

Report for TJPDC:  
Albemarle and Charlottesville Eviction Cases  
Filed Between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2021

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10/1/2021

The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) requested the development of a proprietary database of eviction data and a needs assessment as part of a larger Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP) program. The Equity Center at the University of Virginia (Equity Center) has developed a database of eviction data and shared the database and associated technical documentation with the TJPDC.

The proprietary database and related technical documentation serve two primary functions. First, the database (and the analyses that follow) serve as a baseline of eviction-related data for the region. Second, the Equity Center has developed a data cleaning process that the TJPDC and partner entities can utilize moving forward to continue to track eviction-related data, discern patterns in overall rates of eviction case filings or in details associated with case filings, and evaluate the success of specific eviction reduction programs.

Here, we provide analyses of the eviction data based on the areas of interest stated in the initial Request for Proposal and on feedback received during Advisory Committee meetings.

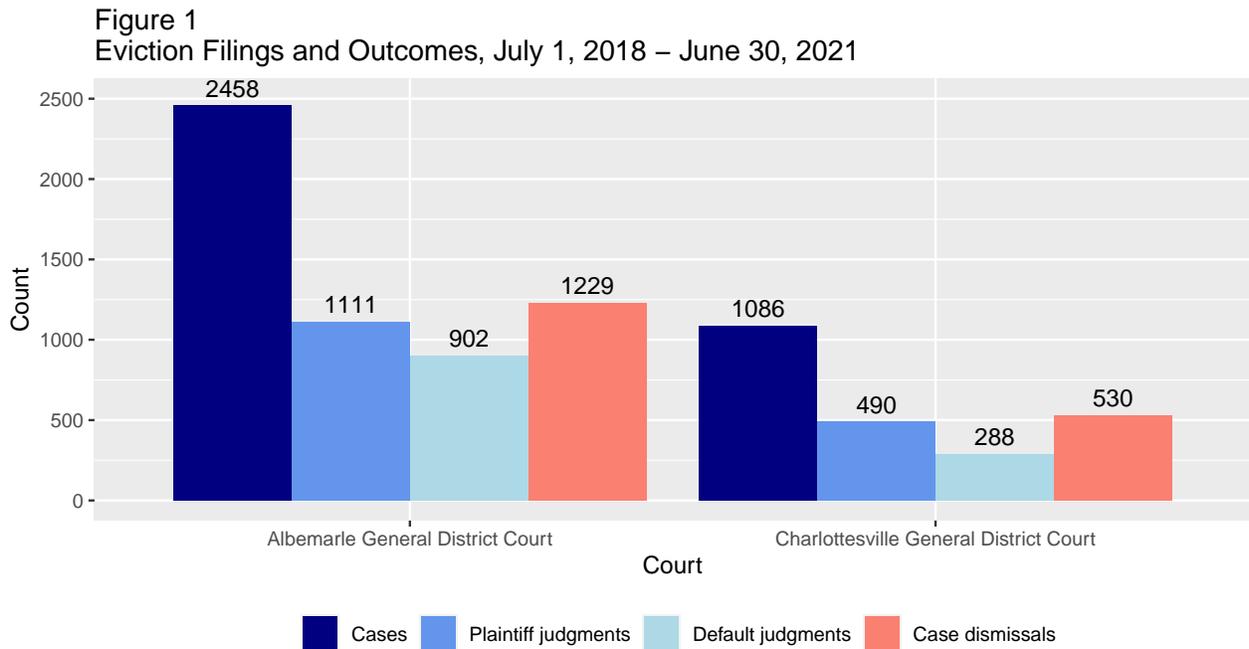
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**Note.** The database captures unlawful detainer (eviction) cases filed in the Albemarle and Charlottesville General District Courts that have filing dates from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2021. The visualizations and tables in this document reflect only eviction cases with *residential defendants*. Further, the visualizations and tables in this document do not exclude *serial cases* (multiple filings by a given plaintiff against a given defendant within a given ZIP Code within 12 months). Please see the Technical Document for details on how data were gathered, cleaned, and deduplicated prior to analysis. Please see the Data Dictionary for details on each variable in the final data set.

## Overall Case Counts and Outcomes

Figure 1 displays the counts and outcomes of the eviction cases filed in the Albemarle and Charlottesville General District Courts during the three-year period of interest. The Albemarle General District Court saw 2,458 eviction cases filed from July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2021. The Charlottesville General District Court saw 1,086 eviction cases filed during that time, fewer than half compared to Albemarle. Based on American Community Survey 2015-2019 estimates, Albemarle County has 15,231 renting households for an effective filing rate of 5.4 cases filed per 100 renting households per year over the course of this period. Charlottesville has 10,640 renting households for an effective filing rate of 3.4 cases filed per 100 renting households per year.

In both Albemarle and Charlottesville, case dismissal is the most common outcome for cases. In Albemarle, precisely half of the cases filed were dismissed. In Charlottesville, approximately 48.8% of cases were dismissed.<sup>1</sup>



Source: Ben Schoenfeld (virginiacourtdata.org) and UVa Legal Data Lab

In cases where a judgment was found, there are, necessarily, more judgments for the plaintiff than default judgments (as the latter is a subset of the former) in both General District Courts. Albemarle had 1,111 cases with plaintiff judgments (45% of overall cases), of which 902 were default judgments (37% of overall cases; 81% of plaintiff judgments). We observe a similar pattern in Charlottesville, where 490 cases were found judgments for the plaintiff (45% of overall cases). There were 288 default judgments among the Charlottesville filings (27% of overall cases; 59% of plaintiff judgments), a slightly lower proportion than in Albemarle.

