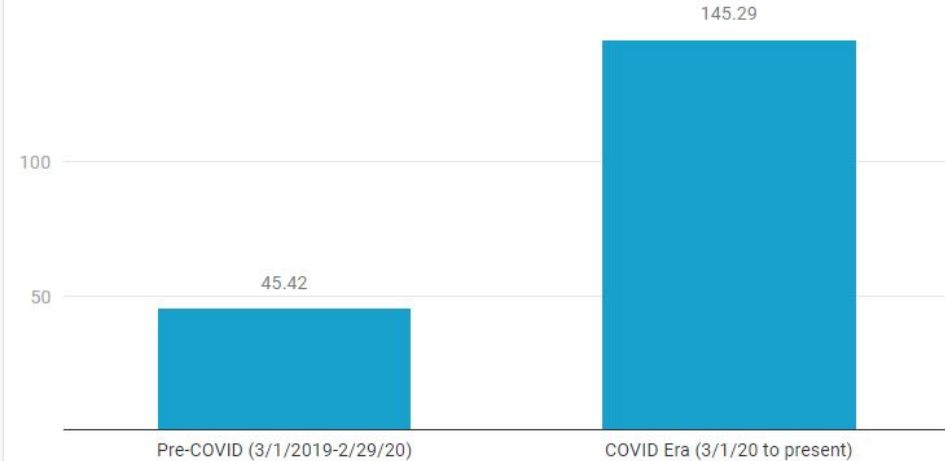
Self-Reported Likelihood of Needing to Leave Current Home in Next 2 Months Due to Eviction, Among Renters in MA who are not Current on Rent Payments

Not very likely Not likely at all Somewhat likely Very likely Did not report



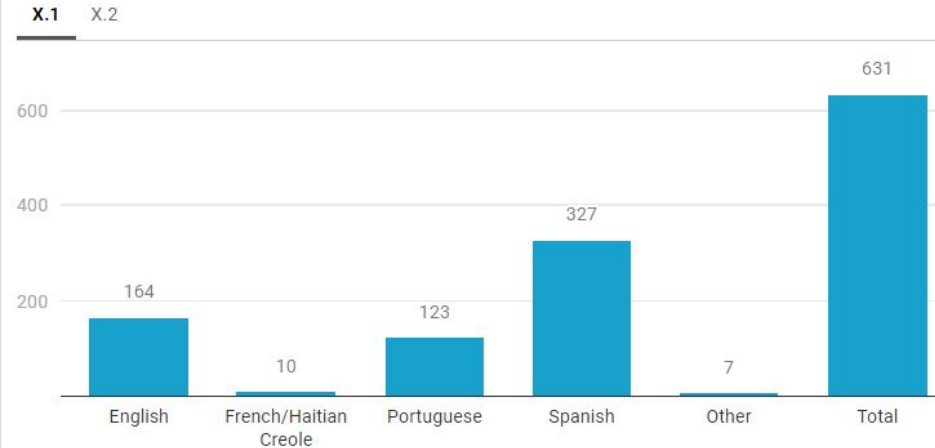
The Somerville Office of Housing Stability has seen a 320% increase in the average monthly number of cases since COVID-19 began

Average Number of OHS Cases Per Month Pre COVID (Mar '19 - Feb '20) and During COVID (Mar '20 - present)



**Spanish speakers
account for 52% of OHS
rental assistance cases
during the COVID-19 era**

**Primary Language for Rental Assistance Cases During
COVID-19 (3/1/20 to present)**





Help is Available

Eviction Moratoria

Federal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protects renters who meet certain conditions from being physically evicted; if eligible, you must send a signed declaration to your landlord• Currently set to expire on December 31, 2020
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prevents landlords from sending notices to quit and filing evictions in Court• Set to expire on Saturday, October 17, 2020
Somerville	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prevents the physical act of removing tenants who have been evicted in Court; also protects from removal small businesses and homeowners who have been foreclosed on• In effect until local State of Emergency is Lifted

Somerville Office of Housing Stability



Mission:

- Prevent involuntary displacement of Somerville residents
- Rehouse the homeless & those needing to relocate
- Enact policies to combat displacement & enhance tenants' rights

How to Get Help:

somerillema.gov/ohs,
click “Make a Referral”
or call, 617-625-6600 ext 2581



Housing Stability Notification Act (HSNA)

HSNA requires Somerville property owners to give tenants and foreclosed homeowners specific documents when they serve a Notice to Quit, court complaint, or notice of lease non-renewal:

- Resources for rental and legal assistance
- Tenants' rights and landlords' responsibilities in an eviction case

To see these documents, visit somervillema.gov/ohs and click "[HSNA Required Documents](#)."

