



GOOD CAUSE TROY



Community Housing **REPORT**

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Executive Summary

The City of Troy is a majority-renter city, with 65% of households renting as of 2022¹. Additionally, Rensselaer County had the highest eviction rate in the state in 2022². Despite this, it's difficult to find local-level data on average rents or renting conditions. To that end, the Troy chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America (Troy DSA) circulated a 39-question survey to renters around Troy. Our goal was to use the data collected to build a more comprehensive picture of the experience of renting in Troy.

We disseminated this survey via social media as well as in-person while canvassing for Good Cause Eviction. We received 114 responses from primarily Troy residents and analyzed the results in this report. We begin with an overview of the questions asked and demographic data about participants. From there, we discuss how rent increases have affected members of the Troy community and take a look at renters' living conditions and their experiences with their landlords. Finally, we examine how implementing Good Cause eviction protections could alleviate the issues we identify in previous sections.

We heard from many Troy renters who feared retaliation from their landlords should they request maintenance which the landlord was required to provide. We also found that many Trojans had their rent increase above the limit that would be set by implementing Good Cause. Based on the responses to our survey and the stories we heard from many tenants, we conclude that opting into Good Cause would greatly benefit the city of Troy's majority renter population by helping to keep people in their homes and empowering them to be more active members of a community they know they can stay a part of.

Questions and Demographics Outline

Participants answered questions about their living situations (including the number of bedrooms in the unit and how many people live in the unit), income and cost of rent, and experience renting in Troy. They also answered questions about how their apartment was maintained and their experiences interacting with their landlords.

The majority of participants (108 responses; 94.7%) reported living in Troy at the time of responding. The vast majority (110; 96.5%) of participants also reported living in a rental unit and a slight majority reported having lived in that unit for between 1 and 5 years (**Fig. 1**). A large majority of participants (95; 83.3%) reported that they did not live with children. A majority of participants reported living in one- (34; 30.4%) or two-bedroom (41; 36.6%) units. Half of participants (57 responses) live with a single other adult; one-third (41; 36%) reported living alone (**Fig. 2**). Survey participants reported living in a variety of apartment complex sizes ranging from single-unit buildings to 100+ unit complexes.

¹ <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/troy-ny/#housing>

² <https://blogs.cornell.edu/nysevictions/>

How long have you lived at your current home?

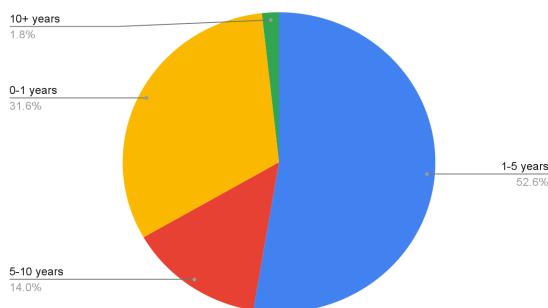


Fig. 1: Length of time in current unit

How many adults live in your unit? (including yourself)

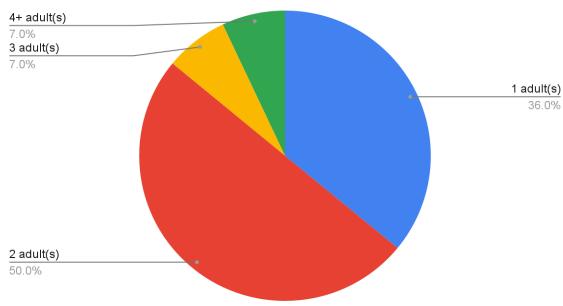


Fig. 2: Number of adults in the unit

101 participants provided their total monthly rent for their unit. Of these 101 participants, the median monthly rent was \$1,450 with a range of \$500 to \$5,500. Based on the median household income in Troy of \$57,688³, the median participant would qualify as “rent burdened” (paying more than 30% of their income towards rent). 39% of participants (41 responses) reported having their rent increase within the past year. Of these participants, the median reported increase in rent was \$50 (4.35% median increase) per month with some residents reporting increases as high as \$255 per month.

