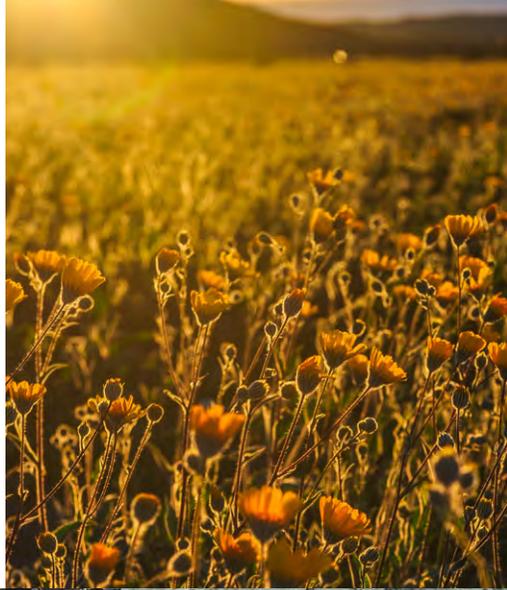




OREGON TENANT POWER HANDBOOK



CAT

Introduction

The Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT) is a tenant membership organization that is building a housing justice movement, led by those who are most impacted by Oregon's affordable housing crisis: low-income renters. CAT's primary membership base includes low-wage workers, families with children, people living with disabilities, seniors, and Black renters, Indigenous renters, and people of color. CAT's mission is to educate and empower renters to demand safe, stable, and affordable housing. We believe that housing is the basis of a strong community. We bring tenants together to organize and collectively advocate for fair and equal protections in housing practices and policies.

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This handbook is dedicated to people everywhere working for liberation and a better world. It was created with the collective support of staff of the Community Alliance of Tenants and members of CAT's Tenant Leadership Council. We are indebted to so many people who have shared their expertise, stories, and experiences with CAT over the years, directly and indirectly contributing to this project, including:

Jensi Albright, Hadley Bates, Coya Crespín, Asher Freeman, Dung Ho, Katrina Holland, Julia McKenna, Daisy Quiñonez, Jesse Sharpe, and so many others.

Together, we have worked to develop critical analyses and popular education materials in support of a more just housing system. We are especially indebted to Justin Buri and Cristina Palacios, who had the vision and commitment to get CAT's Safe Housing and leadership development work off the ground many years ago. Justin and Cristina's early work laid a foundation for the full-scale programs they are today. Above all, we thank thousands of CAT members and supporters all across Oregon, and all those who came before us, who have had the courage to fight for a better future.



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Welcome to The Oregon Tenant Power Handbook!

A Fundamentally Unjust Housing System: Open nearly any newspaper, and you'll find headlines that reflect the housing crisis facing our urban, suburban, and rural communities today. All too often, people are forced to choose between basic needs like food, medicine, and rent. Elders cannot afford to heat their homes in the dead of winter. Rents are doubled simply because the market will bear it, essentially evicting people who cannot afford even a modest rent raise. Many renters are afraid to report mold and other living conditions in need of repairs, fearing retaliation or losing their homes. Others have their applications denied, over and over, sometimes for discriminatory reasons; too many have exhausted their savings simply applying for apartments. Some school districts report that twenty percent or more of their students are homeless, living in motels and cars or on the sidewalk. There are approximately 3.5 million and counting houseless people in a given year in the US,

and tens of millions of others do not make enough money to afford both their rent and food to feed themselves and their families. Oregon ranks number one for the number of houseless children; every house district across the state is rent-burdened, paying more than they can afford. This is a truly a housing state of emergency.

Contrary to some popular narratives, this emergency did not happen because people are lazy, nor did it happen in the last several years. It did not happen because people need to learn to better manage their money. It is also not solely because there is not enough housing stock (although that is part of the story in some cities). This crisis is the result of a housing system that first and foremost caters to the profitmaking desires of landlords and developers, as opposed to the survival needs of ordinary people. Our system is designed to benefit a few over the needs of many.



And as we stated above, for many, today's housing emergency is nothing new. It's been reality for many years.

We live in a nation founded on the forced removal and genocide of Indigenous people, and the enslavement of Black people. Over and over, people have endured dispossession of land, involuntary displacement, arbitrary evictions, and disinvestment, right up to the current moment. In other words, generations of people have lived through an ongoing housing crisis. Today's situation, affecting

people of all backgrounds, is an extension of the crisis that Black and Indigenous communities have felt for years, even as Black and Indigenous people, as well as immigrants, refugees, LGBTQ+ people, and youth and elders of various races and ethnicities, continue to bear the brunt of it. Our work in the present moment therefore builds on the labor, endurance, and love of those who have come before us, and who are still fighting—particularly Black and Indigenous peoples.

The latest chapter of housing instability

begins with the federal government's dismantling of affordable housing programs and disinvestment in mental health supports in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Between 1975 and 1983, the federal government cut spending on public housing by 77 percent. These cuts exacerbated poverty among Black and brown households, contributing to those facing housing instability and triggering mass homelessness like the US has not seen since the Great Depression. These numbers continue to rise today.

Public housing now serves relatively few people, and it often involves years-long waiting lists, poor living conditions, top-down decision-making, the exclusion of people based on skin color, immigration status and criminal records, and limits on residents' self-determination and autonomy. Instead of investing in public housing, the federal government now largely hands public money to the private sector, in the form of housing vouchers. Vouchers build no housing stock, and they do nothing to promote a long-term social safety net; they are essentially pass-throughs to private landlords. The voucher system, while helpful for many, leaves too many families behind to continue bearing the burden of our unstable housing system.

At the same time, developers, landlords, and corporations rely on the housing

and real estate market to earn profits at extraordinary rates, to the detriment of millions. In neighborhoods where public subsidies promise a return on investment, these "growth machine" actors snatch up buildings and land with little regard for the people who have built homes and communities—often lower-income, Black, Indigenous, immigrant, and refugee communities. After "improving" so-called blighted urban areas or turning rural homes into tourist accommodations, developers and landlords market units to wealthier, often white, residents. They then move on to the next community, and the cycle repeats.



In fact, our housing system and many parts of our country's economic stability depends on the ability of wealthy investors to extract in this manner. As a result, millions of people cannot afford a stable, safe place to live. Banks have foreclosed on many who own homes, and tenants devote more and more of their incomes to rent each month, giving up basic necessities like food, medicine, transportation, and more. "No-cause" evictions – those carried out due to no fault of the tenant – are far too common, and many, many people unnecessarily live in their cars, doubled up with family and friends, in motels, and on the streets.

A Movement for Communities Over

Commodities: But renters refuse to stand idly by. Against this tide, a powerful movement of housing justice activists are rising up to say, "Our communities are not for sale!" From New Orleans to Nashville, Miami to Minneapolis, Denver to Detroit, people from diverse walks of life are banding together to assert the human right to housing. We are growing renter power block by block, building by building, town by town, city by city. We are passing local and statewide laws that make life better for renters. We are building power to bring about changes we wish to see in our housing system.

Today's movement builds on the work of generations past. Notably, Civil Rights

movement activists fought and won the Fair Housing Act of 1968. While enforcement of this law is sporadic, it nevertheless provides footing to demand housing access, choice, and stability regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, and (dis)ability.

Locally, in Oregon, the Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT) has been at the forefront of the housing justice movement since 1996. CAT evolved out of an Oregon Housing NOW project to become an independent, grassroots, tenant-controlled, tenant member organization—the only such statewide organization in the state of Oregon. From the outset, CAT was based on the ideal of developing low-income tenants into leaders in the renters' rights movement – initiating and executing systemic change. One of CAT's early grant applications explained, "It is low-income renters who are most adversely affected by the tightening housing market... It is only through grassroots organizing that tenants will be able to gain a base of power, from which they can have some control over their living situations." From day one, CAT has trusted that tenants have the power to work together, to build a better future.

More than two decades since its founding, CAT continues to fundamentally believe that when adequately supported by

education, a robust support network, and space for meaningful engagement, renters who are hardest hit by Oregon's housing crisis are best equipped to drive solutions. CAT builds tenant power through education, advocacy, building-based organizing, leadership development, and membership engagement. After successfully fighting to pass a landmark statewide rent control bill in February 2019, CAT's executive director, Katrina Holland, who is also a tenant and a single mother with a disability, declared, "We are going to keep fighting until this nation honors the fact that housing is a human right."

CAT is also part of a national movement, joining other local groups like Causa Justa:Just Cause in the Bay Area, City Life/Vida Urbana in Boston, Inquilinos Unidos in Chicago, and many more, under the umbrella coalition "Right to the City." These organizations are fighting for fair, stable housing for millions of people. Engaging in "trans-local" organizing, tenant leaders learn from each other via networked communications, national assemblies, social media, and more, adapting solutions to their local areas.

CAT's Core Values: CAT continues to lead the housing justice movement in Oregon. Knowing that those who experience the impacts of housing policies day in and day out possess rich wisdom about the

solutions needed, we are directed by those who are hit hardest by Oregon's affordable housing crisis: low-income renters. CAT's membership base is comprised of low-wage workers, families with children, people living with disabilities, elders, Black people, Native people, immigrants, and refugees.

- We believe in the empowerment of oppressed people to lead the movement and achieve the change we will achieve in Oregon.
- We believe that tenants have inherent collective power within their communities and that power must be tapped into to achieve housing justice for all Oregonians both individually and collectively.
- We believe that each and every renter, regardless of political or economic background, beliefs or status possesses inherent value and worth.
- We believe that housing serves as a function of human life and dignity, a foundational element for living.
- We oppose extractive housing economics that produce wealth and/or value for a select few. People over profit. Communities, not commodities.

- We believe that housing stability leads to healthier communities.
- We value tenant leadership for decision making. We lead together.
- We do not tell our neighbors what is best for them. We give them the information they need to make empowered decisions for themselves. Tenants should always be empowered to make decisions that are best for their families.
- We value the power of renters speaking for themselves as much as possible by empowering their knowledge, experience, and with the information they need to make decisions that best fit their lives.
- We believe and understand that it is our responsibility to fight for law changes to see the systems change we need to see for the sake of Oregon's greater economy.

Adapting this handbook for your group

Audience: This handbook is intended to support the education, consciousness-raising, volunteering, advocacy, and activism of tenants across the state of Oregon and beyond.

We envision that this handbook will be useful for new and seasoned tenants' rights movement leaders alike. The workshops are designed to help people who are new to this movement develop a firm foundation,



as well as to help groups who have worked together for some time. We hope the contents in this book help you and your neighbors develop effective strategies that work for you and your community.

What's In the Handbook: *The Oregon Tenant Power Handbook* is divided into three sections plus an appendix. In the Introduction, we provide some background to today's housing crisis, CAT, the tenants' rights movement, and this handbook.

Unit I: Housing (In)Justice is made up of eight workshops designed to help participants build a firm foundation. From examining their own housing experiences to learning about the ways in which different groups are uniquely impacted, Unit I will help participants become well-versed in the history of housing (in)justice. Understanding today's struggle in historical context will substantially strengthen our movement.

Unit II: Tenant Organizing Tools includes a series of practical, skill-oriented workshops designed to help newcomers and seasoned organizers alike build their toolkits. Key topics include power-mapping, planning a campaign, crafting stories and testimonies, and organizing a building or apartment complex. All twelve workshops could be completed in sequence, or groups could choose topics here and there as needed, to help develop their campaigns.

Sprinkled throughout the handbook, you will find several resource lists, handouts, tips and tricks, essays, graphics, and more to support your group's organizing and augment the workshops in Units I and II. Think of them as little treasures to sprinkle throughout your work. For example, you could print out and hang the "interrupting oppression" handout on your door. Or you could make copies of the Pronouns page to share at your next housing justice meeting, to help those less familiar with the practice of sharing their pronouns catch up to speed. Definitely make copies of the images and post them around the room – or visit the Emergent Strategy coloring book link online, and print coloring sheets to help folks decompress at your next meeting!

How to Use this Handbook: This handbook can be used in a few different ways. Ideally, your group would go through each workshop, beginning with Unit I, moving on to Unit II, and so on. Each workshop will take from one to three hours to complete; these time estimates are included at the beginning of each. If your group meets once a week, and does one workshop each week, it will take about three or four months to finish the whole curriculum. You may not have this kind of time with your group, however, so the workshops are also designed to stand alone. For instance, your group may realize



that, while you are able to turn people out to testify at City Council on a regular basis, you could benefit from building an understanding of past housing justice movement work in order to strengthen solidarity work with other groups and bolster your storytelling; Unit I workshops would help your group pause and reflect, in order to gain a historical perspective. Another group may suddenly need to plan a press conference. You could use the Media workshop in Unit II to help prepare.

Above all, we hope that you will adapt *The Oregon Tenant Power Handbook* to fit your community's needs and contribute to building the power of renters!

A few key things to note...

This handbook is centered on popular education methods: A spirit of "popular education" guides all of the activities in this handbook. At its core, popular education is inherently not neutral: it helps us make connections between our own lived experiences and historical, economic, social, and political systems and power structures. It recognizes that racism, sexism, homophobia, and a host of other injustices exist—and it seeks to build the power necessary to bring about a new, more just world.

Instead of assuming that students should sit quietly, ready for teachers to fill their minds with new information, the popular education model assumes that we ALL have much to learn from one another. In other words, teachers and facilitators have much to learn from students and participants; it's not just a one-way street of knowledge. Popular education also assumes that people are learning every moment of their lives: on the bus, talking with their neighbors, listening to music, at the barbershop, while working at the local hardware store. School is far from the only place that valuable learning takes place. In fact, learning in informal and community settings often yields the most important insights for organizing work. The task of those facilitating the workshops in this handbook, therefore, is to guide their group members in building a collective understanding of the issues at hand.

We believe that building a collective understanding depends first and foremost on the experiences, perspectives, knowledge, skills, and expertise of all

participants. Popular education encourages active participation and multiple modes of learning. For that reason, the workshops here tap participants to not only read and write, but more often to talk and listen, remember and imagine, move and question, create and collaborate. Using discussion, drawing, music, skits, multimedia, poetry, and more, we strive to make this handbook's concepts and skills accessible and inspiring for all.

Keep in mind your time! (facilitation tip): The workshops are generally designed for groups of about five to fifteen people, and take from one to three hours to complete. **If you have a larger group, you will likely need much more time to complete each workshop.** For example, it will take much longer for forty people than ten to introduce themselves. You may find that breaking your large group into smaller groups, with a facilitator for each small group, helps you move many people through each step in a much shorter timeframe.

Unit 1

HOUSING (IN)JUSTICE



Unit I: HOUSING (IN)JUSTICE

Unit I: Housing (In)Justice grounds tenant leaders in history—of their own housing-related experiences, of each other’s experiences with housing, and of the larger past and present-day roots of housing (in) justice. In order to change the narrative about land and housing, we must bring our full selves to the fight.

Who we are makes a difference. Our cultures, backgrounds and identities define our experiences with housing. For instance, racial covenants that were in effect for much of the twentieth century made it illegal for people of various races and ethnicities, but especially Black/ African Americans, to rent or own a home in many places. This has had an impact on the housing and financial stability of entire groups of people over generations that still persist today.

This unit is not only about housing inequities. It is also about housing justice. For decades and even centuries, people have pursued a variety of strategies and tactics while fighting for more stable homes and safer communities, and



they have developed entire systems of organizing in the US and around the world. We have much to learn from the challenges and successes of those who have come before us. Knowing the past can provide inspiration by linking us to earlier generations, and it can help us act more strategically in the present.

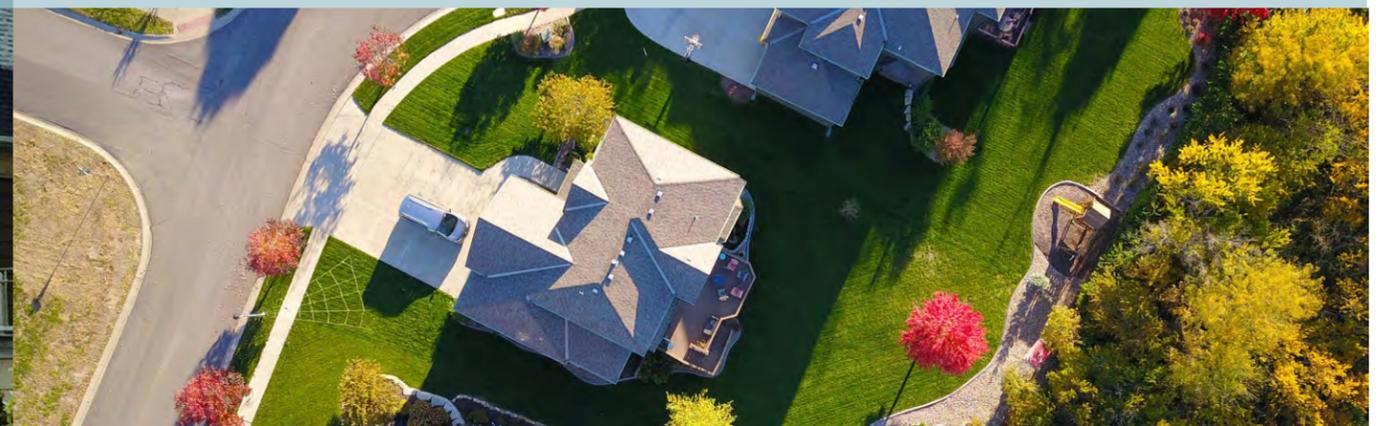
At the same time, today’s challenges are not exactly the same as those of our parents, grandparents, and ancestors. Conditions have shifted and new obstacles have emerged that push us to forge new paths moving forward. Change often

takes many, many years, and the impacts of a course of action may reverberate for several generations. Developing a sense of the long arc of change can increase chances of success.

In Unit I: Housing (In) Justice, your group members will...

- Talk about their own life experiences with regard to housing and learn about each other’s housing-related experiences.
- Collaborate to create a housing-related timeline, and place your own and each other’s experiences along this timeline; begin to differentiate and draw parallels between the experiences of different groups.
- Examine the racist and colonial backbone of the housing and property ownership systems in the US and learn about a few alternative housing models people are pushing for today.
- Learn about some of the key moments in the movement for housing justice in the US over the last several decades.
- Learn about why those most impacted by the housing crisis must lead the movement for housing justice. Inter-linked race and class discrimination so deeply impacts our experiences with housing. Your group will learn how our race and class identities, as well as our experiences of gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, country of origin, religion, and physical, mental, and cognitive abilities play a part in how we will win housing justice for all.

“Poverty is not an accident. Like slavery and apartheid, it is man-made and can be removed by the actions of human beings” – Nelson Mandela



Workshop 1.1 - Our Housing Stories

OVERVIEW: This opening workshop is foundational in several ways. It will begin to ground us in our own and each other's experiences with housing and will help demonstrate that each of us has a vast wealth of experience and expertise to draw on in fighting for a more just housing system. This workshop will also guide us in thinking about how our own diverse identities and backgrounds impact the ways in which we experience housing.

Learning objectives: In this workshop, participants will...

- › Develop a sense of who is in the room
- › Reflect on our own housing experiences and life journeys

- › Begin to put our own experiences in conversation with so many others
- › Start to think about broader patterns of housing (in)justice

Approximate Time: 2 hours

Supplies & Preparation

- Tape a very long sheet of butcher paper (25+ feet) around the room, to create a collaborative timeline; mark off every 50 years from ~1600 to 1900, and then every 10 years from 1900 to today (does not need to be perfectly to scale); leave some unmarked space prior to 1600 to acknowledge this deeper history that continues to reverberate today

- Several colored markers
- Sticky notes of various colors (or 100+ small scraps of colorful paper and tape)
- Computer hooked up to the internet with speakers, with tab open to:
 - "Take Tha Houses Back" (2.5-minute film) - www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCVI8ail2Po
- Tennis ball (or other small ball)

Workshop Content & Steps

1. (15 minutes) Think, Pair, Share: What is your earliest "housing related" memory? Take a few minutes to think about this question, share with a partner, then share with the group.
2. (20 minutes) Remember - ROUND 1: What are some other housing-related experiences you remember as a young person/child? Invite participants to write

or draw their memories on sticky notes or small pieces of paper. Each paper should depict or describe one personal "housing experience"; include the approximate date and place, if known.

- Some examples: 2005 - moved in with my aunt at age 17, in Seattle; 2007: got evicted from our apartment, in Beaverton; 2003: moved in with other queer housemates for the first time in my life, in SE Portland; 1992: became houseless after getting laid off, stayed with relatives in Coos Bay for a month, then lived in my car in Eugene for three months; 1999: saved up for a down payment on

FACILITATION TIP

Emphasize that we all must get free, together!

- Who we are has a significant impact on our experiences with housing.
- Understanding how race, ethnicity, class, immigration status, gender, etc. shape our experiences and the positive and negative outcomes in our lives is key.
- We have to lift up the need for solidarity for all the different groups who experience unstable and unsafe housing, gentrification, and displacement.



a house, purchased a house in Gresham.

- Encourage people to include as many details as they feel comfortable sharing.
- Ask people to attach each paper to the timeline you've taped around the room.

3. (20 minutes) Reflect: Invite people to reflect on each other's postings for several minutes.

- First, provide time to reflect independently or with a partner.
- Then ask participants to gather together and invite people to share how it felt to recall their own housing experiences. A range of emotions may arise during this

discussion, from fear to sadness to anger to relief.

- Next, invite participants to share what they notice about the timeline: patterns, questions that emerge, etc. Move back and forth as a group along the timeline as needed, as conversation unfolds.

4. (15 minutes) Remember - ROUND 2: Ask participants to then add any additional personal experiences they think of, as well as housing-related experiences of family, friends, and communities.

- For example: 1945: my grandfather migrated from Mexico to California during the Bracero Program, then in 1962 joined the National Farm Workers Association to fight for labor rights; 2008: parents' house got foreclosed on, Medford; 1960s: many family members and friends' homes were bulldozed during Urban Renewal, Portland.

5. (15 minutes) Reflect: Invite participants to reflect again on what they notice: patterns, anomalies, questions that emerge, etc. First discuss with a partner, then as a larger group.

6. (20+ minutes) Debrief: Debrief this timeline exercise one final time. (Note:

This step is VERY important. Be sure to leave plenty of time.) Invite participants to reflect again on what they notice: patterns, questions that emerge, etc. First discuss with a partner, then as a larger group.

- Invite people to reflect on why this kind of collective historical understanding is an important part of a tenants' rights movement.

- ◊ Why is it important to understand others' housing experiences?
- ◊ Why does developing a shared understanding of the ways in which different groups have been affected by housing laws matter?
- ◊ Knowing this, how does it change the way we must build and organize with our neighbors? With other tenants in our neighborhood, city, across the state of Oregon, and even around the country?

7. (5 minutes) Looking Forward: While the history discussed today depicts where we've been in the past, it does not



predict where we will go in the future. Show a 2.5-minute film, "Take The Houses Back," depicting diverse people all over the US analyzing the roots of today's housing crisis and resolving to fight for a more just system.

8. (10 minutes) Final Reflection: As a final debrief of the workshop, invite people to form a large circle. Ask people to think about two questions: "What do you love about this work, and what do you need for yourself and from others to do this work?"

- Hand a tennis ball to whoever will share first. Then, this person tosses or rolls the ball to someone else in the group, and they share.
- Continue until everyone has had a turn.
- Applaud the group for its effort!



Housing Story Online Resources

The Numbers
youtu.be/AaH5K8NF2zs

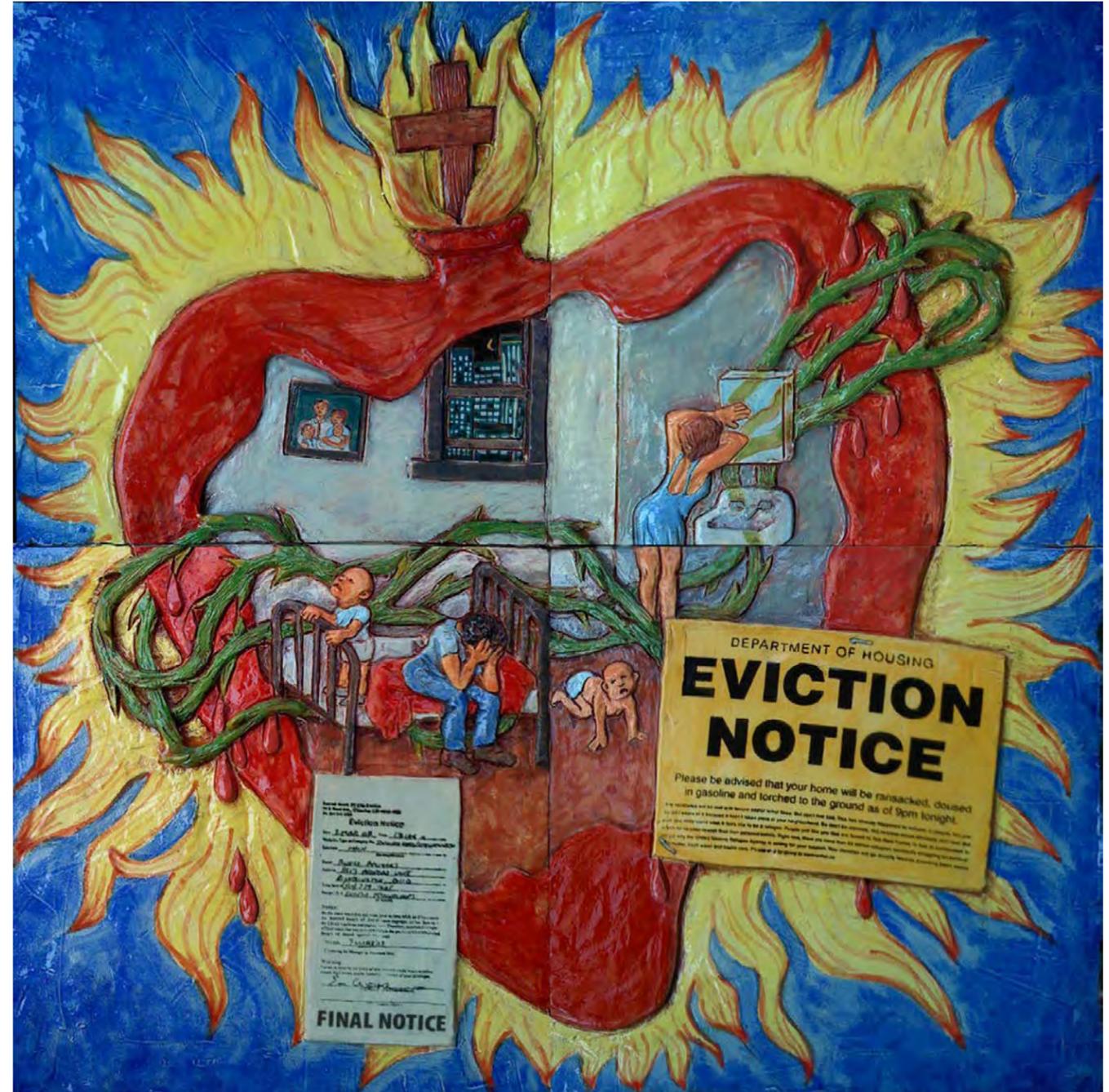
Vanport Oral History Project
www.vanportmosaic.org/oralhistory#story-harvest

Oregon's Rural Organizing Project – Oral Histories
www.rop.org/rov/

Neighborhood Story Project
www.humanitiestennessee.org/programs-grants/core-program-overview/neighborhoodstoryproject/

Village Called Versailles
avillagecalledversailles.com

Anti-Eviction Mapping Project – Oral Histories
www.anti-eviction-map.com/about-the-narratives-of-displacement



Eviction Notice Impact on Families (WRAP artwork) Jos Sances

Workshop 1.2 - My Heart, My Home Intersectional Struggles

OVERVIEW: Broad categories, such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, (dis)ability, and age can have massive bearing on how we experience life, including housing. We know that housing insecurity disproportionately impacts Indigenous people, Black people, LGBTQ+ people, immigrants, refugees, elders, people living with disabilities, women, and single mothers with children. Many people hold two or more of these identities. In what ways do each of us benefit from the current housing system? In what ways are we burdened by it? And, crucially, how do our multiple, intersecting identities impact our housing experiences?

This workshop will help your group unpack two key concepts in the fight for housing justice: disproportionate impact,

and intersectionality. Most importantly, it will lay a foundation for your group to understand how crucial it is that those who are hardest hit are leading the tenants' rights movement—and that this fight is intersectional. After all, elders' rights are tenants' rights, Black rights are tenants' rights, LGBTQ+ rights are tenants' rights, and so on.

This workshop was partially adapted from *BRIDGES* and *Rethinking Ethnic Studies*.

BRIDGES: Building a Race and Immigration Dialogue in the Global Economy, A Popular Education Resource for Immigrant and Refugee Community Organizers. (2004) Written and edited by: Eunice Hyunhye Cho, Francisco Argüelles Paz y Puente, Miriam Ching Yoon Louie, and Sasha Khockha. Oakland, CA: National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights.

Rethinking Ethnic Studies. (2019) Edited by: R. Tolteka Cuahtin, Miguel Zavala, Christine Sleeter, Wayne Au. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

Learning objectives: In this workshop, participants will...

- › Continue to reflect on our own housing experiences and learn about who is in the room.
- › Define and understand the concept of disproportionately impacted: Who is hit hardest? Many people are impacted by our unjust housing system in multiple, overlapping ways that may accumulate over time, and through generations.
- › Define and understand the concept of intersectionality: Reflect on what it means to rent as an elder; to rent as an immigrant; to rent as an LGBTQ+ person, etc.—and what it means to rent as a person with multiple, intersecting identities.
- › Begin to understand how our own identities shape our power, or lack of it, within the housing justice movement; begin to reflect on how to ensure that those who are most burdened by the housing system are elevated within our movement.
- › Begin to appreciate how solidarities across places (i.e., cities and rural areas), racial and ethnic groups, class identities, and other categories of difference are imperative to creating a more just housing system. How is my fight, as

FACILITATION TIP

Gender Justice

At CAT and many other organizations, we share our names and our pronouns when we introduce ourselves. This practice that promotes an understanding that people's pronouns are often very personal, and that we should not make assumptions. For more on pronouns, see this article: "Dear (Cis) People Who Put Your Pronouns On Your "Hello My Name Is" Name Tags - www.sugarbutch.net/2019/04/dear-cis-people/

a renter, tied to other people with different experiences than me? How is my fight, as a renter, tied to other parts of my identity? In order for all of us to be free, we must seek to understand and be accountable to one another.

Approximate Time: 2.5 hours

Supplies & Preparation

- Handouts for each participant, see appendix:
 -  "How Strong Beats My Heart?"
 -  "Oregon Renters"
- Pens, pencils
- Computer hooked up to the internet with speakers, with tabs open to:
 - "Intersectionality" (3-minute film) - www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=66&v=w6dnj2lyYjE

- “Can’t Wait for Housing” (3-minute film) - <http://homesforall.org/cantwaitlist/>
- Index cards or small scraps of paper

Workshop Steps

1. (10 minutes) Circle of Strength: Invite participants to form a large circle, with each person facing inwards. Invite people to do the following: 1) Say your name; 2) Share one positive quality you bring to the group; 3) Make a physical motion or gesture that illustrates this positive quality. Go around the circle until everyone has had a turn.
 - Facilitation tips: You may want to demonstrate before you begin. Challenge people to not repeat a word or action that someone else has already shared.
2. (20 minutes) Identities: Pass out the “How Strong Beats My Heart” handouts and invite someone to read the instructions. Then, invite people to fill out their responses.
 - Pair + share: Ask participants to pair up with someone near them (preferably someone they don’t know well) to share what they’ve written or drawn about each of the different aspects of their identities. Be sure to have partners switch off after about 5 minutes.
3. (15 minutes) Watch + discuss: Show the short film, “Intersectionality”. Invite participants to again talk with a partner. What are some ways your own identities intersect, and what impacts do those intersections have on your life?
4. (15 minutes) Discuss: Reconvene the whole group and ask for reactions to the exercise. How did you feel about this activity? Did you hear anything surprising from your partner? Is there any one part of your identity you think about the most on a day-to-day basis? How do your identities intersect, and with what impact?
 - Then, get more specific to housing: What parts of your identity impacts your experience with housing, whether positively or negatively? In what ways, and why?
 - Facilitation tip: The goal of this discussion is to ask questions in such a way that people reflect on how our identities have everything to do with whether we benefit from or are burdened by the housing system. In general, white people benefit



much more than Black people; LGBTQ+ people are burdened more than straight, cis-gendered people; etc. That is not to say that EVERY white person, or straight person, has benefited from the housing system, but rather that if you are straight, and/or white, and/or do not have disability, etc., you are more likely to experience less challenges to your comfort in home and/or greater stability. On the flipside, if you are a Latinx, LGBTQ+ person (for example), you are more likely to experience housing burdens in multiple, intersecting, and layered ways – for a variety of cultural, political, historical, and economic reasons.

FACILITATION TIP

Intersectional Discussions

The goal of this discussion is to ask questions in such a way that people reflect on how our identities have everything to do with whether we benefit from or are burdened by the housing system. In general, white people benefit much more than Black people; LGBTQ+ people are burdened more than straight, cis-gendered people; etc. That is not to say that EVERY white person, or straight person, has benefited from the housing system, but rather that if you are straight, and/or white, and/or do not have disability, etc., you are more likely to experience less challenges to your comfort in home and/or greater stability. On the flipside, if you are a Latinx, LGBTQ+ person (for example), you are more likely to experience housing burdens in multiple, intersecting, and layered ways – for a variety of cultural, political, historical, and economic reasons.

5. (20 minutes) Read + think, pair, share: Invite people to pair up to read over the Oregon Renters handout.
 - After a few minutes, ask partners to share what they notice. According to the numbers, who is MOST burdened by our housing system? Who is least burdened?
 - If it hasn’t come up already, introduce the concept of disproportionately burdened. Explain that when a group of people makes up a small percentage of the overall population but is impacted



by a policy or in a subject more negatively than other groups, we can describe this group as being disproportionately impacted. It does not mean that EVERYONE in this group is negatively impacted, but the likelihood of being negatively impacted increases. This means that in our work, we have to critique the systems and policies that influence and/or create these kinds of outcomes.

6. (20 minutes) Discuss: In what ways is housing a racial issue? A gender issue? An age issue? A disability issue? In what ways do these categories intersect to shape people's

experiences with housing? What about people's experience as housing justice movement leaders? Why is it important to understand the concept of intersectionality as a participant/leader within the housing justice movement?

- Facilitation tip: Emphasize that we have to work together to make change. There is no easy solution to any of the problems we are talking about. Only through grassroots, accountable movements led by those who are MOST impacted, focused on systemic change, will we all get free.

7. (15 minutes) Closing: Show the 3-minute short film, "Can't Wait for Housing". Invite everyone to write or draw on an index card why they cannot wait for a better housing system.

- Facilitation tip: Following the workshop, if people want to submit their answers online, go to homesforall.org/cantwaitlist/.



Additional resources

Check out *No More Heroes: Grassroots Challenges to the Savior Mentality*, a book by Jordan Flaherty that illustrates why people with privilege often make things worse when they try to help. Drawing on recent social movements, *No More Heroes* celebrates real, systemic change that requires everyone play a role. Spoiler alert: no saviors needed.

"Explaining White Privilege to a Broke White Person" by Gina Crosley-Corcoran
www.huffpost.com/entry/explaining-white-privilege-to-a-broke-white-person_b_5269255?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAALkCcx9I8CE84dSBZ238v-a52B8_pkqc-EaRFuHs7BiNQE8c--OF9XxI3gJmKP_ixbT4zWjEciv8mubJ2auBE0292YDfdLg0-hRKniVN4cvt-f7l_gduhkZFynIG8jbdS-60EdJ7tOiDSylhBgzGyFal9eFcRKJII121PXPaM0lfhW

Resources for understanding race and racism:
citizenshipandsocialjustice.com/2015/07/10/curriculum-for-white-americans-to-educate-themselves-on-race-and-racism/

When We Fight We Win resource list:
www.whenwefightwewin.com/resources/

Don't Talk about Implicit Bias Without Talking about Structural Racism
<https://medium.com/national-equity-project/implicit-bias-structural-racism-6c52cf0f4a92>

Housing Vulnerability Analysis: A Discussion — Shelterforce
<https://shelterforce.org/2019/07/10/housing-vulnerability-analysis-a-discussion/>



Housing for All – Now! (WRAP artwork)
 Josh Macphee

Workshop 1.3 - Roots of Housing (In)Justice in Oregon and Beyond

OVERVIEW: In Workshops 1.1 and 1.2, we focused on the ways in which different groups are impacted by our housing system in different ways, and emphasized that those who are MOST impacted today need to be leading the movement for housing justice. In this workshop, we will delve down more deeply into the histories of disproportionately impacted groups, in Oregon and beyond. Displacement, evictions, and housing instability are nothing new for many, especially for Native and Black people, as well as for many immigrants and refugees. To understand housing (in)justice today, we have to also know about the long history of people resisting displacement and fighting for a better future. By thinking about our own

housing experiences within this long arc of history, “Roots of Housing (In)Justice” will lay a foundation for your group to more effectively fight for stable homes for all.

Learning objectives: In this workshop, participants will...

