

Research from throughout the country, and the results reported from jurisdictions that have implemented an eviction right to counsel, demonstrates that when tenants have legal representation they are significantly less likely to experience the trauma and disruption that often leads to social service responses from local and state government. Tenants who seek and receive legal representation are overwhelmingly Black and female, and their cases often involve circumstances involving sub-standard housing, harassment, difficulty accessing rental assistance, verbal lease agreements and other disputes or complications. While many of these cases will involve the non-payment of rent, many tenants may also be withholding rent because of disputes with their landlord. Legal representation is essential to assist these tenants in effectively resolving these disputes – either with the tenants remaining in the home or a negotiated settlement providing adequate time for the tenant to relocate and payment plans for valid amounts that are owed. By providing legal representation in these cases, adverse outcomes can be avoided, effective resolution can be achieved, and the fiscal costs and economic impact associated with disruptive displacement can be saved. Stout estimated the fiscal return on investment for an eviction right to counsel in Delaware to be at least \$2.76, consistent with Stout’s findings in jurisdictions around the country regarding the positive economic impact that arises from an eviction right to counsel.



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