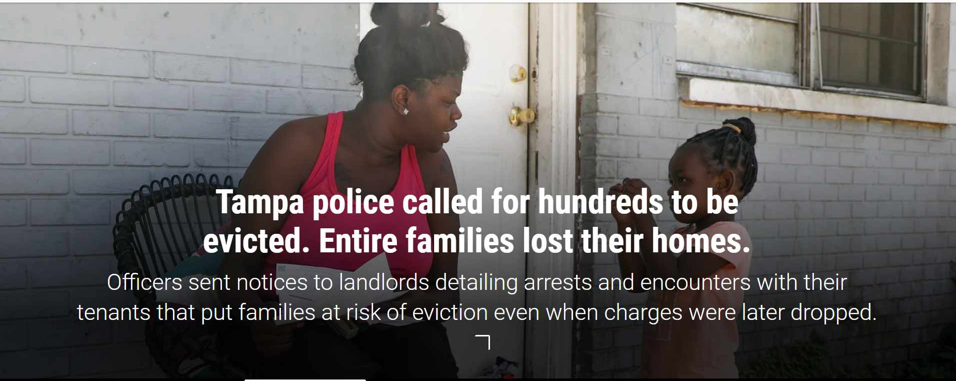

Tampa police called for hundreds to be evicted. Entire families lost their homes.

Officers sent notices to landlords detailing arrests and encounters with their tenants that put families at risk of eviction even when charges were later dropped.

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▶ Listen 23:16

By **Christopher O'Donnell**, **Ian Hodgson** and **Nathaniel Lash**

Published Sep. 15, 2021
Updated Sep. 17, 2021

TAMPA — Police apprehended the three teenage boys, their pockets bulging with coins, close to South Seminole Heights shortly before dawn.

The youngest was 16. His haul from a nighttime spree of stealing from cars was $4.44 in change, a glove, a flashlight, a hoodie and wireless headphones.

The boy was taken to a juvenile detention center. Make sure he goes to school and does not sneak out at night, police told his mother.

But under a Tampa police initiative, officers also notified the management of Robles Park Village, the public housing complex where he lived.

His entire family lost their home.

Since 2013, the Tampa Police Department has taken a hands-on role at more than 100 apartment communities, sending notices to landlords when their tenants are arrested or stopped by officers and encouraging their eviction.

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The program, known as Crime-Free Multi Housing, was marketed to landlords as a way to keep violent crime and drug and gang activity off their properties.

Police pledged to create a database of "documented violent offenders, gang members or career criminals involved in your community." It alerted landlords to tenants arrested for armed robbery and drug dealing.

But the program also swept up more than 100 people who were arrested for misdemeanors — and dozens more whose charges were later dropped, a *Tampa Bay Times* investigation has found.

Tenants were reported to their landlord for matters as small as shoplifting; two were reported for driving with a suspended license. Entire families lost their homes after the arrest of a child or a relative who didn't live with them.

And roughly 90 percent of the 1,100 people flagged by the program were Black, police records show. That's despite Black residents making up only 54 percent of all arrests in Tampa over the past eight years.

The *Times* first approached the Tampa police about the program in 2017. Since then, the department has operated the program less aggressively, sending fewer letters to landlords and toning down wording that instructed landlords to take action. But police are continuing to report tenants to their landlords.

Mayor Jane Castor, who launched the initiative when she was police chief, remains bullish about the program. She said it has significantly reduced crime rates in tough-to-police neighborhoods, improving the quality of life for lawful tenants. That includes a 39 percent drop in serious crime reports at Robles Park, police said.

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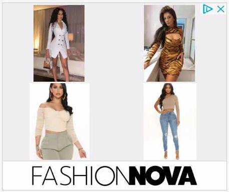

Tampa Mayor Jane Castor was the city's chief of police when it launched the Crime-Free Multi Housing program in 2013. She remains a staunch supporter. [DIRK SHADD | Times]

“In some of the lower-income complexes, they were just like the O.K. Corral,” Castor said. “People were hostages in their apartments and couldn’t let their kids out to play.”

Police officials said they had no say in whether a tenant was evicted — they were just sharing information.

“I don’t think that the landlords are evicting somebody based on a notice of arrest,” Castor said.