- › Continue to learn about who is in the room and reflect on our own housing experiences
- › Expand our shared understanding of the roots and patterns of housing (in) justice, especially in Oregon

Approximate Time: 2+ hours

Supplies & Preparation

- Tape a large sheet of paper, or several pieces together, to create an (approximately) six by six foot square. Draw a rough outline of the state of Oregon in the middle, leaving plenty of room around the outside. The state should be about 1-2 feet across.
- Pens, pencils
- Half-sheets of blank paper
- Tape
- Computer hooked up to the internet with speakers, with tabs open to:
 - ◊ Pacific Northwest Native history
 - ◊ “Why Aren’t There More Black People in Oregon,” by Walidah Imarisha (16-minute film) - www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTZINEZ3NEw
 - ◊ “Why Are Cities Still So Segregated?” (6.5-minute film) - www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5FBJyqfoLM
 - ◊ CAT presentation (show first 6.5 minutes) - www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYpK3KZFMjI&t=1s

Workshop Steps

1. (20 minutes) Home/journey stories: Invite people to think about how they and/or their ancestors arrived in what is now Oregon. For those whose families are Indigenous to this area, invite them to think about what life was like as far back as they know, and how it has shifted over time. Write or draw their stories/journeys on half-sheets of paper, and tape them to the wall in relation to the Oregon map. For example, if someone’s father immigrated to Oregon from Iraq, put their paper approximately where Iraq is on the map, in relation to Oregon. Draw a line between “Iraq” and Oregon. Participants should feel free to add drawings or text if their families have roots in more than one place.
 - Invite people to briefly share their home/journey stories with the group.
2. (5 minutes) Brainstorm: Ask participants to BRIEFLY brainstorm what comes to mind when they think of about



the history of Oregon, more broadly speaking. List and/or sketch simple drawings on the map as people call things out. Are any of the events, people, or institutions mentioned related to housing or home? If so, put an asterisk next to these.

- Facilitation tip: Don't spend too much time brainstorming. The purpose of this step is simply to "activate prior knowledge" and prepare people for learning new information from the films.
- 3.** (20 minutes) Watch + discuss: Show the first 6.5 minutes of a presentation by CAT staff member, Asher Freeman, on the recent history of the tenants' rights movement in Portland and Oregon; they also touch on deeper histories of injustice and community organizing, upon which today's movement builds.
- Invite people to reflect on why this kind of collective historical understanding is an important part of the tenants' rights movement:

Why is it important to ground today's work in the past?

- 4.** (30 minutes) Watch + discuss: Watch "Why Are Cities Still So Segregated", a short film about the history of housing injustice in the US. Invite people to pay attention to specific moments, policies, events, decisions in history that have defined the ways in which different groups experience housing today.
- Discuss: Invite people to pair up and share one new thing they each learned in the film. Then invite them to share one thing they are still wondering about.
 - Discuss, as a larger group: What is the legacy of practices such as "racial covenants" and the real estate "code of ethics" for Black people, today?
 - Facilitation tip: Emphasize that it is precisely because of these kinds of historical policies of disinvestment, which devalued Black neighborhoods, that developers have been able to buy up land and buildings and make enormous profits today.
 - ◊ Public subsidies often enable this profit-making cycle. For

example, when the Interstate MAX line went into Albina, in North Portland, it made property even more valuable— attracting more white residents and investors, but with no mechanisms to prevent displacement of Black residents, who had previously been segregated in Albina through redlining, racial covenants, and other racist practices.

- 5.** (30 minutes) Watch: Watch "Why Aren't There More Black People In Oregon?". This film will help your group better understand the place in which we live and work today.
- Drawing on the film, work together to add a few more key moments to your shared timeline.
 - For example, in 2001, Oregon finally repealed a decades-old law excluding Black people from the

state, after years of advocacy and activism.

- 6.** (10 minutes) Reflect: Invite each participant to pair up with one or two other people, and return to one of the questions from earlier in the workshop: Why is it important to ground today's work in the past? How might some of the history we learned today influence the way we choose to organize? Share out.
- 7.** (10 minutes) Closing: Invite people to form a large circle, close their eyes (if they feel comfortable doing so), and take 30 seconds to "picture the past", drawing on today's workshop.
- Now, take 30 seconds to "picture the present".
 - Now, take 30 seconds to "picture the future", taking inspiration from the fact that many people are joining forces to fight for a more just world, together.
 - Invite people to think of one word that represents their hopes for the future. Go around the circle and share out.



Links Between Racist History of Homeownership + Wealth Gap Today

Additional resources

Native People are Still Here – radio broadcast by Judy Bluehorse Skelton, with Wisdom of the Elders -

www.wisdomoftheelders.org/program-308-sacred-landscape/

Turtle Island Storytellers: Origins of the Chinook – radio broadcast by Cliff Snider, with Wisdom of the Elders -

www.wisdomoftheelders.org/category/radio/series-three/program-308/page/2/

“Long Before Redlining”, article by Lisa Rice -

<https://shelterforce.org/2019/02/15/long-before-redlining-racial-disparities-in-homeownership-need-intentional-policies/>

“City Rising, Part 1”, 15-minute film on history of racist housing policies -

www.kcet.org/shows/city-rising/the-story-of-city-rising

“The Next Generation of Indigenous Knowledge Keepers”

<https://shelterforce.org/2019/09/05/the-next-generation-of-indigenous-knowledge-keepers/>

Land Acknowledgement explanation: I've started acknowledging the people who lived on this land first – and you should too

<http://theconversation.com/ive-started-acknowledging-the-people-who-lived-on-this-land-first-and-you-should-too-118496>

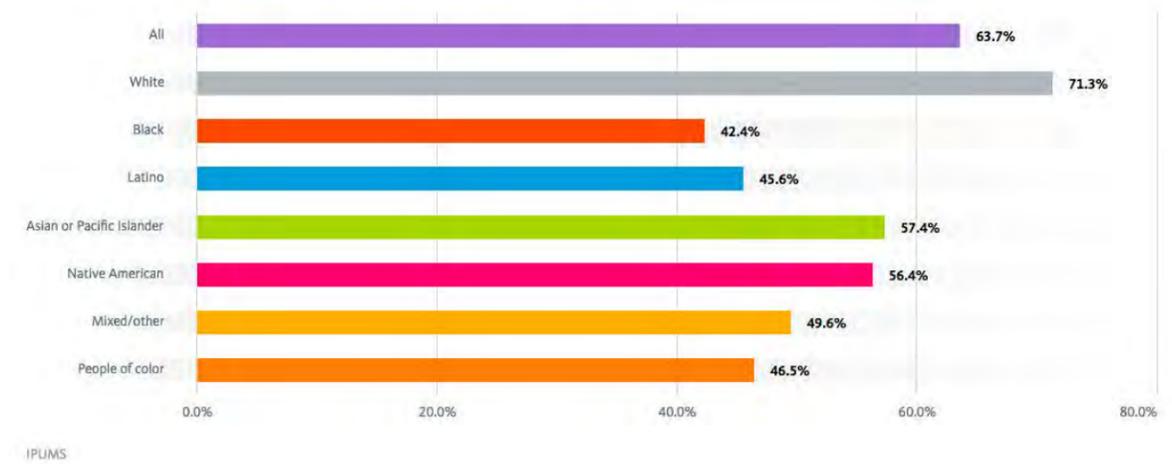
The Great Land Robbery: How Federal Policies Dispossessed Black Americans of Millions of Acres -

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZK094TVvaw

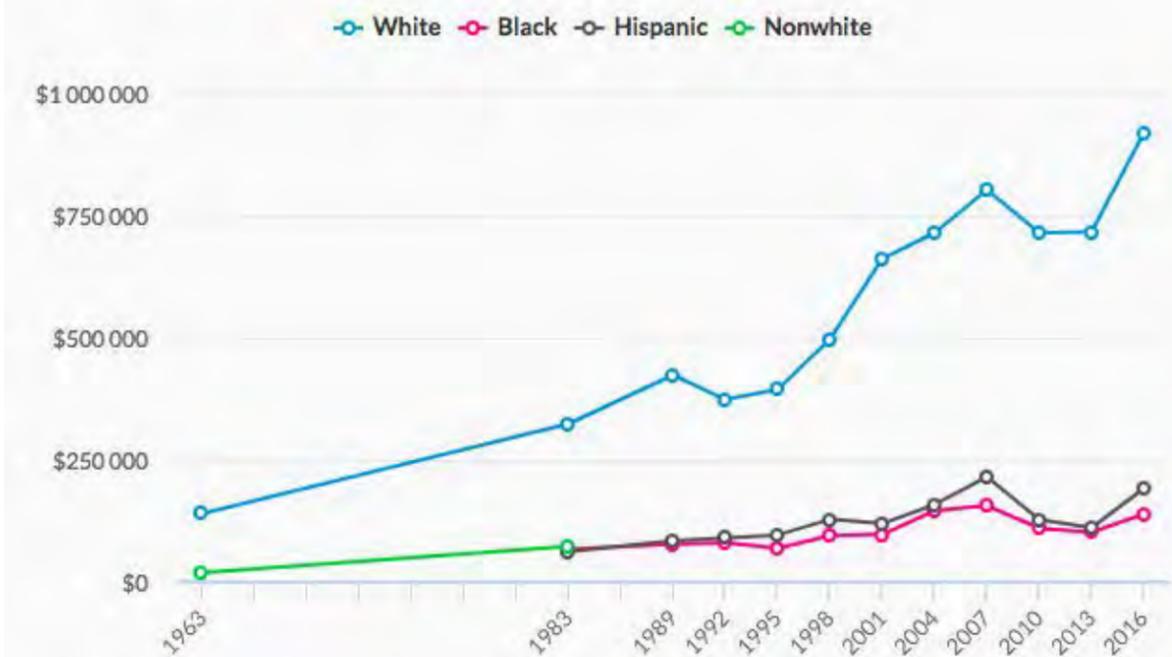
Homeownership United States

Breakdown:

Percent owner-occupied households by race/ethnicity: United States, 2015



Average Family Wealth by Race/Ethnicity, 1963-2016



HOW DID WE GET TO THIS “WEALTH GAP”?

- “Headrights” – land stolen from Indigenous people and granted to British settlers – 50 acres / household; militias helped facilitate this robbery by protecting settlers and developing infrastructure; the government and corporations like the Virginia Company and Plymouth Company subsidized this process, making it possible for early settlers to obtain land and begin building wealth to pass down through to their children.
- “Land Grant and Homestead Grant programs”: Revolutionary War veterans received land grants as payment for service, continuing the theft of land and culture from Indigenous people and fueling policies of “Manifest Destiny”. Black people were denied this opportunity. The US continued to provide military support to enable land theft to happen. In all, about 1.6 million homestead grants were distributed, almost exclusively to white people.
- Jim Crow laws blocked Black people from gaining access to wealth-building opportunities.
- Following the Great Depression, the US government supported white homeownership via the Homeowners Loan Corporation (HOLC), which developed the long-term, fixed-rate mortgage. HOLC also institutionalized the practice of “redlining” by creating maps showing concentrations of Black households—which allowed municipalities to funnel taxpayer dollars away from these areas. The Federal Housing Authority (FHA) used HOLC’s maps to ensure that mortgages were not issued in redlined areas – meaning that white people benefited far more than any others from homeownership programs.
- Between 1934 and 1962, the US government backed \$120 billion in mortgages. Fewer than 2 percent of FHA mortgages went to people of color, making it nearly impossible for non-white people to build wealth.
- 1944 - The G.I. Bill provided mortgage assistance programs and college or vocational education for veterans, broadening the middle class. This was mostly afforded to white families. Black and brown families faced major scrutiny and often were avoided.
- 1949 - Federal government initiates urban renewal to provide low-income housing for families not served by the private market. Program is marred by racial and class discrimination.
- 1980s – Federal government cuts

funding for affordable housing social safety net by 77 percent.

- 1990s – The subprime lending market begins to prey on Black and Latinx consumers, and foreclosure rates skyrocket to 2-2.5 times greater than white homeowners.
- Today, the homeownership rate for Black people is about 42% -- right where it was in 1968.

Sources:

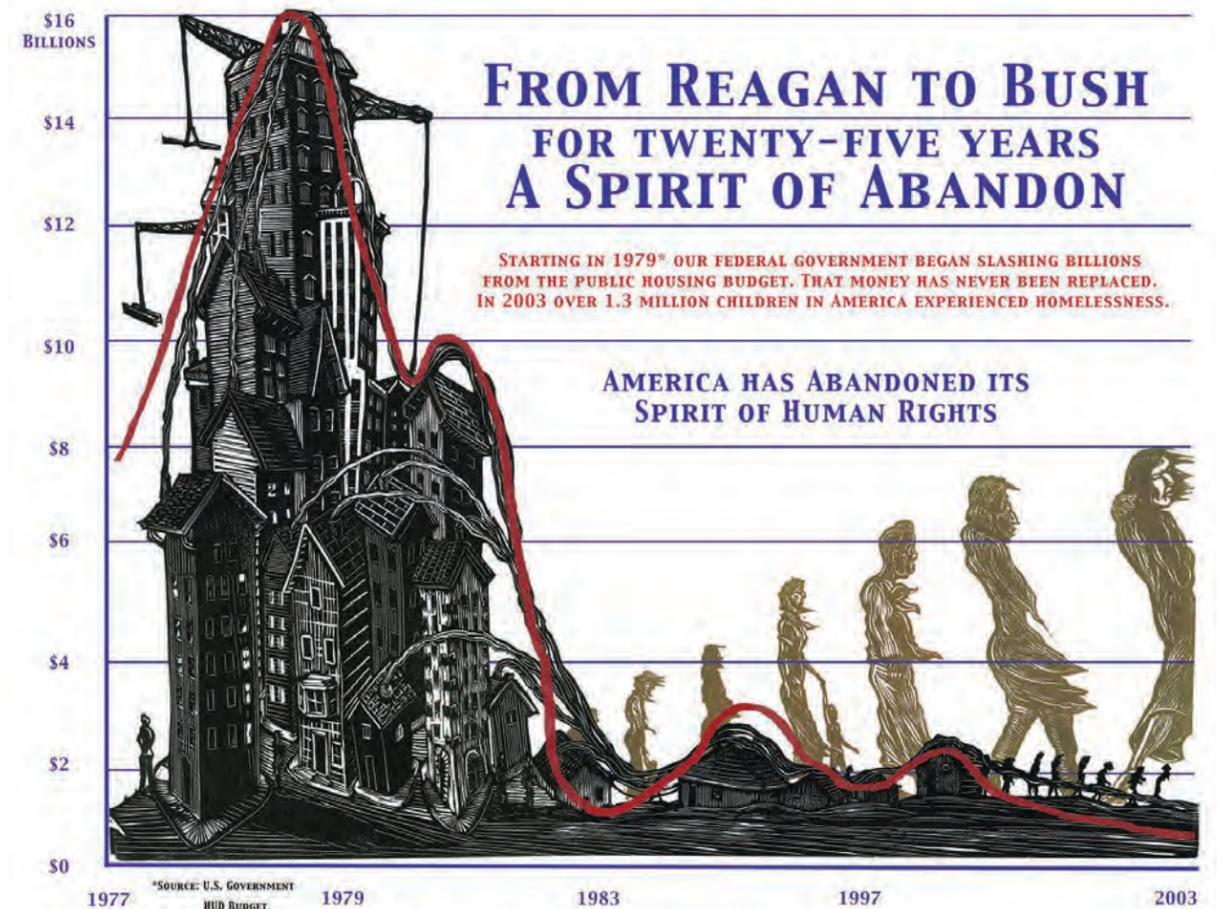
Homeownership by race/ethnicity graph source:
[https://nationalequityatlas.org/indicators/Homeownership/By_race~ethnicity:38486/United_States/false/Year\(s\):2015/](https://nationalequityatlas.org/indicators/Homeownership/By_race~ethnicity:38486/United_States/false/Year(s):2015/)

Racial wealth gap chart (from Urban Institute):
<http://apps.urban.org/features/wealth-inequality-charts/>

How did we get here?
 main sources for text:
<https://shelterforce.org/2019/02/15/long-before-redlining-racial-disparities-in-homeownership-need-intentional-policies/>

<https://shelterforce.org/2019/02/21/long-before-redlining-part-2/>

Rollback of federal funds for affordable housing chart (WRAP artwork)
 Art Hazelwood



Workshop 1.4 - Today's Housing System: Who Benefits, Who Pays?

OVERVIEW: The current housing model in the US has created immense wealth for some, and severe burdens for many more. The fact that so many people do not have stable housing is not a “glitch” in the system. It is by design that a few people get rich at the expense of the rest. This model has an enormous impact on our own lives, as well as our children, families, schools, communities, and neighborhoods. We believe we need a fundamentally different housing system! In this workshop, we will delve deeper into how our current housing system measures up for different groups, with a particular focus on Black people, elders, and LGBTQ+ people.

Learning objectives: In this workshop, participants will...

- › Understand that our current housing system is designed to benefit a small group of people at the expense of many others.
- › Understand how and why poor people are hit the hardest.
- › Continue to build a shared vision for a housing justice movement led by front-line communities.

Approximate Time: 2+ hours

Supplies & Preparation

- Several old magazines, for collage
- Paper
- Glue
- Scissors
- Handout for each participant see appendix:
 - 📄 “Culturally-Specific Experiences of Evictions”
- Computer hooked up to the internet with speakers, with tab open to:
 - ◊ “CAT – Renter SOS” (4-minute film) - www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZiVV3xCe3c
- Large sheet of paper or white board, markers
- Sticky-notes

Workshop Steps

1. (20 minutes) Brainstorm: When you hear “the American Dream”, what do you think of?
 - Invite participants to look through magazines for images depicting the American Dream. Cut out, glue on a sheet of paper.
 - Share with the group.
 - Discuss: What images did you choose to represent “the American Dream”? Why? What does our society tell us about the American Dream? How does “home” (or homeownership) figure into the American Dream? Do you think this dream is attainable? For whom? Why or why not?





2. (45 minutes) Each one, teach one: Ask a volunteer to read the introduction to the “Culturally-Specific Housing Experiences” handout.

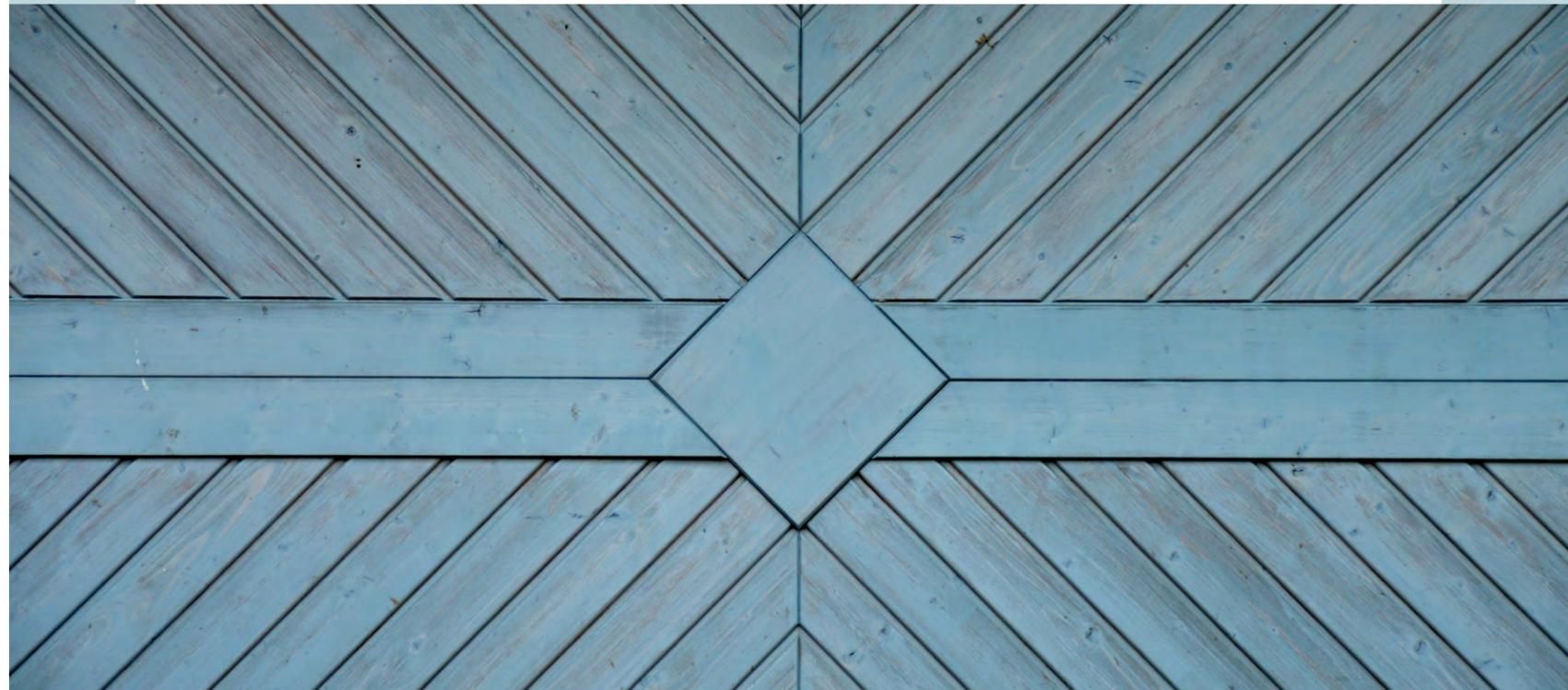
- Then, invite people to form groups of 3, assign each group one summary (focused on Black/African-Americans, elders, and LGBTQ+ people’s experiences), and invite them to study the images and read the summaries together.
- ◊ Invite participants to take turns reading the summaries out loud as a small group.
- ◊ Invite people to use the questions at the end of the handout to guide discussion within their small groups when they finish reading the testimonials.

- ◊ Share out: Invite each small group to spend a few minutes sharing what they learned with the larger group, focused on the handout’s guiding questions: 1) What are some challenges that members of this group face, with regard to housing? 2) What are some sources of strength that members of this group identify? 3) What are some ways that YOUR group/organization might better center the needs of this group in your housing justice organizing work?

- Discuss: What are some commonalities across these stories? What are some differences you notice?
 - ◊ Facilitation tip: Ensure participants understand the importance of making space to recognize that non-white people are hardest hit, and at the same time we ALL have to work together, in solidarity, to get things done.
- 3.** (5 minutes) Watch: Watch “CAT – SOS”, a short video of CAT tenants coming together to fight for housing justice across the state of Oregon.

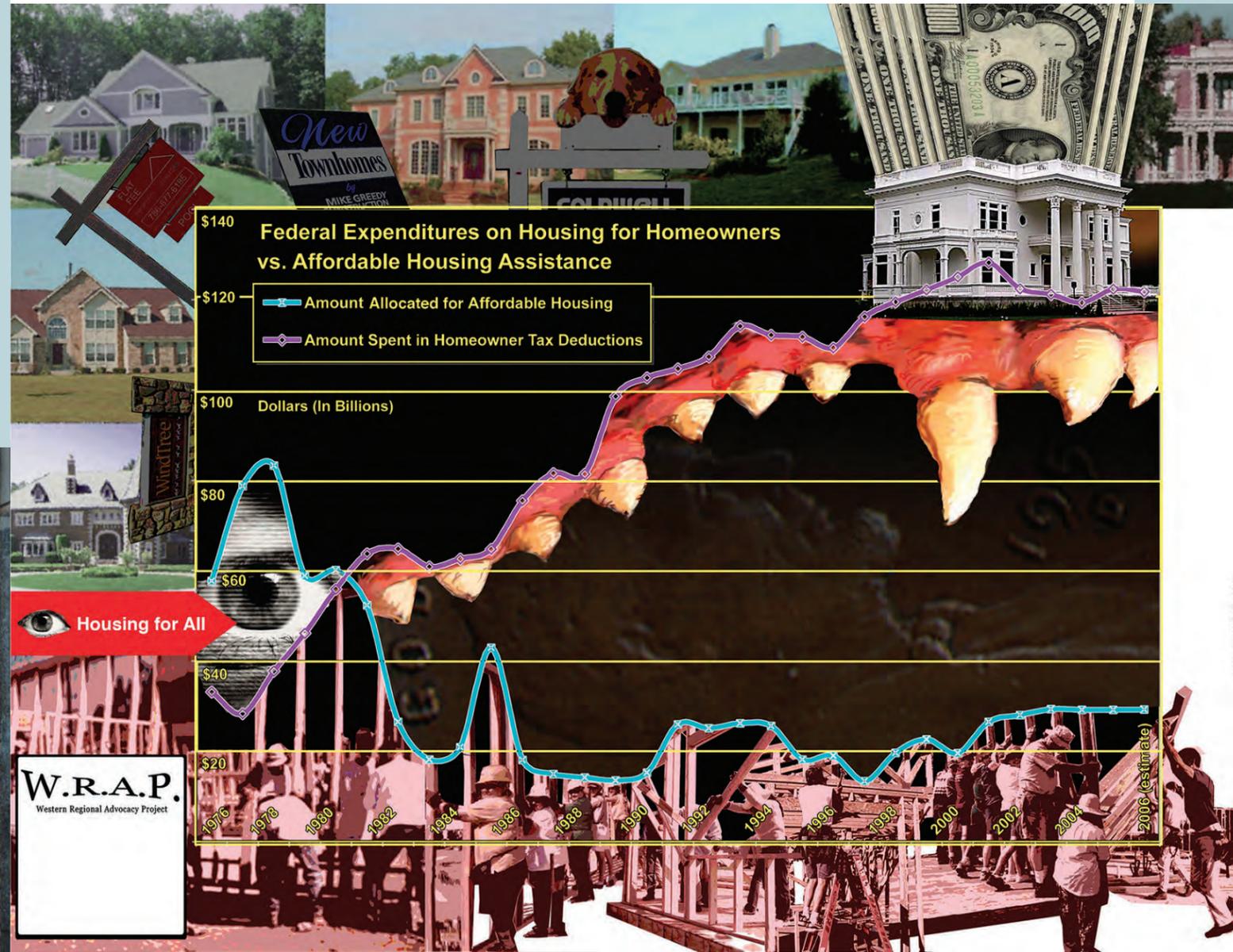
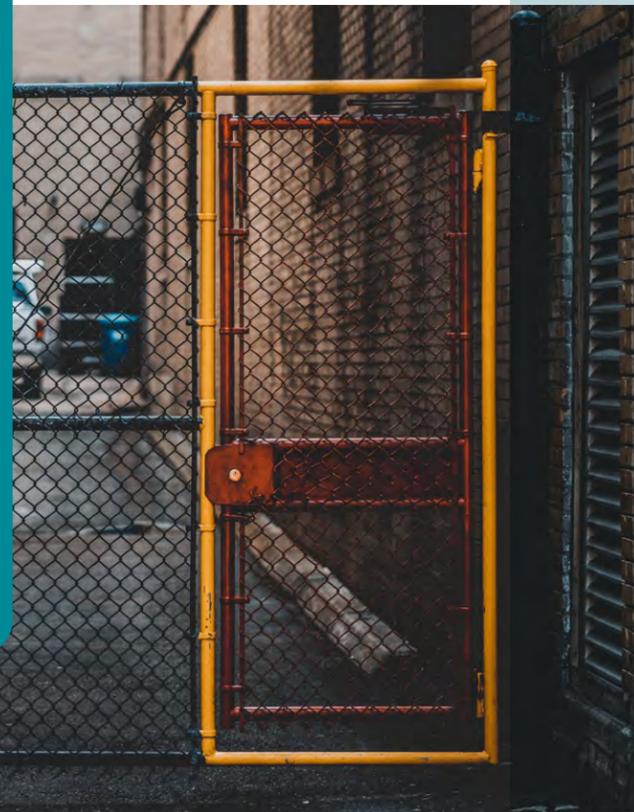
- Emphasize: Rent control and just cause are not the end goals, though they will provide important relief for many people in the short-term. These goals are there to get people activated. Community control is the end goal, and we have to work together, across lines of race, class, age, ethnicity, religion, and gender, as well as across urban-rural divides, to make this happen!
- 4.** (10 minutes) Reflect: Draw an image of a person on a whiteboard or large piece of paper (as large as possible), with an emphasis on the head, heart, and feet/hands.

- Give three sticky notes to each person, and invite them to write one thing on each note:
 - ◊ Head: note or draw something you are THINKING
 - ◊ Heart: note or draw something you are FEELING
 - ◊ Feet/hands: note or draw something you plan to DO
- Have people put their sticky notes on the paper person. Invite each person to share one of their notes (or if time permits, all three)



“White people are taught that racism is a personal attribute, an attitude, maybe a set of habits. Anti-racist whites invest too much energy worrying about getting it right; about not slipping up and revealing their racial socialization; about saying the right things and knowing when to say nothing. It’s not about that. It’s about putting your shoulder to the wheel of history; about undermining the structural supports of a system of control that grinds us under, that keeps us divided even against ourselves and that extracts wealth, power and life from our communities like an oil company sucks it from the earth.

The names of the euro-descended anti-racist warriors we remember – John Brown, Anne Braden, Myles Horton – are not those of people who did it right. They are of people who never gave up. They kept their eyes on the prize – not on their anti-racism grade point average. This will also be the measure of your work. Be there. There are things in life we don’t get to do right. But we do get to do them.” -Ricardo Levin Morales



Federal Subsidy of Home Owners Vs. Renters(WRAP artwork)
Art Hazelwood

Workshop 1.5 - Rural Communities: Challenges and Strengths



OVERVIEW: Today's housing crisis is far from an "urban" issue. Speculation, foreclosures, risky mortgages, a shortage of units, evictions, and huge rent raises are all serious issues in the suburbs, small towns, and rural areas. At the same time, organizers for housing justice in rural areas cannot rely on the exact same tactics as in urban spaces. The media plays much less of a role; the electoral politics tend to play out differently; conversations take place in peoples' living rooms and around kitchen tables, as opposed to in designated community organizing spaces or community centers. It is crucial for rural tenant leaders to get grounded in some of the unique issues their areas face—and it is equally crucial for urban tenant leaders to understand what people are facing around

the state. True housing justice will not come until we all get free.

Learning objectives: In this workshop, participants will...

- › Understand some of the issues faced in rural communities with regard for housing.
- › Begin to think about the unique organizing challenges and opportunities in rural spaces.
- › Continue to build a shared vision for a housing justice movement led by front-line communities across the state.

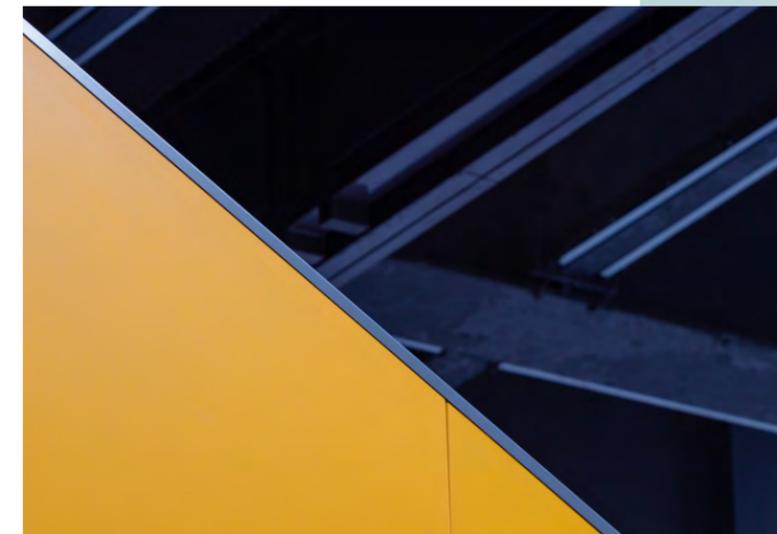
Approximate Time: 2 hours

Supplies & Preparation

- Blank paper
- Pens, pencils, markers, crayons
- Handouts for each participant see appendix:

 "Housing Rural Oregon"

 "Rural Justice and Tenant Organizing"



Workshop Steps

- 1.** (15 minutes) Draw: What does "home" look like for you? Take five minutes to sketch your idea of a stable, safe, healthy, peaceful home. What is it built out of? Who is present? What is inside it? What is outside? Is it in the city, the suburbs, the country, the beach? The US, or somewhere else? Share out with the larger group.
- 2.** (30 minutes) Listen + discuss: It's not just cities that are hit by the housing crisis. Today, rural communities are also severely burdened by our housing system. Pass out copies of the "Housing Rural Oregon" handout. Invite participants to listen for things that are similar and different between urban

and rural housing challenges. Invite volunteers to take turns reading the essay out loud.

- Discuss: Invite participants to share with a partner what resonates with them from this essay. Share out, discuss.
- Next, invite people to share what questions arose while listening to this essay. Share out, discuss.
- As a large group, invite people to reflect on similarities and differences between rural and urban areas with regard to housing.



- ◊ In discussion, emphasize the following: Some of the reason that rural areas haven't built for families and households that live there now; the impact of tourism as an economic driver (including Air B&Bs in some markets); experiences of people of color living in rural areas.
- Facilitation tip: Again, as in previous workshops, emphasize that we all get free together! Landlords, developers, and banks will make money however they can, regardless of how it impacts our communities. We have to stand together, in solidarity, to change this system.

Ask participants to raise their hand whenever they hear an “organizing tip”. As tips come up, jot them on the board (a few words each is fine).

- Invite participants to break into groups of 3-4. Ask each group to choose one of the “organizing tips” listed on the board to role play. Each group will likely need 1-2 rural residents and 1-2 organizers. Give each group 10 minutes to practice, and then invite teams to present their role plays to the large group.
- Discuss as a large group: How did the role plays feel? What questions, challenges, or surprises arose for you? What might your group incorporate into your own work, based on this exercise?

4. (10 minutes) Closing: Return to the drawings of “home” you created in the beginning of the workshop. If you currently live in rural Oregon, think of one word you want urban-based tenant organizers to know about your community. If you currently live in urban Oregon, think of one word that represents how you might work more effectively with people living in rural areas. Write this word on your paper; share out with the group.

3. (45 minutes) Listen + role play: For the last few years, CAT has been working hard to build Oregon’s tenants’ rights movement in rural and small-town Oregon. Pass out copies of the “Rural Justice and Tenant Organizing” handout. Invite volunteers to take turns reading the essay out loud.

Resources

The Rental Housing Crisis Is a Rural Issue Too
<https://shelterforce.org/2019/08/26/the-rental-housing-crisis-is-a-rural-issue-too/>

Changing the Way We Think About Poor Rural Communities
<https://shelterforce.org/2019/08/16/changing-the-way-we-think-about-poor-rural-communities/?fbclid=IwAR1lIk9IXzKh5MQx-onWdbrK5dnyDjumd4E8HtImjwSuzF3kO4kzP98aSoM>

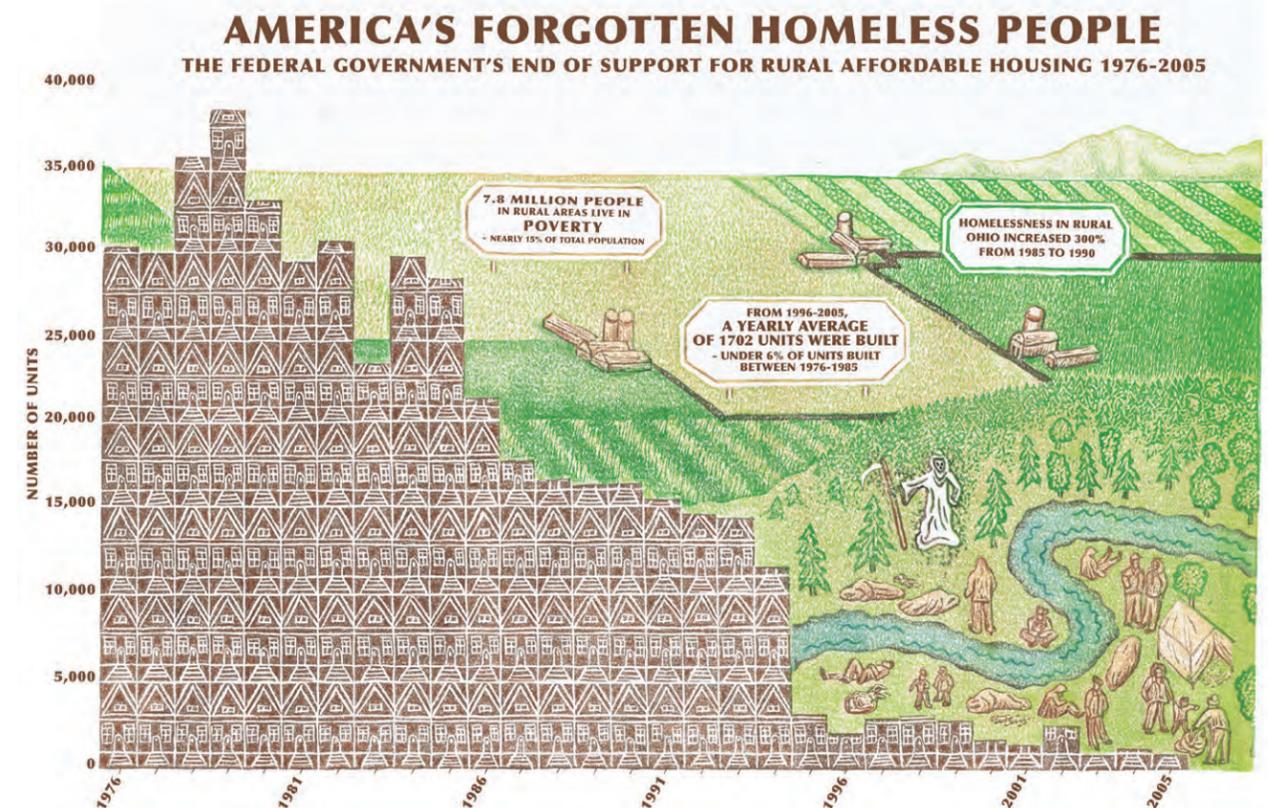
Study turns attention to rural homelessness
<https://phys.org/news/2019-09-attention-rural-homelessness.html>

The Homeless In Rural America Are Often Undercounted, Underserved
www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2019/07/04/736240349/in-rural-areas-homeless-people-are-harder-to-find-and-to-help

Rent as high as an elephant’s eye? Housing shortage hits rural US
www.csmonitor.com/Business/2019/0705/Rural-America-faces-housing-shortage.-How-one-town-is-addressing-it

Listen to an interview with Jesse Sharpe, CAT community organizer, focused on housing challenges in Southern Oregon:
<http://www.kskq.org/kskqweb/index.php/schedule/current-shows/127-brain-labor-report/4761-brain-labor-report-1-30-19-jesse-sharpe-community-alliance-of-tenants>

Rural Housing Cuts (WRAP artwork)
 Art Hazelwood





Workshop 1.6 - Communities Versus Commodities

OVERVIEW: Building on Workshop 1.4, Communities vs Commodities delves more deeply into the nuts and bolts of today’s housing system, to help us understand who profits, at whose expense, and how. We know all too well that many landlords do everything they can to gouge renters: by not making repairs, by raising rents as much as they can get away with, by counting on renters to not know their rights. In what ways do landlords benefit when they refuse to make repairs? Why do so many people still live in unsafe, unstable conditions, even though we have laws that should be protecting us? What can we, as tenants, do to change this system?