Overall, we find more cases in Albemarle than Charlottesville, as well as similar patterns in terms of the proportion of plaintiff judgments in each jurisdiction.

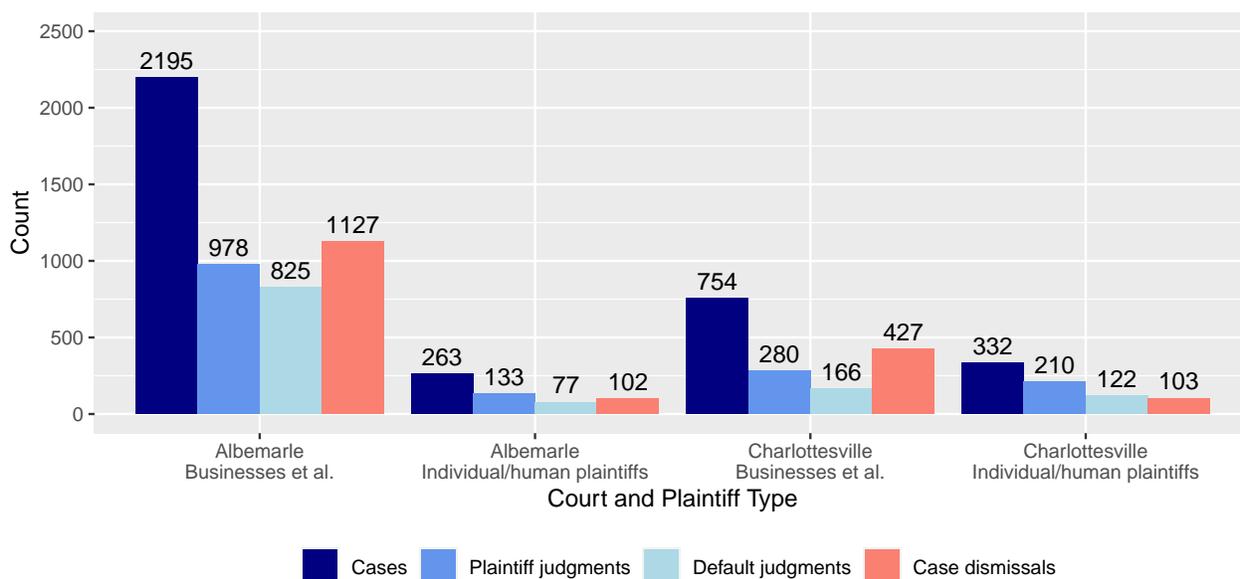
<sup>1</sup>Additional judgments – Non-suit, Unserved, Change of Venue – make up the remaining case outcomes. These outcomes occur for a small number of cases and are not shown in these figures.

## Case Outcomes by Court/Plaintiff Type

Figure 2 splits the cases in the respective General District Courts by plaintiff type: individuals vs. management companies/business entities/quasi-governmental organizations (“businesses”). The data show that the overwhelming number of case filings (89% in Albemarle; 69% in Charlottesville) are filed by businesses.

Additionally, in terms of outcomes, we see a distinct pattern based on the plaintiff type. When a business is the plaintiff, we find far more case dismissals (51% in Albemarle; 57% in Charlottesville) than when an individual is the plaintiff (39% in Albemarle; 31% in Charlottesville). Further investigation would be required to explain this higher dismissal rate for eviction cases filed by business entities. The court data as captured in the Online Case Information System do not help determine if business plaintiffs submit eviction filings for systematically different reasons.

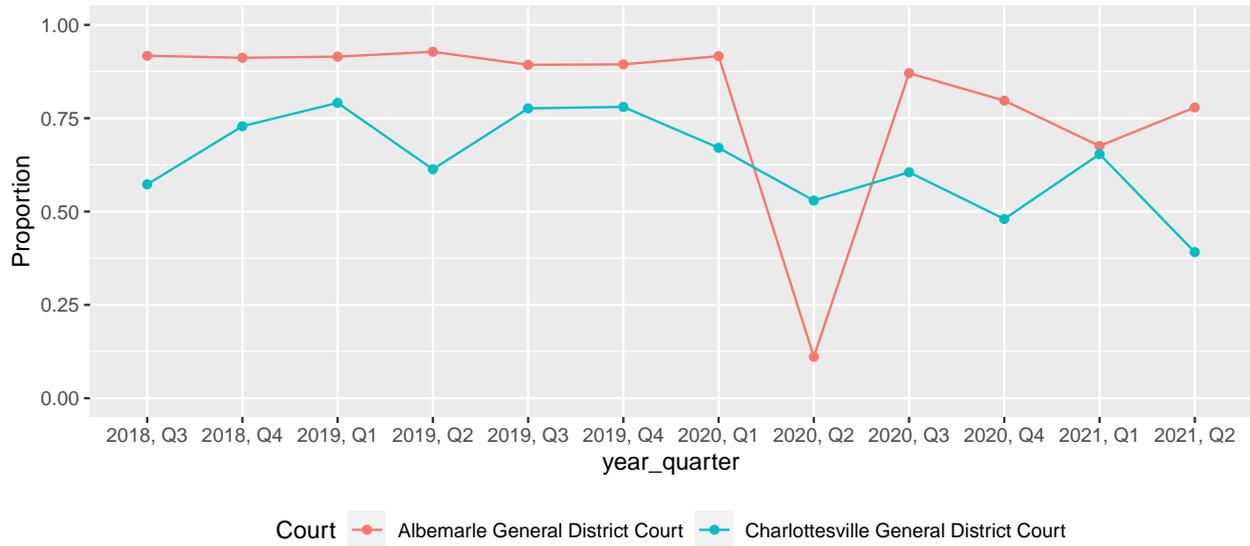
**Figure 2**  
Eviction Cases and Outcomes by Plaintiff Type, July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021