The police department’s biggest landlord partner was the Tampa Housing Authority, which provides housing to some of the city’s lowest income families. It received roughly one-quarter of the notices.

Bill Jackson, the authority’s director of public safety, said that his agency supports the program — and that he wasn’t concerned that people were evicted even when the State Attorney’s Office declined to prosecute.

That happens sometimes because those who are arrested turn informant, he said, adding that judges issue an eviction only if they are satisfied there are grounds. The authority conducts its own investigation, too, he said.

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“We don’t need a conviction,” Jackson said. “We just need reasonable suspicion.”

National experts, however, said the city’s program violates federal housing law and noted that the American Civil Liberties Union is suing similar programs in other cities.

“This is an example of expansive police power going under the radar,” said Deborah Archer, a professor at New York University School of Law and faculty director of the school’s Center on Race, Inequality and the Law. “We shouldn’t be attaching these kinds of consequences to arrests.”

Archer is also the supervising attorney of the school’s Civil Rights Clinic. That organization, the NAACP, the ACLU of Florida and other civil rights groups responded on Thursday to the online publication of the *Times* investigation, calling for the program to be scrapped.

In a letter sent to Castor and the Tampa City Council, the groups said the program “further entrenches the consequences of racial bias, further marginalizes people of color, and further compounds Tampa’s deep legacy of problematic housing and property policies.”

Castor on Thursday continued her support for the program.

RELATED: Civil rights groups call for halt to Tampa police Crime-Free housing program

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TAMPA CRIME-FREE MULTI HOUSING PROGRAM
Keeping Illegal Activity Out Of Rental Property

Meridian Apartments on N 50th St. in Tampa is one of about 100 apartment complexes that participated in Tampa Police Department's Crime-Free Multi Housing program. [CHRISTOPHER O'DONNELL | Times]

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WHEN POLICE TALK TO LANDLORDS

To coordinate the new crime initiative, the police created a General Offender Awareness List, or GOAL, database.

It included names, addresses and dates of birth of roughly 600 arrested tenants. It also listed more than 150 tenants whose children, partner or guest had been arrested.

Landlords were asked to let police know when they had taken action so officers could update the database.

Officers recorded more than 300 tenants as “evicted,” although it’s unclear if they were evicted, forced out of their homes by a notice to vacate or simply moved away.

The *Times* was able to match 178 of those cases to arrest records in Hillsborough County’s court system.

In 42, the arrest charges were for misdemeanors. In 62 cases, the charges reported to the landlord were later dropped.

Police were unable to provide the *Times* with copies of every letter they sent to landlords. Of the almost 400 they handed over, roughly one-quarter were for misdemeanor arrests.

Black renters bore the brunt of the program's impact. Almost 86 percent of those flagged in the database and 91 percent of those named in letters to landlords were Black, records show.

The racial disparity is no accident. Tampa has 267 apartment complexes of 15 or more units, but only about 100 complexes were enrolled in the program at its peak. Three-quarters of those were in neighborhoods where U.S. Census block data shows the majority of residents are Black and Hispanic, the *Times* found.

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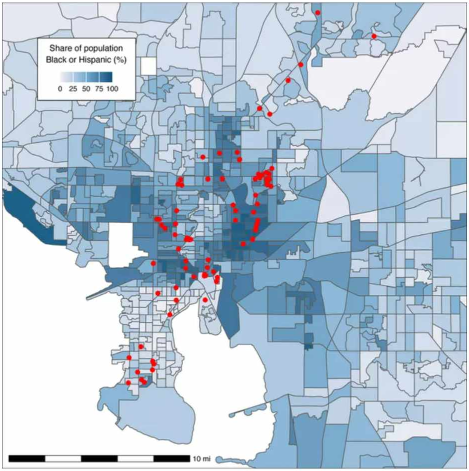
A TARGETED PROGRAM



Around 100 apartment complexes were enrolled in Tampa's Crime-Free Multi Housing initiative, police records show. Three quarters of them were in neighborhoods where the majority of residents are Black and Hispanic. Police said the program was aimed at high-crime properties. Source: US Census; Tampa Bay Times analysis. [IAN HODGSON | Tampa Bay Times]

The true number of people who lost homes through the program is likely higher. Police stopped maintaining the tenant offender database in 2018, although they are still sending notices to landlords. And some tenants chose not to fight an eviction, so no case was filed in court.