Learning objectives: In this workshop, participants will...

- › Continue to learn about how our current housing system benefits a small group of people (i.e., landlords, developers, banks) at the expense of ordinary people (i.e., renters and their families).
- › Build an understanding of how homes have multiple purposes, for different people. Renters appreciate homes for their use value. Landlords and developers appreciate homes for their exchange value. These purposes are fundamentally at odds with one another, and our system’s prioritization of exchange value over use value is what drives inequality.
- › Be able to answer the question: “What does it mean for housing to be a human

right?” Our goal as renters is to shift our system to prioritizing human rights as opposed to property rights. EVERYONE deserves a safe home, regardless of who they are.

- › Begin to learn about what some tenants are doing to fight for more just housing.

Approximate Time: 2 hours

Supplies & Preparation

- Several sheets of large easel paper (one for every 2-3 people)
- Markers
- Computer hooked up to the internet with speakers, with tabs open to:
 - ◊ “Community Alliance of Tenants - Thandar Interview” (short film) - www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XxCQ2NHcy8
 - ◊ “These Tenants are Leading the Largest Rents Strike in LA History” (10-minute film) - www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8E4srZG-Zg

Workshop Steps

1. (15 minutes) Our names, ourselves: Invite people to share their names and a word that alliterates with it (starts with the same letter), that describes something positive about them. For example: Roberto Rises Up; Lisa Leads; Dimitri Defies Expectations.
 - Next, invite people to share where their name came from, if they know.
 - Thank people for sharing. Emphasize that we all may come from different backgrounds and walks of life, but that each of us brings something very important to this movement.
2. (15 minutes) Watch: Watch the first two minutes of a CAT film about one tenant whose landlord refuses to make repairs.
 - Discuss: What is going on in Thandar’s home? Who benefits from this situation? Who is burdened? In what ways?

- 3.** (45 minutes) Brainstorm housing rights: Invite people to form groups of two or three, and give each group a large sheet of paper. Have them draw three concentric circles, taking up most of the paper (see figure on p.X). Then, give the following instructions:



(example of concentric circles for step 3)

- In the inner-most ring, in each segment, write one housing-related problem for your communities (e.g., unreliable public transportation; rents that are unaffordable; housing that is unsafe – mold in bathroom, unreliable heat, etc.).
- In the middle ring, in each segment, write what happens to you and your families because of this problem.
 - ◊ Facilitation tip: Emphasize that different people and families may be impacted differently; include a few impacts in your diagram.
- In the outer-most ring, in each segment, write what happens to your community because of this problem.
 - ◊ Facilitation tip: Emphasize that different communities, and different people within a community, may be impacted differently; again, include a few impacts in your diagram.
- Finally, outside your circle, re-frame each problem as a “housing right”. For example, in response to the problem of mold or slumlords, you might write “the right to safe housing”.
- Invite each group to share two of the most important “housing rights” they wrote down.
 - ◊ Then ask, What is needed for these “rights” to be protected? Invite each group to brainstorm for a few minutes, then share out.
 - ◊ Facilitation tip: Emphasize that while all humans have (or should

have) the same rights, different groups may need something different to protect those rights. For example, all people technically have the right to a safe place to live, but people who use wheelchairs will need key infrastructure, such as ramps, etc. in order to secure this right. Even though different groups may need different things to protect their housing rights, it is up to ALL of us to fight for and protect those rights. We cannot work alone.

- 4.** (30 minutes) Watch + listen: Show the short film, “These Tenants are Leading the Largest Rents Strike in LA History” for a brief summary of how landlord neglect, re-zoning, gentrification, rent raises, tenant organizing, and rent strikes have played out in one LA neighborhood.

- Discuss (select questions as needed for your group):
 - ◊ What happens when landlords neglect buildings?
 - ◊ What are the consequences of a housing system that prioritizes property rights rather than human rights?

- ◊ Who is most likely to be left out of such a system, and why?
- ◊ What role do government policies, like zoning, have to do with housing instability?
- ◊ How has this played out over time? (Return to your group’s timeline here!)
- ◊ Who should our housing system prioritize?
- ◊ How are people fighting to change things?

- 5.** (5 minutes) Closing: Invite each participant to call out one of the housing rights from their circle, and have everyone else to respond (see below). Go around until everyone has been the caller once.

- Caller: “Who has a right to ___(e.g., safe homes, housing near our jobs, etc.)___?”
- Group response: “WE have a right to ___(repeat the caller’s right)___.”

Setting the Record: Myths & Facts

Myth: We just need to build more housing.

Fact: In some fast-growing cities, there is a shortage of units. In these cities, yes, PART of the solution is to build more units. But these units need to be made deeply, permanently affordable for people who make \$0, or \$10,000, or \$30,000 a year. In other cities, there are more than enough units to house everyone, but safe, stable housing is still out of reach for many people due to a housing system that prioritizes profits rather than people.

Myth: The government already gives more handouts to renters than anyone else; people need to work harder and do a better job managing their money. **Fact:** The government has always prioritized homeownership. Tax benefits, programs for homeownership opportunities, laws that protect those who are unable to pay their mortgage all exist as basic homeowner subsidies. While some benefits like deposit assistance and rent assistance are available, the vast majority of need goes unmet with renters compared to homeownership opportunities. The homeownership tax deduction can be taken by pretty much any homeowner in the right circumstances, regardless of income. No such tax benefit exists for tenants. Some foreclosure programs have payment deferral options as long as 6 months. The first month a



tenant doesn't pay rent, they are at risk of losing their home. This is not to say that homeowners are bad or that renters are better than homeowners. It is to say that support and assistance for homeowners – right or wrong – exist much more heavily at multiple layers of government than for renters. Given that our housing system only allows two forms of living in a home (either renting or owning), it makes sense that either living form should have some benefit to participating in our economy and in our communities.

Myth: Everyone loses together during times of economic crisis, whether you are rich or poor. **Fact:** The wealthiest amongst us are buffeted from losses, and even profit during times of generalized crisis. “We have learned through discovery in our members’ eviction cases that one Boston-area corporate landlord increased its holdings from 150 to 500 units over the course of the foreclosure crisis. Buying up foreclosed

homes at bargain prices padded its profit margin and allowed it to acquire even more buildings and grow into one of the biggest property owners in the Greater Boston area. These corporate landlords monopolize the rental market and drive up prices, abuse their tenants, and carry out mass no-fault evictions for profit. - Maria Christina Bianco, Organizer, City Life/Vida Urbana” (p.23 HFA Renter Nation)

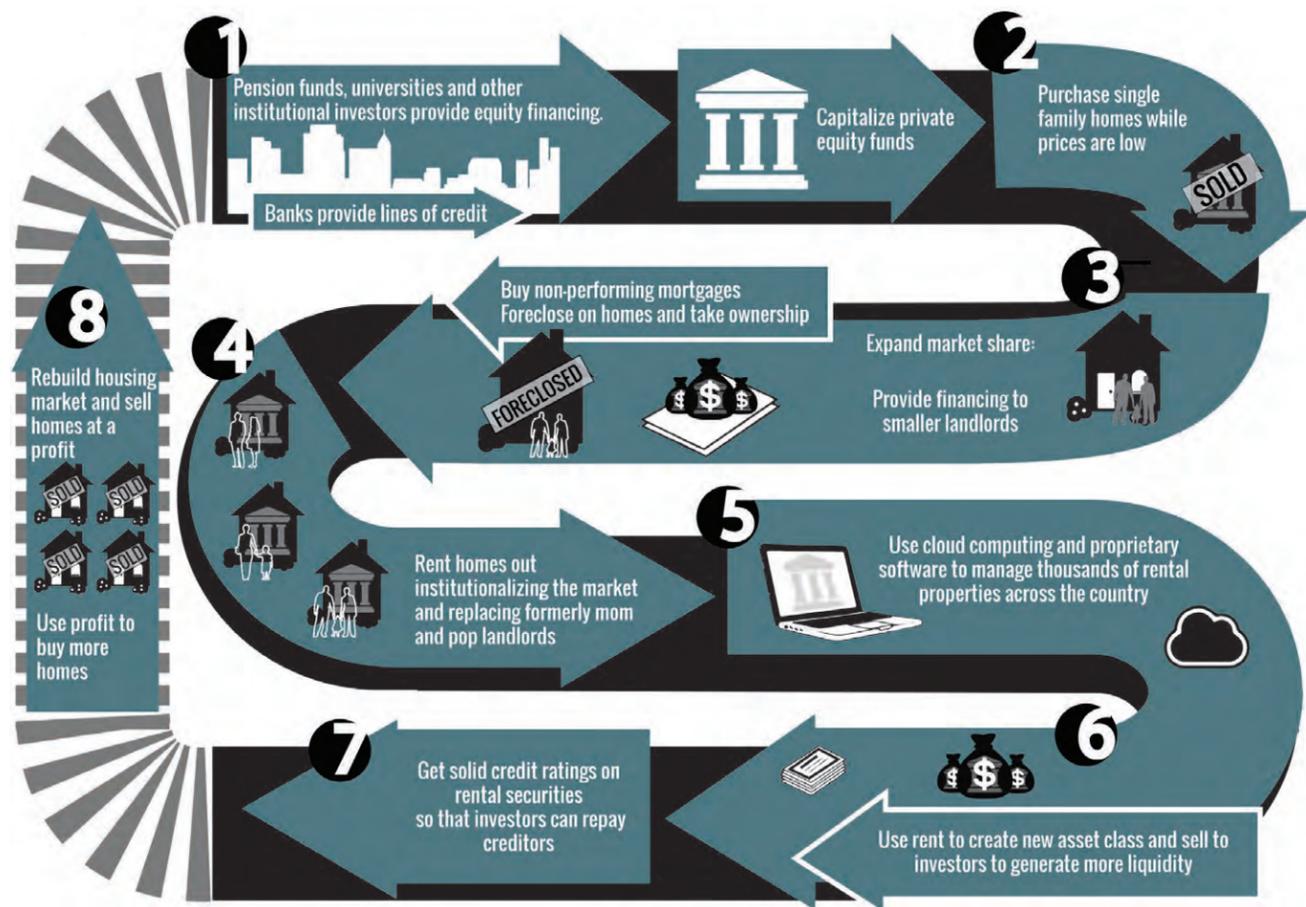
Myth: Rent control doesn't work. **Fact:** The term “work” is loosely defined and can mean very different things to very different people. A rent control policy in the bay area of California prevented the mass displacement and gentrification of thousands of renters of color when new development was taking place. In the case of preventing displacement and maximizing chances of stability, rent control worked in this situation. And in this case, development still happened. When people say “Rent Control Doesn't Work,”

we should always respond with, “What do you mean by ‘work’? Doesn't work for what or for whom? And what does ‘work’ mean to you?”

Myth: Landlords need a way to evict problem renters. **Fact:** A way to evict does exist. This request is most often asking for a way to evict tenants without an opportunity to change their behavior and/or be subject to due process to be able to tell their side of the story. Evictions should be an absolute last resort as we all know that housing is a foundational element of our lives. When evictions do occur, they should be done through ample process, allow time for tenants to remedy a problem, and be able to tell their side of the story. This statement is also often used to talk about situations where a landlord doesn't truly understand the story. For example, we've heard this myth used when a landlord is describing “shady characters” visiting a tenant's home with the possibility of selling drugs. The term shady can be defined in many ways. In this particular case, a landlord was talking about a person of color who wore a hoodie. The landlord didn't know the facts, and the real situation at hand was racial profiling. Evictions should not be a screen for discrimination, profiling, or retaliation. If a tenant is going to lose their home, there should be a reason – a just reason.

THE RISE OF THE CORPORATE LANDLORD

The Institutionalization of the Single-Family Rental Market and Potential Impacts on Renters



Additional Fair Housing Resources:

Fair Housing Act guardian article:
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jan/24/housing-market-racism-persists-despite-fair-housing-laws>

“A Matter of Place”, a documentary film that shines a bright light on housing discrimination, one of the most shrouded and misunderstood civil rights issues in America:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=WkYfa5IX-nU

The Role of Tenant Protections in Solving Housing Crisis:
www.shelterforce.org/2017/02/13/tenant-protections-are-a-cornerstone-to-solving-the-housing-crisis

[Bonus Activity]

Featured topic: Fair Housing Act

Watch + discuss: Show the 6.5-minute film, “Why Are Cities Still So Segregated?” to learn about how our housing system has placed a particularly severe burden on Black communities. (Note: your group may have already watched this film, in Workshop 1.4).

- Discuss the film, emphasizing the following:
 - ◊ The American Dream was designed by and for white people. That’s not to say that some non-white folks haven’t “achieved” the American Dream, but there are huge barriers for most people to do so. It’s also not to say that all white people have achieved the American Dream; a growing number of

white people are shut out, as well.

- ◊ The Fair Housing Act of 1968 was a huge step forward in ensuring more stable housing for all. That said, it has not been well enforced. In other words, despite “good” policy, we still have massive inequalities and inequities, especially for Black and Native people.
- ◊ Moreover, it is important to recognize that the Fair Housing Act promises protection for elders, LGBTQ+ people, etc. – and that this protection comes on the backs of Black people fighting through the Civil Rights Movement (which built on earlier movements).

Workshop 1.7 - The Housing Justice Movement

OVERVIEW: In the midst of a national housing crisis, the tenants' rights movement has gained significant momentum over the last decade. What does today's movement look like? Who is leading it, and what do they hope to accomplish? What are their strategies and tactics? This workshop will help your group develop a sense of who is involved in the tenants' rights movement, the goals of the movement, and various approaches to fighting for a more just housing system. Crucially, this workshop emphasizes the need for those who are MOST impacted to lead this fight.

Learning objectives: In this workshop, participants will...

- › Become familiar with the variety of people involved in today's movement for housing justice as well as their goals.
- › Learn about some of approaches, strategies, and tactics that today's movement groups are using.
- › Appreciate how crucial it is that the renters' rights movement take the lead of frontline communities and most-impacted renters.

Approximate Time: 2 hours



Supplies & Preparation

- Large sheet of paper or white board, markers
- Handout for all participants see appendix:
 - 📄 "Tenant Success Story"
- Computer hooked up to the internet with speakers, with tab open to:
 - ◊ Homes For All National Member Assembly (7-minute film) - www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8sMqiaj0ok

Workshop Steps

1. (10 minutes) Brainstorm: Using a whiteboard and markers to record what people say, make a list of whatever comes to mind for people when they hear "housing justice movement".
 - Facilitation tip: Encourage people to think in terms of people, places, goals, strategies, tactics, slogans, etc. There are no wrong answers! If people get stuck or have little background knowledge, encourage them to think about each of the words in turn. What might these three words mean, together?
2. (45 minutes) Each one, teach one: Invite people to pair up or form groups of 3. Give each pair one "Tenant Success Story" handout and invite them to study the images and read the short descriptions together.
3. (20 minutes) Watch, listen + discuss: Show a short film about the Homes For All National Member Assembly in Atlanta, from summer 2018. This 7-minute film showcases many of the
 - After about 15 minutes, give each pair three minutes to share their housing justice success story with the larger group. They should briefly report the following: name and place of the organization profiled, challenges faced, strategies/tactics used, and outcomes.
 - Discuss: What are some commonalities across these stories? What are some differences you notice? How might these tenant success stories inspire your own work in your home and/or in your community?

diverse groups at the forefront of the tenants' rights movement today.

- Discuss: What did you notice in the film? How did people define the "problem"? What kinds of approaches did they talk about in tackling the problem? Who did they identify as agents of change?

4. (20 minutes) Vision: Working in groups

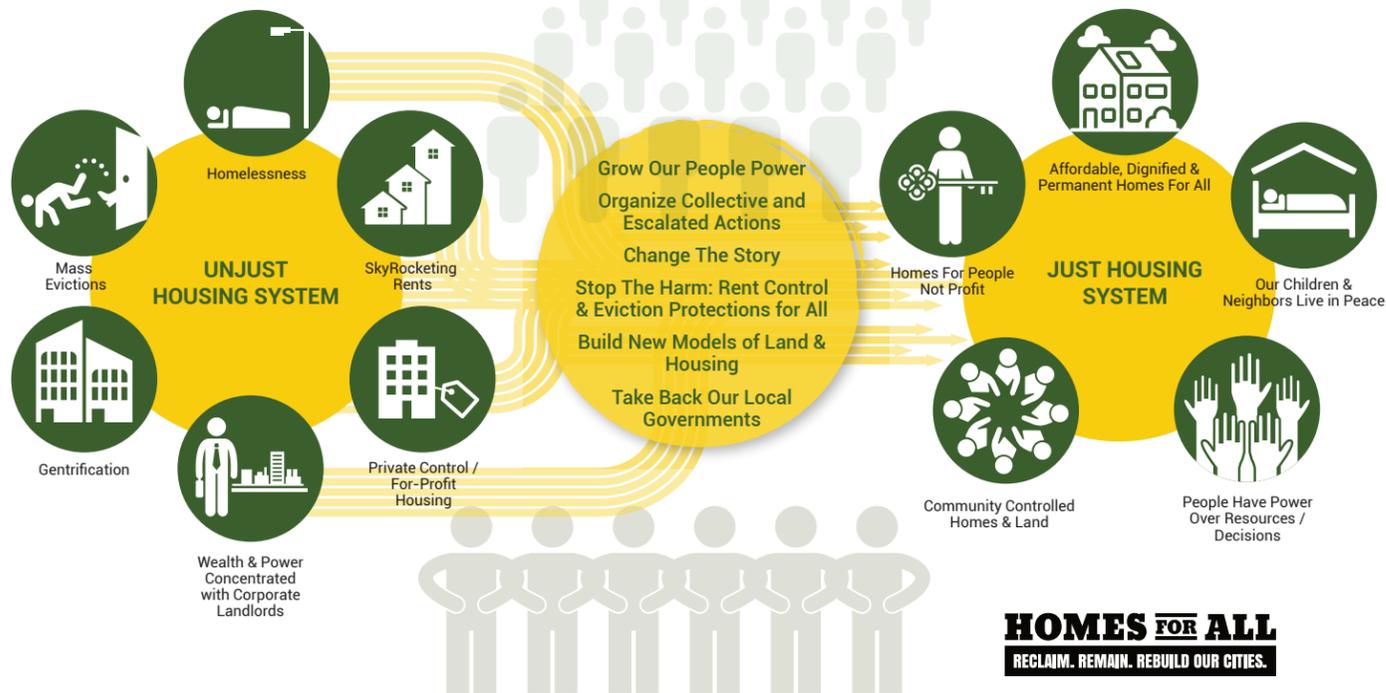
of three or four, invite each group to come up with a 1-minute skit that conveys what "housing justice" means to them, informed by the tenant success stories and the film you saw today. What does housing justice look like for your communities? Perform your skits and applaud each other's efforts!

"Social movements are defined by their ability to move large numbers of people to action to achieve structural and cultural transformation on a national or global scale. Engaging a diverse range of communities and approaches simultaneously, social movements unite people through shared strategy, principles, and goals. Building a social movement requires: increasing the capacity of individuals, organizations, alliances and sectors to be more strategic, collaborative, and sustainable." (From SOUL – www.southernersonnewground.org)



HOMES FOR ALL STRATEGY TO WIN

Organizing to transition from an unjust, exploitative housing system to a world with just, sustainable homes for all



Alternative Housing Models

Luckily, we do not have to start from scratch in envisioning a more just housing system. Here are a few alternative housing models that do NOT depend on the exploitation and displacement of people. These are models that people are experimenting with, right now.

It is time to move past the current for-profit market system and the crisis it has created. We must move boldly in a different direction—towards an understanding that housing is a human right.

- **Informal settlements** respond to the failure of the market. They are part of a spectrum of non-market responses organized by people who have been pushed out of, or were never able to fully enter, the housing market. Using a harm reduction approach, cities should sanction encampments and provide sanitation and social services, thereby allowing people to survive through the housing crisis.
- **Community land trusts and cooperatives** offer a clear model for creating permanently affordable housing that is replicable and scalable across the Bay Area. Community land trusts limit increases in land and housing prices over time and can provide stability for communities most at risk of displacement and economic hardship from speculative land development. Permanent real estate cooperatives, an emerging cooperative model, have the potential to raise community-sourced capital from a broad membership base, in order to develop affordable and community controlled housing.
- **Public land can host pilots or expansions of the models.** Municipalities and other public entities have a major opportunity to mitigate the cost of land in hot markets, build deeply affordable housing, and make a key political intervention into the increasing privatization of public goods.
- **Cities can enact a first-right-of-refusal policy** to help level the playing field for low- and moderate-income tenants, community land trusts, and cooperatives trying to purchase property. Cities can also create funding programs to subsidize the acquisition and rehabilitation of existing affordable buildings in which tenants are at risk of displacement, thereby protecting long-term tenants against eviction and preserving properties as permanently affordable.
- Lastly, cities and other governments should promote **a scaled-up social housing system in which housing is not owned and operated to make a profit** and provides security of tenure for residents. Cities can support progressive taxation, tenant protection policies, and the use of public land to promote social housing types, such as public housing, resident-controlled limited-equity cooperatives, and deed-restricted affordable housing held by community land trusts and nonprofits.

The text here is excerpted from "Rooted in Home: Community-Based Alternatives", a Homes for All report. While it is focused on the Bay Area, these models could be adapted all over the US. To find out more about these and other models, check out urbanhabitat.org/sites/default/files/Rooted%20in%20Home.pdf

You can also find out more about Washington DC's DC's "Tenant Right to Purchase Act" at www.youtube.com/watch?v=icfkYE-N_2g

[Bonus Activity]

Looking Back: Putting Today's Movement in Historical Context

Check out the online Oregon housing (in)justice timeline. Invite participants to look it over in pairs, and to share out two events from the past that seem connected in some way to today's movement.

- Emphasize that a long tradition of community organizing, and social movements have pushed for changes to the housing system in the US and around the world.
- Today's change-makers can learn from the challenges and successes of those who have come before. It is important to honor the roots and historical context that helps inform our strategies and approaches today. In addition, change often
- takes many, many years, and the impacts of a particular course of action may reverberate for several generations.
- Knowing what came before can help us act strategically in the present, as well as take inspiration from previous generations.
- At the same time, today's challenges are not exactly the same as those of the past. Conditions have shifted, and new obstacles have emerged that challenge us to forge new paths moving forward. Developing a sense of the long arc of change can nevertheless increase chances of success.

Workshop 1.8 - Oregon's Renter State of Emergency: Just Cause and Rent Control

OVERVIEW: Building on decades and centuries of struggle, Oregon also has a very rich recent history of housing activists pushing for legislative changes at the local and state levels. Renters have been rising up to say that housing choices and opportunities should not only be for those who can afford it. At the center of this struggle has been a fight for just cause eviction and rent control laws. These policies go hand in hand. They are designed to protect renters from landlords who evict in order to increase their profits with new, higher-earning tenants, as well as who raise rents that amount to de facto evictions. It is imperative to recall this recent struggle as we strategize around how to push for even more changes.

Yet, while just cause and rent control are important steps in this struggle, we cannot stop there. The work for housing justice is not finished. We have to work together until ALL people can afford their homes; until there is affordable housing in ALL kinds of neighborhoods, towns, and cities; until ALL communities are stable, thriving places for children, adults, and elders alike, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc.

Learning objectives: In this workshop, participants will...

- › Know the basic highlights of the recent fight for tenant rights in Oregon.
- › Understand the imperative that

urban residents take the leads of rural Oregonians in this moment, given that cities currently have more progressive tenant protections than do smaller towns and rural areas.

- › Understand the basic arguments for and against rent control and just cause.

Approximate Time: 2 hours

Supplies & Preparation

- Computer hooked up to the internet with speakers, with tabs open to:
 - ◊ “Oregon Has a Complicated History With Rent Control” (4 mins) - www.opb.org/news/article/oregon-portland-rent-control-ban-housing-history
 - ◊ “We need Just Cause Because” film (6 mins) - www.youtube.com/watch?v=7CpNDAgMI60
 - ◊ “Senate Bill 608, Explained” (3 mins) - www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3Az76EH7mk
- speech - www.youtube.com/watch?v=3NskV1rgLIU
- CAT Director Katrina Holland's

Workshop Steps

1. (15 minutes) Brainstorm: What comes to mind when you hear the phrases “rent control” and “just-cause eviction”. Invite participants to pair up and draw images depicting what these concepts might mean. Emphasize that this is meant as a warm-up activity; there are no wrong answers at this point. Share out.
 - Share the following definitions:
 - ◊ Rent control: Policies that limit

the amount and frequency of rent-increases and/or rent charges. Early iterations of rent control often capped how much rent could be charged for a unit. Newer iterations are often focused on increase allowances, frequencies, and attempt to titrate based on market conditions. These policies are designed to be responsive to market dynamics.



- ◇ Just-cause eviction: Policies that prohibit landlords from removing a tenant from a unit without cause. These policies generally have for-cause provisions under which a landlord can initiate an eviction process, but they must follow a process spelled out in law. Just causes can include things like when a landlord wants to move a family member or themselves into a unit. The basic premise of these kinds of laws are that there is a justifiable reason a tenant is being removed from their home and that reason is made known to the tenant prior to their having to leave.

2. (30 minutes) Listen, question + track: Listen to a 4-minute news report called “Oregon Has a Complicated History With Rent Control”, which explains why CAT was leading the fight to end no-cause evictions in 2017. The report gives a brief history of rent control in Oregon, as well as an orientation to the debate about the efficacy of rent control. Invite people to write down questions that come to mind as they listen.

- What questions does this report bring up for you? Jot them on the board, but do not spend time

answering them now; you will return to these questions later in the workshop.

- As a group, work together to create a brief timeline of the events mentioned in the report (or, if you created a timeline during previous workshops, add to it):
 - ◇ WWII – federal government implemented rent control to combat steep rent hikes, following a slow-down in housing development as a result of building materials being diverted to the war.
 - ◇ 1982 – Lane County mobile home residents pushed a ballot measure for “rent stabilization”. It didn’t pass, but it spooked landlords, lobbyists, and politicians to pass a state-wide ban on rent control.
 - ◇ 2017 – CAT led a fight to overturn the state ban on no-cause evictions, require landlords to pay relocation costs, and repeal the state’s ban on rent control. The bill did not pass, but it inspired many people to join the fight for tenant rights.

- Now fill in a few other key Oregon highlights your group may know about, including CAT’s declaration of a “renter state of emergency” (2015), the passage of HB4143 that limited rent increases in a tenant’s first year of tenancy (2016), Portland’s relocation ordinance passage (2017), the passage of state-wide rent control (2019).

3. (30 minutes) Watch + define: Watch the short film, Just Cause Because, to learn about concepts such as “just cause eviction” and “no cause eviction”, and to help build an understanding of the relationship between no cause evictions and rent raises.

- Discuss: What does “just cause eviction” mean? What does “no cause eviction” mean?

- The film does not discuss rent control, but it is nevertheless a key piece of tenant protection demands today. Discuss: Why do you think a cap on rent raises is an important policy, to go hand in hand with just cause evictions?

4. (30 minutes) Debate over rent control: Now watch this short film that details the new 2019 statewide rent control ins and outs in Oregon.

- Return to questions your group brainstormed at the beginning. What answers do you now have to your questions? What questions remain? Where could you find additional answers?

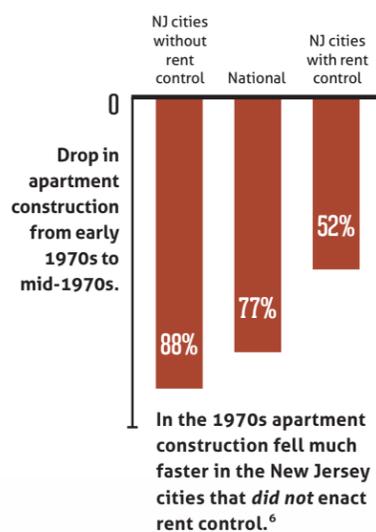
5. (5 minutes) Wrap up: Watch the last half (minutes 4:00 until the end) of Katrina’s press conference speech, from 2015. At the very end, Katrina talks about everyone needing a place to call home. When the film concludes, invite participants to stand up, look each other in the eye, join hands, and chant together five times: “We deserve stable homes! We deserve stable homes! We deserve stable homes! We deserve stable homes! We deserve stable homes!” Applaud each other’s work.

The Answer

SHELTERFORCE

Q: Do rent regulations make the housing crisis worse?

A: No! Despite common fears, decades of evidence shows that rent regulation doesn't restrict housing supply and quality.¹



"New York City's two greatest housing construction booms in the 20th century occurred during 1921–28 and 1947–1965, periods when stricter rent controls were in effect than any around or proposed today."⁵



Economists Don't Actually Hate Rent Control

Modern rent regulations generally don't apply to new construction (unless a developer opts into them to access a subsidy), so there is no disincentive to construction. They allow for annual increases in rent, often pegged to inflation. They also often allow for rent increases for capital improvements, hardship exemptions, and exemptions for owner-occupied properties. In other words, they are structured not to interfere with the viability of rental housing, merely to improve housing stability in appreciating markets.

So when you hear the claim "All economists say rent control doesn't work," it's important to know that it is based on a single 1984 survey that asked about a blanket, fixed "price ceiling" on all rents, which does not describe any rent regulation current or proposed.⁷

"Right now it's much harder for a tenant to find a home, than for a landlord to get them out. That is unacceptable!" – Katrina Holland

Additional resources

CAT's former executive director, Justin Buri, testified at City Council, declaring a renter state of emergency in 2015: www.youtube.com/watch?v=kt7jH8CA-BAM&t=45s

NY Times article, summarizing the 2019 push for statewide rent control in Oregon, in national context: www.nytimes.com/2019/02/25/us/oregon-rent-control-bill.html

Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek, discussing the reasons that Oregon needs rent control in 2019: www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsKEaSBbd1c

Rent Control and Just Cause Evictions Work! Report - www.urbanhabitat.org/sites/default/files/UH%202018%20Strengthening%20Communities%20Through%20Rent%20Control_0.pdf

Why Pdx Needs Rent Stabilization - www.news.streetroots.org/2017/04/20/rent-stabilization-it-s-portland-s-time

Vancouver BC Eviction Defense Handbook: https://srocollaborative.files.wordpress.com/2017/03/evict_handbook_web.pdf

Atlanta Eviction Defense Manual: www.housingjusticeleague.org/evictiondefense

Opening the Door to Rent Control: Toward a Comprehensive Approach to Protecting California's Renters - https://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/haasinstitute_rentcontrol.pdf

San Jose's Diridon Station Area: The Urban Displacement Project - https://www.urbandisplacement.org/sites/default/files/images/urbandisplacementproject_policycasestudy_diridonstation_april2016.pdf

¹ John Gilderbloom, "Rent Control Reconsidered: The Impact of Moderate Rent Control on 60 New Jersey Cities over a 20-Year Period," 2003. Peter Marcuse, *Housing Abandonment: Does Rent Control Make a Difference?* Policy Report, No. 4. (Washington, D.C.: Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies, 1981.)
² U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Housing Vacancies and Homeownership*, 2001, Table 5, "Rental Vacancy Rates for the 75 Largest Metropolitan Areas: 1986 to 2001."
³ Greenberger, "Menino Offers Rent Control Plan," *Boston Globe*, October 20, 2002.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ New York City Department of City Planning, *New Dwelling Units Completed 1921-present*.
⁶ Michael Mandel, "Does Rent Control Hurt Tenants?: A Reply to Epstein," 54 *Brooklyn L. Rev.* 1267, 1273 (1989); citing John Gilderbloom, *Moderate Rent Control: The Experience of U.S. Cities* (1980).
⁷ Frey, Pommerehne, Schneider and Gilbert, "Consensus and Dissension Among Economists: An Empirical Inquiry," 74 *Am. Econ. Rev.* 986 (1984).

Thanks to New York State Tenants and Neighbors and Timothy Collins, whose paper "Rent Regulation in New York: Myths and Facts" provided most of these citations.



Workshop 1.9 - Working Together, Across Difference

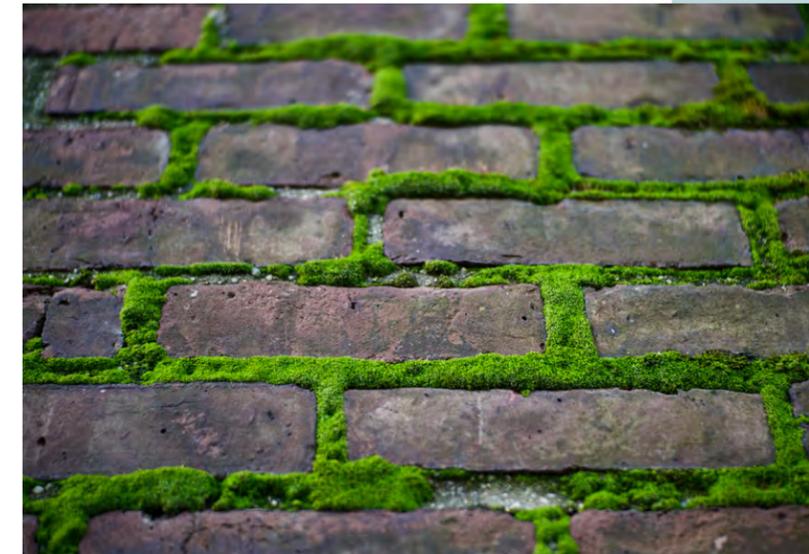
OVERVIEW: Broad categories, such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, (dis)ability, and age can have massive bearing on how we experience life. This is particularly true with regard to housing, as well as our work within the fight for a more just housing system. This workshop will guide participants in reflecting on how our own backgrounds/identities influence what role we might play in the housing justice movement; what each of us needs to be mindful of, or humble about, when working within your own communities—and especially when working with people from other communities; the difference in knowing and knowing something that a group experiences—and how to know the difference; who is “in the room” with our group, who is missing, and how this may

impact our work. Finally, participants will learn and practice “flossing”, one tool that can help diverse groups work together more productively.

Learning objectives: In this workshop, participants will...

- › Understand why it is important to understand each other’s different housing experiences, and that these differences impact the role that each of us might play in the housing justice movement.
- › Continue to establish our positionalities in relationship to this work and each other; establish “who is in the room”.

- › Reflect on how we each might negotiate and balance our own racial, cultural, gendered selves in participating as a leader for housing justice.
- › Continue to build our understandings of how our own identities shape our power, or lack of it, within the housing justice movement; reflect on how to ensure that those who are most burdened by the housing system are elevated within our movement.
- › Appreciate the need for solidarity for all of the different groups who experience unstable and unsafe housing, gentrification, and displacement.
- › Begin to understand how we might work together, across our differences. What challenges might we face? What are some productive ways of working



through challenges?

- › Learn and practice one key tool – “flossing” – that can help diverse groups work together in more productive and sensitive ways.

Approximate Time: 2 hours

Supplies & Preparation

- White board or large easel paper, markers
- Handouts for each participant, see appendix:
 - 📄 “Conflict Case Study Scenarios”
 - 📄 Floss Kit Letter
- Computer hooked up to the internet with speakers, with tab open to:
 - ◊ “Say No to the Savior Complex” (2.5-minute film) - www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDyGDnXbec

Workshop Steps

1. (15 minutes) Ice-breaker – Our names, our stories: Hand out a piece of paper and a marker to each person. Ask each person to write their first name in big letters vertically, going down the center of the page.

