Berkeley, CA eviction risk: Elevated

Alameda County · Population 120,257 · Ranked #179 of 1594 in California · Nationally in the 93th percentile

Berkeley, CA scores **6.3/10** on the Eviction Risk Score — the elevated tier. The score blends nine independent sub-scores covering local, regional, and state political climate; economic stress; supply constraint; rent-control risk; eviction-process difficulty; tenant-organizing strength; and housing-court bias. Every input is sourced from public data — Census ACS, MIT Election Lab, BLS, and the state landlord-tenant statute — with no synthetic estimates.

EVICTION RISK SCORE · 2026

6.3 / 10

ELEVATED

POLITICAL LEAN

Dem

+53.6% margin

Timeline	Cost range	Average rent	Renters
267d	$16.1–39.6k	$2,133	56%
filing → judgment	legal + lost rent	34% stretched on rent	of households

The score in one paragraph

Berkeley is in the **elevated** tier at **6.3/10**. The legal framework has meaningful tenant protections but the courts are not actively hostile to landlords. Standard professional practices — rigorous screening, prompt rent-day communication, precise statutory notice, documented service — keep exposure manageable. Watch for local rent-control proposals; the political baseline supports near-term action in cities at this tier.

9-axis sub-score breakdown

Higher = more tenant-protective conditions

SUB-SCORE	VALUE	DISTRIBUTION
Local political climate	7.5	
Regional political climate	7.5	
State political climate	6.8	
Economic stress	7.3	
Supply constraint	9.5	
Rent-control risk	7.7	
Eviction-process difficulty	6.1	
Tenant-organizing strength	9.5	
Housing-court bias	7.5	
Primary Eviction Risk Score	6.3	9-axis mean

How Berkeley compares

Berkeley, CA 6.3

Alameda County 6.5

California average 6.6

US national average 5.3

> **Berkeley scores 6.3/10** — that's 1.0 points **above** the US national average (5.3) and ranks **#179 of 1594** covered places in California. Nationally, 92.6% of cities score lower than this one.

Demographics & economic context

Population	120,257
Renter share of households	55.8%
Average gross rent	$2,133 / month
Average household income	$108,558 / year
Share of income spent on rent	34.0%
Poverty rate	16.8%
Unemployment rate	6.0%
2024 county presidential margin	+53.6%

Of every 100 households in Berkeley, roughly **56** rent. The typical renter household earns $108,558 a year and pays $2,133 a month in rent — equivalent to **34%** of average household income. HUD classifies any household spending more than 30% of income on housing as "cost-burdened" and more than 50% as "severely cost-burdened" — Berkeley sits **above the cost-burdened threshold**.

Eviction cost & timeline detail

Estimated all-in eviction cost (low)	**$16,123**
Estimated all-in eviction cost (high)	**$39,621**
Lost-rent share of total (typical)	~60–75%
Court filing + summons service fees	$385 – $610
Sheriff lockout fee	$145 – $200
Attorney fees (contested cases)	$1,500 – $5,000+
Typical timeline (filing → judgment)	**267 days**
Post-eviction turnover (cleaning, repairs, re-leasing)	+30–60 days
Tenant-prevailing outcome rate	61.6%

In a typical eviction in Berkeley, **lost rent is the dominant cost driver** — accounting for 60–75% of total expense. At the city's average rent of $2,133/month (≈ $71/day), every day of vacancy during the eviction process costs the landlord roughly $71. A 267-day filing-to-judgment timeline followed by a 30-day turnover means 297 days of vacancy — $18,984 in lost rent alone, before any other cost.

California statute snapshot

Governing statute	Cal. Civ. Code § 1947.12
Just-cause eviction required	**Yes** (statewide)
Rent cap formula	5%+CPI, max 10%
Rent cap statute	Cal. Civ. Code § 1947.12 (AB 1482)
Typical uncontested timeline (high)	60 days
Typical contested timeline (high)	180 days

Per-axis detail — what each sub-score actually measures

The Eviction Risk Score is an arithmetic mean of nine independent 0–10 sub-scores. Each is measuring something different about the local landlord-side legal and political environment. Below is what each one is and what Berkeley's value reflects.