Police spokesperson Jamel Lanee said in April that police don't send notices to landlords about "misdemeanor traffic offenses, a misdemeanor arrest of a juvenile or an offense involving domestic violence."

But the *Times* review found that 44 tenants had been flagged to their landlord for domestic violence incidents since the program began, along with 13 for small-time drug busts and two for driving with a suspended license.

Records show that 140 of the letters police sent to landlords were for arrests that took place more than a mile from the property. Many other communities that have adopted the program limit it to arrests on property grounds.

Assistant Tampa police Chief Lee Bercaw, in an interview with the *Times* in June, said officers should only inform landlords about arrests on or "near" the property. He said the captain running the program is making sure notices are no longer sent for arrests that don't meet that criteria, nor for domestic violence cases.

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When asked about the demographics of the people who had been flagged by the program, Castor said complexes with the highest crime rates were mostly those with a higher percentage of minority tenants.

"Criminality is not a protected class," she said. "If you flip that, on the other side, look at the majority of people you have kept from being victims of crime in these particular complexes."

The Tampa Police Department has been in trouble before for a crime initiative that disproportionately burdened one racial group.

A 2015 *Times* investigation showed that when Tampa police wrote tickets to bicyclists, they were almost exclusively Black cyclists. A subsequent U.S. Department of Justice investigation found that the tactic served no law enforcement purpose.

RELATED: How riding your bike can land you in trouble with the cops — if you're black

And in this program, a handful of residents were reported to their landlords for incidents that didn't even result in an arrest.

Olivia Presley, 5, plays while Jasmine Baker, 30, gives a bottle to Christian Presley, 6 months, in their Tampa apartment. Baker, who said she is a mental health patient, was evicted from Columbus Court Apartments after police took her to a hospital for an evaluation. She had clashed with security guards. "I slept in the park five and a half months pregnant last year so I just take what I got," Baker said about the duplex where she now lives. "Whatever I have to do to keep it, that's what I got to do." [IVY CEBALLO]

Police took Jasmine Baker, 30, to a hospital for a mental health evaluation after she fought with security guards responding to a noise complaint. Witnesses said the guards pepper-sprayed her in her home at Columbus Court Apartments in 2018, according to a police report. Baker, who said she receives therapy for anxiety, depression and bipolar disorder, feared her two young daughters could end up choking.

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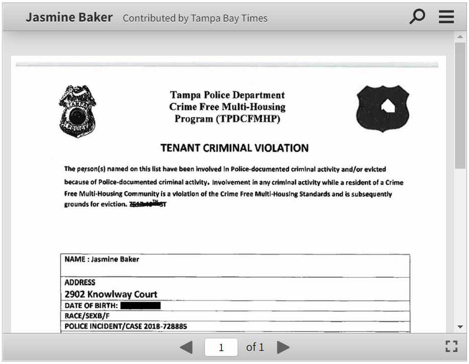
She was not charged, but police later sent a "Tenant Criminal Violation" notice to her property manager stating that there were "grounds for eviction." A termination of lease notice was soon tacked to Baker's door.



Tampa Police Department
Crime Free Multi-Housing
Program (TPDCFMHP)

TENANT CRIMINAL VIOLATION

The person(s) named on this list have been involved in Police-documented criminal activity and/or evicted because of Police-documented criminal activity. Involvement in any criminal activity while a resident of a Crime Free Multi-Housing Community is a violation of the Crime Free Multi-Housing Standards and is subsequently grounds for eviction. [redacted]

NAME : Jasmine Baker

ADDRESS
2902 Knowlway Court
DATE OF BIRTH: [redacted]
RACE/SEXB/F
POLICE INCIDENT/CASE 2018-728885

After the eviction was filed in court, she was arrested for child abuse after she grabbed her son's hand and pushed it into the face of a child she said had been bullying him. She pleaded guilty and was put on probation for 36 months.

Her eviction meant her two children had to stay with relatives for more than a year except when their mother could afford a motel room.

Her lowest point, she said, was the night she slept on a park bench while five months pregnant.

"I feel like the police wronged me," Baker said. "I should never have had to go through that."