For documents in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, and Nepali, visit somervillema.gov/ohs.

If you do not receive HSNA required documents call Inspectional Services at 617-625-6600 Ext. 5600 to report a violation. If you need help, call the Office of Housing Stability at 617-625-6600 Ext. 2581.

Income-restricted Housing Opportunities

Upcoming Homeownership:

- **163 Glen St.** - 8 affordable 2 and 3 BR condominium units for sale available to households with below 80%, 100% and 110% AMI.
- **88 Wheatland St.**- 1 BR condominium for resale at 80%
- **20 Rush-** 1 BR condominium for sale to households with incomes below 80% AMI
- **32 Glen St.** - 1 BR condominium for sale to households with incomes below 80% AMI

Upcoming Rental:

- In April we anticipate 4 apartments at **10-12 Ward St.**
- In June we anticipate 31 apartments in **Assembly Row**

To be notified of upcoming income-restricted rental and homeownership opportunities sign up to the Inclusionary Housing Listserv here: <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/programs/inclusionary-housing-program>

Other Local Resources



For help with rent and/or moving expenses:

- Somerville Homeless Coalition, 617-623-6111
- Just-A-Start, 617-494-0444
- Community Action Agency of Somerville, 617-623-7370

Resources for immigrants:
Welcome Project, 617-623-6633

For legal help and advocacy in evictions:

- De Novo, 617-661-1010
- Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services, 617-603-1700
- Harvard Legal Aid Bureau, 617-495-4408
- Community Action Agency of Somerville, 617-623-7370 (non-attorney advocates)

Recent State Policy Initiatives



On October 12, Governor Baker announced an additional **\$171 million in eviction prevention assistance** through programs such as the ones below:

Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) -

Maximum amount per family has been raised from \$4,000 to \$10,000, with \$100 million added for RAFT/ERMA

Emergency Rental and Mortgage Assistance (ERMA) -

Assistance for homeowners and tenants between 50% and 80% of AMI - e.g. \$86,650 for family of three

HomeBASE - Expansion of emergency rapid rehousing programs up to \$10,000 per year for homeless families

Access to Counsel Initiative - \$12.3 million for attorneys and non-attorney staff to assist and represent low income tenants and landlords in housing court evictions

Pending Legislation

An Act providing for a moratorium on evictions and foreclosures during the COVID19 Emergency H.5018

An Act authorizing the City of Somerville to impose a real estate transfer fee H.2423

An Act promoting housing stability through Right to Counsel H.5018

An Act promoting housing opportunity and mobility through eviction sealing (HOMES). S.824



Somerville-sponsored resources:



\$1.6 million of additional rental assistance, distributed through community partner organizations



Somerville Cares Fund
(for any essential household needs)



City staff are here to help:

- **Office of Housing Stability**
(somerillema.gov/ohs)
- **Office of Immigrant Services**
(somerillema.gov/somerviva)
- **Health and Human Services**
 - (somerillema.gov/hhs)



OHS Case Referral Process

Initial Referral



somervillema.gov/ohs



617-625-6600
ext 2581

Francelia Lievanos
contacts client for
**initial intake for
screening**

OHS provides **direct services** (rental assistance, advice for landlords/tenants/homeowners, housing search, eviction prevention)

OHS refers to CAAS for
Housing Search

OHS refers to CASLS or De
Novo for **Legal Services**

OHS refers to SCC for
building wide organizing

Non Housing-Specific Resources

There is a statewide **moratorium on utilities being shut off** for residential customers through the winter. Funds may also be available to assist with utility arrears. Payment plan options available through your service provider.

Food Resources: For pantry local food pantry schedule, food delivery and school-sponsored food pick-up is available, for more information visit **somervillefoodsecurity.org**.

For a comprehensive list of resources, visit somervillema.gov/coronavirushelp

Thanks for joining!

Questions?