- Then, ask people to think about their housing experiences for a few moments. Use each letter of their name to write a word that describes their experiences, feelings, or views regarding housing. People can use any language. For example:

coMmunity
trAnsitions
fReedom
famIly
dignidAd

- Once people have finished writing their names and associated words, have them tape their papers to their shirts, like a giant name tag. Invite people to walk around the room, talking to other participants about the words they wrote. Give time for people to talk with two other participants.
- After a few minutes, gather the

group back together. Ask each person to introduce themselves by sharing one word they wrote down. As they people share their words, write them on the board or a large sheet of paper. Give each other a round of applause!

2. (20 minutes) Think, pair, share: Explain to the group that today we will focus how we can more effectively work together across lines of difference, with people from very different places, racial/ethnic backgrounds, ages, privileges, and belief systems. It will take all of us, collectively, to successfully fight for a more just housing system.
 - Invite people to pair up and discuss: Invite people to think about one time they were working with someone different from themselves. Briefly share this story with a partner. Invite each group to share out: What are some challenges of working with people who are different from you? Record what you hear on the white board.



3. (15 minutes) Watch + reflect: For groups to work together, across difference, with unequal power relations, it is important to drive home that our power comes from organizing together. There are no shortcuts. Moreover, there is no need for white people, or other people with more power, to “save” those with less power.
 - Watch the 2.5-minute film, “Say No to the Savior Complex”.
 - Discuss: Share with a partner, then with the larger group. What is one key take-away for you from this film?
4. (60 minutes) Building on success stories: The film we just watched drives home the imperative that we work together across our differences, in solidarity. But HOW do we do this, especially when each of us are impacted in different ways, to varying degrees of severity? Luckily, we are not the first group to face this challenge.
 - Next, we will examine “Conflict Case Study Scenarios” faced by community groups in LA and Atlanta. These groups are dealing with conflicts, taking steps to be more collaborative, organizing amongst people of different backgrounds, and developing tools to promote immigrant leadership, specifically.
 - Invite people to form groups of 3-4 people, and distribute a case study and discussion questions to each group. Give time for small groups to read (taking turns) and discuss, using the handout questions as a guide.
 - Reconvene as a large group. Ask one group to summarize the LA story, and another to summarize the Atlanta story. Invite all groups to designate one spokesperson to describe some of the strategies used to overcome challenges.



REMEMBER

BY JOY HARJO

*Remember the sky that you were born under,
know each of the star's stories.*

*Remember the moon, know who she is. I met her
in a bar once in Iowa City.*

*Remember the sun's birth at dawn, that is the
strongest point of time. Remember sundown
and the giving away to night.*

*Remember your birth, how your mother struggled
to give you form and breath. You are evidence of
her life, and her mother's, and hers.*

*Remember your father, his hands cradling
your mother's flesh, and maybe her heart, too
and maybe not.*

He is your life, also.

Remember the earth whose skin you are.

*Red earth yellow earth white earth brown earth
black earth we are earth.*

*Remember the plants, trees, animal life who all have their
tribes, their families, their histories, too. Talk to them,
listen to them. They are alive poems.*

*Remember the wind. Remember her voice. She knows the
origin of this universe. I heard her singing Kiowa war
dance songs at the corner of Fourth and Central once.*

*Remember that you are all people and that all people
are you.*

*Remember that you are this universe and that this
universe is you.*

Remember that all is in motion, is growing, is you.

Remember that language comes from this.

Remember the dance that language is, that life is.

Remember

to remember.

— from *That's What She Said: Contemporary Poetry and Fiction by Native American Women*, edited by Rayna Green (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

Joy Harjo (Muscogee and Creek) is a poet and musician. Her books include *The Woman Who Fell from the Sky*.



- Discuss with the larger group:
 - ◊ What are some ways of resolving conflict, or building solidarity, that we might use, in our work together?
 - ◊ How might we be more effective at bringing more people and groups into our movement?
5. (10 minutes) Closing: Invite participants to stand or sit in a circle and hold hands if they are comfortable doing so, as you read aloud the poem "Remember" by Joy Harjo, Muskogee and Creek poet laureate (or search for a YouTube clip of her reading the poem and play it for all to hear).
- When you finish the poem, invite people to look at each other around the circle; remind participants that you are all there, in this fight together.
 - Then start a final chant, inviting others to join: "Housing is a human right! Housing is a human right! Housing is a human right!"

Dealing with problematic language

Interrupting comments that are homophobic, racist, classist, ableist, etc. in an immediate and safe manner will help create an environment that respects all people. Responding to problematic language requires us to understand that everyone has varying levels of experience and knowledge, and that interruption can be done with compassion and the goal to educate. There are many ways that problematic language can be interrupted. The best way to be ready in the moment is to practice, practice, practice.

Some of our favorite tools include:

- Questioning / playing dumb – What do you mean by a “gay” shirt?
- Personalize it – Hey! That offends me!!
- Humor – So if this shirt is gay, then does that mean it’s attracted to others shirts of the same gender?
- Education – Do you realize that what you are saying is racist? How about coming up with three words that better describes what you are trying to say?
- Assume the best – I know you’re a good person and aren’t meaning to be hateful when you say that.
- Fall back on rules or policy – It’s not okay to use language like that here. Or - We all agreed to ground rules, including no hate speech.

Key Points

- The most important thing is to stop the problematic language as soon as possible.
- Choose your battles. You will not be able to interrupt every comment that is made. It is important to make the environment as safe as possible without burning yourself out.
- Consider time and place; sometimes a direct intervention may not be possible or ideal.
- Consider pulling the person/people aside to talk to them privately.

Facilitation Tip

For tips and tricks on interrupting oppression, including stronger incidents than the micro-aggressions that are the focus on this workshop, see Appendix A.

How to Be An Ally

Heavily adapted from Southerners on New Ground (www.southernersonnewground.org)

- Be honest about who you are and where you are from.
- Listen. Again and again.
- Recognize that we all live in a racist, sexist, classist, ableist, homophobic, transphobic, anti-immigrant, and otherwise oppressive context. Issue are bigger than us, and yet we can take responsibility for our actions and words.
- If you are white, part of your role is to call out other white people who are operating oppressively. But the goal is not to make you look good; the goal is to effectively help build a stronger anti-racist force. Approach people with humility, in a way that does not alienate them; we all have lots to learn.
- At the same, time, be willing to be uncomfortable and speak out against oppression.
- Spend energy fighting the system, with a group; do not try to act in isolation.
- Be willing to do the boring and tedious work necessary, not just the fun and exciting stuff.
- Center the movement, not your individual role. If you have a key skill, figure out how to share it with others who want to learn.
- Center the voices and leadership of frontline communities. Don’t take up a lot of space.
- Take time to build relationships; be consistent; keep your word; be honest.
- Honor others’ traditions; don’t steal them.

Additional resources

City Rising: Mobilization is a short film (focused on Oakland) that emphasizes that those most hard hit need to be at the forefront of the housing justice movement; people power is what will force change:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwGITdscrV8&t=0s&index=9&list=PLWu5ajp6Zk8e3KC2vsJ_JEQLKRRvDed0J

100 Ways White People Can Make Life Less Frustrating for People of Color
https://broadly.vice.com/en_us/article/neighborhood/how-to-be-a-white-ally-to-people-of-color?utm_source=broadlyfbus&fbclid=iwar0otk6iofl-wkrjoyuhahnd5l3yexlcji73mvn-c8msyd2papda2apew0m

Two resources for building organizations that reject White supremacy culture in grassroots organizations:
https://collectiveliberation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/White_Supremacy_Culture_Okun.pdf

www.showingupforracialjustice.org/disrupting-white-nationalists.html

“Hey, you got a little racism stuck in your teeth” -
<https://nonprofitaf.com/2016/08/flossing-and-the-dental-hygiene-paradigm-of-race-discourse/>

Unit 2

TENANT ORGANIZING TOOLS

Unit II: TENANT ORGANIZING TOOLS

Ella Baker dedicated her life to fighting for racial justice, including through the civil rights movement. Her nickname, “Fundí,” is a Swahili word meaning a person who teaches a craft to the next generation. Community organizing is indeed a craft—and honing this craft, and teaching it to others, is necessary to make our collective dreams for stable homes, families, neighborhoods, and communities become reality.

Unit II: Tenant Organizing Tools will help participants establish a toolbox for building power with fellow tenants. While a carpenter’s toolbox includes a hammer, chisel, and wrench, the toolbox of an organizer includes things like tenant contact lists, power maps, and door-knocking plans. The workshops in this unit are designed to help tenant leaders pool their collective experience and tap into some new ideas, in order to build a shared base of knowledge and skills—and tenant power.

“This may only be a dream of mine, but I think it can be made real” –Ella Baker

In Unit II: Tenant Organizing Tools, participants will...

- › Improve their abilities to work with other people, including collaborating with people from all walks of life, organizing a building or apartment complex, and establishing a tenants’ union.
- › Develop technical skills, such as power-mapping, campaign planning, and crafting testimonies.



Workshop 2.1 - Building Community, Building Power

OVERVIEW: While landlords, developers, and corporations are powerful because of their money, tenants build power with people. Almost half of Oregonians are renters. Despite what people may say, we care about our homes and communities. We know and research has shown that when we get a chance to stay stable in community, we often choose to do so. We are not transient; we are here to stay. A more just housing system will come about when many, many renters – from all walks of life – join forces to demand it. When we come together, we can combat fear and isolation, lawfully withhold rent, expose bad practices, and make demands for change. As renters, we have power!

People power does not happen overnight. Tenant power does not come automatically. To build power, we have to build community. To build community, we need to know each other's challenges, hopes, and fears. We have to build trust—often across lines of race, class, religion, age, geographical boundaries, and electoral politics. One key to building trust is bringing people together, so we can learn what we have in common and from each other's experiences. This workshop will orient tenant leaders to some of the ways in which we can build community with people who may not look or talk alike, but who believe that everyone deserves a safe, stable place to call home.

Learning objectives: In this workshop, participants will...

- › Build the spirit and skills needed to bring people together from a wide variety of backgrounds to fight for a more just housing system.

Approximate Time: 1 hour (or more, if your group plans a community event)

Supplies & Preparation

- Whiteboard or easel paper
- Markers

Workshop Steps

1. (5 minutes) Define: As a group, brainstorm on a whiteboard or large paper everything that comes to mind when you hear the word “community”. What does community mean to you? What kinds of communities exist? Once people have brainstormed a good amount, write this definition of community on a whiteboard or large sheet of paper:
 - Community: a) a group of people living in the same place, or having a particular characteristic in common; b) a feeling of fellowship with others, due to sharing common attitudes, interests, and/or goals.
2. (15 minutes) Discuss: Have participants pair up and discuss the following questions: According to the above definition, are renters a community? Why or why not? Under what circumstances might it be important for renters to become a community?
 - Share out. In follow-up discussion, emphasize that renters may



automatically be a community by virtue living in the same apartment complex, or simply sharing the experience of paying rent to a landlord (definition “a”, above). But developing a feeling of fellowship – community – with others (definition “b”), requires a process that takes time, and involves dialogue and really listening to one another’s experiences.

3. (15 minutes) Discuss + list: Invite participants to pair up with someone else, and discuss the following: When is a time you felt like you belonged somewhere? What helped you feel like you belonged? – Or, if you have not felt a sense of belonging, what would help?
 - Invite each pair to share with the larger group two things that have helped them feel like they belonged; make a list on the board.
 - It is likely that talking and listening to one another, and more generally, community events (e.g., cookouts, church events, etc.) will emerge as two elements that help people feel a sense of belonging. Be sure to point this out.
4. (15 minutes) Read + discuss: Ask a volunteer to read the “Community



Posada” testimony pop-up box. Ask people to share any reflections, surprises, or questions that emerge while hearing this testimony. What insights might it have for your group?

5. (15+ minutes) OPTIONAL - Plan: As a group, if appropriate, discuss how you might plan an upcoming event, to help bring people together. What would be the purpose of the event? (e.g., to help new people connect, to hear what’s going on for each other, to enjoy each other’s company, to celebrate a recent win...) Work backwards from the purpose to discuss what kind of event would help your group work toward this goal.

6. (5 minutes) Connect: Invite people to stand if they are able, and link arms. Invite them to look into each other’s eyes, to take a moment to take in everyone in the room. State that THIS is “the movement” – here, in this room. Invite people to repeat the words of Assata Shakur, one line at a time. Repeat three times!

*“It is our duty to fight for our freedom.
It is our duty to win.
We must love each other and support each other.
We have nothing to lose but our chains.”*



Some ways to do community-building events:

cookouts, potlucks, community posadas, BBQs, sprinkler parties for kids, story slams, pizza parties, afternoon teas, block parties, complex or apartment building dinners, game nights, walk-and-talks, movie night, playground gatherings, fishing outings, swap meets, garden shares, music, poetry readings, talent shows, free concerts, karaoke, basketball or soccer pickup games, bonfires, plain old meetings...

Keys to a successful community-building event:

Have lots of 1-on-1 conversations with people prior to the first event, to create a rumbling that something is happening; this will help get people comfortable with the idea of building something together. Make sure to connect! Get on the phone, meet in person, have dinner together!

Ensure that the food, activities, style, etc. will resonate with people: the key is to help people feel at ease.

For meetings, establish ground rules. See Appendix A section 3.4 for tips on how to create a safe space.

Make sure to make space for children and elders! Check out tips in Appendix A section 3.4 for hosting family-friendly events.

Community Posada - Testimony

(by Coya Crespin, CAT Community Organizer)

We had this event, a community posada, mid-getting kicked out of our apartments. We wanted more community support, more acknowledgement of what we were doing. This event was a culmination and celebration of all our hard work. It was entirely tenant planned. Kids even designed the invitation – a golden ticket! Everyone helped decorate, and made food potluck style. We put up Christmas lights. We invited everyone who'd been supportive, including the whole neighborhood, as well as tenants who hadn't been a part of things but who we wanted to acknowledge.

We had a speak-out where people said what they were thankful for, and core tenant leaders told their stories. It was SO powerful, because two youth who grew up in the building spoke. One who's going to college now was able to talk about how thankful he was to grow up here. He said that laws do so much to protect money, but not people. There's no even playing field. Money comes out miles ahead of children, poor people, people who've never had anything. It was a good thing for the community to see this kid, born and raised here speak. His parents put money into every single mortgage payment for the landlord.

But because it's property over people, he was able to be pushed out. This was a great moment for people to see, how he analyzed it all. You're not poor because you don't work hard. You're not hungry because there's not enough food in the world. There are systems in place that keep you poor and hungry. It's not about pulling yourself up by your bootstraps.

Setting little goals along the way, like having this community posada, help keep people motivated. Just these little celebrations keep people going. You don't always have to celebrate "big successes" like staying in your home. We got kicked out, but this event recognized that we got money for relocation. And it solidified this family that we now utilize outside of just being neighbors. Now my old neighbor picks up my daughter, and they are best friends. This wouldn't have happened if we didn't organize together. She couldn't go home when her mother passed away, and she called me to come to her house. Community organizing is about being there for people in a real way. Even if you can't give them money or connect them with a lawyer, you can be a support. We still see each other all the time.



Workshop 2.2 - Listening to Learn and Building Power

OVERVIEW: Building community is not just about organizing events, however. Key to bringing people together is building trust, building relationships, and building shared knowledge. As organizers, it is not our job to “teach” people or educate people about their problems, but rather to facilitate space for people to talk with their neighbors, come to a shared analysis of the problem, and take steps together toward a better future. This takes careful listening. The more people are able to listen and really hear one another, the more likely we are to find common ground and build a movement that truly centers those who are most vulnerable.

Learning objectives: In this workshop, participants will...

- › Learn to really listen and hear one another, in order to build a stronger movement.

Approximate Time: 1 hour

Supplies & Preparation

- Handouts for each participant, see appendix:

 “Listening to Build Trust”

Workshop Steps

1. (15 minutes) Warming up: We communicate in so many ways. This exercise will warm us up to paying close attention to each other.
 - Form a large circle, with all participants facing inwards.
 - Invite participants to introduce themselves, by: 1) saying their name; 2) saying a place they used to live; 3) making a motion that illustrates why they moved.
 - Start the group off with an example for yourself; then go around the circle. Encourage people not to repeat an action someone has already done.
 - Once everyone has introduced themselves, invite people to pair up. Each person should explain what their action represented. Emphasize that each partner should pay attention to what it feels like to listen, and to be listened to, during this warmup exercise.
2. (20 minutes) Reflect + listen: As community organizers, it is our job to listen. Listening, and really hearing

people, is imperative to building trusting relationships with other potential tenant leaders.

- Invite people to reflect on this opening activity. What did it feel like to be the listener? How about to be the person sharing? What did you notice about what it’s like to listen to someone sharing a personal experience? What helps us feel heard?
- Invite participants to check out the “Listening to Build Trust” handout; have people take turns reading each bullet point out loud.
- Discuss: What resonates with you from this list? What surprises you? What is difficult for you?



3. (20 minutes) Practice: Have people pair up and decide who will listen first, to practice the “Listening to Build Trust” handout tips. The listener should ask their partner: “What’s going on with your housing these days?”, and ask follow-up questions as needed. After 5 minutes, switch partners.
 - If you have time, invite people to repeat the exercise with a new partner.
4. (10 minutes) Reflect: Invite participants to reflect on the experience. What made listening difficult? What helped? What helped people feel heard? What did you hear when you really listened that you may have missed otherwise? Why is listening such an important skill for housing justice organizers?

Conversation Starters:

What’s going on with your housing right now?

Has anything changed for you lately with your place?

What are your neighbors saying?

We believe that tenants standing united have great power to fight for their homes and protect their neighbors. What do you feel might help the situation?

De-escalation Tips:

Housing is personal. Community organizing is personal. This work is personal. People bring a wide variety of experiences into this work, as well as a variety of coping skills and capacities. Sometimes, tensions come to a head and people become escalated. Here are some basic tips for those times.

Reasoning with an angry person is not possible, so don’t try to argue or convince people of anything.

Be empathetic with feelings, but not with bad behavior.

Be respectful, not judgmental and defensive.

Keep a safe distance and don’t put your hands in your pockets.

Don’t touch people or point at them.

Use non-threatening language.

Don’t smile, people might think you are mocking them

Appear calm and use a low tone of voice.

Respond selectively: answer informational questions but don’t answer abusive questions.

Explain limits and rules in an authoritative but respectful tone.

Provide choices and suggest alternative behaviors.

Workshop 2.3 - Building Based Organizing

OVERVIEW: Apartment buildings, as well as apartment complexes, housing projects, and other arrangements in which renters share a landlord or management company provide valuable opportunities for tenants to come together and build power. As an organizer, you may hear rumors of a landlord not making repairs, or of some tenants receiving a no-cause eviction. Your first job is to connect and build trust with tenants in the building, and to find out the challenges that tenants are facing more broadly. Ultimately, your goal is to bring people together so that they can develop a shared analysis of the problem, support one another, and collectively fight for better conditions. In this workshop, participants will develop a sense of what it takes to organize a building, and will build a basic

organizing plan for one particular building, complex, etc.

Learning objectives: In this workshop, participants will...

- Become familiar with some basic tenets of building-based organizing; understand why this can be a powerful way to bring tenants together
- Begin laying groundwork to organize a particular building or complex
- Anticipate challenges you may face doing building-based organizing

Approximate Time: 90 minutes

Supplies & Preparation

- Small slips of paper or sticky notes – one for each person
- Pens, pencils
- Handouts – one for each participant, see appendix:



“Building-Based Organizing Plan”

Workshop Steps

1. (20 minutes) Identify issues: Pass out a slip of paper to each participant. Invite each person to write or draw a picture depicting one challenge they have had with their housing.
 - Examples might include a landlord who refuses to clean up mold; a rent raise they couldn't afford; a broken elevator; loud construction happening across the street, etc.
 - Put all slips of paper in a basket. Pass the basket around, and invite people to take one slip of paper to share out with the group. The person who wrote on the slip of paper should identify themselves, sharing their names.
 - Once you have shared all issues, go back through each slip of paper, and set aside all the issues that might benefit from “building-based organizing”—that is, from bringing tenants together to fight for a common cause. You will likely find that most issues listed can be more easily solved if people are working together, as opposed to one person working on their own.
2. (20 minutes) Read: Ask volunteers to take turns reading the “Connecting With People, Building Trust” handout.
 - When they are finished reading, invite questions or comments. What resonates with you from this testimony? What sounds challenging? What questions do you have about building-based organizing?
3. (30 minutes) Create a plan: Have people work in groups of 2 or 3 to fill out the

“Building Organizing Plan” handout. This exercise works best if there is a specific building or complex that participants may want to organize.

- Invite small groups to briefly present their plans to the larger group, and work together to sort through challenges that may arise.

4. (15 minutes) De-brief: What obstacles do you anticipate with building-based organizing? What seems to be powerful about this type of organizing?

5. (5 minutes) Closing circle: Ask the group to form a circle, standing (if they are able) and facing inward.

- Explain that you will read off a list of statements; if participants agree with the statement, they should take a step forward (or raise their hand).

- I. “I learned something new today”
- II. “I have some new ideas about my work”
- III. “I want to work with other people in my community”
- IV. “I want to get to know new people”
- V. “I appreciate this group!”

- The idea is that you read statements that most or everyone will agree with.
- Continue until everyone in the group is standing very close to one another, and have a group hug, celebratory yell, or some other way to express appreciation for the group.

Chants

<i>UP with the people! YEAH YEAH Down with the landlords BOOM BOOM!!</i>	<i>What do we want? JUSTICE! When do we want it? NOW!</i>
<i>I believe in... HOMES FOR ALL!</i>	<i>Hey Hey, HO HO Greedy banks have got to go Ho Ho, HEY HEY Gotta believe we're here to stay!</i>
<i>Derecho a techo! Right to our roofs!</i>	<i>1-2-3-4 – No more cops at our door 5-6-7-8 – Don't evict. Negotiate!</i>

Stop the Evictions (WRAP artwork) Faviana Rodriguez



Connecting with People, Building Trust

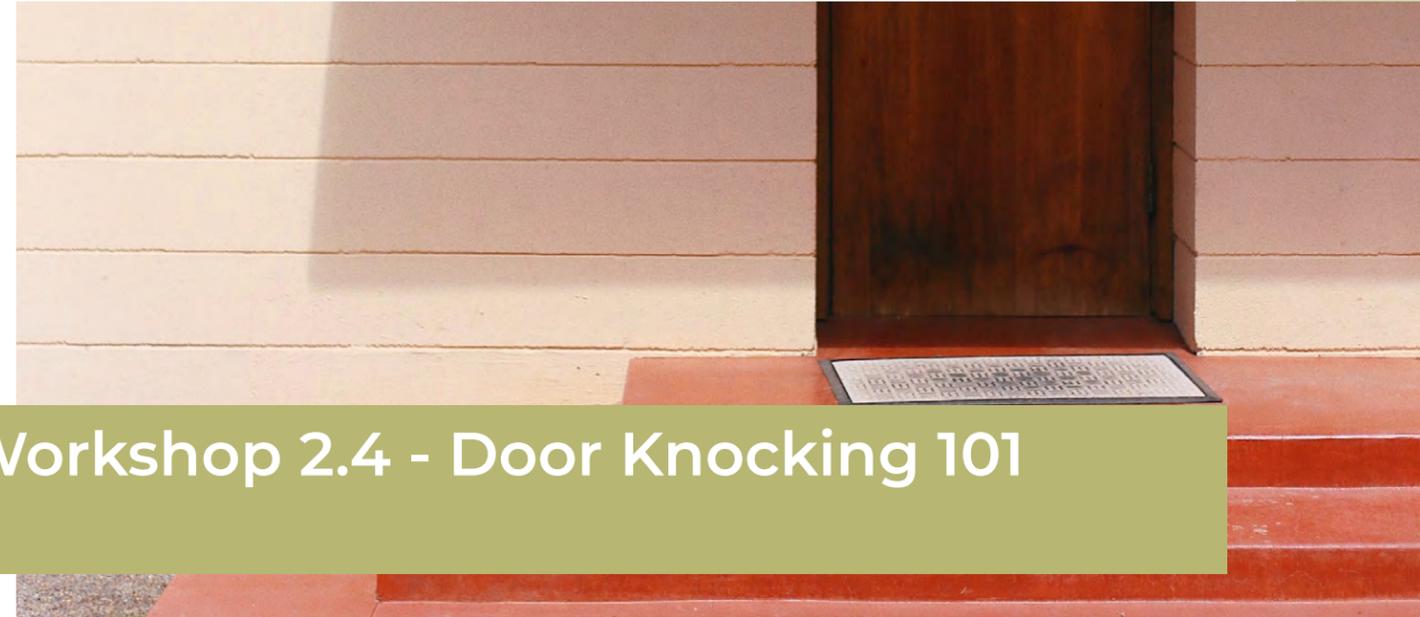
(by Coya Crespín, CAT Community Organizer)

Having meaningful one-on-one conversations with people is so huge. You have to put in the time. People who aren't approachable, there's a reason why. You have to have an open heart to meet people where THEY are at – not where YOU are at. You have to listen to people who are never listened to. That is so powerful. Shake someone's hand. Be real with them. Present as genuine person. People can tell bullshit from a mile away, especially people who've been looked down on their whole life. We gotta listen to them even more, because they know what's going on. What drives me is anger for landlords who hold power, who take people who are so vulnerable and screw them over. Those are the people we have to listen to. It takes so much time.

Active listening means to take in what they say. Listening is NOT

about being ready with advice. Don't wait for them to finish talking, to say, “Well here's what I'm here for.” If they want to talk about stuff beyond repairs, that's fine. People call when there's problems with their boyfriend, or whatever. That's not extra work, to talk to people. That's the real shit that when you listen, you imprint yourself on someone else. The other stuff will come up because that's their home you're there to talk about.

Workshop 2.4 - Door Knocking 101



OVERVIEW: Knocking on doors is essential to building a tenant power movement. We knock on people's doors to...

meet our neighbors, face to face

hear their stories, hopes, and fears

meet our fellow tenants, right "where they are at" in terms of both their homes and their understanding of the problem

let people know they are not alone

build trust

recruit fellow tenants, to build the housing justice movement.

Door-knocking for the first time can feel intimidating, but it's easy to catch on. With a little practice, door-knockers will find their own groove, have fun, and learn about their neighbors. This workshop will help participants prepare to head out and pound some pavement!



Learning objectives: In this workshop, participants will...

- › Become familiar and comfortable with the basics of door-knocking
- › Practice listening, and really hearing people's concerns
- › Prepare to head out to door-knock for a particular campaign or base-building effort

Approximate Time: 90 minutes



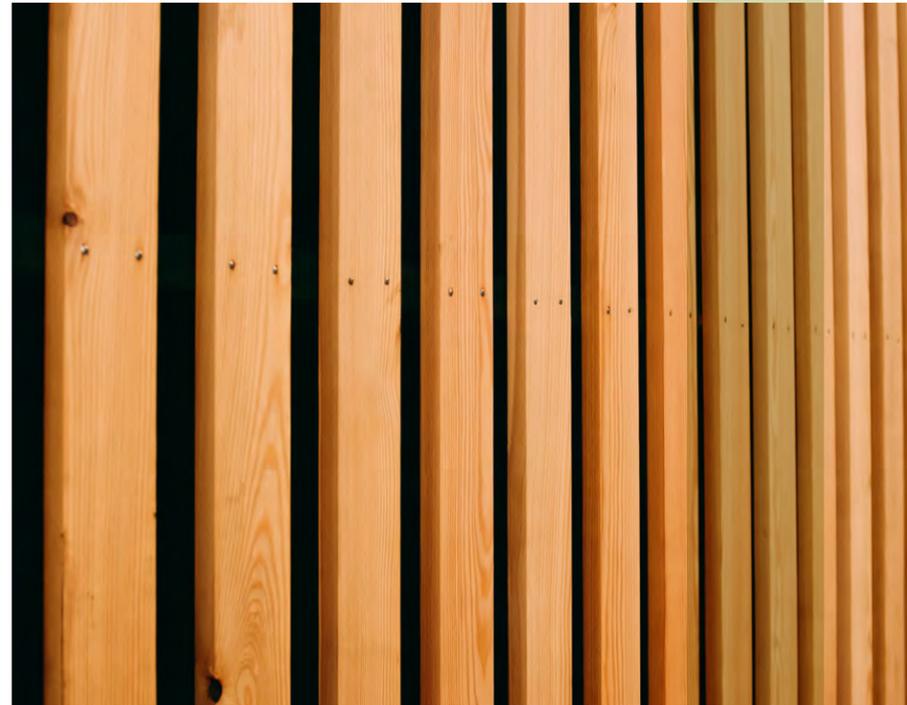
Supplies & Preparation

- Handout – one for each person, see appendix:
 - 📄 "Door-Knocking Sample Script"
 - 📄 "Door Knocking Tally Sheet"
- Markers
- Sticky notes
- Pens or pencils

Workshop Steps

1. (20 minutes) Visualize: Invite participants to close their eyes if they feel comfortable doing so, and imagine the entrance to their current home (or the entrance to a place they have lived in the past).
 - Standing on the inside looking out, what do you see? Who is passing by? What do you hear with the door open? Is it warmer or colder with the door open?

- Now imagine you are on the outside looking in. What do you see inside your home? What furniture, photos, and personal items do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell? Who is inside, and what are they doing?
 - Invite participants to pair up and share their visualizations.
 - Explain that this visualization is intended to put people in the zone to think about “door-knocking”, which is a short way to refer to crucial conversations that can happen when an organizer knocks on a tenant’s door. Ask participants to raise their hands if they have ever “door-knocked”. If anyone says yes, invite one or two people to briefly share with the group what it was like.
- 2.** (10 minutes) Demonstrate: Explain to the group that door-knocking is an essential part of building the housing justice movement, and that today you will practice this important skill.
- Ask for a volunteer to join you to role a door-knocking conversation. They will be the tenant, and you will be the organizer.



- Use the attached script to guide your conversation, in front of the group.
- 3.** (10 minutes) De-brief: Following the role-play, ask your volunteer to share what it was like for them to talk about their housing experiences with you. What did it feel like? What was difficult? What helped put them at ease? What do they wish you’d done differently? Then, invite the rest of the group to make observations about what they saw, and to ask questions.
- 4.** (10 minutes) Practice: Have people pair up and decide who will be the tenant, and who will be the door-knocker for

the first round. Invite them to use the script to guide them through a practice door-knock conversation. After 5 minutes, switch roles.

- 5.** (20 minutes) De-brief: What was the conversation like? What went well? What was difficult? What adaptations do you feel you may need to make, depending on the circumstance?
- 6.** (15 minutes) Practice again: Have people pair up with someone else for this second round. Decide who will be the tenant, and who will be the door-knocker. Invite people to use the script to guide them through another practice door-knock conversation. After 5 minutes, switch roles.
- When finished, ask people to briefly discuss with their partner: What felt easier during the second round? What are you still thinking working on?
- 7.** (15 minutes) Head, heart, feet reflection: Draw an image of a person on a whiteboard or large piece of paper (as large as possible), with an emphasis on the head, heart, and feet.
- Hand out three sticky notes to each person, and invite them to write one thing on each note:

- Head: note or draw something they are thinking
- Heart: note or draw something they are feeling
- Feet: note or draw something they plan to do
- Have people put their sticky notes on the paper person. Invite each person to share one of their notes (or if time permits, all three).



Workshop 2.5 - Building a Tenant Contact List



OVERVIEW: In previous workshops, we've established how important it is to bring tenants together. To sustain connection, we have to be able to follow up with people. And during the heat of a campaign, we have to be able to get in touch with people at a moments' notice, for a direct action, to give testimony, or to support one another in some other way. A Tenant Contact List is therefore one of the most valuable tools in a housing justice organizer's toolbox. In this workshop, participants will learn what to include and how to organize a contact list and will get started creating one.

Learning objectives: In this workshop, participants will...

- Understand how important tenant contact lists can be
- Learn how to create a basic tenant contact list
- Begin tracking tenant contacts (if you haven't already)

Approximate Time: 1 hour

Supplies & Preparation

- Whiteboard or easel paper
- Markers
- Pens or pencils
- Handout – one for each person, see appendix:

 Tenant Contact List template



Workshop Steps

1. (10 minutes) Telephone: To kick off this workshop, invite participants to line up for an old-fashioned game of telephone. Start it off from one end of the line by whispering a phrase to the person next to you, such as "Housing is a human right", or "I believe in the power of renters to change our housing system". This person then whispers the phrase to the next person, and so on down the line. The last person should say the phrase they hear out loud.
 - Facilitation tip: Explain that it is okay if people do not hear the phrase perfectly; they should simply repeat as closely as possible what they hear. You may need to make accommodations: provide pens and paper in case anyone needs to see the phrase written down, or to write the phrase instead of whispering; be prepared to make other accommodations as needed.
 - Once the last person says the phrase out loud, no matter how jumbled it becomes, everyone should applaud the groups' effort.
2. (10 minutes) Discuss: Invite participants to debrief the activity: What was fun about this activity? What was frustrating? How did you feel if you could not hear your partner, or if your partner could not understand you?

- Ask participants to discuss what this telephone game might have in common with community organizing. What happens when messages get passed word-of-mouth, but the details get mixed up? What are some ways to ensure that we communicate clearly and effectively with all who are involved in our group, building, campaign, movement?
- 3.** (20 minutes) Brainstorm: Explain that today you will work as a group to build a very simple – yet crucial – tool for effective organizing: a Tenant Contact List. Invite people to brainstorm what a tenant contact list might look like. What information should you include? How should it be organized? Where should it be stored? How can you add to it over time? How can multiple people access it, while keeping people’s private information confidential?

FACILITATION TIP

The exact way in which you collect, organize, and store information will depend on your group’s needs and access to technology. Google drive is one way many groups keep track of contact information. Another way is a binder filled with contact lists that you can add to over time.

- Ask leading questions to emphasize that the following information should be included in a tenant contact list: names, addresses, unit numbers, phone numbers, email addresses, best way to contact people, language, main concerns, notes, who’s following up and when, etc. See Tenant Contact List template on page X for an example but don’t hand this out until the end of the workshop.





Workshop 2.6 - Power Mapping

OVERVIEW: One key tool for building future tenant power is mapping existing power. That is, outlining who currently has power, and analyzing which powerful people who do not currently support tenants' rights might be convinced to shift their position. Who should you target? Landlords? City council members? The governor? State representatives? Banks? Who ultimately has the power to exploit and protect tenants? Who influences whom? What can you do to make them change their position? A power map can help illuminate answers to these questions and suggest some effective ways forward.

(The warmup and closing exercises in this workshop were adapted from the BRIDGES curriculum; the power-mapping workshop was adapted from beautifulrising.org.)

Learning objectives: In this workshop, participants will...

Build an understanding of why power-mapping is such a valuable tool

Learn how to create a power map

Practice power-mapping, focusing on a particular issue/campaign

Approximate Time: 2 hours

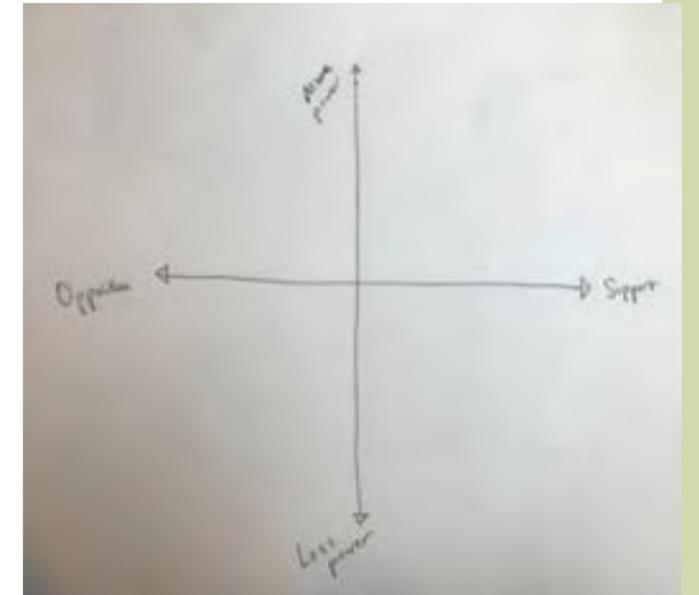
“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.” – Alice Walker

Supplies & Preparation

- Whiteboard or easel paper
- Sticky-notes
- Markers
- Ball of yarn or string

Workshop Steps

1. (10 minutes) Circle of Strength: Invite participants to form a large circle, with each person facing inwards. Ask each person to: 1) say their name; 2) share one positive quality they bring to the group; 3) make a physical motion or gesture that illustrates the positive quality.
 - You may want to demonstrate before you begin.
 - Go around the circle until everyone has taken a turn.
 - Challenge people to not repeat a word or action that someone else has already done.
2. (30 minutes) Identify stakeholders: Introduce your topic for the day: power-mapping. Explain that power-mapping is a way to outline who currently has power, and to analyze who you might target to shift their position, to become more supportive of tenants' rights.