'STRENGTHENS YOUR ABILITY TO REMOVE PROBLEM TENANTS'

Programs like Tampa's exist in more than 2,000 U.S. cities, mostly modeled on one launched in Mesa, Arizona, in 1992.

Tampa police learned of the concept from the Orlando Police Department. They printed brochures to market the program, promising landlords reduced crime, better property values and increased demand for apartments.

Landlords can get properties fully certified as "crime-free" by taking an eight-hour class on crime-prevention strategies and making recommended safety improvements, such as securing doors and adding outdoor lighting. They also must incorporate a clause into their leases that says they may evict if a tenant, family member or houseguest "engages in any criminal activity."

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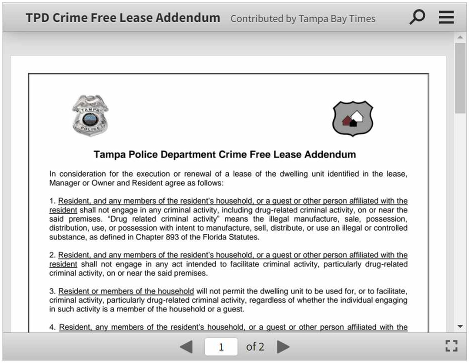
The department had legal language already written for landlords, documents show. The addendum, the police brochure promised, "strengthens your ability to remove problem residents."



Tampa Police Department Crime Free Lease Addendum

In consideration for the execution or renewal of a lease of the dwelling unit identified in the lease, Manager or Owner and Resident agree as follows:

1. Resident, and any members of the resident's household, or a guest or other person affiliated with the resident shall not engage in any criminal activity, including drug-related criminal activity, on or near the said premises. "Drug related criminal activity" means the illegal manufacture, sale, possession, distribution, use, or possession with intent to manufacture, sell, distribute, or use an illegal or controlled substance, as defined in Chapter 893 of the Florida Statutes.

2. Resident, and any members of the resident's household, or a guest or other person affiliated with the resident shall not engage in any act intended to facilitate criminal activity, particularly drug-related criminal activity, on or near the said premises.

3. Resident or members of the household will not permit the dwelling unit to be used for, or to facilitate, criminal activity, particularly drug-related criminal activity, regardless of whether the individual engaging in such activity is a member of the household or a guest.

4. Resident, any members of the resident's household, or a guest or other person affiliated with the

Similar clauses are common in apartment leases, but most are not enforced through a data-sharing agreement with police officers.

Landlords' participation in the program is voluntary, but police officials acknowledged that in the early years of the program, officers chose which properties they invited to join. That practice has been discontinued, said Lanee, the police spokesperson.

The *Times* was able to contact and get a comment from 25 of the participating landlords. All of them said the police invited them to participate.

The number of apartment complexes taking part has dwindled to 42 this year.

Castor said that's likely because those communities are safer. Police officials also attributed that to the turnover of property managers. And some complex owners may not be willing to pay for crime prevention improvements required by the program, they said.

Police provided statistics for 51 apartment complexes that participated in the program through at least 2020, showing that reports of serious crime had fallen by about 28 percent since 2013. Crime reports, however, rose at 11 of the properties.

It's unclear how much of the improvements can be attributed to the program versus other crime initiatives. The overall drop in crime at participating properties is in line with a 25 percent drop in violent and property crime reports across the city over the first seven years of the program.

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CAUGHT UP IN AN EVICTION

Tenants caught up in Tampa's crime-free housing program described being thrust into a bureaucratic process they struggled to understand.

Evictions are filed in court with the tenant named as a defendant. Tenants are not provided with an attorney, and a procedural misstep can mean the judge defaulting the case in favor of the landlord.

That's what happened to Darryle Jackson, a 35-year-old truck driver who decided to fight his eviction from the Robles Park apartment where he lived with his 2-year-old daughter.

The eviction filed by the Tampa Housing Authority cited the January 2018 arrest of Darryle's brother, Nicholas Jackson. During a traffic stop several miles from the property, police found 25 grams of marijuana in his pockets, 5 grams more than the limit to let the offender off with a civil citation. Nicholas Jackson also had been arrested four months earlier with 4 grams of the same drug.