Source: Ben Schoenfeld ([virginiacourtdata.org](http://virginiacourtdata.org)) and UVa Legal Data Lab

Figure 3 shows the proportion of cases filed by businesses in each quarter of the three-year period broken out by court jurisdiction. In Charlottesville, rates range consistently between just over half to three quarters of cases being filed by businesses during the time period (except for a drop in the most recent quarter, 2021 Q2). Albemarle also exhibits initial stability in the rates of businesses filing cases in Albemarle, with the rate hovering at 90%, up until 2020 Q2, at which point we see a sharp drop to about 12% of cases being filed by businesses. The next quarter sees case filings returning close to the historic trend. Notably, though, there is a downward trend in the proportion of management companies filing eviction cases for the remainder of the study period.

Figure 3  
Proportion of Eviction Cases Filed by Management Companies/Non-Human Entities  
July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021



Source: Ben Schoenfeld (virginiacourtdata.org) and UVa Legal Data Lab

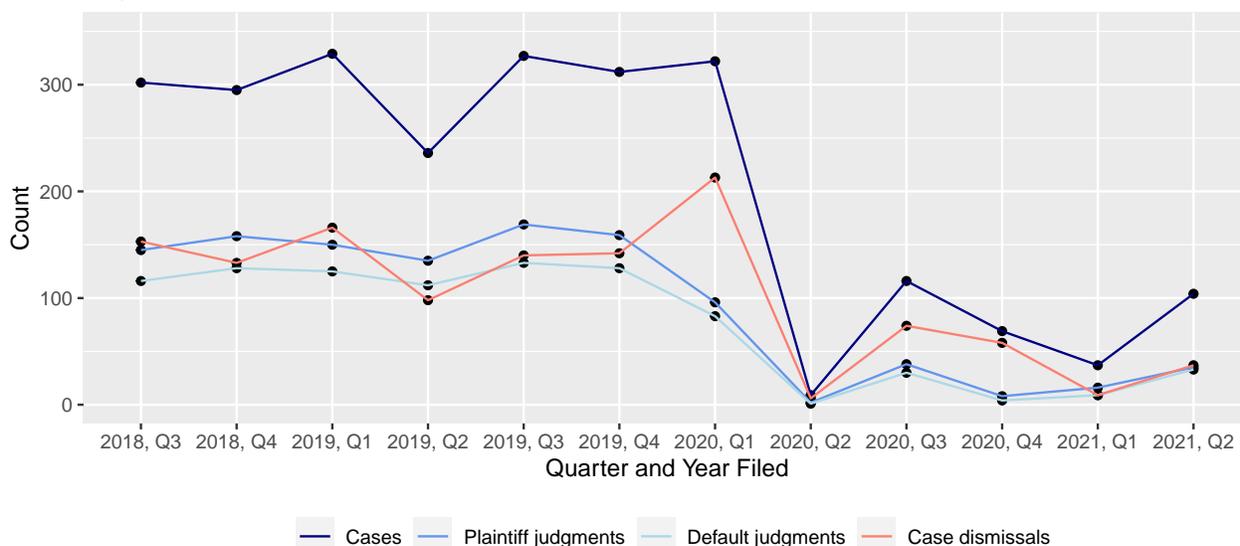
## Case Filings and Outcomes Over Time

Figures 4 and 5 capture eviction filings and outcomes in the respective General District Courts occurring during each quarter of the time period captured in the database. While overall rates differ, in general, we see similar patterns in the changes to the numbers of eviction case filings during the time period analyzed here.

In Albemarle (Figure 4), case filings hover at approximately 300 cases per quarter (with the exception of 2019 Q2, where we find fewer than 250 cases) up until the second quarter of 2020. In the 2020 Q2, we see a sharp decline to nearly zero cases. Cases then rebound slightly, but never to the levels seen prior to 2020 Q2.