Local political climate — 7.5

2024 county presidential margin (MIT Election Lab, 2020 fallback). Reflects the local electorate's lean — strong-Dem counties tend to support stronger tenant ordinances; strong-Rep counties tend to favor faster, landlord-neutral eviction processes.

Regional political climate — 7.5

Population-weighted average of surrounding counties in the same metro area. Local rent-control fights almost always cluster regionally — adjacent counties with the same political lean produce coordinated policy waves.

State political climate — 6.8

Statewide presidential margin + legislative chamber composition. The state legislature controls preemption (whether cities CAN pass rent control), eviction notice periods, and just-cause requirements.

Economic stress — 7.3

Census ACS poverty rate combined with BLS LAUS unemployment. High economic stress correlates with higher eviction filing rates because rent-payment problems track joblessness more reliably than any other single signal.

Supply constraint — 9.5

Renter share × average gross rent. Constrained markets (low vacancy, high rent) produce both higher rent-burden and more aggressive tenant organizing, both of which raise eviction risk.

Rent-control risk — 7.7

National percentile of rent burden. Cities at the top of the rent-burden distribution are the most likely targets of new rent-stabilization ordinances within 1–2 legislative cycles.

Eviction-process difficulty — 6.1

Coded reading of state landlord-tenant statute: notice periods, response window, available defenses, just-cause coverage, mandatory mediation. Higher = longer, more procedural, more dismissal-prone.

Tenant-organizing strength — 9.5

Renter share weighted by political lean. Cities with majority-renter populations and tenant-friendly politics produce active tenant unions that escalate individual disputes and lobby for stronger protections.

Housing-court bias — 7.5

State-weighted disposition data + appellate posture. Some state housing courts apply procedural rules strictly against landlords (dismissals for minor notice defects); others apply them strictly against tenants.

Quick answers

What is the eviction risk score for Berkeley?

6.3/10 — Elevated tier. The score is the arithmetic mean of nine sub-axes covering political climate (local, regional, state), economic stress, supply constraint, rent-control risk, eviction-process difficulty, tenant-organizing strength, and housing-court bias. Inputs are public ACS 2023 5-year data, 2024 county presidential margins (MIT Election Lab; 2020 fallback), BLS LAUS unemployment, and a coded reading of the California landlord-tenant statute.

How long does an eviction take in Berkeley?

Filing to judgment runs roughly **267 days** for a standard case. All-in cost runs **$16,123–$39,621** per case — that's legal fees, lost rent, sheriff lockout, plus post-eviction turnover. Contested cases (where the tenant files an Answer) add another 30–60 days. Cases where a tenant raises a habitability defense or files an appeal can run 4–6 months total.

What share of Berkeley households rent?

55.8% of households are renter-occupied (ACS 2023 5-year, table B25008). About **34%%** of average household income goes to rent at the city's average gross rent of **$2,133/month** (ACS table B25064).

Is Berkeley a landlord-friendly market?

Elevated tier (**6.3/10**). Documented notices and proactive screening matter. Tenant defenses are common but not universal — landlords with clean procedural records win most contested cases.

What does "stretched on rent" mean?

HUD defines a household as "cost-burdened" if it spends more than 30% of income on housing, and "severely cost-burdened" above 50%. Berkeley's value of **34.0%** measures the city-wide average from Census ACS 2023 5-year table B25071 (gross rent as a percentage of household income). The higher this number, the more financially fragile the average renter household, and the more likely a missed paycheck cascades into a rent default.

Who is this report for?