- Draw a Power Axis on the board or large sheet of paper. As a group, add as many stakeholders as you can think of. Write names/groups on a sticky note, to make it easier to move people around as your discussion unfolds. Stakeholders generally include:

FACILITATION TIP

Get as specific as possible. For instance, you may have many institutions on your list, but institutions don't make decisions—people do! So, you've got to find out who makes the decisions in those institutions. And then you've got to try to answer a few questions about these people: Do they agree or disagree with you on this issue? How much power do they have over this issue?

- ◇ those responsible for creating the problem;
 - ◇ those who have the power to fix the problem but are not doing so;
 - ◇ those who are geographically relevant to the issue;
 - ◇ those who are working to fix the problem;
 - ◇ those who are impacted by the problem;
 - ◇ you and your group, others who you have worked with.
- You'll end up with a long list of institutions (both formal and informal), organizations, influential people, media, and assorted individuals that are relevant to your issue. Keep this list handy!

3. (20 minutes) Moving primary targets: Your next step is to invite participants to identify a **primary target**: that is, to figure out who has the most influence over the issue and who is most likely to give you what you want. Then, you will map the power relationships around your primary target.
 - The perfect target (and perfection rarely exists in real life) would be both very powerful and already supportive (or at least easily accessible and open to supporting you). The hardest target to move, but the kind you will often face, and be forced to take on, is someone with a lot of power who strongly disagrees with you.
 - Map the power relationships around your primary target. Put the person's name in the center of a new sheet of large paper (or a new place on the board). Are they influenced by any of the other names you have written down on the sticky notes? Who can sway them? Add these names, in relationship to the key target. Draw circles and arrows of relationship similar to those in the "Relationship Map" example shown. Make sure to include your own group.



4. (20 minutes) Moving secondary targets: Your next step is to map the power relationships around your secondary targets. You may not be able to move your primary target directly. The only way to get to them is through other stakeholders you've identified, who have some influence on them. These are your secondary targets. But who are they influenced by? To find out, make a separate power map for each of these stakeholders. Power mapping can be meticulous work! Again, include yourself and your potential relationship to anyone on this diagram.

- Ultimately, you will use this analysis to plan your work. It is crucial to create a plan that targets those who can actually give you what you want, rather than just the people you can reach easily.
 - At key campaign junctures, and as power shifts or you learn more about who holds it, revisit and revise these maps as needed.
5. (10 minutes) Closing web of solidarity: Ask participants to form a large circle.
 - Start off by holding the end of a string, and tossing the ball of string to another person. Say one thing you appreciate about them. They should then toss the string to someone else, repeating the process until everyone has received the ball of string.
 - At the end, explain that this exercise shows all of the connections that make us strong; the web is weakened if someone lets go.

Workshop 2.7 - Campaign Planning

OVERVIEW: Sometimes tackling topics as vast as “housing justice” can feel like swimming in a deep ocean, with no land in site. To achieve a desired outcome, it helps to plan and focus actions through a “campaign”. One powerful tool for planning campaigns (or any purposeful activity, really), is the POP model. POP stands for: Purpose: Why? Why are we undertaking this? What is the purpose? Outcomes: What are the specific outcomes we want to accomplish as a result of this action? Process: What steps will we take to achieve these outcomes and fulfill the purpose? The POP model can help groups get clear on their goals. Then, working backwards, it becomes easier to maintain ongoing, disciplined focus on results rather than only activities. Yes, the activities are important—but only insofar as they serve the outcomes

and any process-goals your group sets. The POP model can help create more real results with less effort.

This workshop was adapted from the Social Transformation Project’s “Tools for Transformation”, stproject.org.

Learning objectives: In this workshop, participants will...

- › Learn basic tenets of the POP model; understand why “backwards planning” – starting with your goals and objectives, and then working backwards to create a plan of activities that will help achieve them, can be effective for housing justice campaigns
- › Begin using the POP model to plan a housing justice-related campaign

Approximate Time: 90 minutes

Supplies & Preparation

- Whiteboard or easel paper
- Markers
- Handout – one for each group of 2-4 people, see appendix:
- POP Model Template
- Small pieces of paper
- Pens, pencils

Workshop Steps

1. (5 minutes) Ice-Breaker: Invite participants to form a large circle, with each person facing inwards. Ask each person to: 1) say their name; 2) share one word that describes why they came to today’s meeting.
 - You may want to demonstrate before you begin.
 - Go around the circle until everyone has taken a turn.
 - Challenge people to not repeat a word that someone else has already done.
2. (20 minutes) Define: Explain to participants that today you will learn about something called the “POP model” to guide you in planning a campaign, focused on housing justice. Explain that POP stands for Purpose, Outcome, and Process.
 - Divide participants into three groups (aim for 2-4 people per group), and assign each group one of these three words: What does this word mean? How does it relate to housing justice organizing?
 - Invite each group to share out.
 - Synthesize what you hear from the groups. Ultimately, the POP model is about the following:

- ◇ Purpose: Why? Why are we undertaking this? What is our motivation, or vision? Purpose is important at the meta level: Why do I/we do this work? But it's equally important to consider in all our daily acts of leadership: Why this meeting? Why this phone call? As leaders, there's always more to do than can be done. Before embarking on any significant expenditure of time & energy, we want to ask: Why? For what reason? If you don't have a good answer to this question, consider not proceeding.
- ◇ Process: What steps will we take to achieve these outcomes and fulfill the purpose? Only now, after being clear on our purpose – why?, and the specific outcomes we wish to accomplish – what?, are we ready to begin planning the process we will use – how?
 - We all know how to plan. But the simple, revolutionary point of the POP model is to ensure that our plans – the processes we create – are actually designed to serve our purpose and accomplish the outcomes we intend.
- ◇ Outcomes: What are the specific outcomes we want to accomplish as a result of this action? What will be different in the world? Outcomes can include things that are visible, concrete, and easy to measure, or they can be relatively less tangible outcomes like increased commitment, greater understanding, better partnership, etc. Do not proceed to planning until you are clear on exactly the outcomes you want to create.

3. (30 minutes) Practice: Now is your chance to put the POP model into practice. In small groups of 2-4, invite participants to use the POP model handout to plan a housing-related campaign.

- Share out.

FACILITATION TIP

If your group is already thinking about embarking on a particular campaign, use this exercise to sharpen thinking and planning.

4. (15 minutes) Reflect: Discuss how this exercise might guide your group in thinking about your next steps: Do you need to shift course, based on this focused exercise? Are your current plans aligned with your overarching purpose and goals? How might you adjust your plan to get the outcomes you want?
5. (10 minutes) Personalize: Pass out a small piece of paper to each person, and invite them to write down one "take-away" from today, one question, and one thing they are excited about. Share with a partner.



Workshop 2.8 - Crafting Testimonies

OVERVIEW: One fundamental tool that renters can use in fighting for a more just housing system is their own stories and experiences. Statistics and graphs and charts tell part of the story about unjust housing, but they do not always convince people to change their minds or understand what it looks like on a day to day basis. When carefully crafted into “testimony” for a particular audience, with a particular ask, stories can sometimes sway people in power to take the side we’re pushing for. They can also inspire more people, including fellow renters, empathetic landlords, and other community members to join the fight.

Learning Objectives: In this workshop, participants will...

- › Recall a housing-related story
- › Strategically refine their stories, so that they might help push the housing justice movement forward
- › Practice sharing their stories for a public audience

Approximate Time: 90+ minutes



Supplies & Preparation

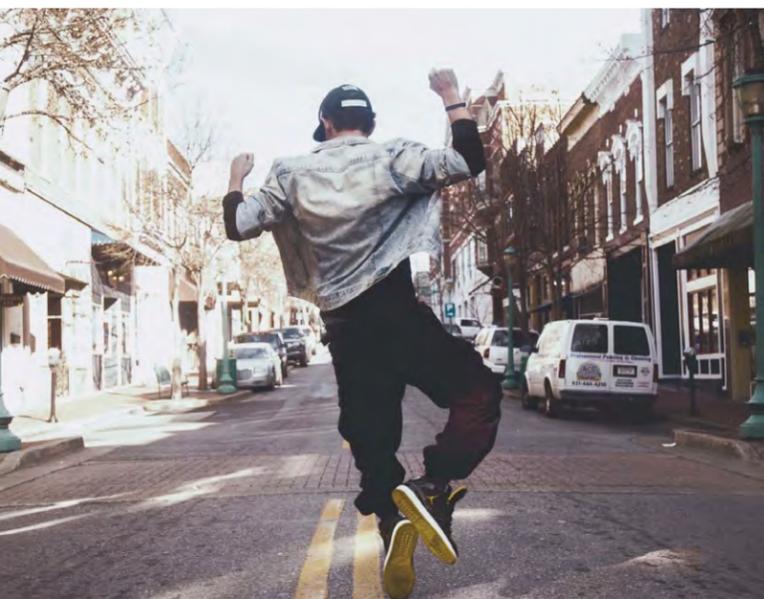
- Whiteboard or easel paper
- Markers
- Handouts – one for each person, see appendix:
 - Testimony Guide
 - “Telling Your Good Story”
 - Story Map
- Pens, pencils

Workshop Steps

1. (15 minutes) Shared circle: To help establish trust and shared values, invite participants to form a large circle, standing if they are able.
 - First invite everyone to say their name, if people don't already know each other.
 - Then, explain that you will read a list of statements to the group. If the statement applies to them, they should step into the circle; if the statement does not apply to them, they should remain in place.
 - Here are some sample statements (moving from light-hearted, to more serious):
 - ◊ I love chocolate.
 - ◊ I am wearing glasses.
 - ◊ I have a pet.
 - ◊ I'm wearing a blue shirt.
 - ◊ I have moved from one place to another in my life.
 - ◊ I have moved when I didn't want to.
 - ◊ I have delayed or avoided reporting needed repairs to my landlord, out of fear of being evicted.
 - ◊ I have had a hard time paying my rent.

- ◇ I have faced some kind of discrimination with my housing.
- ◇ I believe that I have a right to a clean, safe, stable home!
- End with applause for the group. Thank participants for participating in the warm-up activity.
- Discuss: How did it feel to reveal your experiences by taking a step, or by standing still? Did anything help you feel more comfortable? How might this exercise feel if reporters were watching, or city councilors?

2. (15 minutes) Talk story: Explain that today's workshop is focused on crafting testimonies, in service to a more just housing system. Invite participants to pair up and talk with each other about some of their housing-related experiences.



- What happened? Who was there? Where did this happen? What impact did it have on you and your family, community, or neighbors? What laws, policies, or system changes might have prevented this from happening?
 - Facilitation tip: Consider getting more specific, depending on what's going on for your group. For example, you might invite participants to share stories related to no-cause evictions, or rent raises, in preparation for a particular campaign.
 - Debrief: How did it feel to share your stories with a partner?
3. (30 minutes) Think, pair, share: Explain that now you will use a template to guide more focused story-telling – testimony – related to a campaign your group is involved in (or that may be upcoming).
 - Give each person a copy of the Testimony Outline handout, and invite them to think about a related experience that they (or their neighbors) have had.
 - Facilitation tip: Depending on comfort with writing, participants can either fill in the boxes



themselves; work with a partner to do so (one person speaks while the other person writes); or simply use the template to guide thinking and speaking (and skip the writing).

- Once people have written a draft of their testimony, have them share it with a partner, and then with the larger group.
4. (30 minutes) Refine: Now that everyone has practiced sharing their stories out loud, explain that you may need to make some revisions to ensure that it speaks directly to a particular campaign or purpose. As a group, discuss your particular target and goal. Who is your audience? What is your purpose?
 - Use your answers to these questions to help people make small or large changes, as needed to their testimonies.

- Invite people to share their refined testimonies with a partner and/or the larger group, depending on time.
 - Facilitation tip: Consider filming people and playing it back, to help participants refine things even further. Invite them to pay attention to body language, tone, volume, and language. Also – emphasize that sometimes it takes a lot of practice to feel comfortable. Suggest that people practice sharing their testimony as many times as possible: in the mirror, with friends and family, etc.
5. (10 minutes) Closing: It takes courage to publicly share our stories! Pass out a small index card to each person, and invite them to draw (or write) a symbol that gives them strength. Participants can keep the card in their pocket when speaking their truths, to give them strength. Examples: a heart, a home, the Sankofa symbol, the name of a family member, the logo of your group, etc. Share out.

The Power of Threes

The human brain is very selective in what it remembers. We have a bunch of information coming at us quite often. There is something powerful about describing or telling a story in a way that patterns the use of three. This is particularly important when you're crafting your story to share with others. This power of three can be used in you'd like to share in your plot, how to say your story, and more. It's really up to you! <https://www.copyblogger.com/rule-of-three/>

Say It

There's a golden rule in writing a speech of any kind to make sure people get the message you want to convey: Say what you're going to say, say it, then say what you said! When crafting your testimony, referring back to the power of threes, you want to say those three points at the beginning of your speech letting people know you're going to say to them. Then tell your good story, being sure to say what you said you were going to say. When it's time to wrap up, make sure to bring the point home by repeating your take-home points that you introduced, said, and are now saying again.



[Bonus Activity]

Story Mapping

If there is enough time in the workshop or if participants decide they'd like to, you can have folks fill out the "Story Map" handout to describe their testimony/story that they plan on sharing. Be sure to demonstrate this activity by outlining your story in the story map. Participants should know that filling these out can be short and

simple answers just to help them think through how they want to share their stories. They can use a bulleted list, pictures, or write in paragraphs – it's up to them! The purpose of this map is to help think through the elements of their story that they'd like to make sure to highlight as they write it or tell it.



Workshop 2.9 - Media Messaging

OVERVIEW: The media plays an important role in our fight for housing justice, for better or worse. Best case scenario, publicity will help us attract new people to our movement, shift the thinking of policymakers, and spur funders and others to support us. We may not be able to control what gets printed in newspapers or broadcast on TV, but we can make sure that we work hard to deliver a carefully crafted, strategic message in our communications. We can also control our own social media messages, using art, graphics, and other creative mediums to shape public discussion.

Learning objectives: In this workshop, participants will...

- › Learn about how to strategically communicate with the media to advance your group's campaigns.

Approximate Time: 90 minutes

Supplies & Preparation

- Whiteboard or easel paper
- Markers
- Pens, pencils
- Handout for each participant, see appendix:

 "Media 101"

Workshop Steps

1. (15 minutes) Ice-breaker: Pass out strips of paper, and invite people to write down a news headline that highlights something currently happening in their community. Then invite people to share their name and their headline.
 - Facilitation tip: Save the headlines! You will need them at the end of the workshop.
2. (20 minutes) Media 101: Pass out the Media 101 Handout, and have volunteers to take turns reading it out loud.
 - Once you have read the whole thing, have people pair up and discuss: What seem to be the most important points for your group? What questions do you have about speaking to the media?
 - Re-convene as a large group, and share out/discuss.
3. (20 minutes) Write: Using the Media 101 handout as a guide, as a group, use the whiteboard to collectively brainstorm your group's "elevator speech", ideally pertaining to a particular campaign you are working on. Remember: you may not be asked questions that directly
 - pertain to your key talking points, but you can still stay on message if you develop a script.
 - Structure your story like this: 1) problem, 2) ideal solution, 3) action you are taking, to push for the solution. This should be short – no more than 4-6 sentences.
 - Facilitation tip: Remember, identify two or three main talking points, and repeat them over and over. Use phrases such: "We're standing up for affordable housing by..." or "Just cause and rent stabilization will help our communities by..." or "The whole community wins if we win because..."



better? Do you need to make any changes to your elevator speech?

- Reverse roles, do the role play, and discuss a second time.
 - Repeat the role play with new volunteers. Encourage everyone to give it a try at least once; you never know when you will be in a position to speak truth to power!
5. (10 minutes) Closing: Ask participant to review the headlines they created in the introduction to the workshop. Now that everyone has learned about interacting with the media and practiced giving an elevator speech, ask participants to re-write their headlines to positively reflect your group's goals. Share out!

Media Outlets

adapted from City Life/Vida Urbana handbook:

Use as many communications outlets as you have time and capacity to undertake. Don't be afraid to delegate media responsibilities to volunteers, young people, etc.!

Traditional: Press releases to newspapers and TV and radio stations, including public/noncommercial and independent media.

Social media: Spread your message through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube and other commonly used platforms.

Get in the habit of posting an update, photo, and/or video before and after EVERY action your group undertakes.

You MUST update your pages regularly.

Press Release

adapted from City Life/Vida Urbana handbook:

If you want reporters at your events, you have to send out well-crafted press releases that get the facts right and frame the issue in a way that supports your goals. Here's a sample:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

<<Short, concise headline that conveys the importance of the event>>

When: Day, Month, Date, Time

Where: <<exact address>>

Contacts: Names and phone numbers of key people

NOTE: <<Give name(s) of key people willing to be interviewed.>>

Summary: <<Give a half to three-quarter page summary of the event. Include relevant information and demands. Use emotionally compelling quotes that spell out the main talking points.>>





Workshop 2.10 - Lobbying (Direct vs. Grassroots)

OVERVIEW: Lobbying is when people meet with elected officials and try to persuade them to vote a certain way. Some people love it, some people hate it. Either way, for many housing justice groups fighting for stronger tenant protections in a city, a county, the state, and even nationally, it's a part of the work for stable homes for all. This workshop is focused on preparing tenant leaders to effectively share their stories with elected officials and lobby!

Learning Objectives: In this workshop, participants will...

- › Gain confidence telling stories in a small group, in preparation for sharing stories with elected officials
- › Understand why it is important for

regular people to speak up.

- › Learn how to effectively make “the Ask”
- › Have fun and get excited about speaking with decision-makers

Approximate Time: 1.5 hours (90 minutes)

Supplies & Preparation

Whiteboard or easel paper

Markers

Pens, pencils

Workshop Steps

1. (15 minutes) Ice-breaker: Play musical hot potato. Play music while passing a ball around. When the music stops, the person holding the ball says their name, and one reason they came to today's meeting.
 - Tell the group to pass the ball faster as the music gets louder, slower as the music gets quieter.
2. (15 minutes) Lobbying 101: Ask your group to brainstorm everything they know about lobbying. Take notes on the board or a large sheet of paper. Ask questions if needed, like: What is lobbying? Who does it? Why do people lobby? When and where does it usually take place?
 - Once people have brainstormed for a few minutes, summarize some of what you see on the board. Emphasize the following:
 - ◊ Lobbying is sharing your story with an elected official, in order to influence their decision.
 - ◊ ANYONE who has a story to share about how we can make our community a better place can lobby, including young people, elders, students, parents, grandparents, aunties, uncles, “workers,” teachers.
 - ◊ The people who usually GET to lobby include business owners, landlords, wealthy people,





and paid lobbyists (usually professionals working on behalf of people with money).

- ◆ Elected officials are PEOPLE—like you and me.
- Discuss: Why is it important for us to change standard lobbying patterns? Give each person two post it notes, and invite them to write one reason that “normal” people need to do more lobbying. Share with a partner, then with the larger group.
- Discuss: What did you notice? Do you agree with others’ reasons?
 - ◆ Emphasize: Elected Officials are accountable to US, the people

and the public. You are a “constituent”: you live, go to work, school, or worship in the district that elects them. You can also influence them, even if you’re not able to vote.

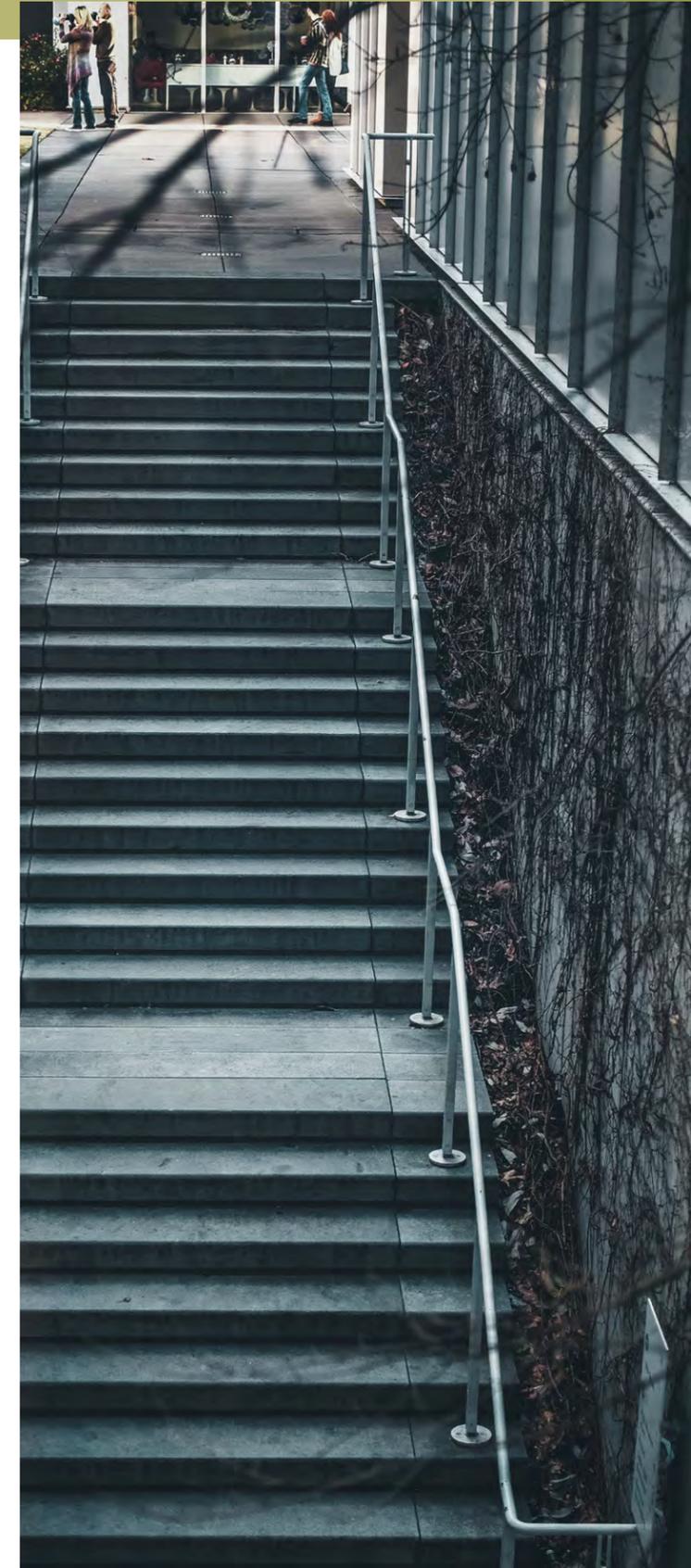
- ◆ The GOAL of a lobby visit is that the elected official listens to your story and demand, and acknowledges that they heard it.
- ◆ Once they have acknowledged they have heard your story/demand, then make the “Ask”: “Can I count on you to support Gresham Housing for the People and our demand for tenant protections?”

3. (30 minutes) Role play: Invite a volunteer to role play with you. The volunteer pretends to be a state representative, and you will pretend to be a tenant leader.

- ROLE PLAY guide.
- Reflect: What did the tenant leader do well? What could they have done better?
- Reverse roles, do the role play, and discuss a second time.

- ◆ Emphasize the following tips: Be clear and brief; don’t give too many details. Stay on topic. “Land the plane”: make sure to get to your point, and make the “Ask”.

- Repeat the role play with new volunteers, and have three people work together as tenant leader lobbyists.
- 4.** (10 minutes) Closing: Play musical hot potato a second time. Play music while passing a ball around. When the music stops, the person holding the ball says one thing they learned.
- Tell the group to pass the ball faster as the music gets louder, slower as the music gets quieter.





Workshop 2.11 - Direct Action Organizing

OVERVIEW: In this workshop, workshop participants will get an opportunity to talk about Direct Action; what it is, its purposes, benefits and things to consider. Direct action is a tool that has been used by many movements both for the better and for the worse. Direct Action is a tool in an organizer’s toolbox that can be used to inspire, make significant movement, demonstrate importance, attract attention and more.

Learning Objectives: In this workshop, participants will...

- › Explore the definitions of Direct Action
- › Explore the different purposes of direct action

- › Get a chance to discuss the pros/cons of direct actions, and important things to consider
- › Learn about the different kinds of direct actions used in the tenant’s rights movement
- › Discuss and develop a list of direct actions they’d like to do now or in the future

Approximate Time: 2 hours (120 minutes)



Supplies & Preparation:

- Handout for each person, see appendix:
 - 📄 “Have You Ever? Icebreaker”
 - 📄 Action checklist
 - 📄 HFA chant sheet
 - 📄 “Turn Up the Heat”
- A laptop with 5 tabs open to the workshop videos below and power supply
- Projector and Screen plugged into the computer and plugged into a speaker
- Enough chairs for all participants to sit in
- Flip Chart Paper
- Markers and Pens
- Masking tape, duct tape or painters tape

Workshop Steps:

1. (3 minutes) Watch: Martin Luther King and Direct Action - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYrR7ByvF4U>
 - their name, pronouns, and 1 thing they remember feeling the most after attending that direct action.
2. (20 minutes) Icebreaker – Have You Ever?: Have everyone sit in a circle or sit where they’re sitting. The facilitator should have a list of questions from the “Have You Ever? Icebreaker” handout.
 - If there are people who haven’t stood by the end of the questions, ask them to stand at the end – share their name, pronouns, and 1 question they have about direct actions.
3. Direct Action 101 - Watch + Discuss – Take about 30 minutes and watch the following videos then break into groups of 3-4 people and discuss the videos
 - Read the questions and have participants stand up if they’ve participated in the activity asked about in the handout. When folks stand up, have each person share

answering the following questions: If you were to define Direct Action in two words, what words would you use? How did the video make you think about ways to address your housing, your neighborhood or city?

- “Direct Action 101” - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cdMC_Naf-Hc
- “Black Lives Matter Protest in a Parade” - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6rd1diUhix0>
- “Non-Violent Direct Action for Trayvon Martin” - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S47koq4sM3c>
- “HFA Renter Week of Action highlight reel” - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgEFah5Q_Sg

4. Reflect – Think, Pair, Share: The facilitator should share the following statement – “One of the benefits of Direct Action is that it disrupts every day life and routine. It draws attention to a particular issue by forcing people to stop and look/think about what the demonstrators or actors are talking about. It is important to remember that disrupting everyday life also comes with

discomfort for people who are affected. They may just be trying to get to work, or trying to do their jobs and feel that they are not a part of whatever issue is arising through this direct action. That means that sometimes people will react in negative ways as well and call upon institutions to help react in that negative way. If we think back to disproportionately impacted – what sorts of ways do you think people might react negatively and who would that affect?

FACILITATOR TIP

Try to get folks to recognize that police, permitting institutions that approve actions, and para militia are a real threat to safety. Black, Brown, LGBTQIA folks may/will be targeted by those fighting against a direct action and that it is important to protect one another and prepare direct actions in a manner that prioritizes the safety and wellbeing of participants unless they give express consent to make themselves at risk.

5. Brainstorm – Kaleidoscope: Have participants form a circle of chairs and place one chair in the middle that is the “Question Seat.” If you don’t have enough chairs place a piece of tape in

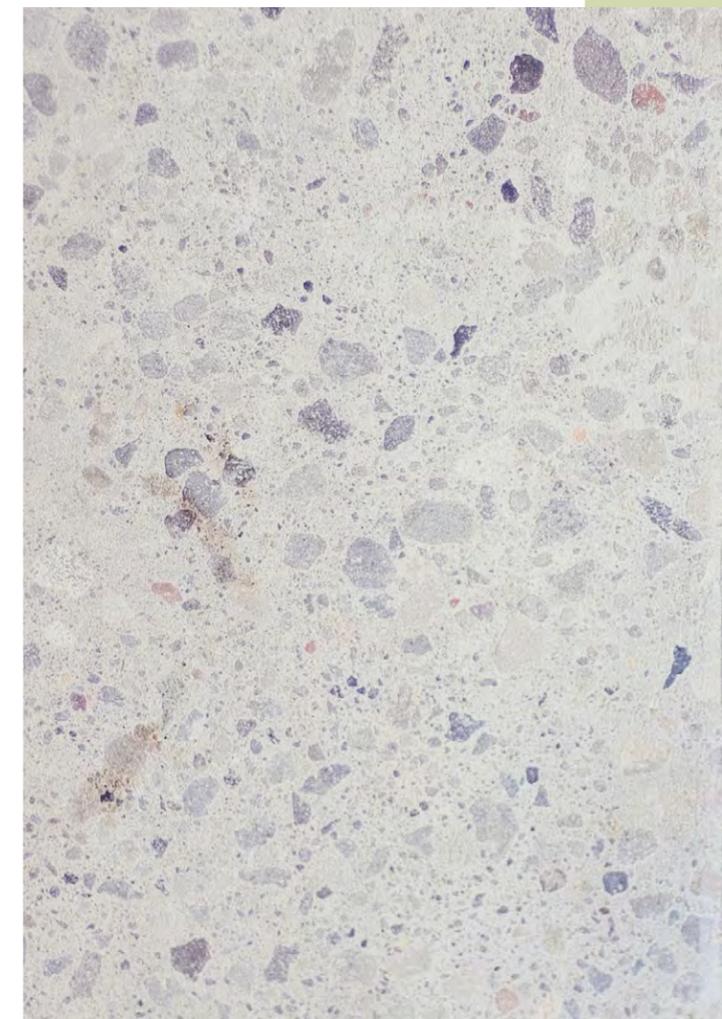
an x in the center of the circle. Place flip charts either on the ground with markers or along the wall. Designate at least 2 notetakers to capture all of the questions that will come out of this exercise.

- The facilitator needs to explain the steps to the Kaleidoscope exercise. As everyone sits in a circle, they should take turns standing on the tape-x or sitting in the question seat to ask a question as an answer to the question, “What sorts of direct actions could we do to address our housing situations?”. For example – “What if we hosted a community posada, invited the landlord and handed him a giant letter with our demands?”

FACILITATOR TIP

If you find that there is a lull or that certain participants are dominating the conversation, step in and ask a question to answer the question to keep discussion going or invite a participant to join the question seat by name. If they insist that they would like to sit out, respect that!

- This should continue until everyone has had an opportunity to answer the question with a question at least once.
6. Closing: Have everyone stand in a circle and link arms. Collectively take a deep breath together and exhale. Breathe into the count of four, and exhale to the count of 8. Have each person answer the question – “What is one word to describe your feelings about direct action after today?”





Weighing the Pros and Cons

Direct Action is a powerful tool of escalation often used at a time when all other options are failing. It could also be the primary choice. There is no formula to determine when Direct Action is appropriate. It depends on the group you are working with and the context you're in. That said, one of the ways to determine if Direct Action is appropriate is to engage in a pro/con brainstorming session. In this session, you'll want participants who will be participating in the direct action to fully think about and openly discuss their perspectives about how this direct action will bring your group closer to the goals you are hoping to achieve. What will be good about this direct action?

Why would it be a good thing for the group to do this direct action? It's also JUST AS IMPORTANT to discuss any reasons why group participants have any doubts or are hesitant to engage in a direct action. What will be bad about this direct action? How could it hinder the goals we are hoping to achieve? Are there any safety or health concerns that people are carrying? This open discussion will help foster trust and open dialogue, two important elements when doing any direct action. This will also help individuals determine if the direct action is something that they want to do or not. We should never force anyone to participate in something they feel is bad or unsafe to do.

[Bonus Activity]

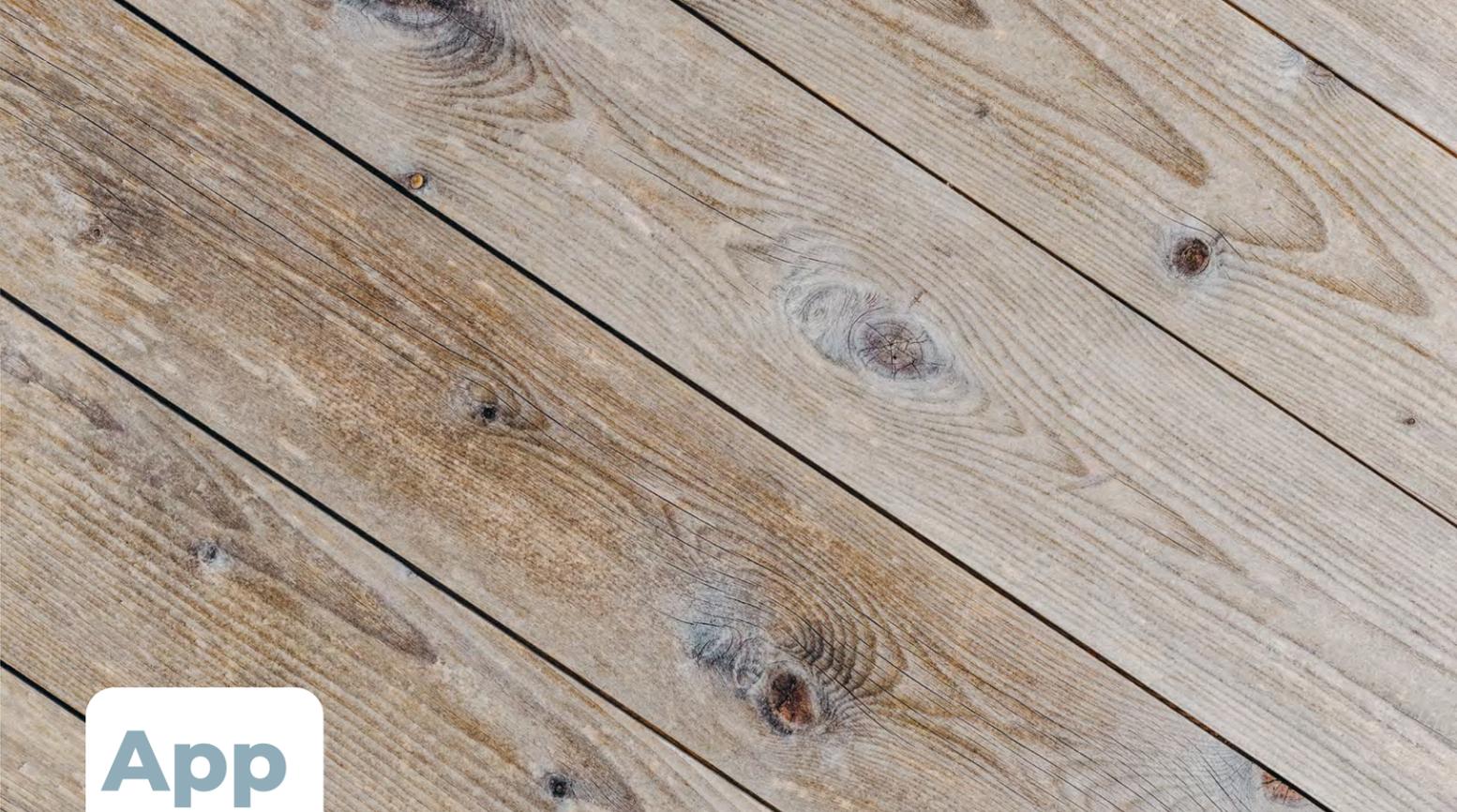
Put It In Action

Do you or your group have an idea for a direct action now? It's time to plan it out! Take a few moments to brainstorm your direct action and think through your next steps. You'll want to answer the following questions:

- What is your idea for a direct action?
- What will you need to do that direct action?
- Where will it be held?
- When do you want to do it?
- Who would you like to participate in the direct action?
- Is there any laws you will be violating performing this direct action? If so, what are they?
- What are the pros/cons of engaging in the direct action?
- How would you like this direct action to affect the thing you are trying to change?
- Based on your power-mapping who will appreciate the direct action and who will disapprove? Will either of their reactions have any bearing on your end goals?

Additional resources

Organizing in the Slums of Chicago
<https://www.coursera.org/lecture/nonviolence/organizing-in-the-slums-of-chicago-aootl>

A close-up photograph of light-colored wooden planks with visible grain and knots, arranged diagonally from the top right towards the center.

**App
A**

REFERENCES
**APPENDIX
A**

Appendix A

3.1 Language Justice

http://antenaantena.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/langjust_eng.pdf

“Language Justice is about more than interpretation. It’s about us being able to win. If we’re going to win we need mass numbers of people in our movement. We need the people most affected by the issues we are fighting to transform to lead. Those people speak many languages - our movements must, too.” - Andrea Chiriboga-Flor, HFA member and organizer with 9to5 in Denver colorado. (quoted in a HFA email)

<http://antenaantena.org/>

“WHAT IS LANGUAGE JUSTICE? When we refer to language justice, we mean the right everyone has to communicate in the language in which we feel most comfortable.”

When we say multilingual space, we don’t just mean a space where many languages are spoken, but spaces where there is a commitment to equality among languages, as well as a resistance to the dominance of any one language in the room.

It is often impossible to create an ideal universe of language justice in which all languages are given entirely equal space

at an event. Language justice is only as strong as the resources dedicated to it. Without experienced interpreters for a given language, there is no functional way for a person to speak that language at an event or meeting and be understood. Sometimes there is not enough equipment to accommodate more than two or three languages at a single event. However, when a commitment to language justice is clearly demonstrated, even when there are languages represented in the room that cannot be fully integrated into the conversation, the feeling in the room is one of openness, acceptance, and willingness to listen. Goodwill combined with good practice can go a long way to derail structures of privilege and language dominance, and construct a space that is truly welcoming to a variety of perspectives, expressed in a variety of ways.