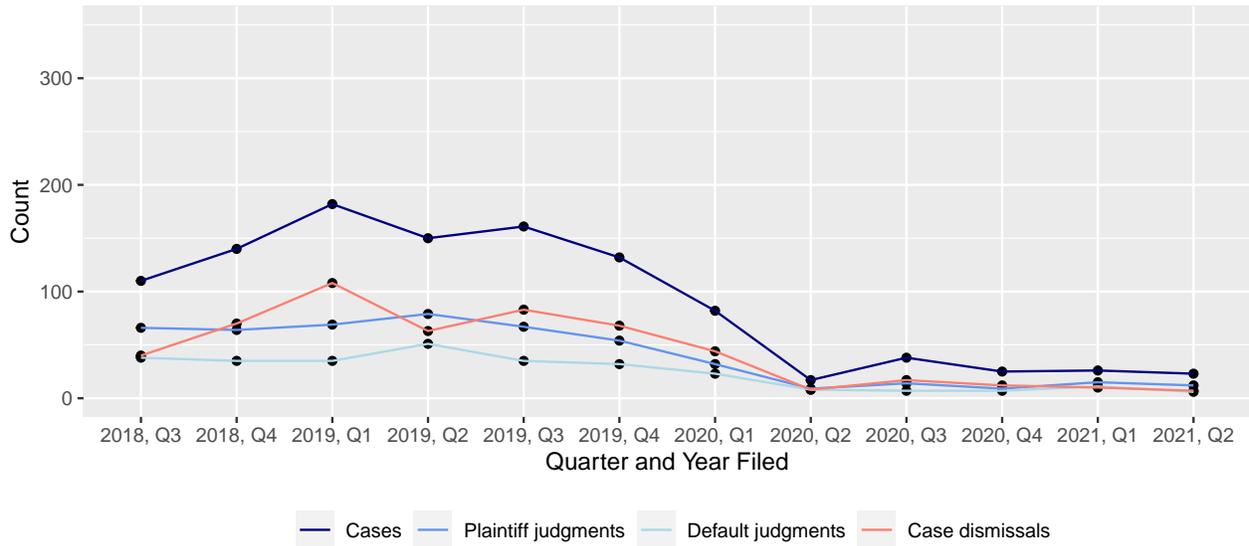
In Charlottesville (Figure 5), eviction filings are slightly more variable prior to 2020, ranging from 110 eviction case filings in 2018 Q3 to 182 eviction case filings in 2019 Q1. Eviction case filings begin steadily falling in 2019 Q3 and then fall sharply in 2020 Q2. Case filings remain below 50 for the remainder of the quarters in the dataset.

**Figure 4**  
**Eviction Cases and Outcomes, Albemarle General District Court**  
 July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021



Source: Ben Schoenfeld (virginiacourtdata.org) and UVa Legal Data Lab

Figure 5  
 Eviction Cases and Outcomes, Charlottesville General District Court  
 July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021



Source: Ben Schoenfeld (virginiacourtdata.org) and UVa Legal Data Lab

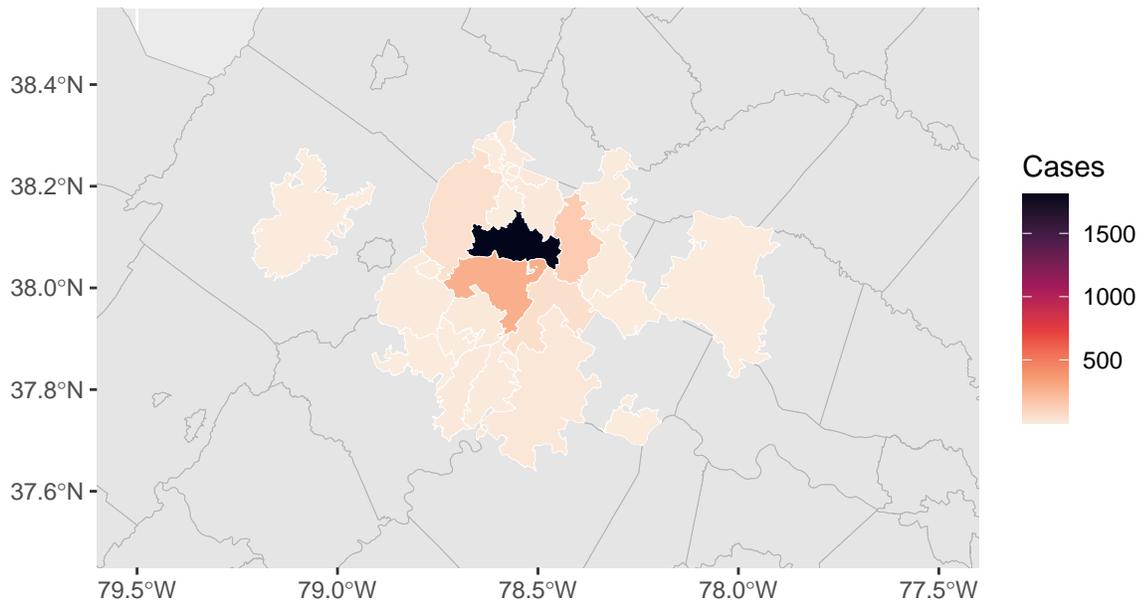
While we do not conduct analyses capable of drawing causal inferences, the dramatic drop in eviction case filings in 2020 Q2 is consistent with the COVID-19 pandemic-related eviction moratoria issued by the federal and Virginia state governments at that time.

## Filings and Evictions by ZIP Code

**Albemarle.** Figures 6 and 7 display counts and rates of eviction cases filed in the Albemarle General District Court during this three-year period, broken out by the ZIP Code of the primary (first-listed) defendant. In Albemarle, the overwhelming number of case filings (1806, or 73%) involve defendants in one ZIP code: 22901. Only two other ZIP codes (22903, 22911) have over 100 associated filings during this time period.

Looking at eviction filing rates (the number of eviction filings relative to the number of renting households), the 22901 ZIP code again stands out, with the highest measured rate of 0.088, or about 9 filings per 100 rental households per year (6,823 renting households). The eviction filing rates are also relatively high in ZIP codes 22959 and 22935, with 4 to 5 filings per 100 rental households per year, but these ZIP codes contain far fewer renting households (107 and 70). While ZIP codes 22903 and 22911 have a moderately high number of eviction filings, the eviction filing rate are low given the large number of renting households: for 22903 the rate is 1 filing per 100 renting households per year (8,489 renting households); for 22911 the rate is 1.9 filings per 100 renting households per year (2,626 renting households).