While many participants said that they faced no issues requiring maintenance with their current apartments, over half reported facing at least one issue with their apartment over the last year. The most commonly occurring issues Troy renters face include leaks and floods (19 occurrences), broken appliances, and mold or other environmental hazards (16 occurrences each). 18.4% (21 responses) of total participants reported that they did not feel comfortable contacting their landlord about needed repairs. The most common reason given for why participants were not comfortable contacting their landlord was that the participant knew the issue wouldn’t be fixed anyway. Many participants also listed fear of retaliation in the form of eviction or rent increases as a factor contributing to their not requesting maintenance. Participants who faced more issues in their apartments were typically less likely to feel comfortable contacting their landlord to fix those issues (**Fig. 3**).

³ Median income as of 2023, from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/troycitynewyork/PST045223>

Are tenants with problems in their apartments comfortable with contacting their landlord?



Fig. 3: Number of issues vs. “Are you comfortable contacting your landlord to fix issues in your apartment?”

Rent Increases

Respondents indicated that rent increases, however small, have major impacts on them.

Question: How have any rent changes you've experienced over the last 5 years impacted you financially?

Cannot afford/pay rent (3 responses)

- “Despite making more money sometimes, it is still very difficult to pay the rent. I am extra stressed out by the cost of living even though we live in a ‘low cost of living area’”

Cannot afford necessities (e.g., food, bills) (11 responses)

- “I went from living comfortably, putting a little away each month to living paycheck to paycheck. Which is weird because I make more than I ever did.”
- “It has made budgeting harder. Leaves less for student loan payments and much less for spending on local businesses in Troy. The local hardware store is more expensive than Amazon, a dinner out is harder to justify, etc. “

Had to move (9 responses)

- “Large increases in rent have forced me to move apartments multiple times to find something that I can afford on my own as a single working individual.”
- “Almost every year rent has increased in current apartment so much I have to move to a cheaper apartment.”

Emotional stress (5 responses)

- “When new property owners raised my rent by almost 50%, it created incredible emotional and financial stress. I had to adopt severe budget restrictions to be able to stay in my apartment that I have lived in for many years. I couldn't afford to move and I couldn't afford to stay. I had to seek support from family members and friends to get by.”
- “I was forced out of my last apt where I lived for over 10 years so my landlord could list my apt as \$1700 per. month rent even though I was only paying \$1125...She gave me

bare minimum notice to leave and I couldn't find anything that allowed dogs so I had to take a larger apt but the new landlord agreed to let me work from home, however my cost of living has still doubled! And the threat of housing instability is a constant stress."

Forced out (3 responses)

- "I was in the middle of interviews for a much higher paying job (I have a PhD), but my landlord said I needed to move because they needed to renovate....I had to quickly find a new home and stop my job interviews. I had no time as it's hard to find reasonable rent in Troy for a single person who works from home"

Living Conditions

Survey respondents were asked about the conditions of their rental units in Troy. One-third of renters (34; 30%) rated their rental situation as "not great but could be worse." 8 participants (7%) said either "bad" or "it's among the worst places I've ever lived."

Renters encountered a wide variety of issues in their units. Of those respondents who reported maintenance needs in the last year (N=41), the most commonly reported issues were: leaks and floods, mold or other environmental hazards, broken appliances not repaired in a timely manner, pests, broken doors/windows, and plumbing issues not repaired in a timely manner. Figure 4 on the following page notes the frequency of each issue reported.