“WHAT MIGHT A WORLD WITH LANGUAGE JUSTICE LOOK LIKE? It would be a world with room for multiple languages to operate at all levels of society: from the kitchen table to the community meeting to the art museum to the City Council or even the legislature. A world where a vast range of languages could coexist. A world where social structures would not be based on the dominance of one language over all

others. A world where interpretation and translation are cherished and valued as

critical tools for opening communication.”

3.2 Flossing

Flossing

It is inevitable that conflicts will arise between people within our group: this is difficult work, and we come at it via many different paths. “Flossing” is one key tool that can help us work together to resolve and prevent conflicts, reduce harm, and build power together, across lines of difference. Flossing helps us address harmful actions or words. It gives a framework for us to address problems quickly and effectively, with an emphasis on learning and changing the behavior moving forward.

Pass out the “Flossing” handout (see Appendix B). Ask for a volunteer to read the handout out loud.

Pass out the “Microaggressions” handout. Ask for a volunteer to read the handout out loud. Following the reading activity have folks stand in a circle and link arms and do a breathing activity together where we breathe in for four counts and breathe out for 5 counts.

Role Play: The facilitator should select one participant and be someone who accidentally does or says a microaggression. Ask the group to say FLOSS when they notice one and write it down. After about 5-6 minutes, have each participant share what microaggression they witnessed and why they said floss.

3.3 CAT History

CAT History Timeline

- In 1997, CAT evolved out of an Oregon Housing NOW project to become an independent, grassroots, tenant-controlled, tenant member organization—the only such organization in the state of Oregon. From the outset, CAT was based on the ideal of developing low-income tenants into leaders in the renters' rights movement. An early grant application CAT submitted to the Mackenzie River Gathering Foundation explained, "It is low-income renters who are most adversely affected by the tightening housing market, as unscrupulous landlords take advantage of the surplus of tenants to shirk their responsibilities as landlords. It is only through grassroots organizing that tenants will be able to gain a base of power, from which they can have some control over their living situations." From day one, CAT's belief in the power of tenants working together has been the foundation of the organization.
- A decade later, by the late 2000s, CAT had evolved into two main programs: the Housing Justice Program (HJP), and the Renter Stability Education Program (RSEP). The HJP prioritized two areas of work: 1) organizing tenants to take direct action to collectively challenge unsafe housing conditions; 2) organizing for systemic change in order to increase the supply of decent affordable housing, improve the quality and enforcement of housing maintenance standards, and strengthen tenant eviction protections. RSEP educated tenants about their rights, and provided strategies for self-advocacy to promote safe, stable and affordable housing.
- CAT's members and volunteers have counseled more than 40,000 callers to our Renters' Rights Hotline, providing Oregon tenants with the information they need to stand up for their rights.
- In June of 2018, CAT in partnership with Stable Homes for Oregon Families helped the City of Milwaukie develop a comprehensive tenant protections policy plan that will include relocation assistance for Milwaukie renters.
- In April of 2017 a policy proposal to lift the ban on rent-stabilization and ban no-cause evictions for all of Oregon passed the Oregon State House of Representatives for the first time in Oregon's history! CAT helped lead the Stable Homes for Oregon Families Coalition who worked with legislators to develop HB 2004, a landmark bill that would have created a just-cause standard for renters being evicted from their homes, and lifted the preemption on rent-stabilization. Though the bill did not pass in the 2017 session, this was the first time in Oregon's history that this decades-old policy had been challenged in such a manner with so much progress.
- In early 2017, CAT launched its first ever on-the-ground organizing initiative with an in-city Senior Organizer in Jackson County, Oregon.
- In February of 2016, CAT supported the creation of a renter-relocation policy in the City of Portland that mandates relocation assistance for renters being no-cause evicted from their homes or receiving rent-increases of 10% or more in a rolling 12-month period. CAT also sat at the negotiating table for 18 months debating a permanent renter-relocation policy which was adopted in February of 2017.
- In 2015, we launched a #RenterStateofEmergency campaign demanding a moratorium on no-cause evictions and rent-increases above 5% until the market cooled down. The cities of Bend, Milwaukie, and Portland responded with extending notice periods for renters receiving no-cause evictions or rent-increases. This also sparked a housing omnibus bill in the 2016 legislative session where the concept of Just-Cause evictions was first introduced.
- Through our Safe Housing Project, CAT has organized more than 50 buildings throughout the Portland metro area. Residents of these buildings have received much-needed repairs by learning about their rights, working with their neighbors, and demanding that their landlord make the required repairs under the law in addition to pushing back against unjust evictions and rent-increases.
- In 2013, CAT fought to expand housing opportunity for tenants with Section 8 vouchers, by including them as a protected class in the Fair Housing Act. As of 2014, Oregon landlords can no longer say, "I don't accept Section 8." We also added protections for tenants with high barriers for housing, by placing limits on how a landlord can screen a rental application. People of color and previously homeless are more likely to have high barriers

to housing, and these protections will help to reduce these disparate impacts.

- In 2012 and 2013, in collaboration with JOIN, StreetRoots, 211info, Oregon Opportunity Network, we successfully launched the “I Support the Portland Safety Net” and “We are Safety Net” campaigns that successfully protected City of Portland housing and homeless services from \$1.1 million in cuts. We also converted over \$4 million in housing funding, from one-time general funds, to protected, on-going funding.
- In 2009 CAT won more protections for tenants in Oregon, limiting the types of fees a landlord could charge and how much they could charge. Also, tenants who have lived there for more than one year now have 60 days to move out when they receive a no-cause termination from their landlord, instead of 30 days.
- In 2009, in collaboration with housing advocates throughout Oregon, CAT won a new source of funding, called the Document Recording Fee, which generates over \$15 million every two years for housing development, preservation and services in Oregon.
- In 2007 CAT and our partners in Affordable Housing NOW! (AHN!) won a 30% set-aside of urban renewal funds for affordable housing. By 2011, this resulted in over \$153 million in spending for affordable housing, and targeted up to half of the spending to housing extremely low-income people (individuals that earn less than \$14,600 and families that earn less than \$20,800).
- In 2007 CAT won commitment from the City of Portland to create a Quality Rental Housing Work Group to address “the issue of environmental health and substandard housing conditions that threaten the health and safety of low-income tenants and develop corresponding policy and program recommendations.”
- In 2006 CAT won an expedited system for referring landlords in Portland with outstanding code violations to code hearings. Before this victory, units with outstanding code violations would go two years before a decision to take the landlord to a code hearing was made. Now, any unit with fire/life/safety violations is referred to code hearing after 30 days.

- In 2005, CAT won expansion of Portland’s code enforcement relocation services to include tenant families getting sick as a result of mold or lead in their housing.
- In 2005, CAT won stronger protections for tenants from discrimination and retaliation under Oregon’s state landlord/tenant act. Landlords are now required to tell us in writing why they turn us down for housing. This makes it more difficult for landlords to refuse to rent to us for discriminatory reasons or because we successfully challenged evictions in the past.
- In 2002, CAT, together with two partner organizations, launched the Affordable Housing NOW! Campaign (AHN!). Over 40 organizations and hundreds of individuals signed onto AHN!’s Declaration of Support, and over the years, AHN! won more than \$19 million for affordable housing programs from the City of Portland’s general fund.
- In 2001, CAT won passage of an affordable housing “no net loss” policy for the neighborhoods of Portland’s Central City
- In 2000, CAT coordinated a campaign to win \$4.5 million from Portland’s general fund for affordable housing for extremely low-income households including \$500,000 for Portland’s first-ever ongoing budget line-item for affordable housing.
- In 1999, tenants in Oregon were organized and actively involved in a state legislative session for the first time – negotiating changes to the landlord-tenant law – winning improvements for renters. We held back initiatives to gut the Portland Preservation Ordinance and to exempt some landlords from fair housing laws that protect tenants from discrimination.
- In 1998, CAT, leading a coalition of 5 organizations, won the nationally groundbreaking Portland Affordable Housing Preservation Ordinance. This ordinance is a tool with which to save the affordable homes of nearly 5,000 low-income families.

3.4 Creating Safe(r) Organizing Spaces

Alchemy: The Elements of Creating a Collective Space – Heavily adapted (but almost entirely quoted) from SOUL

<http://southernersonnewground.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/SONG-Alchemy-The-Elements-of-Creating-Collective-Space.pdf>

It is crucial that we make space for conversation and community that makes people feel whole, connected, and courageous. SOUL – Southerners on New Ground – talks about the process of creating this space as a sort of alchemy:

Usually alchemy is defined as a magical process by which something of little value is made into something of great value. As opposed to chemistry, which is a process that many see as putting together a formula that, if followed correctly, comes out the same every time. Working with people is much more about alchemy than chemistry, because alchemy is different every time. There are parts of what happens in the process that cannot be named, and

Elements of Collective Spaces that have worked for us:

Attention to Physical Space

Folks often do paid work for long and hard

it always involves an element of hope—the hope that each of us together are more than just the sum of our parts or our numbers.

We also would like to draw attention to the fact that many of the elements listed below have been historically taken care of by women and others perceived as or self-identified feminine people in our movement spaces and groups. Many of these elements have been seen as less important than “strategy”. We disagree. We see these elements as essential to long-term group cohesion and wellness. In our time, groups will have to form so they can help people get a whole range of needs met—spiritual needs, food needs, housing needs, etc. These groups will have to be holistic and strong. These elements can help to build such groups.

hours in places that deprive our senses and demoralize us. It is part of how we

are oppressed. SONG finds cheap ways to create spaces that are colorful, bright and sensuous: like adding a tablecloth or some flowers from outside. Altars are also a great way to help groups remember why they come together.

Nourishing Food

We lead such busy lives that we often end up at meetings with only chips and dip. When we are meeting over dinner at SONG meetings, we do your best to make it a hearty dinner: we make something inexpensive that has protein and nutrients. It really affects how our hearts and bodies feel during meetings.

Child Care

SONG tries to always line up child care for meetings when needed. The bottom line is it is usually what makes the difference between parents of young kids being able to participate in meetings or not. If possible, have a child care person who will do liberation-oriented stuff with the kids—this is great for kids and parents because it starts kids off early with a role in our movements.

Accessibility Work

We consider accessibility issues around disability and language to be on-going. Non-disabled people and monolingual English speakers need to do our homework to figure out how to make spaces as

accessible as we can.

Check-Ins

We ask how each other are doing before digging into where the group is at. A group is its members. If individuals are bringing raw pain, sadness, or joy to the group it will be felt—the question is only whether we allow it to be acknowledged and held or whether we try to push it down deep.

Flexibility and Patience

Things don't always go as we planned, and sometimes getting through an agenda is not as important as slowing down and understanding where others in the group actually are. Of course, if a group has a chronic problem moving thru a reasonable agenda, then that must be addressed—but often we just all think we can do more in 2 or 3 hours than we can really do, and do well. Also, be patient with others as they formulate thoughts, reach for understanding, or repeat themselves. If you are still in this Movement, surely someone has been patient with you on many occasions.

Breaks

We use breaks to stay strong and focused. No group should meet for more than 2 hours without a break, because we are always more productive with carefully planned breaks.

Attentive Listening

We try to listen carefully and deeply to each other as a practice. Some of us listen best while writing notes or drawing. That should be talked about in a group so that everyone feels heard even if some folks are doing things with their hands during discussion. We also think that letting distracting acts go on during meetings (like cell phone use or texting) creates a culture where everyone feels like it is OK to do other things at the same time. It usually leads to folks feeling that their time and voices are not valued, and can lead to people leaving groups. It helps if a group agrees on how they will listen and be present during meetings.

Well-Planned Agendas

We try to make an average meeting no more than 2 hours, with ½ hour of social/eating time before the meeting starts. In 2 hours, it is reasonable for a group to accomplish: Intros and/or Check-ins, 15 minutes of updates, 2-3 content questions or issues, and the planning of the next meeting. Be thoughtful about which agenda items might be long discussions or hard discussions, and give them at least 30-45 minutes. After that much time, a group should know next steps on a question or issue, even if the next step is more of a reflection than a conversation.

Shared Values

We do a shared value process with groups

convening for 5 days or 5 years. We base it off of a visioning exercise that came to us from healing practices in our lives. We ask groups to envision what kind of world they want to live in, and what kinds of values people would live by in that world. Then, we ask them to list and enact those values for our work together. We live in a time with a lot of discussion about 'values', and yet the mainstream world is functioning out of values of greed, scarcity, dishonesty, and domination. If we do not declare, reflect on, and struggle with our own values we will fall into living in those values too. This is a core tenet of building groups that can make another world possible and viable.

Shared Leadership and Leadership Development

We work on sharing leadership by sharing all aspects of the work: decisions, planning, strategizing, acting, reflecting, and all other aspects. Shared leadership means that people switch roles often and easily. Shared leadership is always connected to leadership development because we all have some area where we need support and growth in our leadership. Additionally, new leaders are precious and key: as organizers, we always think about how we can share ALL the skills we have with new leaders—we consider their development as equally important to any campaign or strategy. Our movement has a shortage of leaders; we need to get better at

transferring our knowledge to others. It is a skill that requires intention and patience. Creating processes for how to bring new people into the group, make them feel welcome, and having each member make an individual growth plan for themselves really helps with this.

On-going Political Education and Analysis

A commitment to on-going education and analysis means we are always committed to becoming more aware and acting more fully from that awareness. We are never done learning. It also means that we understand our strategies are connected to the current moment—and that our strategies must shift based on conditions as well as a strong analysis of these conditions.

Shared Decision-Making

We work on making all decisions either by consensus or consensus minus one (a process that stops one person from blocking any decision). Decisions should be made, ideally, when a whole group is ready to make the decision and everyone is present. It should be clear which groups make which decisions (if there is a larger body and a smaller body). Without shared decision-making, many people will leave groups or grow very bitter within them.

Clarity and Agreement about Goals, Strategies, and Practices

We put a lot of time into discussing goals, strategies, and practices to get full agreement. We document them. This takes time, but again, without it people will feel lost, insecure about the group and the work, unable to speak about it to others, and may leave the group.

A Sense of Group and Individual Responsibility

We try to develop this by talking about who has which responsibilities within the group and checking in about tasks and roles often. It is important to know if tasks are completed, and if not, why. It is also important to check in with people about if they have too few or too many tasks—clear communication about this can help avoid under-activity or burnout. Interestingly, we find that under-activity pushes away new people as much as burnout. Often new people come to groups and are given nothing meaningful to do or be part of, and they leave out of frustration or boredom. It helps for core members to have plans ahead of time for how to bring in new people, and to let go of some control as soon as new members are properly oriented and have shown up for 3 events or meetings.

Accountability Structures

We find that the clearer the structure, the better the accountability. We use our agreements and values to make accountability structures out of these values. For example, if we say we value honesty, then we expect people in the group are honest with each other. In order to move forward if someone is not, we have a process for how to talk about that, and what to ask from the person who broke an agreement. We also have a process for if the behavior happens more than once. Finally, it is important to know what a group's bottom line is. Asking people to leave a group is really hard. You should know collectively what you would be willing to ask someone to leave a group over. For example, at SONG, we would ask someone to leave over repeated and intentional major confidentiality violations because it is just so harmful to the work.

Reflective Practice

Reflection is a practice for how to help groups and individuals hold pain and conflict; it is also a way to help bring deep clarity and focus to our work. We recommend reflection, at least a few moments, at every meeting. This can be silent or loud, quiet or active.

Clear Communication and Transparency

Clear communication means on-going

communication. It means that we provide regular updates to each other on a regular basis, and that we are clear and honest about where we are with an issue. If things come up we bring them to the whole group.

Economic Justice and Resources

This is one of our core principles around economic justice. All people should be involved in how money and other resources are used. Everyone should know how to look at financial tools too—like budgets, etc. It is not shared decision-making if some people cannot read the tools, or if folks who can read the tools rush others through decision-making. Also, having just practices is very important if people are paid inside the group for work. There will always be tensions in groups, in some form or another, when one person makes \$10,000 more than another person. Transparency about who is paid what is also very important. Sometimes, foundations only grant a certain amount of money for some people, and more for others. For example, SONG gets much more money to pay full-time staff than for interns. Part of how we handle this is by refusing to pay interns thru stipends (which usually ends up being \$3-\$4 an hour), but rather pays them by the hour—therefore paying more for less work, to get the pay scales closer to each other...Finally, smart resource allocation means we always bring the best

of working-class money sensibility to the table—we make a magic dinner out of a few cans and some rice, we make regional events out of \$100. When we combine good organizing skills with working-class scrappy strategies, we can become good financial stewards no matter what our personal stories about money are.

Conflict Resolution Process

Having a process for how to deal with inevitable conflict that comes up is very important. We recommend a more formal procedure (like a traditional grievance procedure), as well as using shared values to figure out how to address conflict. For example, having an agreement that if there is conflict between 2 people they will address it directly, or that if one person needs to confide in a 3rd party they will bring it to the relevant parties within 1 week of talking to the 3rd party.

Acknowledgement of People's Work

We don't do the work to be complimented, but it really helps a group's morale when appreciating people's work is the norm. At every meeting, think about who has been doing what work, especially concentrating on folks who do not often get recognition.

On-going attention to the Minds, Bodies, and Spirits of all involved

This means that we are able to bring our joys, desires, fears, and be heard for all of who we are. This often creates a sense of belonging and identity with the group, and is not always easy. It means that often we have to hear ways of being that are not like our own, and that we are constantly opened to new insights about others experiences of which we had not previously been aware.

3.5 Glossary

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

often refers to housing costs that do not exceed 30% of the tenants' income; CAT defines affordable housing as ____.

COMMUNITY CONTROL

(see HFA COC report p.8)

DISPLACEMENT

unwanted or forced move away from a place you call home, for any reason.

FAIR HOUSING ACT

The Fair Housing Act is a law enacted as part of civil rights legislation that prohibits discrimination in home sales, rentals, and financing based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or disability. Passed in 1968, it protects people from discrimination when they are renting or buying a home, getting a mortgage, seeking housing assistance, or engaging in other housing related-activities. Some states and even cities have protections that add additional protections and define other protected classes. It is important because it is one of the tools we have to tackle discrimination in housing.

GENTRIFICATION

Gentrification is the displacement of poor and working class people, often of color, their replacement with middle and upper class people, often white, all to generate profit for a very wealthy elite. Gentrification is also rooted in colonialism and white supremacy. It disrupts family ties, uproots communities and erases cultural heritage. Gentrification and mass displacement are not inevitable. They can be resisted by a mass popular movement that not only militantly refuses to accept dispossession and oppression, but together envisions and builds a different world, one where

housing is a fundamental human right, not a commodity for trade and profit. (from the LA Tenants' Union Handbook, 2018)

HOMELESS

people who lack a fixed, regular, adequate nighttime residence, including those who are couch surfing; living in emergency shelters, vehicles, or overcrowded places; unaccompanied youth; and fleeing domestic and other forms of violence.

LANDLORD

Legal owner of a building. A landlord has the legal right to collect rent, advertise vacant apartments, conduct improvements on the property, and to evict tenants according to the law (from the LA Tenants' Union Handbook, 2018)

LEASE

A contract by which one conveys real estate, equipment, or facilities for a specified term and for a specified rent. For legal protection, it is preferable to have a WRITTEN lease agreement rather than a verbal agreement (from the LA Tenants' Union Handbook, 2018)

LOWER-INCOME

Typically based on Median Family Income (MFI) limits; households earning 0-30% of MFI are "extremely low-income"; 31-50% MFI are "very low-income"; 51-80% are "low-income".

MARKET RATE RENT

units that have no limit on how much rent can be charged

NO-FAULT EVICTIONS

A type of legal eviction where the landlord is required by law to compensate a tenant for relocation costs (from the LA Tenants' Union Handbook, 2018).

REDLINING

In the United States and Canada, redlining is the systematic denial of various services to residents of specific, often racially associated, neighborhoods or communities, either directly or through the selective raising of prices. It is a practice that was very prevalent in Oregon to try and concentrate particular populations in certain "neighborhoods" and labeled community members of color in a very negative way that reduced their abilities to get access to mortgages, home loans, and in some cases, even being shown houses by realtors in specific neighborhoods. While redlining isn't recognized as a "practice" to some in the private housing market, it is recognized when happening directly or indirectly through various systems in our government and lending institutions.

RENTER

we define renter expansively, and use it interchangeably with tenant. A renter includes anyone who is paying rent or seeking rent but may not have the resources to do so, including tenants, squatters, and homeless people living in shelters or on the streets.

TENANT

A person living in an apartment unit with the permission of the landlord, either with a written lease agreement or verbal agreement. For political reasons, the L.A. Tenants Union defines as tenants anyone who does not own or control their housing (from the LA Tenants' Union Handbook, 2018).

RENT GAP

the growing potential for rental profits in buildings with low rents and increasing property values, in tandem with a pool of people able/willing to pay higher rents. In short, the rent gap involves the incentive for landlords to evict low-wage renters to tap the rental profits of high-wage residents and inflate the rental market rate. (Adapted from Causa Justa report)

Other possible topics

Dealing w/ elected officials
Addressing white supremacy
Dealing w/ landlords
Renters rights workshop
Fishbowl exercise

Setting shared responsibilities, groundrules
Self-care
Getting feedback on workshops, events
Organizing family and friends
(Dis)ability justice

Handbook Creators

Lead Writer: Erin Goodling was born and raised in East Portland, and has since lived in Washougal, WA, Ewa Beach, HI, and San Francisco, CA. Today she lives in Portland's Montavilla neighborhood and is an activist-researcher working on issues of homelessness, environmental justice, popular education, and housing. She works with the Community Alliance of Tenants and Right 2 Survive on various action research, writing, and community organizing projects, including a book to be published by the University of Georgia Press, *Green City Rising: Superfund Site Contamination, Cleanup & Collective Action*. Previously, she was a teacher, mainly working with homeless teenagers. She has a Master's of Teaching from Lewis & Clark College and a PhD in Urban Studies from Portland State University. She is currently a National Science Foundation Postdoctoral Researcher in the Department of Geography at the University of Oregon.

Supporting Writer: Pam Phan has been CAT's Policy and Organizing Director since 2016, leading a strong and nimble organizing department that responds to the dynamic political environment at statewide and local levels. For over 20 years, Pam has organized with youth, immigrants, refugees, people of color, houseless, and low-wage workers for housing justice and improved livability in the Portland metropolitan region. Working in both grassroots and government settings, she supports leadership development and political education for people to speak for themselves at policymaking tables. Pam also brings technical skills and expertise to the tenant power movement, with a Master's of Urban and Regional Planning from Portland State University.

App
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HANDOUTS
APPENDIX
B

How Strong Beats My Heart

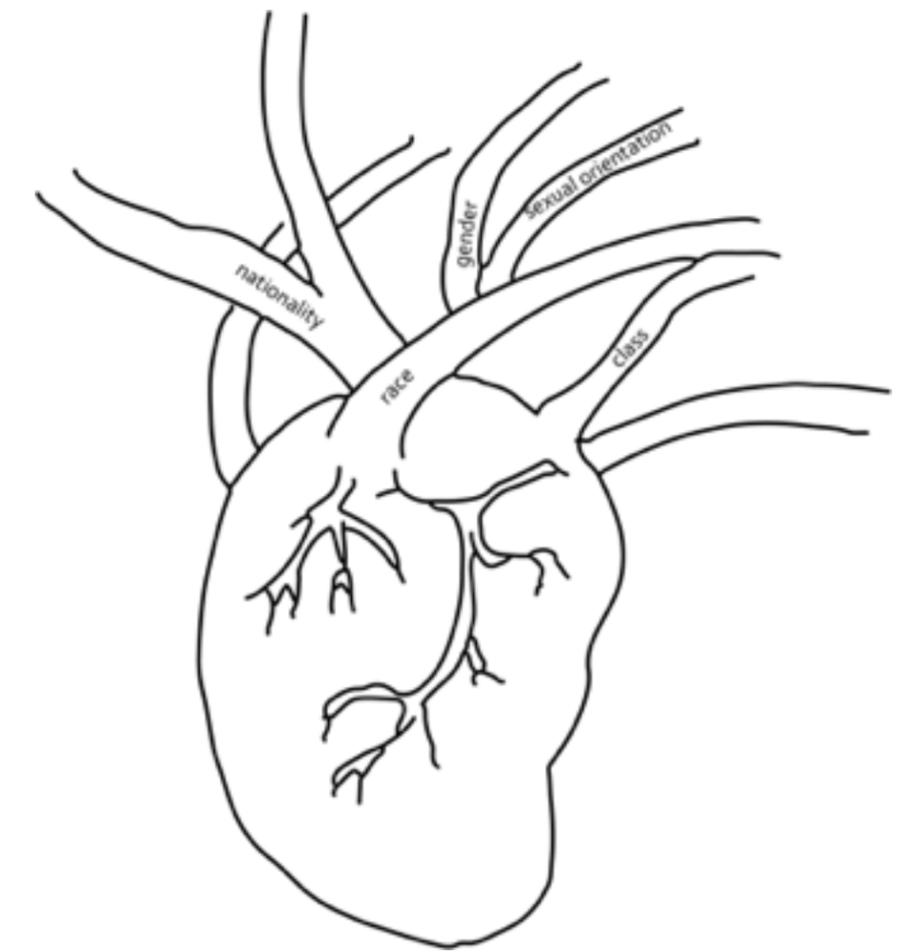


Many cultures see the heart as the center where our feelings, spirits, emotions and compassion live. We are going to use the imagery of our hearts to reflect on different parts of who we are and how that links us to broader communities of people.

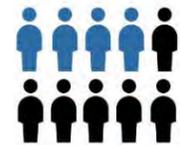
Take time to think about the different aspects of your identity in terms of: immigration status, race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, religious affiliation / spiritual beliefs, age, and any other piece of who you are that is important to you. Then answer the following questions.

Directions:

1. How do you identify under these categories? Are there any other parts of my identity that I also want to name? Write in the veins and arteries leading to your heart.
2. What positive experiences have I had because of my identities?
3. What negative experiences have I had because of my identities?



OR Renters A Breakdown



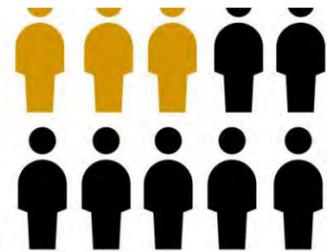
4 in 10

people are renters
1.4 million Oregonians



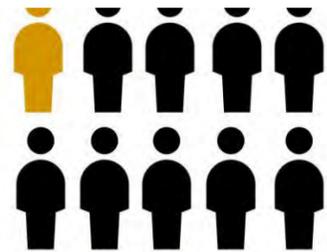
5 in 10
renters are
rent-burdened

They are paying more than 30% of their income in rent alone (not including utilities).
Approximately 51% of Oregon renters.



Over 30%
of Oregon renters
are
people of color

Even though...



Only a little over 1 in 10 Oregonians are **people of color**



In almost every unified school district, over 40% of children's households are rent-burdened...

...except Hillsboro which sits at 35%



% of Race as Renters

64% of Black Oregonians

56% of Latinx

53% of American Indian/Alaska Native

37% of Asians

74% of Native Hawaiians

51% of Other Race

33% of White (alone)



Every house district across the state is Rent Burdened.

Particular concentrations of more than 50% in Benton, Jackson, Josephine, Klamath, Lane, Linn, Multnomah, Polk, Yamhill counties.



Culturally Specific Housing Experiences



Introduction

In 2017, CAT's Tenant Leadership Council organized focus groups with members of three (overlapping) groups in the Multnomah County area: Black/African American people, elders, and people who identify as LGBTQ+. Conversations showed that, across the board, the housing crisis means that people who do not want to move are being pushed out of their homes due to rising rents and no-cause evictions. Challenges include finding a place and paying moving costs, such as application fees and deposits. People overwhelmingly feel a lack of control over their housing; they report feeling scared.

Even for people who have good jobs and savings, housing is too expensive. An LGBTQ participant described their "precarious" financial situation, spending more than 2/3 of their income on rent and utilities. One Black/African-American focus group participant was flabbergasted to realize that the \$1,500 they put aside for moving expenses was not enough: "I started looking for an apartment and to actually move, you need first, last, and security deposit. Everyone wanted all these application fees and they just kept getting higher and higher!" Fees can mean the difference between maintaining shelter and being houseless. Another Black/African-American participant was incredulous about their building's policy: "It's \$150. For a late fee. For a late fee! Where in the world do you pay \$150 for a late fee?!"

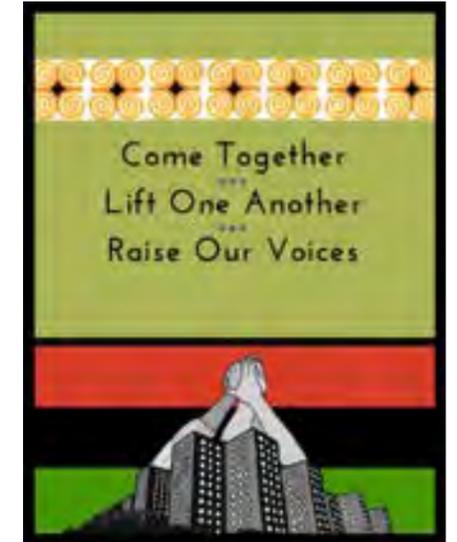
A sense of tenuousness, that housing can be taken away at a moment's notice, creates anxiety. One elder explained, "There are a lot of people who live in my building that have no families. Living there is just one step [away from] homelessness." One Black/African-American participant described a feeling of walking on eggshells: "When I see some sort of note on my door, and it may not be [an eviction notice] . . . Even if I know I paid rent, just to see that they're giving out notification is stressful." Accounts of people being evicted without cause, or being forced out by rent increases, circulate daily. While Oregon recently implemented an ordinance that puts caps on some rent increases, and some cities now mandate relocation payments to certain tenants being evicted, focus group participants reported limited awareness of the programs, confusion about how they work, or fear that the ordinances will not protect them if they move to other more-affordable jurisdictions.

Black/African American community

The Black/African American focus group revealed an intense shared experience of insecurity and powerlessness about housing and the future, especially for children and families. There is a clear consensus that the Black/African American community has been disproportionately affected by Portland's housing crisis: "When white people get a cold, we get the flu," is how one person put it. Over the last two decades, Portland's Black/African American community has scattered far beyond the historically Black Albina District neighborhoods. Albina's low property taxes and proximity to the city center – as well as specific planning and policy decisions – have fueled gentrification and displacement.

Residents often relocate to areas with fewer services and amenities, such as parks, transit service, and proximity to jobs, as well as fewer renter protections, such as Portland's relocation ordinance.

This dispersal has increased exposure to health hazards and strained the social fabric of the Black community. One participant explained, "The air quality is horrible where I moved to . . . It's all the car exhaust. Those are the areas where we end up in. That's environmental racism." The geography of displacement also means that people live further away from each other, making it more difficult to rely on community for support: "This [housing] crisis that we are experiencing means that we have to be responsible for ourselves," lamented one participant. Communicating and sharing resources, for instance, has become more difficult. A participant describes today's sense of disconnection: Back in the day, you'd go to church and you'd hear what was going on at the school, or from somebody, because you all live in the same area, community. But because we don't live in the same area [now] it's kinda hard to



track all of this information around housing that's going on.

Such challenges stemming from systemic racism are compounded by overt racial discrimination, which often starts with the first contact with apartment managers during the rental application process. One person reported one such encounter with indignation:

I spoke to a [White apartment manager in NE Portland]. She said, “Boy, what’re you going—”

And I’m [thinking], “Boy?!...you’ve gotta be outta your mind! I’m three times your age. You’re going to call me ‘boy’??”

Infantilizing in any case, the term “boy” has an ugly legacy of use to denigrate Black men and is immediately understood as overtly racist in an instance like this. The participant continued, explaining how the racial slur added insult to injury: [The manager] was saying, “Well it’s \$950 to move in, and it’s \$950 a month. And you have to make three times that amount to move in.” If this is what I’m gonna have to face, I’m damn near ready to get a tent.

While housing instability feeds a sense of powerlessness in the Black/African American community, the roots run much deeper than housing. There is also a feeling of shame, of letting ancestors down. For many in the Black/African American community, being raised under an oppressive system meant that people did not just go to school for themselves, but rather to move the whole group forward. The first generation of Black people to go to college built on the work of their parents’ generation, which was the first to finish high school. This generation of college-educated people felt a cultural obligation to move the social group forward. Black women in particular have contributed their every resource to advancing the capacity of their community. It feels like housing instability and cultural displacement has ruined this upward momentum, cultivated over decades.

The result is disillusionment, a let-down accompanied by a pervasive sense of deep loss, bewilderment, and shock. Explained one participant, “Some days I’m just like, ‘Wow. I can’t believe it’s like this.’ It gets really overwhelming. We’re just in survival mode.” People who have gone to college or found other avenues of success often feel a sense of failure, of letting down elders, family, kids, and community as result of widespread displacement. There is guilt among those who have housing, because for the Black/African American community, when you have something and others do not, there is an expectation of sharing that success. The weight of the unmet cultural obligation to push things forward adds to feeling overwhelmed and powerless, which creates stress and

distress that impacts health, work, and all areas of life. One participant commented on the costs of the aforementioned “survival mode” to community capacity: “We’re unable to really make a real connection because everything that we have to do, it’s just like – it’s all so, so fast – it’s GMO¹, it’s not authentic.”

And yet, Black/African American Portlanders maintain a vivid sense of what a more just housing system would look like: “Everyone deserves a home... Everybody deserves not a tiny apartment that you’re raising your kids in, but a house. There are BIG houses in Portland. And we’re not in them. But we helped build them.” There also remains a pervasive sense of cultural support rooted in shared history, despite the erosion of networks. Black/African American people continue to fight for changes, to help each another in any way possible, to find strength in one another’s presence. One focus group participant spoke to these values: This is an important conversation for us to continue to keep having, culturally, to heal the wounds that we’re dealing with. There are five women at this table [right now]. Five Black women at this table. All different backgrounds, and all different generations. That’s important. [Our] housing has been discriminated [against] for fifty plus years.

This perspective makes Black/African American experiences critical to the housing justice movement, yet Black voices are not as visible as participants might like. Participants also articulated the importance of bringing allies to the movement—who center the experiences and follow the leads of Black people. Explained one person, “There are a lot of people that are fighting really hard for a lot of change to happen, like CAT and other agencies. But we need more [Black] voices within those spaces to see if it works for an individual or not. And we need our people of color. We need our Black people at these tables and in these rooms.”

Policy and programming opportunities

The importance of intergenerational expectations and the historical roots of Black experiences of housing instability today suggest that programming should strengthen intergenerational and cross-class relationships among Black/African-American people. Additionally, advocacy efforts should recognize the geographic basis for historically Black communities and employ strategies that enable Black residents and institutions to maintain and evolve their place connections.

¹ *The participant is referring to “genetically modified organisms,” viewing it as a technique for mass production that generates uniform but lower quality foods.*

Elders



Elders described their housing experience as one of constraint and fear. Their incomes are often fixed and they worry what will happen to their homes, their communities, and their health, as rental costs go up. One elder described this experience of tight finances: “It’s living penny to penny, not

paycheck to paycheck. I’m on Social Security, food stamps, Section 8. I never thought I’d be in this position. I’ve always been able to work.”

One significant contributor to an overall sense of fear and lack of control is that elders feel that they are living out their golden years at the whims of landlords, in both subsidized and unsubsidized housing. “Being a senior is very disempowering,” is how one person bluntly explained it. One participant described recently finding out that although her rent would stay the same, the landlord was doubling most of her neighbors’ rents. She said, “It was like the skies opened up. [But] everybody is not so lucky, and I know it. I could be one of those people in a tent. It was miracle upon miracle that I am housed.” Elders believe they should not have to rely on miracles for stable housing.

Elders are also vulnerable to abuse by landlords and property managers, particularly when they live in subsidized housing. One person described the fear and isolation that came after she spoke out about concerns in her building:

You have this bullying, this sense of being totally disempowered because you’ve lost the right to stand up for yourself, because you’re in jeopardy. I used to have these dreams that I was going to have potlucks regularly in my apartment building. But I keep in my room. These are not safe living situations. It’s not this welcoming place. It’s like being in a very unloving space, that you feel so in jeopardy. The perks are wonderful: I can have a nice apartment and pay only a third of my income. But I feel like the issues that I’m raising say a lot about what seniors put up with. There’s this sense of seniors being disempowered, separated, alienated, disconnected. The emotional insecurity, fear, stress, depression, fear, uncertainty—that takes such a toll on you. We become ill, very ill, very fast. What are you going to do when you get sick?

Landlords thus intimidate elders into staying silent about needed repairs or tolerate practices such as property managers’ illegal limits on visitors, because elders fear harassment or eviction.

Elders may be unaware of policy changes that benefit renters, such as Portland’s new relocation assistance ordinance, nor other resources available to them. Those who do seek safety-net service often find that organizations cannot meet their housing-related needs. Waiting lists for subsidized housing, for instance, are often two or three years long. As a result, many elders rely on family members. While family is an important, healthy source of support for some elders, for others, relying on relatives puts strain on relationships and subjects them to abuse.