**Figure 6**  
**Cases Filed by Defendant ZIP Code**  
**Albemarle General District Court, July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021**



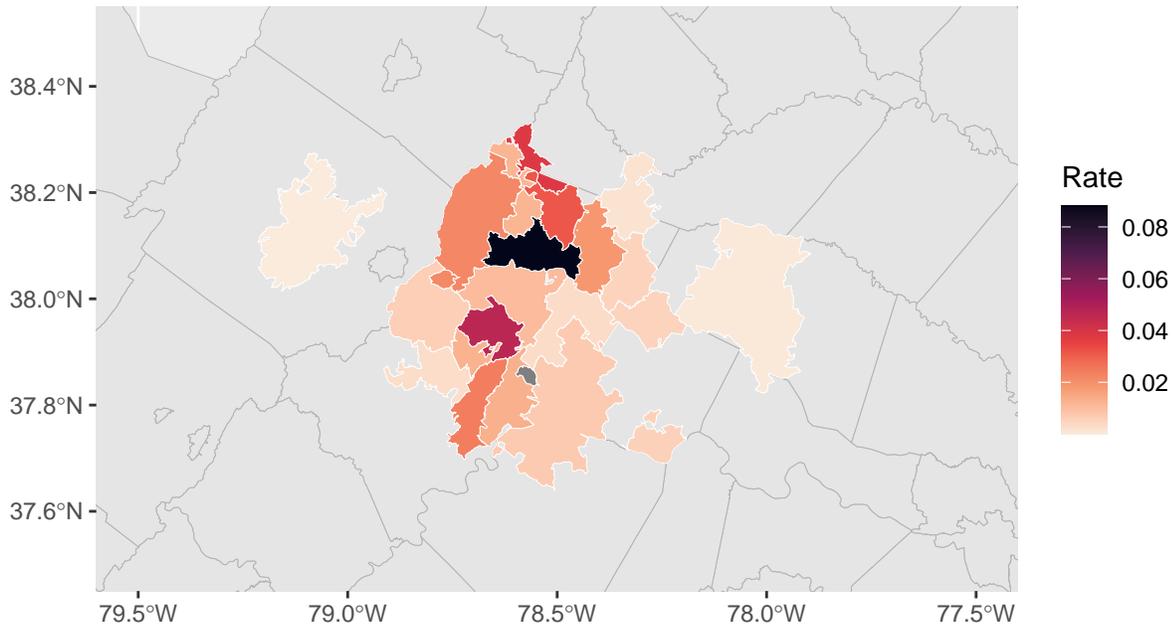
Source: Ben Schoenfeld ([virginiacourtdata.org](http://virginiacourtdata.org)) and UVa Legal Data Lab

1 case in an outlying ZIP is not shown

4 cases in unmappable ZIPs are not shown

12 cases with no ZIP are not shown

Figure 7  
Cumulative Filing Rate by Defendant ZIP Code  
Albemarle General District Court, July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021

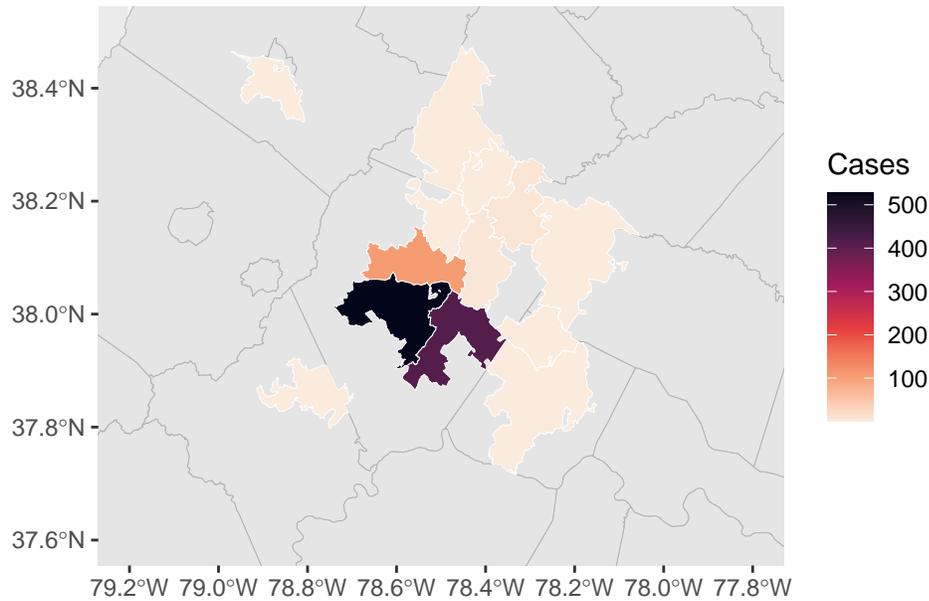


Source: Ben Schoenfeld ([viriniacourtdata.org](http://viriniacourtdata.org)), UVa Legal Data Lab,  
and American Community Survey 2015–2019  
The exclusions in Figure 6 apply to Figure 7

**Charlottesville.** Figures 8 and 9 display counts and rates of eviction cases filed in the Charlottesville General District Court during the time period of interest, broken out by the ZIP Code of the primary (first-listed) defendant. As with cases filed in the Albemarle General District Court, defendant ZIP Codes are fairly concentrated: 87% of cases list defendants in one of two ZIP codes (22902 and 22903), and only one other ZIP code (22901) had over 100 associated filings.