Landlords evaluating a market for an acquisition, property managers underwriting an existing portfolio, investors comparing submarkets, tenants researching their rights, and journalists/researchers covering local housing policy. Every number is reproducible from public sources cited at the back of this report. **No legal advice is provided** — consult a licensed attorney in California for guidance specific to a particular property or dispute.

Methodology

The primary Eviction Risk Score is computed as the arithmetic mean of nine sub-scores, each independently normalized to a 0–1 national percentile against the universe of 31,828 covered US cities, then multiplied by 10. Each sub-score is capped at [1.0, 10.0] before averaging to keep the headline number from being dragged to extremes by a single outlier axis.

$$\text{score} = (S_{\text{local}} + S_{\text{regional}} + S_{\text{state}} + S_{\text{economic}} + S_{\text{supply}} + S_{\text{rent-control}} + S_{\text{eviction-process}} + S_{\text{tenant-org}} + S_{\text{court-bias}}) \div 9$$

REPRODUCIBILITY

Every input is sourced from a public dataset cited in the source registry below. To reproduce Berkeley's score from scratch, pull the city's ACS variables from *data.census.gov* (place GEOID), the county presidential margin from MIT Election Lab's CSV, and the state statute from the cited code section. The full computation lives at **evictionriskmap.com/methodology/** and the per-city payload is available as JSON at **evictionriskmap.com/api/v1/cities/{id}.json**.

CONFIDENCE & UNCERTAINTY

ACS 5-year estimates for places with population under ~25,000 carry meaningful margins of error — we suppress the score entirely for places under 5,000 and add a wide confidence band for places 5,000–25,000. Presidential margins use county-level returns (the most granular level published consistently for every US county) so they uniformly under-represent within-county political variation in large metros. The eviction-process sub-score is a coded reading of statute text; it does not attempt to measure within-state judicial variation.

Source registry

SOURCE	COVERAGE	VINTAGE
US Census ACS 5-year (B17001, B19013, B25008, B25064, B25071)	Poverty, income, renter share, rent, rent burden	2023
US Census Gazetteer	Place + county geometry, FIPS codes	2024
MIT Election Lab	County presidential margin	2024 (2020 fallback)
BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics	City-level unemployment rate	Latest available
California landlord-tenant statute	Notice periods, just-cause, rent caps, timelines	2026 reading
HUD cost-burden thresholds	30% / 50% income-on-rent benchmarks	Codified
NGP-EvictStats scoring formula	9-axis Eviction Risk Score	Current production version

Disclaimer

This report is informational only. The Eviction Risk Score is descriptive of measurable inputs (Census demographics, voting history, statute structure) — it is not a prediction for any individual property, tenant, or dispute. It does not constitute legal, financial, or investment advice. Eviction outcomes depend heavily on case-specific facts (notice service quality, tenant defenses, judicial assignment) that no aggregate score can capture. Before taking any action on a specific property or tenancy, consult a licensed California attorney.

All public-source citations above are non-exclusive: anyone can reproduce the Eviction Risk Score by pulling the same source data and applying the methodology published at **evictionriskmap.com/methodology/**. NextGen Properties publishes EvictionRiskMap.com as a free research tool; we do not sell the underlying data and we do not warrant the score's fitness for any particular purpose.

ABOUT NEXTGEN PROPERTIES

NextGen Properties is a licensed real estate brokerage and full-service property-management firm. We own and operate a portfolio of single-family rentals and small multifamily buildings across the West and South, and we publish **EvictionRiskMap.com** as a free research tool for landlords, tenants, and investors evaluating local rental markets. Our team blends 20+ years of operational landlord experience with original data work — we ingest, validate, and combine public datasets (US Census ACS, BEA, Princeton Eviction Lab, CDC SVI, FRED) so customers can underwrite a market in minutes rather than weeks.

WHAT WE DO

Full-service property management for landlords (leasing, maintenance, accounting, legal coordination) · Pre-purchase market diligence reports for investors · Free public risk data and methodology at evictionriskmap.com

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