

The Cost-Benefit of Dallas Eviction Advocacy Center Legal Representation for Dallas Tenants Facing Eviction

According to a **cost-benefit impact study** conducted by economists at The Perryman Group,¹ Dallas Eviction Advocacy Center's legal representation and right-to-counsel program demonstrates a net benefit back to local county and city governments of **\$40.68M** annually when services are provided to **5,000** tenants facing eviction — preventing at least **3,100** evictions each year.² The result of DEAC's intervention thereby yields a significant Return-on-Investment of **\$30:1** directly back to local taxpayers at current investment levels.³

The investment needed to represent a tenant is nominal compared to the significant downstream costs — with the city, county and taxpayers bearing the burden when an eviction occurs. Intervening early in the process often allows an eviction to be prevented — curbing the costs associated directly with the eviction itself — as well as the costs associated with

“Based on studies in Dallas and elsewhere, the right to counsel for persons facing eviction can significantly reduce their likelihood of becoming homeless. A reduction in the segment of the population which has its housing status compromised can, in turn, reduce costs which would otherwise be borne by the public sector such as uncompensated health care and incremental crime and incarceration as well as productivity losses.”

“Economic activity generates tax receipts to local governments through channels such as retail sales, and these downstream fiscal benefits can be significant. The net benefit of a right-to-counsel program from factors such as reduced taxpayer-funded health outlays and shelter costs as well as the downstream tax benefits from a program [DEAC] are estimated to be \$40.68 million per year, which far exceeds the likely cost of a right-to-counsel program.”

homelessness that frequently results from an eviction. More than **37,000** evictions were filed in Dallas County in 2023, nearly **23,000** of them were City of Dallas residents (**62%**). When legal representation is provided, eviction cases are dismissed or abated **78%** of the time.⁴ DEAC serves an estimated **13.5%** of the population facing eviction. Tenants show up for their hearing less than half the time (**45%**).⁵

A \$1.3M INVESTMENT TO PREVENT EVICTION RESULTS IN

\$40M

NET SAVINGS

for the City of Dallas and Dallas County

TOP SECTORS AFFECTED



Criminal Justice



Jails



Housing



Health Care

ALONG WITH AN UNDERLYING IMPACT ON THE WORKFORCE AND THE ECONOMY

“There are compelling social and humanitarian reasons to reduce homelessness, including the positive effects on human health, wellbeing, and dignity. At the same time, there are significant economic and fiscal costs which are worthy of consideration when evaluating community priorities. An effective right-to-counsel program provides a notable opportunity to improve the lives of the affected households, achieve substantial economic and fiscal benefits, and improve the overall quality of life throughout Dallas County.”

The cost burden is largely assumed by departments within the city and county budgets due to uncompensated healthcare, criminal justice and shelter costs, along with downstream tax benefits.

¹ The Perryman Group. (January 2024). The Potential Economic and Fiscal Benefit of a Right-to-Counsel Program in Dallas County.

² The Perryman Group analysis included methods and assumptions using Dallas County economic and demographic information, with additional inputs specific to Dallas Eviction Advocacy Center's program. There are varying degrees of legal representation and right to counsel programs that serve tenants facing eviction. The impact is a simulation of the net benefit provided to the county assuming 5,000 tenants facing eviction are provided DEAC pro bono legal representation resulting in 3,100 evictions prevented based on a success rate of 62%. As of FY2023, the DEAC success rate in preventing eviction was 82% (Source: DEAC Data), indicating that a higher net benefit may be attained. The average cost to serve each tenant at this scale is \$263/tenant (Source: DEAC Data).

³ An investment of \$1.315M allows 5,000 tenants to be served at current program service levels at DEAC

⁴ North Texas Eviction Project. (2024). Data retrieved at <https://northtexasevictions.org>

⁵ CPAL. (Jan 2024). Dallas County Court Observation Report.