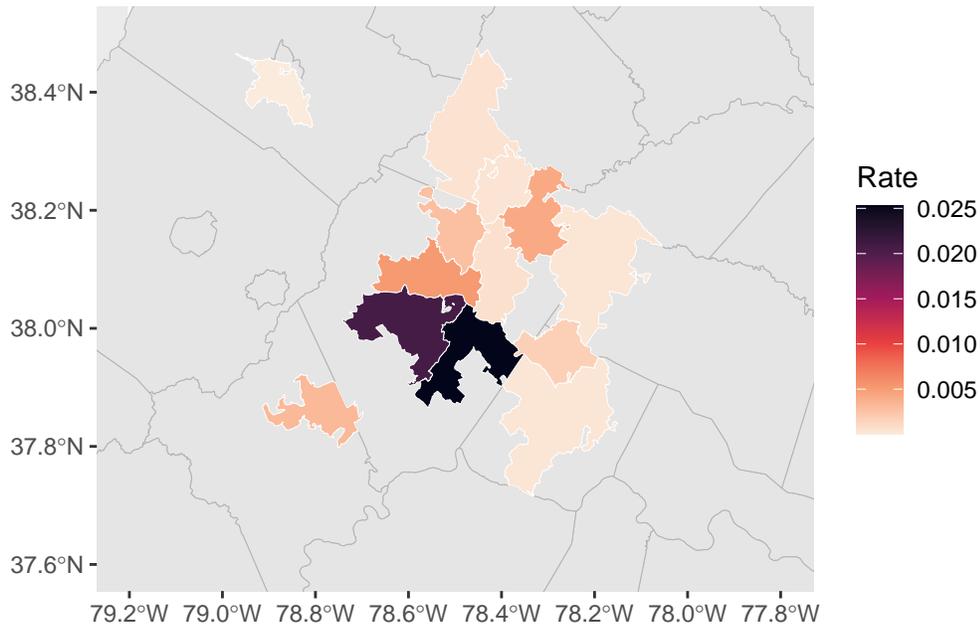
Eviction filing rates, taking into account the number of renting households, spotlight the same ZIP codes. There were 413 eviction filings made in ZIP code 22902 during this three-year period, for an eviction filing rate of 2.5 filings per 100 renting households per year (5,440 renting households). While there were more filings in ZIP code 22903 (528), the eviction filing rate was slightly lower at 2 filings per 100 renting households per year (8,489 renting households). No other ZIP codes experienced an eviction filing rate above 1.

**Figure 8**  
**Cases Filed by Defendant ZIP Code**  
**Charlottesville General District Court, July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021**



Source: Ben Schoenfeld ([virginiacourtdata.org](http://virginiacourtdata.org)) and UVa Legal Data Lab  
 3 cases for defendants in outlying ZIPs are not shown  
 3 cases in unmappable ZIPs are not shown  
 9 cases with no ZIP are not shown

Figure 9  
Cumulative Filing Rate by Defendant ZIP Code  
Charlottesville General District Court, July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021



Source: Ben Schoenfeld ([virginiacourtdata.org](http://virginiacourtdata.org)), UVa Legal Data Lab,  
and American Community Survey 2015–2019  
The exclusions in Figure 8 apply to Figure 9

## Defendant Costs

Figures 10 and 11 break down the various costs to defendants in cases judged for the plaintiff in the Albemarle and Charlottesville General District Courts, respectively. Overall defendant costs totaled just under \$2.7M for cases in the Albemarle General District Court during the time period analyzed here. Overall defendant costs totaled approximately \$1.1M for cases in the Charlottesville General District Court during this time period. For both courts, we find that the principal amount is the primary cost, making up 85% of awards in cases filed in Albemarle and 88% of awards in cases filed in Charlottesville. Principal amount typically covers rental costs not previously paid by the defendant. Attorney’s fees represent 6.6% of total defendant costs in Albemarle and 3.4% of total defendant costs in Charlottesville.

**Figure 10**  
**Defendant Costs, Albemarle General District Court**  
**July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021**



Source: Ben Schoenfeld (virginiacourtdata.org) and UVa Legal Data Lab

**Figure 11**  
**Defendant Costs, Charlottesville General District Court**  
**July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021**



Source: Ben Schoenfeld (virginiacourtdata.org) and UVa Legal Data Lab

Table 1 gives the average monetary awards in cases found for the plaintiff, broken out by court and default/non-default judgment status. In both jurisdictions, the average monetary award in default judgments for the plaintiff is approximately \$2,400. In Albemarle, awards accompanying non-default plaintiff judgments are greater, on average, than awards accompanying default plaintiff judgments, whereas in Charlottesville, average

monetary awards are substantially lower, on average, among cases with non-default plaintiff judgments than among cases with default plaintiff judgments.