Darryle Jackson said Nicholas hadn't lived in the apartment for six months, but he hadn't been able to get his brother to sign a notarized form to remove him from the lease. He learned of his brother's arrest only after he got the court summons for his own eviction in March 2018, he said.

He couldn't afford a lawyer, and the property manager wouldn't take his rent checks once the case was filed. Jackson said he didn't know that under Florida law, he had to deposit that money with the court instead.

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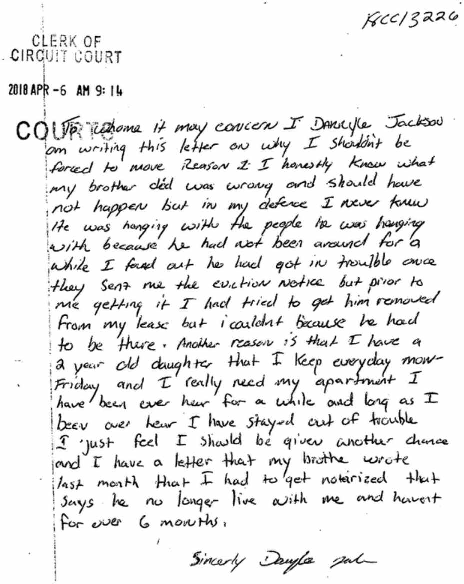
Once he found out, he paid his outstanding rent to the court and wrote his own motion asking the judge for "a day in court" to prove his brother wasn't living with him.



18CC13226

CLERK OF
CIRCUIT COURT

2018 APR -6 AM 9:14

COURT

To whome it may concern I Darryle Jackson
am writing this letter on why I shouldn't be
forced to move Reason 1: I honestly know what
my brother did was wrong and should have
not happen but in my defence I never knew
He was hanging with the people he was hanging
with because he had not been around for a
while I found out he had got in trouble once
they sent me the eviction notice but prior to
me getting it I had tried to get him removed
from my lease but i couldnt because he had
to be there. Another reason is that I have a
2 year old daughter that I keep everyday mon-
Friday and I really need my apartment I
have been over hear for a while and long as I
been over hear I have stayed out of trouble
I just feel I should be given another chance
and I have a letter that my brothe wrote
last month that I had to get notarized that
says he no longer live with me and havent
for over 6 months.

Sincerly Daryle

Darryle Jackson's handwritten plea to the judge to not be evicted. [Tampa Police Department]

The judge gave him a hearing that May but didn't give him an opportunity to talk about his brother.

Instead, she asked why he hadn't put the rent into the court registry right away. The eviction had been signed when he missed the first payment.

The hearing was over in minutes, he said. The judge asked the housing authority's lawyer to take Jackson outside the courtroom and explain what just happened, Jackson said.

Unbeknownst to Jackson, one day earlier, the Hillsborough State Attorney's Office had filed a document in his brother's case indicating it was dropping all the drug-related charges.

"They didn't want to hear anything," Jackson said. "Long as I've been over there, I've never got in any trouble, never got arrested, nothing."

Using evictions to tackle crime will invariably mean innocent family members also are punished, said Sandra Park, a senior attorney with the ACLU. She said crime-free programs like Tampa's effectively allow police to use landlords to punish people outside of the criminal justice system and can be a way around due process for defendants.

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The ACLU is suing other cities over similar programs.

‘CRIME-FREE’ IN OTHER CITIES

A handful of Florida communities have programs similar to Tampa’s, including Orange County and the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office. Other local agencies have decided against the program.

The St. Petersburg Police Department devised its own program with classes for landlords on how to improve safety.

But the department decided not to help landlords identify which tenants to evict, said Chip Wells, a retired officer who works at the department conducting security assessments of local businesses.

“We didn’t feel we should require a lot of the things theirs did,” Wells said of the national program.

The Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Office has no plans to advise landlords about tenant arrests, according to its public affairs office.

“It is at the discretion of the landlord to evict tenants who are not following the rules of their lease,” the agency said in a statement.

In other states, similar programs have been controversial.

Norristown, Pennsylvania, was operating a program when Mark Talbot was appointed chief of police in 2013. He successfully lobbied council members to rescind it after seeing how it impacted mostly poor and minority communities. It also was not an effective tool to reduce crime, he said, because it merely moved those arrested into different neighborhoods.