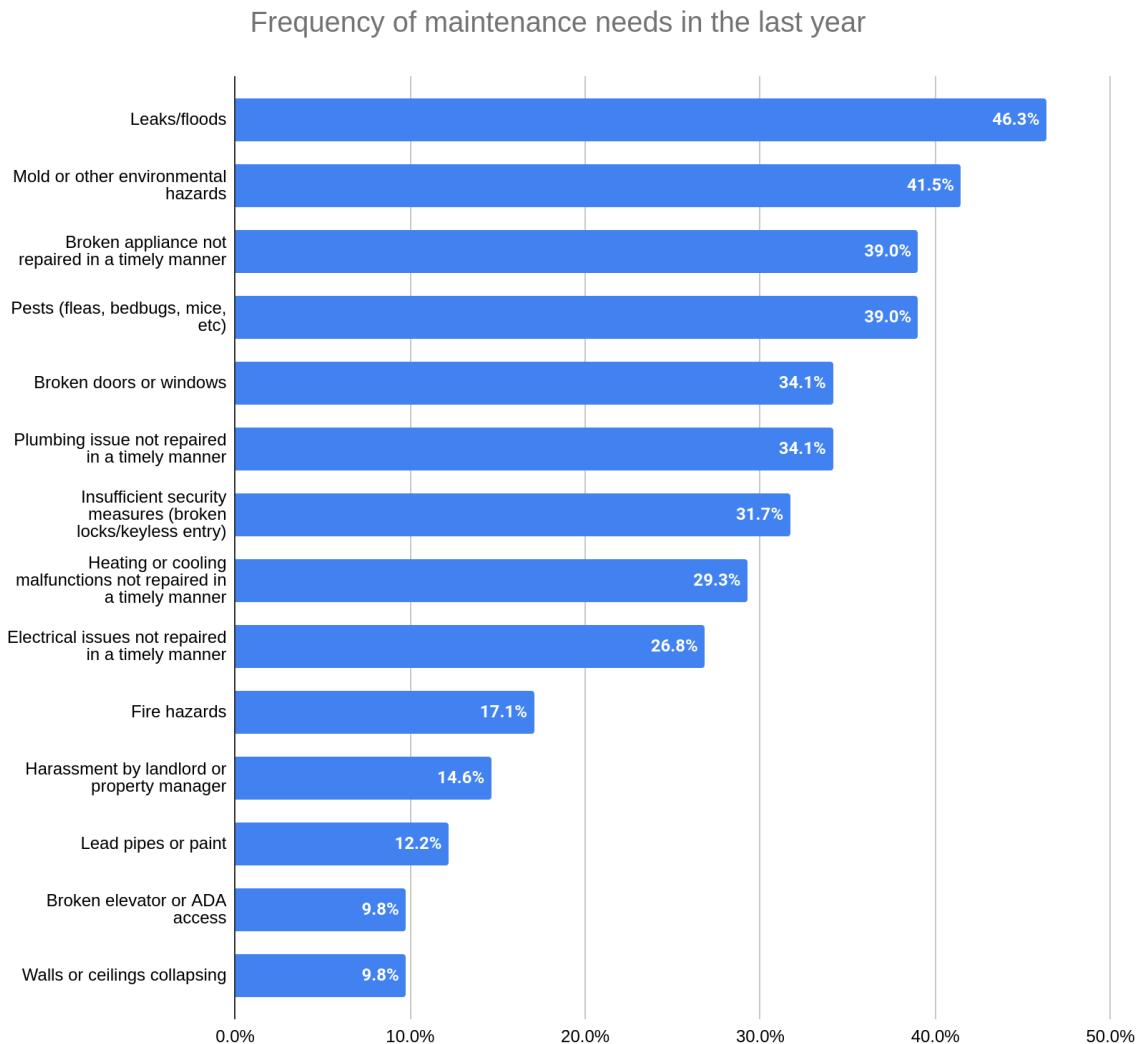


Figure 4: Frequency of maintenance needs in the last year

- “Our last building had significant water damage and mold issues and they just painted over it.”
- “It’s been stressful, as the mice have destroyed several sentimental items and contaminated a lot of our belongings/spaces that I’ve then had to deeply sanitize.”

Despite encountering so many issues, 19.8% of residents felt uncomfortable to some degree contacting their landlord about needed repairs. Of those (N=21):

- 67% said they knew the issue wouldn’t get fixed anyway
- 38% feared the landlord would blame them for the issue and charge them for repairs
- 38% feared the landlord would raise rent or refuse to renew their lease if they reported repairs.