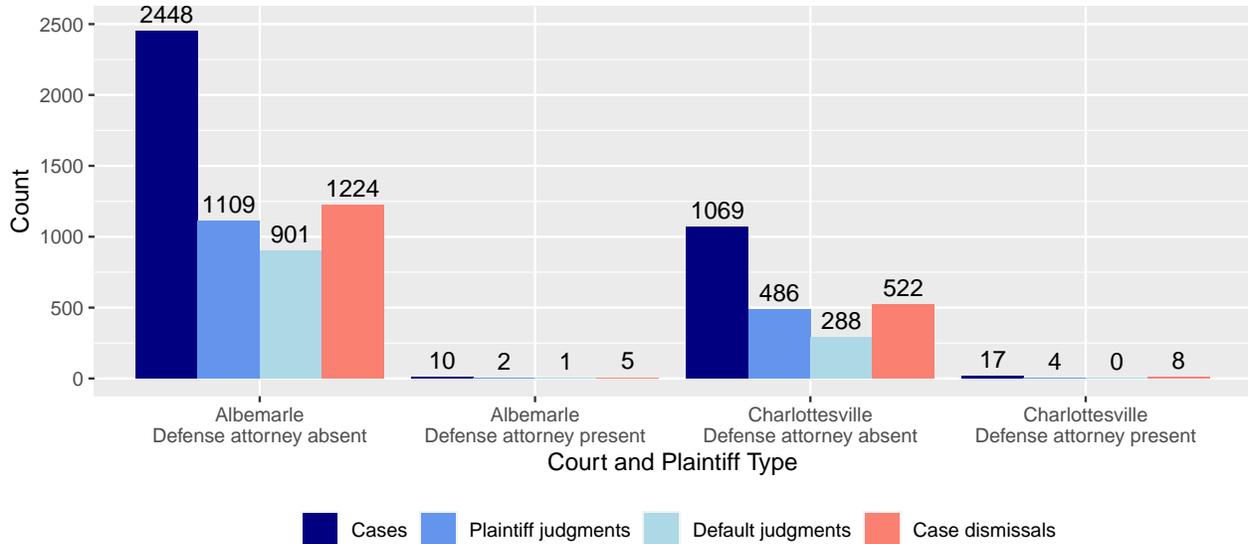
Table 1: Average Monetary Awards in Cases Found for the Plaintiff by Default/Non-Default Judgment by Court

| Court                                  | Result                         | Average \$ Award | Award \$ Range    |
|--|--------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Albemarle General District Court       | Default Plaintiff Judgment     | \$2407.28        | [\$0, \$46151.80] |
| Albemarle General District Court       | Non-Default Plaintiff Judgment | \$2664.75        | [\$0, \$31304.00] |
| Charlottesville General District Court | Default Plaintiff Judgment     | \$2453.67        | [\$0, \$93043.62] |
| Charlottesville General District Court | Non-Default Plaintiff Judgment | \$1990.41        | [\$0, \$9369.10]  |

## Presence of Defense Attorneys

In both the Albemarle and Charlottesville General District Courts, the overwhelming majority of cases (99% and 98%, respectively) did not have a defense attorney listed, an extremely troubling outcome. Figure 12 displays case outcomes split up by whether defense attorneys were listed or not. We encourage extreme caution in drawing any conclusions about differences in patterns of outcomes between cases where defense attorneys were present and cases where they were not present, given the extreme dearth of cases in which defendants had representation.

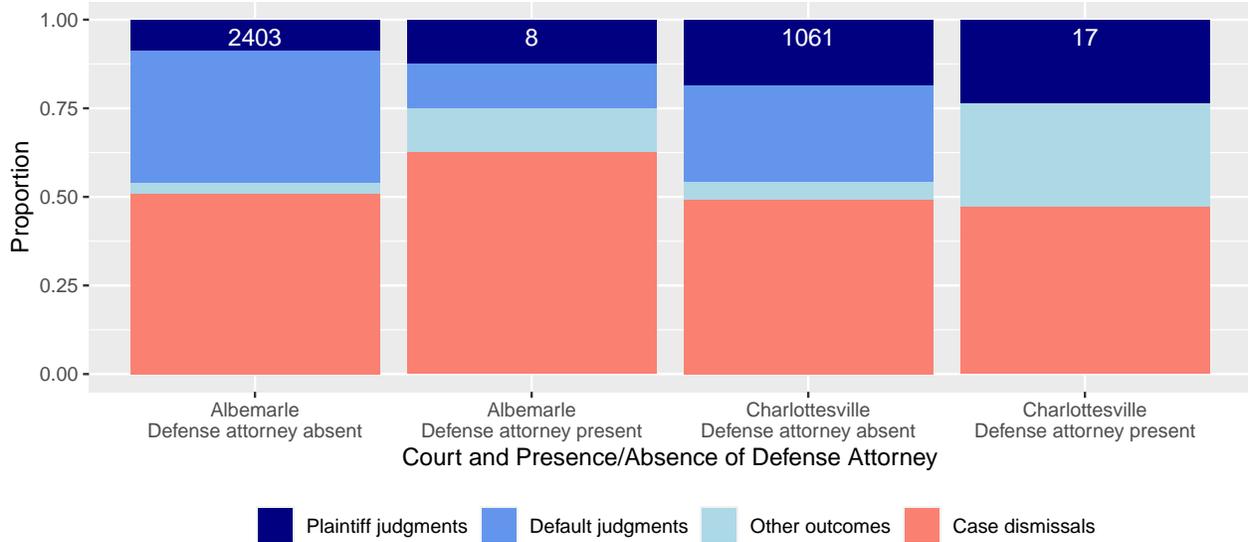
**Figure 12**  
Eviction Filings and Outcomes by Presence/Absence of Defense Attorney  
July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021



Source: Ben Schoenfeld (virginiacourtdata.org) and UVA Legal Data Lab

Figure 13 displays the number of cases filed in each of the courts of interest broken out by whether an attorney was listed for the defendant or not.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 13**  
**Case Outcome Proportions by Presence/Absence of Defense Attorney**  
**July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021**



Source: Ben Schoenfeld (virginiacourtdata.org) and UVa Legal Data Lab

Again, we encourage caution in drawing conclusions about the impact of a defense attorney with so few positive cases to draw on. While there is little difference in the percent of cases that are dismissed or that result in (non-default) judgments for the plaintiff, there are fewer default judgments and a higher rate of other outcomes in these cases where defendants have legal representation.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Figure 12 excludes two eviction cases filed for which no judgment had yet been issued at the time of data collection.