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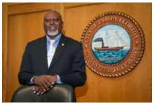
“The right question to ask is, does this constitute justice?” he said. “I’m of the belief we all are entitled to a place to live that is inside, away from the elements.”

Housing advocates expressed concern that Tampa police embarked on a policy with such severe consequences without any public debate or approval by the City Council.

Castor said it made sense to keep it under police department control, so it would be easier to make changes over time. And Bercaw said that only cities that passed ordinances to implement the program have faced legal challenges.



Tampa City Council Chairman Orlando Gudes said he has concerns about police reporting tenants to landlords for arrests that happened away from their properties. [IVY CEBALLO | Times]

Tampa City Council Chairman Orlando Gudes served for 26 years with the city’s police department, finishing his service as a master patrol officer. His district includes East Tampa, an area with many of the apartment complexes in the program. Gudes said he had heard of the program but did not realize landlords were being told of arrests that happened anywhere in the city.

"It's kind of disturbing people being evicted related to an offense that didn't occur on the property," he said. "We have to look at what we're doing and who is being evicted."

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Gudes on Thursday wrote to Castor calling for the program to be suspended for 90 days so it can be "re-evaluated." State Rep. Dianne Hart, D-Tampa, also sent Castor a letter calling for her to end the program.

Some experts said they believe Tampa's program runs counter to federal guidelines.

Sara Pratt, a former assistant secretary for fair housing enforcement and programs at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, said a policy of evictions based on arrests contravenes federal guidelines on housing. It would likely violate the Fair Housing Act, she said, because it would have a "disparate impact based on race and national origin."

An attorney with 44 years experience in housing law, Pratt works for the Washington, D.C., civil rights firm Relman Colfax.

“If the policy was challenged under the Fair Housing Act,” she said, “the people who have been victimized by this treatment would have significant claims against the landlords and the police department.”

But supporters of such programs disagree.

Tim Zehring, a former Mesa Police Department officer who now runs the International Crime Free Association, pointed to a 2002 U.S. Supreme Court case affirming a law that let public housing authorities evict tenants for the drug-related activity of household members and guests.

“If you evict one person for drug dealing, that will ruin one person’s life,” Zehring said. “There will be 400 people who live inside that property who will thank you for getting rid of that person.”

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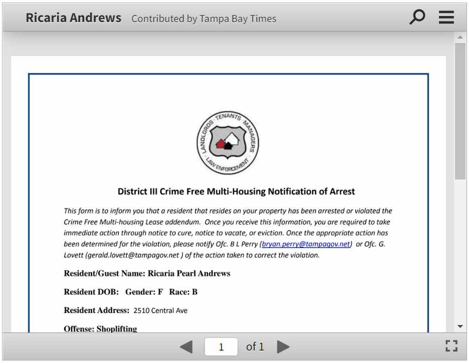
‘BOYFRIEND AND DADDY DRAMA’ AND MISSING CHILD SUPPORT

When the *Times* first began reporting on Tampa’s program in 2017, a reporter requested a copy of landlord letters and the offender database. The reporter left in 2018, and the *Times* relaunched its investigation last year.

Police flagged about 800 tenants during the first five years of the program, an average of 14 per month.

That included a notice sent to the private, low-income Central Court Apartments when a 16-year-old girl was accused of stealing hair extensions from a beauty shop 7 miles away.


Ricaria Andrews Contributed by Tampa Bay Times

District III Crime Free Multi-Housing Notification of Arrest

This form is to inform you that a resident that resides on your property has been arrested or violated the Crime Free Multi-housing Lease addendum. Once you receive this information, you are required to take immediate action through notice to cure, notice to vacate, or eviction. Once the appropriate action has been determined for the violation, please notify Ofc. B L Perry (bryan.perry@tampagov.net) or Ofc. G. Lovett (gerald.lovett@tampagov.net) of the action taken to correct the violation.