43% of respondents said that not all the issues they reported to their landlord in the last year were repaired. Additionally, 22% of respondents shared that they had outstanding repair needs when they submitted the survey. Of those:

- 35% had outstanding issues with broken doors or windows
- 23% had outstanding issues with leaks, floods, and other water
- 23% had appliances in need of repair
- 15% had pests
- 12% had outstanding electrical issues
- 12% had outstanding structural issues

Effects of Good Cause on Respondents

A significant number of respondents to Good Cause Troy's renter survey reported eligibility for Good Cause protections- 70%. The median reported income of these respondents is \$39,792. Of this number, 20% reported a rent increase above the limit set by Good Cause Eviction at the time of the law's passing. The lowest of these increases was 8.70%, while the highest tops out at 20.82% - an increase of \$255 for an individual whose income fell below the 200% Federal Poverty level. These drastic increases would have been limited by the restrictions to rent hikes mandated by Good Cause protections, at 10% or 5% plus the Consumer Price Index (CPI), whichever is lower⁴.

This individual is among many who have endured both emotional and financial stress by having to take on extreme budget restrictions while potentially facing equally onerous rent increases. As rental units continue to rise in price, where would this individual have to go in the event they are totally priced out?

"It's a major disruption. Moving is expensive and exhausting. I'm a disabled senior and I have to rely on others to help me if I'm forced to move. I want to stay where I am, but rising rents and declining property conditions may dictate whether I stay or go." They report, having to survive on charity without even the dignity of living in habitable conditions!

The individual also reports numerous problems with their apartment including, *"Broken appliance not repaired in a timely manner, Leaks/floods, Holes in ceiling with exposed wires/insulation, hallway carpets soaked with pet urine, trash/junk around dumpster attracting pests (roaches, mice, bees, raccoons), hit and run vehicle accidents, serious domestic violence disturbances, no timely snow removal, and more."*

Furthermore, they report a lack of mold prevention and a refusal to repair appliances such as refrigerators leading to the loss of "hundreds of dollars worth of food."

⁴ As of 2025, the cap on rent increases for upstate New York under Good Cause Eviction would be 8.38%. <https://hcr.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2025/03/gce-fact-sheet-update-3-3-25.pdf>

Other respondents also reported numerous and significant issues that have gone unaddressed. Another respondent reported significant electrical issues posing a fire hazard, pests, “*...no acknowledgment of lead pipes or warnings to tenants despite having verified the lead pipes with the City...*” as well as mold issues. Despite these issues, they reported their landlord as not responsive to requests for maintenance. “*It still has the same issues as when I moved in.*” This respondent too, is afraid that their calls to action will result in an increase of their rent or a refusal to renew their lease.

This is a common thread throughout the survey. A significant portion of respondents, 20%, report discomfort when contacting their Landlord about maintenance they are *obligated* to perform. Of this portion, the most repeated reasoning is a fear of an increase in rent or refusal to renew their lease. Just shortly behind it, is the reasoning that the respondents “know it won’t get fixed anyways.” Fears that would not be present if Good Cause was allowed to pass and help directly shield tenants from retaliatory practices and unreasonable rent increases.

Conclusion

Good Cause Eviction protections would make for a significant improvement in the living situations of tenants around the city. The protections would help to alleviate financial stress by limiting excessive rent increases, allowing tenants to invest in their community. Communities, in turn, could be built and improved by stable renter households who could connect with their neighbors and neighborhoods and put down roots without fear of non-renewal or being priced out of the city. It would also allow for tenants the freedom to call for their landlords to improve their living conditions by blocking their ability to retaliate or use the *threat* of retaliation. In the most egregious of cases, tenants would have greater freedom to pursue legal action through the Tenant Dignity & Safe Housing Act.

Good Cause Eviction would return dignity to the tenants of Troy as it has done for the cities of Albany, Kingston, Ithaca, Poughkeepsie, Beacon, Newburgh, Hudson and more.

“Good Cause is good public policy, period. As both a property owner and Common Council Member in Albany, I have long understood that Good Cause stabilizes neighborhoods and ensures healthy and affordable communities for everyone. As a longtime supporter of Good Cause, I am proud to see Albany be the first city to opt into local Good Cause since the 2024 state budget made it possible.”

- Albany Common Council Alfredo Balarin