Elders also overwhelmingly want to band together to take action to bring about more stable housing. One participant explained this sense of purpose: “Safe housing that we can feel secure in is so fundamental to our well-being. At our age, we are vulnerable to so many other things, like illness. Safe housing should be a given. It should be our right to have a home.” Stability also means that they have a place for their families and friends to visit; they have a place for their hobbies, such as jigsaw puzzles, singing, and woodworking; they live close to services, libraries, grocery stores; they have the freedom to stay or leave, whenever they choose; they do not live in fear of eviction or retaliation for reporting a concern to their landlord. One elder summed up what home means to them: “Home has been everything to me. It’s my sanctuary, my place of retreat.” Another participant discussed issues citywide: “I want to have a voice as part of changing what’s going on in our city. I mean, it’s just heartbreak after heartbreak. [I want] to be an advocate for all of us.” Yet another participant spoke of their fire for collective action: “I recently have felt this sort of explosive energy coming, that I need to tell my story. I want to get these things out and be a voice. We need a vocal, active, senior, of seniors group, to start talking about this. It’s our lives.”

Despite this energy, elders do not necessarily know what to do or how to do it. One explained, “If only there was some way that we could—some organization that would come together, somewhere outside your building, something that is organized and that helps advocate.” Elders have made contributions to society their whole lives, and they want to continue to make contributions, especially if it means helping to stabilize their housing.

Policy and programming opportunities

Elders could benefit from leadership training opportunities that are tailored to their life-stage, harnessing their twin desires for activism and social connection. Given the experiences of isolation and prevalence of physical limitations, home-visiting or activities at places where elders already congregate, such as the Hollywood Senior Center, could be a helpful way to support and engage elders on housing issues.

LGBTQ community

The LGBTQ group described histories of trauma, health challenges, and economic exclusion as forces that destabilize their housing. Within the community, young people transitioning to adulthood commonly experience houselessness. Such housing struggles are even more pronounced for people of color, trans people, people with disabilities, and for people who engage in “non-mainstream” sexual practices, such as sex work or having multiple sexual partners.



One participant explained how all these factors combine to produced severe marginalization:

I don’t know a single trans person who isn’t traumatized. And that comes with really real impacts on mental health experiences, physiological health experiences. Mix that into housing, with extraordinary employment barriers for trans-ness alone, plus more and more people are living on the outskirts to find housing at all, and the total let-down of public transit, when there aren’t sidewalks, when there aren’t buses, when it’s not even safe to be out at night as a visibly trans person—that can make it very socially and economically isolating.

Feeling safe where you live, in other words, is of paramount importance for LGBTQ people, and it is

even more crucial – and difficult to come by – for those with multiple intersecting identities. House-sharing with fellow LGBTQ people is therefore the norm, and people often double- and triple-up in rooms in order to afford high rents.

More generally, there is a history of shared housing in the LGBTQ community. One participant tied this to experiences of houselessness: “Most people I know are either houseless themselves or are trying to house as many houseless people as we can at any given point, with the resources we have.” Another agreed that experiences of hardship create a culture of mutual aid:

I see people that have gone through a struggle are the ones to help the most. I see that someone who has struggled before is wanting to help someone out in a situation that’s relatable to them, because they’ve made it and have something to offer. Now I have a place to live and I have a lot of roommates, but I’m offering what I can to friends who just moved back and need a place.

Community members who have been able to purchase or rent a home often share this resource with other LGBTQ people.

While house-sharing sometimes has its roots in political or cultural practice (such as creating a chosen family), there is a clear economic aspect that makes people vulnerable to unsafe living conditions, especially given that LGBTQ people often face workplace discrimination. Focus group participants listed many sacrifices that people in their community made in order to obtain and maintain shelter that they can afford: living in a basement with no windows or heat; living with eight people crowded into a 2-bedroom apartment; and living with an abusive partner or housemate, or in conflict with housemates. One person described such trade-offs:

I feel lucky to live with other queers. I wouldn’t have been able to live with non-queer identifying people. I know a lot of my friends who are doing that and I am their emotional support. They come to me with the stuff that goes on in their household. And I feel lucky that my room is only \$200. But I live in a windowless, heatless, basement room. And sometimes I wonder why I feel lucky.

Moreover, for many LGBTQ people, housing and health challenges operate in a vicious cycle for people who have experience discrimination in their families of origin, on the job market and in the workplace, and in the public sphere:

A lot of it is mental health. A lot of it is PTSD. Trauma-related because you’re excommunicated

from your own house because of your identity, and then nowhere wants to let you in because of your identity. Or give you help, because you’ve had to make your situation what it is. The trauma is a big piece.

Older people, especially men, face challenges in living with HIV and its legacies, such as widowhood and a generation lost before antiretroviral medications became available. Elder LGBTQ people often deal with loneliness and isolation, and they rely on a fixed income to simultaneously pay expensive housing and healthcare costs.

Younger members of the LGBTQ community face distinctive challenges as well. For example, they lack safe spaces to heal from the trauma that is very common for LGBTQ youth, and lack supports to navigate gender transitions, such as needing a protected place to heal from surgery. One participant described how their health issues were making them question their housing situation:

I’m living with other people within this 500-square foot studio for \$1200 a month. We have two mattresses in a little sort of a side room, and all four of us sleep there. It’s hard because I’m also really grateful to have a place to be. I celebrated a year of not being houseless and it was really cool. I try to keep that in mind. I’m also having surgery coming up and rooming with three other people together in such a tiny space is not really conducive to healing well. I know it’s silly but sometimes I miss just being able to worry about where I would stay for the night. And now [I’m] having constant worry, am I going to lose this? I also live with two of my partners and it’s really hard in general.

In other words, safe, stable housing, where people can be who they are, is very difficult to find, and it often comes with a host of complicating factors and trade-offs. One person explains how the LGBTQ community is uniquely affected:

Everyone in Portland is experiencing trouble with housing, finding affordable housing. But not everyone needs a house full of people who will respect you. That element is given for some people. It’s not given for queers—specifically for trans folks. It reduces the opportunity that you have to get proper housing. Proper housing is not just decent, practical, cheap. It’s also living with people who will respect who you are as a person.

Housing instability is so common that community support and movement-building are compromised. One focus group participant discussed the ways the housing situation forecloses collective opportunities:

Rural Justice and Tenant Organizing



Community groups get obliterated because the people involved can't even find housing. So, the most basic groups that get assembled, of like, "Hey, okay, you've got this skill and I've got this skill, and this is how we're going to support our community" . . . Oh shit - José has to move to Montana because they can't afford rent anymore. Julian has to . . . I don't even know where they are because they were living on the street and then they just stopped showing up. Those kinds of things. There's nothing certain, in any way. To think beyond a month of housing is so incredible to try and conceive of, after so many years of housing insecurity.

Policy and programming opportunities

Because of the importance of shared housing in the LGBTQ community, policies that allow people to more easily double-up rather than penalize them for helping each other could be very beneficial. Additionally, legal assistance could help "curators" of group homes and homeowners who want to share their space with other members of the community draft rental agreements that protect all parties' rights. Partnering with the kink, polyamory, and sex work communities to provide information about laws related to occupancy limits and working at home could help improve housing stability. CAT and partner organizations could also foster housing stability in the LGBTQ community by offering a support group for queer people – especially those newly housed – who are worried about housing stability to unpack their fear and stress, and to develop tools to navigate conflicts and safely assert their rights.

Guiding Questions

1. What are some challenges that members of this group face, with regard to housing?
2. What are some sources of strength that members of this group identify?
3. What are some ways that YOUR group/organization might better center the needs of this group in your housing justice organizing work?

By Jesse Sharpe, CAT Tenant Organizer

Introduction

On the west coast, the majority of the tenant power movement of the past has been centered in urban areas. A lot of the reasoning and justifications of this historical truth relies assumption that the problems around which the tenant's movement was built – those of gentrification, slumlordism, price gouging, and other predatory practices are particular to urban environments.

While it is true that particular predatory practices are especially prominent in urban areas, other harmful practices are common and sometimes even more extreme in rural areas. CAT is committed to building a statewide movement for tenant power. The vast majority of Oregon is rural or small metro, with few large cities around the state. Supporting tenants in this environment requires a careful look at the intersections of rural justice, racial justice, and economic justice. Organizing in rural areas presents a unique set of challenges, and little analysis or methodology has been created to assist organizers in overcoming these challenges.

While the challenges are unique and often staggering, watching the shifts that are possible when a small group of tenants begins organizing and growing into a local union - especially in a city where nobody ever assumed it was possible, can be extraordinarily rewarding and set the stage for a new sort of movement in which all people have access to justice.

What is Rural Justice?

Rural (In)justice simply refers the idea that small towns often lack access to resources that might help remedy the situation. While the term has largely been used to refer to legal services, justice itself is a complex social phenomenon. It includes:

- Access to movement building and the tools to redress grievances against injustice in your community.
- Access to the vortexes of progressive power (i.e. Union or progressive Lobbyists, grassroots legislative discussions, etc...)
- Access to quality services (healthcare, housing assistance, shelters for displaced families, etc...)

- Access to the law (pro-bono lawyers, courts, unbiased community policing - ex: self policing, etc...)
- Access to democracy (voting, public comment, community control over land, etc...)

The disparity between metro areas and rural areas on each of these fronts is extreme. We know that many public services are held accountable in metro areas by relatively strong local movement infrastructure amongst poor and working class people - allowing for movement building and rapid community response. This is generally lacking in rural areas, though amazing work is being done around the state to address this problem.

When our services fail, when rents rise, or when whole communities are being forced from our towns through the evils of racism, poverty, and/or economic violence we often do not have the dedicated local organizations, services, or activist circles to respond rapidly to the needs of the community. This must be addressed.

While low population density provides a unique set of challenges to service providers, this fact alone is not enough to create the level of disparity which is currently experienced by rural Oregonians. One of the core reasons for this disparity ties back to the question of movement building and process.

Most of rural Oregon lacks homeless shelters, legal protections, tenant protection groups, or other much-needed services. The tradition of churches supporting the needs of the community is limited due to the often enormous conservatism of rural evangelism and the often enormous elitism of more liberal churches. Where churches do offer support, that support is often mixed in with requirements such as attending services each night, arriving before 6:00 at night for shelters, and/or remaining alcohol and tobacco free. These barriers become even more enormous for single mothers, DV survivors, non-english speaking folks, disabled and chronically ill folks and other marginalized groups.

The lack of services makes for extreme circumstances. Much of the rural Oregon was once company towns and later struggled from the collapse of logging and agriculture in the 80s and early 90s. Rather than freedom from company rulership, many of these towns have since become investment-towns - areas in which continued tourism and investment has caused mass purchases by real estate investors, driving down housing supply. For example, while Coos Bay has a vacancy rate which consistently sits around or under 1%, the unoccupied rate is 20-25%, meaning that at least 1/5 houses sit empty on a daily basis, oftentimes through investment properties which are planned to be sold

once the housing market has skyrocketed beyond the prices affordable to local citizens.

Childhood Homelessness rates in rural Oregon are also often extreme, jumping as high as 15-30% of registered school children for some rural areas. As much as ten times the rates seen in Portland, Eugene, or Salem. These families are also far more likely to be either living in their cars or sleeping outside as compared to their urban counterparts, according to the Oregon Department of Education.

In short, poor people in rural Oregon are likely to lack access to legal and institutional services as well as the means to democratically address these problems. This may emerge from the history of rural company towns – towns where the sheriff, judges, and the only lawyers were also employees of the mill or mine. Much of Oregon divested from mills, mines, and agriculture in the 80s and 90s as a result of Reagan and Clinton era policies, but the towns still remain, as do the people who lost their jobs, homes, and livelihoods in those days. This history contributes to the conservatism of rural Oregon. The failure of government to provide meaningful support, while at the same time touting their rural programs, sets the stage for a reactionary response.

We can learn from this. In working in rural areas, we must look to the history and create analyses which center the experience of the working and poor people in the region. When our analysis is based on anything else (automation, culture, etc...), we perpetuate the othering of rural peoples.

Rural justice simply put is the concept that there is recourse to the great harm that has been done to our communities. Committing to rural justice means committing to action.

Other notes:

- There is a general lack of concern from institutions which otherwise champion working class people – i.e. labor unions centered in major cities, those who advocate reforms which fail to address systemic disparities in power.
- In West Virginia, there was a strike in all 55 counties. This is an example of what it means to achieve working class power on a scale that includes rural and poor communities.
- What does it mean to not only encourage but support rural working class people speaking for themselves, and engaging as equal participants in the movement for economic and racial justice?

The Movement has to be Personal and Communal

Or, why Alinsky, Trotsky, isolation, and social media are not the solution

For your average poor rural Oregonian, chances are high that there is no direct connection or sense of belonging to any particular “social movement”, related to housing or otherwise. Rural areas tend to not receive much national coverage, local papers have small readerships, and long-time movements with deep and well-built roots exist mainly in urban areas. Oregon’s rural print media is mainly owned by Sinclair Broadcasting and other mass media groups, and conservative broadcasters purchased many rural radio stations in the early 1980s, leading into Reagan’s election. Independent local papers tend to have very small followings, and are rarely profitable let alone able to extend their reach beyond their small spheres of influence. Partially because of these media shifts, the movements of rural areas – the grange movement; movements related to mining, agricultural, forestry, and timber workers; the co-operative movement – have largely seen a decline in membership and activity in recent years.

We are therefore faced with a problem unheard of in urban spaces: most of our organizing is invisible to the outside world. For this reason, we cannot rely on the kinds of serious media coverage, activist rallies, and demands for recognition that urban activists have come to rely on, allowing them to sidestep the real work of developing relationships and listening to those who are most affected by oppression. Instead, we have to rely on deep organizing work—a commitment that groups in metropolitan areas sometimes take for granted. There is no way to avoid deep organizing in rural areas. Lacking media attention and so many other forms of infrastructure, our power can only come from our abilities to work together as a community.

Organizers should consider their motivation and ask others to do the same. True change will require thousands of conversations at the door with people who do not share an analysis of the current housing crisis. These conversations cannot center only on the theoretical – such as America’s skewed concept of homeownership, or the distribution of capital in this state, etc... Talking points should center on stories at two levels – firstly, the level of the individual. Think about why you are here- Not only what you want to change but how you personally find joy or peace in the movement for justice? Secondly, the story of your community. Only once both the organizer and the community member have reached an understanding of these two stories, can they move on to talk about what sort of change the community needs to see.

Adding to that, resources are thin. Unlike urban organizing, in which specific organizations can be found which center on one issue, rural organizing requires a more holistic approach: one which maximizes cooperation and constantly elicits feedback from the community. One in which intersections are central to actions.

Union Town -> Plunder Town -> Trump Town

If you are rural, chances are you live in the red zone in the map below (demonstrating 2016 election results). Oregon voted against Trump in the 2016 election, but rural Oregon overwhelmingly voted in favor of him. Regardless of how you feel about the current administration, the history of the tenants’ movement is one which is overwhelmingly associated with the left.

As such, organizers in rural areas should prepare themselves to have hard conversations with people who have a very different political background than those usually expected from the tenants’ movement. If you are rural, you already know this, but it bears repeating.

We cannot afford to work in liberal silos. The reason for the red tendencies of rural areas is very different from what the media portrays. Seek to explore these differences, you may find that many Trump voters believe in rent control, socialized healthcare, and even reparations. Refusing to have these hard conversations has created an environment of liberal isolationism which only harms our communities further. Reach out and talk with everyone.

Many rural communities in Oregon have strong cultural identities informed from their histories and current struggles. Understanding the history of movement in your area is crucial – the union movement is a strong start. In all deep organizing, place matters.

How does gentrification impact organizing in rural communities?

Liberal bastions exist throughout Oregon - Understanding the dynamics of liberal bastion small towns is also crucial. It is common for small wealthy communities to form in rural areas which tend to isolate themselves from the rest of the surrounding area. These communities, while crucial, should not be the main focus of the movement. They are often heavily made up of wealthy transplants from liberal areas, who are rarely the most at-risk communities, with majority white and significantly wealthier median incomes. However, the mass migrations which are being felt across

Oregon also lead to extraordinary disparities in wealth. Engaging these communities should mean engaging service and hospitality workers and fixed income folks, the long-time residents who are often in crisis. Many of these communities are experiencing rapid gentrification.

Identifying organizers and leaders from the area is always crucial. It is very common for organizers from neighboring counties or from distant places to feel most comfortable in these liberal bastions and to prioritize them in their work. This can unfortunately feed into the power disparity that emerges from these economic disaster zones. Local folks who have lived experience with poverty in the region understand these dynamics and know how to navigate them.

An organizer should also work to identify a trail of displacement. Often, the patterns of displacement and economically motivated segregation are consistent. Rural tourist towns driven by the service industry tend to neighbor poorer towns where abuses are rampant and homelessness amongst workers is often extreme. These towns may have enormously differing levels of trust towards the wealthy elite and very different political beliefs. In conversations with leaders and organizers around the state, it is not uncommon to hear shock as people discover that the towns which are seen as deeply red are often also the towns with the most concentrated communities of color and most extreme poverty. The patterns that create this dynamic are diverse but generally come from a frustrating dynamic— liberalism in rural Oregon is often rich, white, and elitist. Many people identify not as republican but as “whatever my landlord isn’t”. With so much investment in rural communities coming from the Bay Area or Portland, and so many vacation homes for career property investors or industry tycoons in towns like Bend, Ashland, and Coos Bay – the oppressor often has a Hillary sticker.

The common enemy of working people is not related so much the abstract conceptual views of people in Washington D.C. as to people’s real experiences with the landlords, business owners, and the wealthy rulers of their community.

Working class and poor people tend to form cells for their own protection in these situations. Often the infrastructure for communication and the leadership roles necessary to build a movement already exists to some extent. Find and support these cells. Communicate your goals clearly and ask how you can support them. Never begin by asking a community to do something for you. Discover their needs, and help them to achieve it.



Figure 1: Votes in the 2016 presidential election by Oregon county

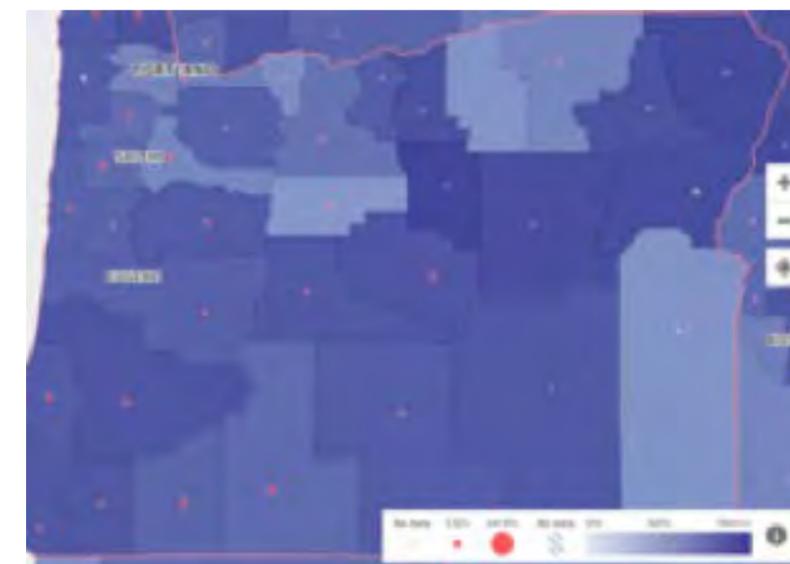


Figure 2: Percent of population which is white - the lighter the color the less white the community. This image is provided to dispel some common myths. Notice that of the top 10 least white counties, only one (Clackamas Co.) is considered urban. The rest are rural counties with Jefferson county and Malheur county as the two least white counties in the state.

Housing Rural Oregon: A crisis beyond Portland's boundaries



The “Rural White” Mythology

Oregon is one of the whitest states in the country. However, this fact has contributed heavily to a mythology that is extraordinarily harmful to the movement both for rural justice and racial justice – the myth that rural Oregon is white and that urban Oregon – namely the Portland metro – is the center of diversity in the state.

- We have to understand the intersecting roles of race and place in Oregon's politics.
- Urban organizations should lift up the voices of rural and poor communities, and especially rural communities of color who are neither included in our state's history or considered in conversations of our future.
- Every Oregonian deserves an opportunity to participate in the democratic process, but right now that right is denied.
- DATA POINT: of the top 10 least white counties in the state, nine of them are rural.

It is also worth noting that the majority of undocumented folks, the subjects of hate crimes, and the most vulnerable communities in the state live in rural Oregon. The intersections of lacking access and of failed justice systems puts rural Oregonians of color at a strikingly difficult intersection.

More research and personal stories are required to draw out the meanings of the important intersection between rural and racial justice. It is crucial that we understand these intersections are real. Any person organizing in a rural area should attempt to understand the way in which local communities of color experience the crisis and allow local leadership on that front to lead the movement.

In each situation it will be unique, in one place you may be dealing with racist militias, in another you may be dealing with a majority POC population which lacks recognition or power from the given power structure, or struggles with coalition partnerships with organizations based in PDX or Salem. Support them and do not make assumptions.

Furthermore, question communities which claim diversity but which are entirely led by white folks. Try to understand those circumstances and interrupt them.



Lincoln City has more than 500 vacation rental dwellings and a lack of affordable housing for residents.

Housing Rural Oregon: A crisis beyond Portland's boundaries

Rural Oregon is experiencing one of the worst housing crises of our lifetime

by Joanne Zuhl | 1 Dec 2017

Elizabeth Reyes grew up in Lincoln City. The small tourist town on the Oregon Coast is her home, where she works full time and spends her money, where her children go to school. She's a proud second-generation member of the Lincoln City community.

“I grew up here. I lived in low-income housing for quite a few years. I took some free classes on how to become a homeowner. It took a couple of years before I was able to buy.”

But she can't afford to live in her hometown. Instead, Reyes and her children live in the small, unincorporated community of Otis. From there, she commutes to her job as the executive director of Family Promise of Lincoln County, where she works to provide shelter, case management and

supportive services for families and youths experiencing homelessness. Last year, nearly 600 individuals used their services, most of them victims of high rents, low vacancy levels, and the feast or famine of seasonal wages.

“A vast majority of the people that come into our program have full-time employment,” Reyes said. “They do not have a drug and alcohol problem. They have simply lost their housing because they were renters.”

Generational poverty also accounts for many of Family Promise’s clients, Reyes said, including a lack of financial planning skills or basic savings accounts. Reyes recalled the day a woman she had gone to high school with walked through her doors.

“She and I sat down, and we cried a little bit. The vast majority of people in this community that work in this community are easily one paycheck away from being homeless. This woman had two children. The father quit paying child support. She had her own house cleaning business. She would clean the vacation rentals. She was very good. One of her children was special-needs.

“And then her car broke down.”

For want of \$100 to pay for car parts, she lost everything, including her home, Reyes said.

In the past five to 10 years, the housing issue has grown from concern to a full-on political, economic and social crisis across rural Oregon.

“In a rural community, everything is magnified, and there’s no avoiding it,” Reyes said.

“It also forces us to deal with it, because they’re not sweeping it someplace else. There’s no pretending it’s not going on. It affects all of us one way or another.”

It’s the case across all of rural Oregon. Up the coast in Manzanita, Marzano’s Pizza closed its dining room service because “for the first time in 15 years, we were unable to staff our summer crew,” according to the owners’ notice. “We’ve received a lot of interest from people who would love to come to work for us, but they can’t find housing.”

In Central Oregon, Bend and neighboring communities are feeling the crunch of not having enough

housing to support service industry workers, as well as the higher-paying positions.

“Compared to the metro area, folks in rural areas are more impacted because wages and housing costs are even more out of balance. There is a lack of public transportation options, and in many communities, there simply is no housing that’s affordable and close to a job,” said Alison McIntosh, deputy director of policy and communications with Neighborhood Partnerships and spokesperson for the Oregon Housing Alliance.

“We have communities across our state where the people who work in those communities can no longer afford to live there, or can’t find a place to live there and it is absolutely impacting many different sectors of the economy,” McIntosh said.

She listed just a few of the reports her organization has received. Reports like the one from Marzano’s and other restaurants along the coast unable to hold on to staff. Stories from Hood River and Southern Oregon of teachers sleeping in vans for months at the beginning of the school year because of a lack of housing options. In Central Oregon come reports of construction workers filling hotel rooms in lieu of finding real housing. In some communities, she said, city managers and other highly skilled professionals are turning down jobs because they can’t find housing close to employment.

“In all of these communities, it is a struggle to build more housing,” she said. “There are many reasons – a lack of funding to build affordable housing, constraints on land supply, banks not being willing to finance housing in rural areas, and fewer developers to build more housing, to name just a few.”

According to the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis, all of Oregon’s coastal counties are among the 10 percent least affordable counties in the nation, with the exception of Lane County. The same goes for many other rural counties in the state, including Hood River, Lake, Klamath, Wasco, Crook, Grant, Wallowa and Union. (The affordability rate is measured using the price to income ratio.)

In Douglas County, there are so few places to house people coming out of homelessness that there are waiting lists to get into motels with emergency rental assistance – to the point where some motel owners in Roseburg have said they are no longer going to rent to local residents. Oregon has one of the highest rates of unsheltered homeless families with children in the nation – nearly 60 percent – second to California.

Down south, in Jackson and Josephine counties, there is one emergency shelter for the entire region, and what homeless shelters exist are limited and faith-based. The housing vacancy rate hovers around or below 1 percent – statistically nonexistent. And no one is building to fill the need.

Last month, the city of Grants Pass in Josephine County declared a housing emergency, joining metropolitan hubs such as Portland, Seattle and San Francisco.

“There is literally no available housing, let alone affordable housing,” said Mary Ferrell, executive director of The Maslow Project in Medford, which works with homeless youths. “So now we’re in a situation that the housing situation is causing and perpetuating homelessness for people who actually have paying jobs. They have money; if they could find affordable housing, they would not be homeless, but because we’ve got no housing, they are continuing to be homeless.”

The Great Recession has been over for years. Oregon’s economic future promises continued momentum. Cranes are in the sky over Portland. And rural Oregon is in the throes of one of the worst housing crises of our lifetime.



Earlier this month, the Oregon Department of Education released a sobering figure: For the 2016-17 school year, 22,541 students “lacked a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.” That’s nearly a 20 percent increase since 2014.

The first instinct is to look to Portland and its surrounding metropolitan school districts that traditionally top the list. But a new pattern has emerged over the years; smaller, more rural communities are seeing more students without adequate housing. Nine out of 10 districts with the highest rates of homeless students have enrollments less than 250 students, according to ODE. Places like Lincoln County, where 12 percent of the student population was identified as homeless – nearly 650 students this past year, and more than 400 more students are considered “doubled up,” in a shared housing situation. In Jackson County, roughly 1 in 10 students is homeless. ODE places the blame squarely on the lack of affordable housing and family-wage jobs.

Ferrell founded The Maslow Project 20 years ago to serve homeless youths – this at a time when she said the community was in denial that a homeless population even existed beyond the occasional passing travelers. The issue was overlooked by design: The city had an array of laws to keep anyone from lingering publicly to the point of notice, much less suspicion.

But as an outreach worker, Ferrell knew where to find them.

Over the past decade, the environment has changed, Ferrell said. Today, the Maslow Project serves about 2,400 unduplicated individuals each year: 70 percent of them youths, the average age being 10.

“Ten years ago – shortly after the housing crash that really affected Southern Oregon in a very profound way – we saw a whole new round of homelessness that we had never seen before, and those are people who had been stock brokers, real estate agents, property investors. When the housing market crashed, we had gobs of people who have never been homeless lose their housing, lose their job, experiencing homelessness for the first time.”

And in that time, the response from the community has gone from denial to acceptance, to political and somewhat polarizing, Ferrell said.

“I would say, after 20 years, I have probably never felt more than now the intense urgency,” Ferrell said. “I think we’re in more of a crisis situation than we ever have been. I’m also seeing locally, really concerning trends in tolerance or inclusivity that are concerning to me and that I have not seen in 20 years, until now. I think there’s an undercurrent, politically and socially right now, that is adding an element of strain to an already tense situation.”

That political tension has boiled over in recent years in Lincoln City and Gearhart, where ballot measures on regulating vacation rental dwellings, or VRDs, have been – and will likely continue to be – hotly contested. Ballot measures pit VRD groups against local residents who want protections on the proliferation of vacation rentals. Both cities have voted to retain the regulations enacted by local government, but opponents have indicated future battles lie ahead.

Reyes has been an ardent observer of the discussions around VRD policy in Lincoln City. She has watched as the VRD groups have pushed to remove zoning barriers, reduce fine levels and raise capacity caps to expand the number of VRDs in the community. And there have been other movements to criminalize panhandling because it threatens the biggest industry in Lincoln County: tourism.

But Reyes has no real say on the city’s future. Because unlike some of the Californians, Seattleites and Portlanders who register their address as their Lincoln City vacation rental, she can’t vote in

Lincoln City elections. She can't afford to live within city boundaries.

"As passionate as I am, and committed as I am to my community, I lost my vote."



In Central Oregon, Keith Wooden has watched the housing market's roller coaster ride from recession onward. Wooden is the real estate facilities director with Housing Works, the housing authority for low-income residents in Central Oregon, based in Bend. He moved there in 2006, just as the recession was starting to take hold. By 2010, the market collapse had decimated construction crews, who migrated to other industries and states, and brought new building to a halt.

"There were 20 percent vacancies across the market," Wooden recalled.

Those days are gone. Even during the recession, Deschutes County continued to draw new residents, and rents rebounded. Bend, more than any other city in the state, swung deep into the depths of the recession, only to slingshot its way back to the top, in terms of high occupancy rates and rent prices.

"Now rents have doubled from what they were in 2006 at the last peak," said Wooden, who works with low- or no-income individuals and families who receive subsidized housing vouchers.

The gap across the state is growing: Between 2008 and 2015, family median incomes in Oregon decreased nearly 2 percent while median rents increased nearly 10 percent (adjusted for inflation).

Many decades ago, the federal government led the way in creating housing for people in poverty by building public, government-owned projects. Public-private endeavors became the norm through the 60s and 70s. By the 1980s, however, government was retreating wholesale from public housing, and instead encouraged the private market to invest more in housing through tax credits and bonds – subsequently increasing long-term debt obligations.

Today, every state in the country has a shortage of housing for extremely low-income renters, according to the 2017 Affordable Housing Gap Analysis by the National Low Income Housing Coalition. Oregon ranks third in the nation for the size of this gap – behind Nevada and California and tied with Arizona – with only 26 units for every 100 extreme low-income renter households.

But on the higher end of the economic spectrum is the "missing middle," as reported in multiple communities, where people make good money but still can't afford to live where they work.

"Employers are having difficulty finding people," Wooden said. "You see these wanted posters all over the place; they were nonexistent five years ago. Boat and RV dealership can't hire techs. That's what we hear from employers. They're struggling – your nurse, your police officers, your firefighter. It's really hard to hire because the housing is so difficult."

Oregon Housing and Community Services, the state's housing bureau, is in the process of developing its next five-year statewide housing plan. The bureau is working with Gov. Kate Brown's office on a new initiative, the Workforce Housing Pilot, to develop creative strategies to overcome barriers to building affordable housing in rural Oregon. Those barriers include the fact that – the cost of construction being equal – developers will gravitate to the more profitable market in Portland and other large cities. The economies of scale simply don't exist in small towns like they do in metropolitan areas. Nor do small towns have the heft to implement local funding mechanisms, such as tax increment financing, to further incentivize development.

OHCS Executive Director Margaret Salazar said they anticipate having communities selected for the pilot by February. Meanwhile, all eyes are on the actions of Congress, a tax reform proposal that threatens housing funding mechanisms, and the future of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

In 2015, the Oregon Legislature created the LIFT program to fund housing for underserved populations, specifically in rural communities and communities of color. It approved \$40 million in 2015, and a historic \$80 million for 2017. For rural communities, which lack the economies of scale and the funding mechanisms dense urban areas can tap, the financial infusion is a vital resource.

Yet even that could be unraveled by proposed changes in the tax reform bills in Washington, D.C. The state funding simply isn't enough to cover the gap in rural housing needs without the federal tax credit support, Salazar said.

"The federal climate," she said, pausing for words, "it's really hard right now."

This is the first report in our Housing Rural Oregon series. Look for more articles in upcoming editions of Street Roots.

Tenant Success Stories



Block by Block, the Renters Movement is Growing

By Malcolm Torrejón Chu | Published in Shelterforce

<https://shelterforce.org/2017/10/31/block-block-renters-movement-growing/>

October 31, 2017



From September 18-24th, 2017, over 100 organizations took part in over 55 coordinated actions and assemblies across the country for the #RenterWeekOfAction. While the week itself was striking, the brewing and growing national housing justice movement behind it signals a dramatic shift in the fight for safe, secure, sustainable, affordable housing for all people in the country.

In the wake of the foreclosure crisis, community organizations and new autonomous tenant union groups have been rebuilding the housing justice movement block-by-block. In 2017, they are racking up significant victories that enhance renter protections, invest in community control of housing, and secure development without displacement.

“The string of victories in 2017 are a direct product of renters building power on the ground. Renters, faced with a historic housing crisis, are getting organized to change immediate conditions on the ground and build a movement to transform the way land and housing are treated in the country,” says Tony Romano, director of organizing with the Right To The City Alliance.

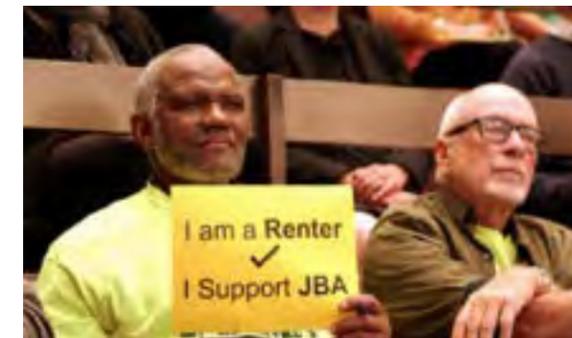
This year’s wins come as evidence continues to mount that the housing crisis is reaching epidemic proportions. According to a new study by PolicyLink and the National Equity Atlas, 51 percent of all renters are now cost-burdened.

Below are three “tenant success stories”.* Your group should choose one to read and discuss. Be ready to report back to the larger group the following:

- Challenges faced by the groups featured
- Strategies/tactics used to overcome challenges
- Outcomes for renters
- Questions, or any confusions about the challenges and strategies/tactics you read about
- Take-away for YOUR group

**Note: If you want to know more about these stories, go to the link above online. The original article features many hyperlinks to various background sources.*

#1 - Renter Protections = Community Stabilization



A member of City Life/Vida Urbana holds a sign at the Boston City Council vote on the Jim Brooks Community Stabilization Act. Credit: Helen Matthews.

In late September, Boston renters celebrated the passage of the Jim Brooks Stabilization Act, also known as Just Cause Eviction. The ordinance, which many in the movement contend still does not go far enough, established just cause eviction

protections for homeowners after foreclosure, requires landlords to notify the city of all evictions prior to evicting, and mandates that the city provide renter rights information and referrals to local housing rights organizations to tenants facing eviction.

Led by tenants at CASA New Settlement and the Right to Counsel coalition, New York City passed even stronger protections in February, approving a first-in-the-nation law that guarantees a right to an attorney for low-income renters in housing court and eviction cases. The city has pledged \$90 million to provide legal services to tenants facing eviction. According to the City of

New York Independent Budget Office, evictions decrease by 77 percent when renters have legal representation versus when they are pro se, or one's self.

In San Jose, renters staged a hunger strike outside of city hall, leading to the passage of one of the strongest Just Cause for Eviction laws in the country in April.

In Seattle, the Fair and Accessible Renting for Everyone Coalition celebrated a long-fought victory to end housing discrimination against formerly incarcerated individuals when the City Council passed a new law in August making it illegal for landlords to inquire or consider previous criminal record in housing applications. Organizers at the Miami Workers Center announced a similar victory banning discrimination against formerly incarcerated individuals in public housing applications in December 2016.

While these just cause eviction and non-discrimination laws are gaining steam, campaigns for city and statewide rent control are also gaining momentum.

Just weeks after Newark residents secured thousands of signatures to put a strengthened Rent Control law on the ballot this fall, the Newark city council passed an ordinance to strengthen the city's rent control and vacancy ordinances in September. The ordinance prevents landlords from imposing skyrocketing rents on vacant properties, requires landlords to comply with state and city health codes before increasing rents, and places oversight of annual rent increases for rent-controlled units into the democratic control of the council.

On October 6th, Glendale California Tenants submitted more than 11,000 signatures to certify a rent control ordinance on the ballot, and Illinois renters with the Lift The Ban coalition plan to go to the ballot to repeal the ban on rent control in March, 2018. State and citywide campaigns for rent control

are being planned across the nation in California, Oregon, Rhode Island, Illinois, Maine, Colorado and Minnesota.

Renters in Santa Ana California rallied on September 18, 2017 as they launch their Community Lands in Community Hands Campaign. Credit: Equity For All

The success of these rent control campaigns have



dramatic implications for the social and economic well being of neighborhoods. Besides the immediate benefit of defending against displacement and keeping families and children in their schools, rent control could have a significant positive impact on local economies. According to the National Equity Atlas and PolicyLink report, if every renter in the nation only had to spend 30 percent of their income on rent, the average renter would have \$6200 more to spend in their local economy. The total economic contribution? \$124 billion per year.