Resident/Guest Name: Ricaria Pearl Andrews

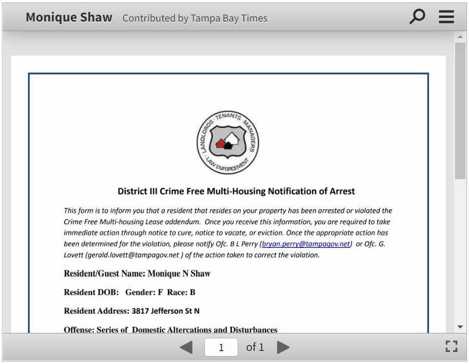
Resident DOB: Gender: F Race: B

Resident Address: 2510 Central Ave

Offense: Shoplifting

It sent one to Robles Park about a 27-year-old woman — not because she was arrested, but because an officer felt police were called to her home too often.

“Most of the calls are (in) reference to boyfriend and daddy drama,” the officer wrote.



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Resident/Guest Name: Monique N Shaw

Resident DOB: Gender: F Race: B

Resident Address: 3817 Jefferson St N

Offense: Series of Domestic Altercations and Disturbances

It’s unclear what happened to the 16-year-old. Property management at Central Court declined to comment.

The woman at Robles Park received a notice to resolve the issues surrounding her apartment, and records indicate she moved out soon after.

Police also thought it appropriate to write to Osborne Landings Apartments, an affordable housing complex in East Tampa, after booking a tenant found in contempt of court for not paying child support. Records indicate that property management took no action.

One 27-year-old woman had an eviction filed against her after police responding to a domestic dispute found she had half an alprazolam pill, used to treat anxiety, without a prescription. She and her child were allowed to keep their home only after she agreed to pay $365 in court costs.

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The wording on the notices varied among Tampa’s three police districts.

In District III, home to some of the city’s poorest neighborhoods in East Tampa, the language left landlords little doubt about the response police expected: “Once you receive this information, you are required to take immediate action,” it said.

It specified that the landlord could force the resident out or issue a “notice to cure.” Many times, those are threats to evict the tenants unless they take a specific step to fix the problem, such as issuing a trespass notice to the family member accused of a crime.

Notices from an institution as powerful as the police department invariably pressure landlords to act, said Kate Walz, a senior staff attorney at the National Housing Law Project, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit that advocates for low-income tenants.

Walz said landlords in crime-free programs have told her they feel so pressured, they negotiate with tenants to get them out, even if that means using security deposits and the last month's rent as incentives.

Police officials say the program works.

One of the first testing grounds was Tampa's infamous Grid 33, which in 2013 was a high-crime area full of apartment buildings nestled between the Hillsborough River and Busch Boulevard, just west of Temple Terrace. The area is 75 percent Black.

It included Broadmoor Apartments, which police said was marred by constant drug crime.

Police sent dozens of notices to the property's management over a two-year period. Nearly 50 tenants were evicted or relocated from the complex of about 380 homes, according to the police database. Crime at the complex fell by 86 percent, police said.

The complex was sold in 2015 and rebranded as the more upscale Alister Place. It is still part of the police program.

Reva Iman, who serves as the tenant council president at Robles Park, has mixed feelings about how the program impacted her community.

She wants the neighborhood to be safe and has no sympathy for tenants who are evicted after repeatedly causing trouble.

But she knows of parents who had teenagers they couldn't control who begged for help but ended up being evicted, she said. She wants more help for families like that, and she said it's unfair that it's mostly Black tenants who face eviction when there isn't the same consequence in predominantly white neighborhoods.

"African American communities are always targeted because of the crime in the community, but there's crime in other communities, too," she said.

A SOFTER APPROACH

After the *Times* began requesting copies of the landlord letters, the number of tenants flagged through the program dropped to about 140 over the next three years, an average of about four per month.

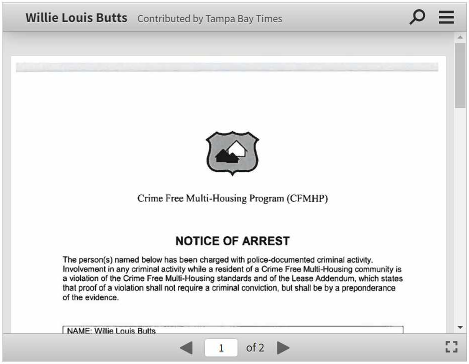
Police also sent a clarification memo to landlords. It stated: "Landlords should consider, first of all, that an arrest is not itself proof that an individual arrested committed the charged crime."

And police toned down the language on arrest notices sent to landlords. The new wording simply states: "The person(s) named below has been charged with police-documented criminal activity."