<sup>3</sup>Among the six cases where a defense attorney was present and the outcome was not a dismissal, a default judgment, or a judgment for the plaintiff, all resulted in a “Non-suit” outcome.

## Outcomes in First vs. Later Hearings

In Table 2, we report the percent of cases filed in each court that were concluded in one hearing (i.e., that have both a judgment and a single hearing listed), broken out by judgment.

Table 2: Percent of Cases Concluded in First Hearing

| Court                                  | Outcome                        | Percent |
|--|--------------------------------|---------|
| Albemarle General District Court       | Default Plaintiff Judgment     | 85.03%  |
| Albemarle General District Court       | Non-Default Plaintiff Judgment | 60.87%  |
| Albemarle General District Court       | Case Dismissed                 | 73.15%  |
| Charlottesville General District Court | Default Plaintiff Judgment     | 70.38%  |
| Charlottesville General District Court | Non-Default Plaintiff Judgment | 66.50%  |
| Charlottesville General District Court | Case Dismissed                 | 62.08%  |

In Albemarle, default judgments were notably more likely to be made in the initial hearing (85%). A somewhat smaller percent of cases that were ultimately dismissed were resolved in the first hearing (73%); and only 60% of cases ending in a (non-default) judgment for the plaintiff were resolved in the first hearing.

In Charlottesville, the differences in timing across outcomes were less stark. Default judgments were still the most likely to be made at the initial hearing (70%), very close to the 67% of cases that ended in a (non-default) judgment for the plaintiffs resolved in the first hearing.

## Serial Cases

We define serial cases as multiple filings by a given plaintiff against a given defendant within a given (defendant) ZIP Code within 12 months. We flag combinations of plaintiffs/defendants/defendant ZIPs that have associated serial cases in the database, and we provide in Table 3 an overview of the representation of serial cases in the database. In the table below, a “Serial Combination” is a combination of a plaintiff, defendant, and defendant ZIP Code for which serial cases are present.

Table 3: Number and Percent of Cases Associated With a Serial Combination

| Court                                  | Number | Percent |
|--|--------|---------|
| Albemarle General District Court       | 1098   | 44.67%  |
| Charlottesville General District Court | 325    | 29.93%  |

## Writs

In Table 4, we report the percentage of eviction cases filed in each court during the study period that have a writ filing date included in their case record. We encourage caution in interpreting these percentages, as it's yet unclear whether the fields in the Online Case Information System that contain writ filing dates are fully up-to-date and reliable. We observe a large proportion of cases with no information in those fields, and it's possible that court clerks and/or other case-involved parties don't update records as writs are filed/executed.

Table 4: Percent of Cases With a Writ Recorded

| Court                                  | Percent |
|--|---------|
| Albemarle General District Court       | 23.52%  |
| Charlottesville General District Court | 19.89%  |

## Plaintiffs With Highest Case Filing Counts From July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2021

Per the expressed interest of TJPDC, we are including in Table 5 a list of the plaintiffs with the highest filing counts in the time period of interest (across both courts). Note that this table should not be interpreted as reflecting plaintiffs with the highest filing *rates*. We do not have information as to how many units are leased by each of the plaintiffs in the tables below. Instead, this table should be interpreted as a general reference regarding plaintiffs that file large volumes of eviction cases.

Table 5: Plaintiffs With Highest Filing Counts, Inclusive of both the Albemarle and Charlottesville General District Courts

| Plaintiff                                   | Case Count |
|---|------------|
| GOLDSTAR BARRACKS OWNER LLC                 | 404        |
| SEMF CHARLESTON LLC                         | 345        |
| ABBINGTON CROSSING LLC                      | 205        |
| CRHA  | 186        |
| PEP UVA LLC                                 | 163        |
| SQUIRE HILL CHARLOTTESVILLE LLC             | 156        |
| BLUE RIDGE COMMONS APARTMENTS LLC           | 138        |
| FOUR SEASONS APARTMENTS LIMITED PARTNERSHIP | 95         |
| WESTGATE/BARCLAY PLACE LLC                  | 90         |
| MCDANIEL, DONNIE                            | 75         |
| WILTON ASSOCIATES LP                        | 50         |
| BERKSHIRE ASSOCIATES LC                     | 44         |
| RIO HILL ASSOCIATES LP                      | 42         |
| NHTE PIEDMONT GARRETT SQUARE LP             | 35         |
| PMI COMMONWEALTH                            | 34         |
| GS BW UNITS LLC                             | 31         |
| TIMBERLAND PARK VA LLC                      | 31         |
| FITZGERALD COMPANY                          | 29         |
| SQUIRE HILL CHARLOTTESVILLE LC              | 28         |
| TREESDALE LP                                | 27         |

Also note that this table reflects an enduring limitation of administrative data: The same entity can be entered in multiple records under different names. “Squire Hill Charlottesville LC” and “Squire Hill Charlottesville LLC” are presumably the same plaintiff, but they will not automatically be tagged as such using unmodified grouping procedures. We apply standardization procedures to defendant and plaintiff names to get around this issue to a large degree, but, as exemplified above, the process is imperfect.