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I-Team: What nearly 50,000 eviction filings in four years have done to Hamilton County

'It's worse than we thought'

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CINCINNATI -- About a month after the health department found black mold in Stephanie Smith's Golf Manor apartment, Smith's landlord gave her an eviction notice.

A judge eventually dismissed the eviction. But Smith still ended up giving away her furniture, moving out and living apart from her three children for six months when she couldn't find anyplace they could all stay together.

"That was the hardest thing I ever had to go through, not being with my kids every day," Smith said through tears. "It was really hard for me to deal with my kids just missing me and me missing them."

Smith had a steady job and money to pay the first month's rent for a different apartment. But she said she got rejected again and again after landlords saw an eviction filing on her record. Experts say that's a struggle that just about everyone who gets evicted experiences.

Stephanie Smith cries as she talks about the time she lived apart from her children. (Lot Tan | WCPO)

A new study conducted as part of The Cincinnati Project at the University of Cincinnati shows just how prevalent evictions are in Cincinnati and Hamilton County -- and which communities