The changes came after the department launched a review of the program in 2018, the first in the program's five-year history at that point.

But police continued to send notices to landlords for minor offenses and for arrests that happened away from their properties.

In July 2018, police reported the arrest of a 66-year-old Robles Park man for panhandling. A notice sent in September 2020 reported a Robles Park 17-year-old who had vandalized an air-conditioning unit.


Willie Louis Butts Contributed by Tampa Bay Times

Crime Free Multi-Housing Program (CFMHP)

NOTICE OF ARREST

The person(s) named below has been charged with police-documented criminal activity. Involvement in any criminal activity while a resident of a Crime Free Multi-Housing community is a violation of the Crime Free Multi-Housing standards and of the Lease Addendum, which states that proof of a violation shall not require a criminal conviction, but shall be by a preponderance of the evidence.

NAME: Willie Louis Butts

A notice also was sent about Belmont Heights resident Krista Mina, 34, who got into an argument with a U.S. Postal Service carrier in the community's mailbox room.

The carrier threatened to pepper spray Mina, according to a police report. Mina responded by flashing her concealed-carry firearm, for which she said she has a permit. She was not arrested, but the property management office put a lease termination notice on her door.

She successfully fought the eviction, but it cost her $3,000, she said.

"I had to obtain a lawyer to let them know that it was self-defense," Mina said.

CHILDREN PAY THE PRICE

The program intended to make neighborhoods safer for children to play outdoors also resulted in children losing their homes.

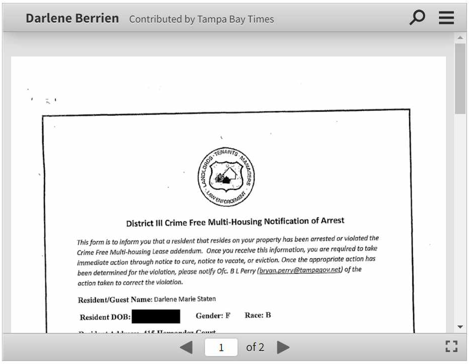
Some were forced to move when their mother or father was evicted. In at least seven cases, a child's arrest led to the eviction of the whole family, records show. Those families included another 15 children.

Darlene Berrien and her family were evicted from Robles Park after police reported the arrests of two of her sons to the Tampa Housing Authority. She and her family now live in a two-bed hotel room. [LUIS SANTANA | Times]

Darlene Berrien and four of her children were evicted from Robles Park in November 2018.

She was charged with resisting arrest without violence after she tried to push past a police officer to reach her son, who was in the back of a police car after he had been detained for driving without a license.

Berrien, 46, was sentenced to 50 hours of community service and 12 months of probation. An eviction notice followed.



District III Crime Free Multi-Housing Notification of Arrest

This form is to inform you that a resident that resides on your property has been arrested or violated the Crime Free Multi-housing Lease addendum. Once you receive this information, you are required to take immediate action through notice to cure, notice to vacate, or eviction. Once the appropriate action has been determined for the violation, please notify Ofc. B L Perry (bryan.perry@tampagov.net) of the action taken to correct the violation.

Resident/Guest Name: Darlene Marie Staten

Resident DOB: [redacted] **Gender:** F **Race:** B

After a two-month court battle, Housing Authority officials agreed to stay the eviction on the condition that no one in her residence was arrested for 12 months. But in October 2018, another of her sons, then 13, was arrested for stealing a car and leaving the scene of an accident.

Charges against the teenager were later dropped, but that didn't spare the family from losing their home. Three years later, Berrien is still homeless. She lives with two of her sons in a two-bed hotel room close to Busch Boulevard that costs $365 a week.

"Some days, I try to forget, but it weighs on you," she said. "You're always scared of losing your kids because you don't have a place to live."

TAMPA's Crime-Free Multi Housing program

101 — apartment complexes enrolled in the initiative

267 — apartment complexes of 15 or more units in Tampa

54 — percentage of residents arrested in Tampa who are Black

90 — percentage of the 1,100 tenants flagged in the program who are Black

28 — percentage fall in reported crimes at 51 apartment complexes that took part in the program

62 — number of cases where police database shows tenant was evicted or moved out and charges were later dropped

UP NEXT: Justice Department to review new Pasco intelligence effort

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