#2 - Community Controlled Housing and Development Without Displacement

In perhaps the most groundbreaking victory, Picture the Homeless (PTH) and the NYC Community Land Initiative won a landmark victory in July when they got the city to create a \$1.65 million fund to support the expansion of Community Land Trusts. The funding includes training and capacity building to seed new CLT projects and funding for existing CLTs to secure additional land and housing and turn it into long-term, de-commodified space for the benefit of the community.

"This will help curb spiraling rent increases that tenants face every year, because CLTs won't have rent increases every year like we see in NYC." said PTH member Althea York. "The communities will have more control over land, and landlords won't profit from us anymore. Picture the Homeless has been doing this work for almost ten years. We proved community land trusts can work, and now I hope HPD (Housing Preservation and Development) and others follow in our footsteps."

In September, both the Newark and Detroit City Council adopted new inclusionary zoning measures requiring developers to ensure minimum of 20 percent of all new or renovated housing units are affordable and accessible to low and moderate-income families. While there continues to be ongoing debate about the long term viability of inclusionary zoning as a solution to the crisis, these victories come in response to growing pressure from public housing and private market renters, community members, small business owners and community organizations demanding development without displacement. Inclusionary zoning victories are one tool being employed in a longer term fight to secure greater democratic community control over land-use planning, housing and resources.

#3 - Tenant Union Organizing and Collective Bargaining

Behind these victories, organizers say that it's the explosion of building-by-building and block-by-block tenant union organizing that is building the necessary power to shift policy.

"We know that to truly win and transform the housing system, our movement needs to be rooted in the love, leadership and resilience of renters most impacted by the crisis. Through tenant unions and direct campaigns against corporate landlords, renters are making decisions, exercising their power, strengthening bonds in their communities and building a vision of a world where all people have safe, affordable and dignified homes," says Roberto de la Riva, and organizer with InquilinXs UnidXs in Minneapolis.

Minneapolis renters recently won class-action status in what is possibly the largest tenant class-action lawsuit in U.S. history against predatory and corporate landlord Stephen Frenz and his companies, The Apartment Shop and Equity Residential Holdings, building on a string of direct collective bargaining victories.

Similar efforts in Nashville led Inquilinos Unidos to win a groundbreaking collective bargaining agreement after just 2 months of organizing mandating repairs and continued negotiations.

Tenants unions in New York, Maine, Chicago, Oregon, Florida, Georgia, California, New Jersey and Massachusetts are building similar power and communicating with each other across states, regions, and the country. In doing so, they are laying the groundwork for bigger, collective fights against the powerful real estate industry.

The emerging tenant movement has the potential to radically alter the national political landscape more broadly, challenging long standing dominant narratives that restrict housing policy to relief and benefits for homeowners.

This resurgent movement is being led by women, people of color, working class immigrants, low-income communities and LGBTQ communities. This is neither accidental nor incidental. These communities exist directly in the path of the rampant property speculation and gentrification that are driving the housing crisis. Together, through national networks and coordinated organizing they are seeking to transform renters into a political class that advocates for its own interests, passes

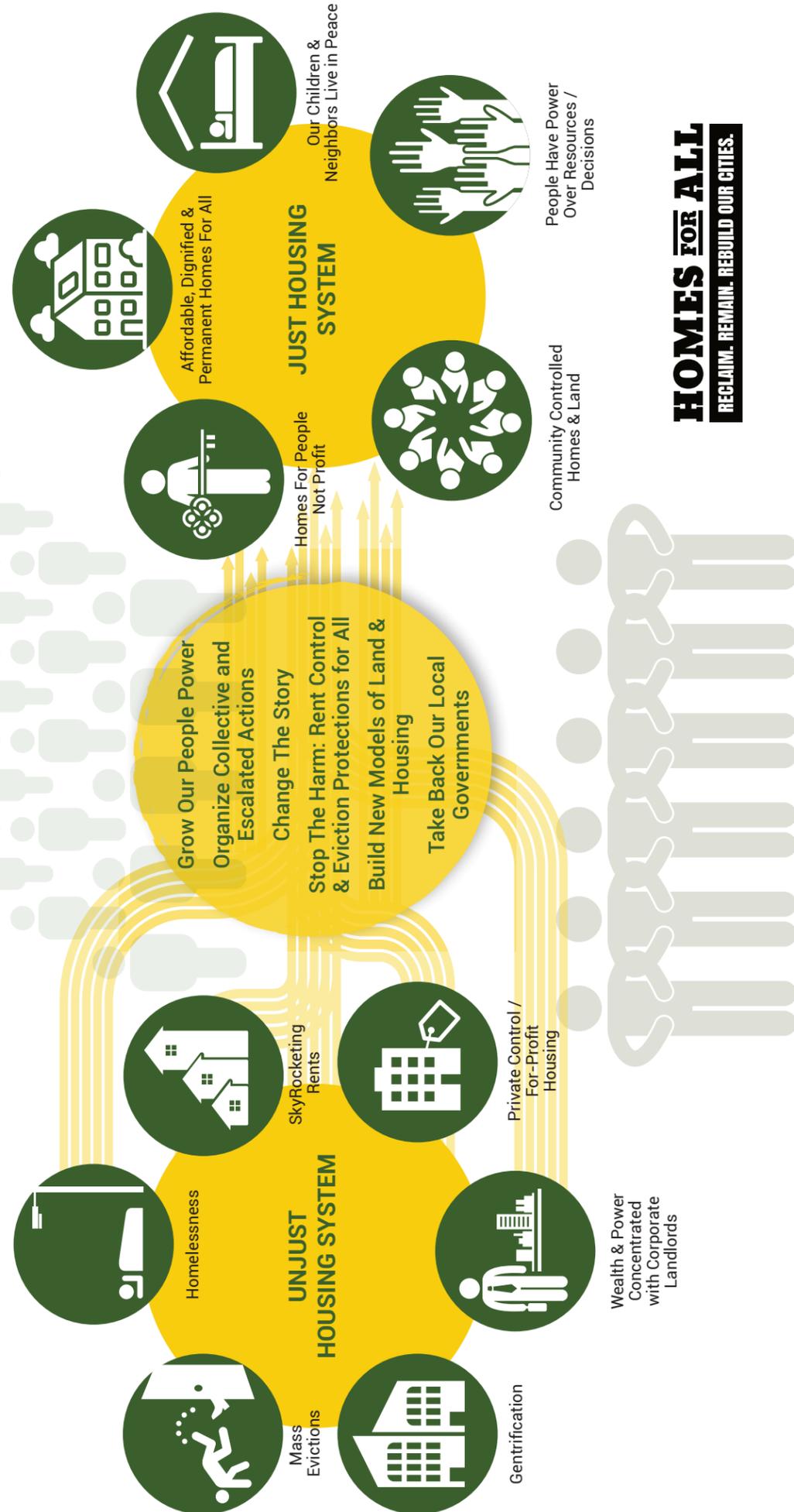
policies with real benefits, influences local elections and eventually take seats of local power.

2017 has been a historic year for renter victories, but organizers with the Homes For All Campaign, a trans-local housing justice campaign with member groups in 38 cities and 24 states across the country, say they are just getting started.

"We've only seen the tip of the iceberg," says Trenise Bryant who is a member of the Homes For All Organizing committee. "As more and more people feel the impact of the housing crisis we expect many more victories to come. We're angry, we're organized and we have a vision of a better world."

HOMES FOR ALL STRATEGY TO WIN

Organizing to transition from an unjust, exploitative housing system to a world with just, sustainable homes for all

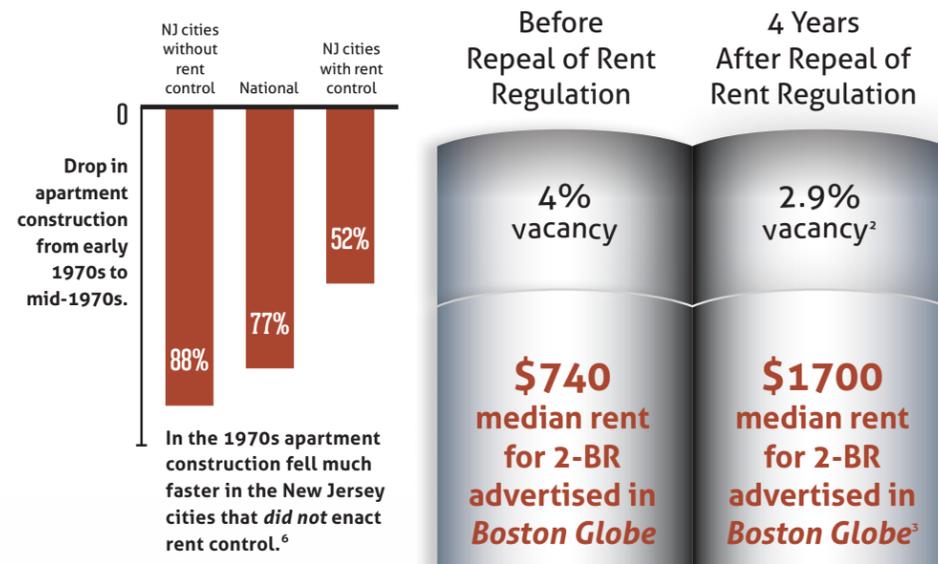


Rent Control Works



Q: Do rent regulations make the housing crisis worse?

A: No! Despite common fears, decades of evidence shows that rent regulation doesn't restrict housing supply and quality.¹



"New York City's two greatest housing construction booms in the 20th century occurred during 1921-28 and 1947-1965, periods when stricter rent controls were in effect than any around or proposed today."⁵



Economists Don't Actually Hate Rent Control

Modern rent regulations generally don't apply to new construction (unless a developer opts into them to access a subsidy), so there is no disincentive to construction. They allow for annual increases in rent, often pegged to inflation. They also often allow for rent increases for capital improvements, hardship exemptions, and exemptions for owner-occupied properties. In other words, they are structured not to interfere with the viability of rental housing, merely to improve housing stability in appreciating markets.

So when you hear the claim "All economists say rent control doesn't work," it's important to know that it is based on a single 1984 survey that asked about a blanket, fixed "price ceiling" on all rents, which does not describe any rent regulation current or proposed.⁷

¹ John Gilderbloom, "Rent Control Reconsidered: The Impact of Moderate Rent Control on 60 New Jersey Cities over a 20-Year Period," 2003. Peter Marcuse, Housing Abandonment: Does Rent Control Make a Difference? Policy Report, No. 4. (Washington, D.C.: Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies, 1981.)
² U.S. Bureau of the Census, Housing Vacancies and Homeownership, 2001, Table 5, "Rental Vacancy Rates for the 75 Largest Metropolitan Areas: 1986 to 2001."
³ Greenberger, "Menino Offers Rent Control Plan," Boston Globe, October 20, 2002.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ New York City Department of City Planning, New Dwelling Units Completed 1921-present.
⁶ Michael Mandel, "Does Rent Control Hurt Tenants?: A Reply to Epstein," 54 Brooklyn L. Rev. 1267, 1273 (1989); citing John Gilderbloom, Moderate Rent Control: The Experience of U.S. Cities (1980).
⁷ Frey, Pommerehne, Schneider and Gilbert, "Consensus and Dissension Among Economists: An Empirical Inquiry," 74 Am. Econ. Rev. 986 (1984).

Thanks to New York State Tenants and Neighbors and Timothy Collins, whose paper "Rent Regulation in New York: Myths and Facts" provided most of these citations.



Conflict Case Studies



Building on Success Stories Small Group Scenarios/Discussion Questions

Latino Day Laborers & Jewish Residents Reach Agreement, Los Angeles

For over the past 25 years, the corner of Beverly and La Jolla—in the parking lot of a local paint store, had served as the place where mostly Mexican and Central American day laborers gathered to look for work. While the old owner of the paint store didn't mind having day laborers in his lot, things changed after he sold the store. The new owners kicked the day laborers out, and had to stand on the street corners to look for work.

A few of the neighborhood residents, who were mostly elderly and Jewish, called the police to complain. Although the day laborers stood on public property and had committed no crime, the police officers began to harass and arrest the workers. Threatened with more arrests, the workers began to organize with the Day Laborer Leadership Program of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA).

First, CHIRLA organizers went door to door to talk with the different residents. In these neighborhood visits, they found out some surprising information. They discovered that the residents held a wide variety of opinions on the day laborers, and that the two women who most frequently called the police did not speak for all the residents. Some residents had even hired the day laborers in the past. The organizers also found that while most of the residents in the neighborhood were Jewish seniors, many younger Asians and Russians had moved into the neighborhood. Some of the older residents were feeling threatened by this change.

Next, CHIRLA and the workers talked to the local police—a new captain who was more open to working out solutions—and to the paint store owner. Together, they decided that the day laborers could meet in a lot across the street from the paint store. But residents opposed to the deal said “No way!” Finally, CHIRLA and the workers decided to hold a community meeting. Before the community meeting, CHIRLA held meetings with the workers, and they discussed stereotypes about the Jewish residents. The process took a long time, but at the end, workers agreed that many of the stereotypes were not valid.

The community forum was well attended, with over 70 participants. The organizers arranged for simultaneous interpretation through headsets, and the police agreed to send a beat cop to the meeting to observe. The dialogue gave workers the opportunity to respond to how residents treated them. Participants agreed that workers could continue to meet across the street from the paint store. Workers agreed not to litter and to keep the alley clean. Workers pledged to stay in their designated area and leave space for people to move through.

Building on Success Stories: Day Laborers & Residents, con't...

Mayron, an organizer, expressed satisfaction with the lasting results of the dialogue. “Every time I go by the corner the guys are still there. They're still in the designated area and sticking to agreements.”

Discussion Questions:

1. Who are the groups involved in this situation? Why did the day laborers and CHIRLA staff find it necessary to work with other groups? What were some of the ways they began to work with other communities?
2. Who were the decision-makers in the situation? What did the workers and organizers do to work with them in this situation?
3. What were some of the challenges that the workers and organizers faced? What were some of the strategies they used to overcome these challenges?
4. Are you and your community experiencing any conflicts or problems where you could visualize using some of the methods in this story? If so, how? If not, why not?

After your group is finished, choose 1-2 people to report back to the large group a quick description of your case study, and the strategies that the groups used to overcome the challenges.

CHIRLA: Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights Los Angeles, www.chirla.org.

Reaching Out To Newcomers through the Brown/Black Alliance in Atlanta, GA

Like many other places in the U.S. South, Atlanta has drawn increasing numbers of Latinos and other immigrants and refugees since the mid-1990s. While the majority of new Latino immigrants come from Mexico, the community also includes people from Venezuela, Argentina, Columbia and other countries. Some African American organizations took initiative to learn about and reach out to the expanding Latino community.

Project South, a community membership popular education and action organization with roots in the African American freedom struggle, made these links, especially through its Youth Council. Project South's Christi Ketchum recalled, "We'd seen the tensions build up around jobs and limited resources. We knew the history of divisions, so we believed in bringing the two cultures together to learn about each other."

African American youth conducted strong outreach to bring Latinos to its annual Summer Institute in 2001, which featured an hour-long play by Sueño Latino, a drama group that on youth issues. The play portrayed the array of problems impacting the community, including substance abuse, domestic violence, punitive immigration laws, police brutality, and mistreatment of immigrant youth.

After the groups got some experience working together, the two African American groups (Project South and Alternative Roots), and the two Latino groups (Sueño Latino and Somos), jointly approached the Community Foundation of Georgia for resources to continue to work together.

The groups have spent time together sharing foods, stories, cultures, and staging events. Christi says that it takes a lot of time and patience to work together in the collaborative. Project South and Alternative Roots are the organizations that have been around longer, and they have some staff to help push along the program. As newer groups, Sueño Latino and Somos do not. Sueño Latino produced and performed another play for Atlanta's 2003 Juneteenth celebration, which commemorated the day slaves in Texas finally learned they were free.

"As a movement-building organization, we've got to be broad based," says Christi. "We can leave no one behind. Everyone has got to be brought to the table. Everyone has got to participate. We cannot go on without you. The communicating, the understanding, the learning never stops. It keeps on happening down through the generations."

Reaching Out To Newcomers, con't...

Discussion Questions:

1. Who are the groups involved in this situation? Why did they find it necessary to work with other groups? What were some of the ways they began to work with each other?
2. What were some of the challenges that the groups faced? What were some of the strategies they used to overcome these challenges?
3. Do you see opportunities in your city where different communities or different sections within an ethnic group could work in closer collaboration with each other? What issues or ways could the different communities work together?
4. What does it take to work together as equals in this situation? What kinds of inequalities, differences, and misunderstandings can come up? How can they be addressed?

After your group is finished, choose 1-2 people to report back to the large group a quick description of your case study, and the strategies that the groups used to overcome the challenges.

Project South, 9 Gammon Ave. Atlanta, Georgia 30315. Tel: 404.622.0602,
www.projectsouth.org.

FLOSS Kit Letter



Welcome to your floss kit! Pat yourself on the back for your bravery in stepping into new waters. This is a beautiful opportunity for us to practice and model what tangible, intentional, and thoughtful equity work in community organizing looks like!

Here is how the “Floss Kit” works:

If/when you feel that you have experienced or witnessed a micro-aggression due to the actions or words of someone in our group, you signal the moment by saying the word, “Floss.” The person responds with the word, “Floss,” acknowledging they have said or done something that was a micro-aggression. This could be written or spoken.

A note on terminology: “micro-aggression” refers to...

Within 24 hours, both people will communicate their next steps, which could be one of three options:

- a)** Talk about and explain what happened, talk through remedies.
- b)** Decide not to discuss the incident further.
- c)** Arrange a time to talk about and explain what happened, talk through remedies.

The goal is to speak directly about the incidents, as they happen, rather than waiting. However, given that an incident may not always be appropriately addressed by speaking immediately (due to others being present, etc.) you also have the option of a “Floss Note” method.

To give a “Floss Note”:

- 1.** Use a post-it, or small piece of paper, or recycled paper;
- 2.** Write down the “floss” incident that occurred, the date and the time (it could be a quote, a description, etc.).
- 3.** Roll it up or fold it and tie it together with a piece of floss.
- 4.** Place the floss note at the person’s seat, or hand it to them directly.

The hope is that within 24 hours, the parties will communicate their next steps, which could be one of the three options above. Please remember: this method should be used only if it would be inappropriate to speak to the matter in the moment.

Working through this brave process together can and will build trust and comfort with one another about these issues and empower us to teach others who come into CAT. We’re “being the change we wish to see in the world!”

Remember that this is a continual learning process. We won’t get it right all the time – and that’s okay. We’re world changers and that’s a brave job.

Listening to Build Trust



Tips from Jesse Sharpe, CAT Community Organizer:

- DO identify “leaders” with whom to build relationships—someone who everyone knows and trusts in the apartment complex, the person who hosts all the cookouts and knows what’s going on, the person who organizes the domino games for the neighborhood, etc.
- DO listen more than talk: aim to listen at least 80% of the time.
- DO ask questions: What’s going on with your housing right now? Has anything changed lately? What are your neighbors saying?
- DO let people come to their own conclusions, about whether their landlord needs to be outed, about rent control, etc. Asking questions is an amazing way to help people develop their analysis.
- DON’T tell someone they’re wrong. Say, “Yes, and...” in order to acknowledge their feelings but also steer discussion to new ideas.
- DON’T tell people what their experience is. Let them tell you, empathize, and draw parallels with your own experiences and those of your neighbors.
- DO remember that conversations should happen where people feel comfortable: in the pool hall, at the dinner table, on the bus, etc.
- DON’T force things; building trust takes time and consistency.
- DO lean in, make eye contact, and/or use other physical gestures that are commonly practiced in your community to indicate that you are listening.
- DO remember that an organizer’s job is not to “teach” people or educate them on their problems, but rather to create space for them to vocalize what’s going on, analyze the situation, and ultimately join forces with their neighbors to make change.
- DO know that listening, and building relationships through conversation, takes lots of practice.

Building Based Organizing Plan



This handout is designed to help you think about how you might begin to organize your building or complex, or if you are already working on that task, to get a bit more organized.

1. Draw a map of the building, project, or complex you are thinking about organizing. It does not need to be perfect, but do include as many details as you can remember, such as office, units, parking area, entrances, elevators, etc.

2. Who are some tenants you already know in the building? Make a list of as many people as you can think of. Put a star next to potential “leaders”.

3. What issues do you know people are facing?

4. What issues do you suspect people might be facing?

5. What other organizations, institutions, etc. are tenants connected to, who may be supportive of your efforts? (e.g., churches, schools, health clinics, etc.)

6. Who owns the building?

7. Who manages the building?

8. Do tenants also work at the building, as office staff, groundskeepers, maintenance people, etc.? If so, who does what?

9. How might you gain access tenants? For example, can you simply walk up and knock on peoples' doors? Will you need to get inside a locked building or gate? If so, how might you do this? Would it be better to first call a meeting at the school where tenants' children attend, or at a church where people are members?

10. Once you are able to gain access to the building, what tools will you bring with you for door-knocking? (e.g., CAT flyers, event flyer, business cards, pens, paper, contact list, etc.)

11. What challenges do you anticipate in organizing this building?

Door Knocking Sample Script



1. Introduce yourself:

Keep introductions brief, you want to establish the reason why you're there and introduce yourself. That's all. "Hi, my name's _____, I'm a member of The Community Alliance of Tenants, we're a group of renters fighting back against the wave of rent increases that are displacing our neighbors and friends..."

2. Ask leading questions and listen:

An organizing discussion should be 80% listening and 20% talking. Nobody wants to be preached to. Renters don't need to be told that they are being treated unfairly, they know it. Your first leading question should always be about the renter, we recommend: "Are you concerned about the most recent rent increase?"

3. Ask follow-up questions:

Follow-up questions are meant to direct the conversation in a way that both helps the tenant to understand your point of view and express their own. This isn't just a casual conversation, we want to make it short, sweet, and leave with a direct ask.

Sample follow-up question:

"We believe that tenants standing united have great power to fight for one another and protect their neighbors. What do you feel might help the situation?"

Continue with follow-up questions, such as:

"What makes you feel that way?"

"I know that some of our neighbors are being forced to move and are concerned about being unable to find a place to live, some of them are afraid that they'll end up becoming homeless. Do you feel that is unjust? Would you be willing to stand with them when push comes to shove?"

All your questions should be directed towards leading into the ask for a commitment. Some people will get tired of talking to you, don't drag the discussion on too long, move to the ask as soon as you can.

4. Ask for a commitment:

If supportive: "Thank you so much for talking with us! We're going to be having a [insert event here] on [insert date] where we'll be enjoying food and talking with our neighbors about how we can defend ourselves as tenants. Can we join us?"

If uncertain: "It seems like you have a lot of thoughts on this topic and we don't want to hold you for too long. We're trying to talk with everyone and make sure that the entire building is heard. Would you be willing to sit down with some of our members and talk through your concerns and what we can do to work together for a better future?"

"What's the best way to get a hold of you?" (Make sure to get their name, number, and/or email so that we can follow-up with them.)

If aggressive or a hard "no": "Thank you for your time. Have a good day."

TIPS & TRICKS

- Listen and ask questions.
- Never tell someone they're wrong. Try to use "yes, and..." discussion format, acknowledging their feelings but centering the discussion on the issues at hand.
- Don't tell people what their experience is. Let them tell you, empathize and draw parallels with your own experiences and that of your neighbors.
- Writing things down! The point of door-knocking is to find connections and get back in touch w/ people. Come prepared with a tenant contact list where you can write down people's names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, and main concerns. See "Building a Tenant Contact List" workshop (page X) for more details.
- Be sure to have an ask or call to action: invite people to an upcoming meeting, event, potluck, etc. Have flyers to hand people. Ask for a commitment: For example, Can we put you down for the meeting on Tuesday? We hope you can join us at the potluck next week. Is there anything we can do to support you, so you can make it?

Door Knocking Tally Sheet



TIPS & TRICKS

- Don't be afraid to go off script once you're comfortable with the talking points, but be respectful of people's time and keep the discussion moving towards the ask at all times.
- Respect people's time. If someone doesn't want to talk, ask them if there would be a better time to come by and move on. This won't be our last time knocking on their doors, we can try again another day and we want them to feel safe and respected the next time we come by.
- You are likely to get questions about what tenant groups can actually do to defend their rights. Fighting back often requires diverse tactics. This is a brief list of a few of the tactics that tenants' unions and building associations have been able to employ to win better protections at the building level:
 - ◊ Under Oregon Law, tenants are able to elect collective bargaining units with whom the landlord must meet with to discuss the demands of tenants in a building. Remember that tenants have a right under Oregon law to organize without fear of retaliation. Landlords can face large fines and have their decisions overturned by the court if they try to retaliate against tenants for organizing.
 - ◊ In response to mistreatment by their landlord, tenant groups can threaten a landlords' reputations with tactical media campaigns, public events, and testimony. Often, a threat to the landlord or property manager's reputation can be enough to force their hand and change their actions.
 - ◊ Tenants standing together can escalate and prevent evictions or massive rent increases through threatening eviction blockades and even rent strikes.
 - ◊ Tenants can lobby for better protections at the local and statewide level. A group of 20 tenants showing up and proactively pressuring their legislatures can be enough to turn a needed vote in favor of tenant protections. This is most effective when combined with other tactics to draw attention to the situation.

Apartment Complex/City _____ Start Time: _____

Date/Fecha: _____ End Time: _____

Name(s)/Nombre(s): _____

Phone#/Telefono: _____ Email/Correo Electrónico: _____

Please take a minute to sum up your work today so that we can learn from your experience and improve over time.

Por favor tome un minuto para resumir su trabajo hoy para que podamos aprender de su experiencia y mejorar con el tiempo.

TOTALS/TOTALES:

Doors Knocked/ Puertas tocadas _____ Total Conversations/ Convercaciones Completadas _____

Activated renters/ Rentadores Activados _____

ANSWERED/ RESPUESTA	NO ANSWER/ NO RESPUESTA
i.e. Unit 4A, Martha - (Notes/ Notas)	i.e. Unit 4A, 4B,...

FEEDBACK/REACCIONES: _____

Testimony Outline



Story Map



1. INTRODUCTION:

My name is _____ and I am a tenant living in _____. I'm here because I want you to hear my story.

2. MY EXPERIENCE:

Use bullet points to tell your housing-related story.

3. YOUR DEMAND:

I want _____ (for example: affordable housing choices, 90-Day No-Cause Protection, etc.) because..... _____

4. CLOSING:

Renters deserve stable homes. [Repeat your DEMAND message again].

<p>Characters</p>	<p>Setting</p>
<p>Time</p>	
<p>Plot</p>	<p>Conflict</p>

Telling Your Good Story



<p>Characters</p> <p>someone...</p>	<p>Goal</p> <p>wanted...</p>
<p>Title _____</p> <p>Author _____</p>	
<p>Problem</p> <p>but...</p>	<p>Solution</p> <p>so...</p>

“Telling Your Good Story” – At CAT, we don’t believe there is just one way to tell a story. However, there are some basics that help to ensure that when you are telling your story it may have a more compelling impact.

Telling your story is often just like reading a good book. The elements you would find in your favorite book are some of the same elements you can include:

- Characters – protagonist (good person), antagonist (bad character), other characters or extras (friends, family, people who helped or you talked to). This is about answering the question: who is in your story and what should the audience know about them?
- Setting – Every story takes place somewhere and at some point. When describing a setting you want to write your speech in a way that helps folks understand the answer to the following question: when did this happen to you and where did it happen?
- Plot – This is the basics of what happened in the story and generally follows a predictable pattern: introduction, rising action (what happened to get to the main point of the story), the climax or central struggle which is the highest point of tension or drama. It is often the turning point of a story; falling action describes the points of the story that are winding down, loose ends tied up, etc. conclusion/resolution – what was the outcome of the story?
- Conflict -
- Theme -
- Point-of-view -
- Tone -
- Style -

Media 101



Adapted from the City Life/Vida Urbana tenant organizing handbook.

The media plays an important role in our fight for housing justice, for better or worse. Best case scenario, publicity will help us attract new people to our movement, shift the thinking of policymakers, and spur funders and others to support us. We may not be able to control what gets printed in newspapers or broadcast on TV, but we can make sure that we deliver a carefully crafted, strategic message in our communications. We can also control our own social media messages, using art, graphics, and other creative mediums to shape public discussion.

Here are some basic tips:

1. Highlight the immorality and unfairness of landlord, banks, elected officials, etc.
2. Don't couch the story in terms of victimhood. Emphasize instead that tenants are taking control of our lives and helping others in the process. This movement is about community building; we are fighters.
3. Remember that you are speaking for the whole group, not just yourself. Talk about what "we" want, not just "I".
4. Give the housing crisis a human face. Highlight the story of a specific person or family in EVERY communication with the media, and also make sure to refer to several others in a similar situation.
5. Identify two or three main talking points, and repeat them over and over.
6. Use phrases such: "We're standing up for affordable housing by..." or "Just cause and rent stabilization will help our communities by..." or "The whole community wins if we win because..."
7. Structure your story like this: 1) problem, 2) ideal solution, 3) action you are taking, to push for the solution.
8. Stay on message—regardless of what questions the reporter is asking. Use phrases like, "I think the real issue here is..." or "Here's what really matters to hardworking people like me and our families..." if the reporter is steering conversation away from what you want to talk about.
9. Give the press good sound bites: 5-15 seconds on air, or 5-25 words on paper.
10. Prepare an "elevator speech" for situations when you have limited time to convey your message: a 30-second summary of your campaign. Opportunities to speak may come unexpectedly; this speech will help you take advantage. Practice ahead of time!
11. Back up your message with compelling data.
12. Be prepared to address common myths. For example, "Landlords won't have a way to evict problem tenants with the new policies proposed."
13. Tap community leaders to help get out your message, from local government agencies, faith communities, etc.
14. Don't overlook the power of op-eds, editorials, and letters to the editor.
15. Cultivate personal relationships with journalists, to increase the odds they will write an accurate and compelling story about your group.
16. Offer to have reporters come to your meetings and/or shadow members of your group.
17. Be accessible to reporters – give them your cell number, and get back to them ASAP.
18. Know your facts: your reputation rides on the accuracy of the information you give reporters.
19. Be aware that everything is "on the record", even if you have a good relationship with a reporter. Don't say anything you don't want on the front page.

Have You Ever? Icebreaker



This handout is designed to get you talking to each other in the room and learn about people's experiences with Direct Action Organizing.

1. Have you ever gone to a rally that was held outside?
2. Have you every gone to a rally that was held in a government building?
3. Have you ever blocked doors do that folks couldn't get in?
4. Have you ever blocked a street so that traffic couldn't get by?
5. Have you ever chanted in a rally before?
6. Have you ever planned a direct action for a cause you care about?
7. Have you ever taken over an elected officials' office?
8. Have you ever attended a counter-protest?
9. Have you ever been arrested for a direct action?
10. Have you ever done a direct action that was approved with a permit by a government entity?
11. Have you ever asked your friends to go to a protest or a rally that you cared about?
12. Have you ever drawn a sign for a protest or rally?
13. Have you ever done a walk-out for a cause that you care about?
14. Have you ever organized a direct-action event?
15. Have you ever done a sit-in before?

Homes For All Action Checklist



(Include cell and email next to each person's name)

Name of Action: _____

Date of Action: _____

Location of Action (Address, City, State, Zipcode) _____

Turnout Goal: _____

Tactical Team: _____

Scout(s): _____

Police Liaison(s): _____

Peacekeeper(s): _____

Press Wrangler (Sign Up and Greet): _____

Press Spokespeople: _____

Chant Leader(s): _____

Greeter(s) (Ensure All Sign In) _____

Sign/Banner/Flyer Maker(s): _____

Medic(s): _____

Legal Observer(s) _____

Photographer(s): _____

Videographer(s): _____

MC for Program: _____

Problem Solver _____

Jail Support Team: _____

Detailed Program: _____

Time	Agenda Item	Who
------	-------------	-----

DEFINITION OF ROLES

Tactical Team: Leaders (usually 3-4 people) of the action who are the key decisionmakers

Scout(s): Scope out site of action, map it out, identify entrances/exits, location/type of security personnel, location of action targets; Also, shortly before action go ahead of time to assess situation and report back to tactical leaders

Recruiter(s): Recruit people to attend the action through social media, phone calls, email, and /or meetings

Leafleter(s): Hand out flyers during the action to passersby

Police Liaison(s): Serve as point of contact with police, identify and speak to the highest ranking officer in charge, communicate and share/gather information based on action plan and interests of protesters

Peacekeeper(s)/Marshall(s): Group of people identified and prepared in advance to support participants in action to stick to our plan, to de-escalate when necessary, to address needs that may arise, to communicate messages between our police liaison(s)/key organizers and action participants ; often peacekeepers wear something to be easily identified eg arm band/vest

Press Wrangler (Sign Up and Greet): Identify, greet, sign up and connect to our spokespeople all press that arrive

Press Spokespeople: Prepared individuals who can speak to the press to deliver our messages

Chant Leader(s): Prepped individuals who lead chants (often with bullhorns) and chant sheets to pass out

Greeter(s) (Ensure All Sign In): Sign up all attendees so we can followup with them. Sign up sheet should include name, cell, email, action name, date

Sign/Banner/Flyer Maker(s): Those who prepare and make signs/banners/flyers and bring to action

Medic(s): Those who are trained to help people who have health issues (often have water/granola bars and other items to help those in need)

Photographer(s): Take photos including people holding signs/banners, speakers, crowd shots, upload photos to designated email/website

Videographer(s): Take video of action, speakers, arrests; send video to designated email/website

MC for Program: Lead the program, introduce all speakers/performers, keep energy up

Legal Observer(s): Lawyers who attend the action to observe, take notes and document any police misconduct and to inform tactical team about legal matters

Jail Support Team: Distribute the jail support number, ensure everyone who intends on engaging in civil disobedience fills out and turns in an information sheet; this team goes to the jail to provide support and be present when arrestees are released.

Problem Solvers: Someone whose job it is to deal with unforeseen circumstances. This could be keeping the crowd together, dealing with people who try to interrupt, making a plan for counterprotestors etc

Homes For All Chant Sheet/Consigna



Our Cities! Our Homes!
Remain, Reclaim, Rebuild!

I believe in...
HOMES FOR ALL!

Derecho a Techo!
Right to our roofs!

Ask the Neighbors, Ask the Police
Empty Homes Won't Bring Us Peace

Empty Houses Ain't No Good
They Destroy Our Neighborhood

What do we want – justice
When do we want it – Now!

Hey Hey, HO HO
Greedy banks have got to go
Ho Ho, HEY HEY
Gotta believe we're here to stay!

1-2-3-4 – No more constables at our door
5-6-7-8 – Don't evict. Negotiate!

Fee, fie, foe fum
Look out Banks
Here we come!

Banks got bailed out,
We won't be thrown out

Gonna beat, back, the Bank attack
Gonna beat beat back that Bank attack

What do we do when the banks attack?
Stand up! Fight back!

UP with the people! YEAH YEAH
 tenants
 public housing
 etc
Down with the landlords BOOM BOOM!!
 banks
 wall street gamblers
 speculators
 hedge funds
 real estate vampires
 Gentrification
 Displacement
 etc...

Whatcha really want Whatcha really want??? (Justice, etc)
Whatcha really NEED Whatcha really NEED??? (Justice, etc)

Who's got the money money
Who's got the money money
They got the money money
We got the bill!

Fannie - Freddie. You can't hide
We can see your greedy side.

Pain for the many, Profits for the few.
Fannie - Freddie, We're coming for you!

Fannie - Freddie, They're no good.
Get them out of our neighborhood!

Fannie - Freddie. We're here to prove.
We – shall – Not be moved!

Workout Counselors can fix this corruption.
Give them the tools for Principal Reduction!

One! – We are the people
Two! – a little bit louder
Three! – We're gonna take back our City!

Up with the people – Yeah Yeah! (2x)
Down with the banks – Boom Boom! (2x)

En español

Escucha, escucha
 Estamos en la lucha

Se ve, se siente
 El pueblo está presente

Estamos diciendo
 No al desalojo!
 Después el embargo
 No al desalojo!

Cuando Luchamos – ¡Ganamos!

¿Que queremos? ¡Justicia!
 ¿Cuando la queremos? ¡Ahora!

¡Luchar, Crear!
 ¡Poder Popular!

¡derecho a techo!

Song by Evan Greer, Rising Tide
 We ain't letting you evict
 our neighbors anymore
 Housing is a human right
 we won't let you ignore
 So Fannie - Freddie, you better believe
 we're knocking down your door
 Screaming we ain't letting you evict
 our neighbors anymore

HERE'S A SLIGHTLY OFF BEAT IDEA- <http://youtu.be/WdISfjwJsGs> -
 ala Sweet Brown call and response-
 We shout out -
 CALL- gentrification!
 RESPONSE- Ain't nobody got time for that!
 CALL-FORECLOSURE
 RESPONSE- Ain't nobody got time for that!
 CALL-DISPLACEMENT
 RESPONSE (chorus) via beat in this video (please include its crudeness and just listen to beat) <http://youtu.be/WdISfjwJsGs> -
 Ain't nobody got time for that! (repeat 2 times)
 Ain't nobody got time
 Aint nobody got time
 Ain't nobody got time for that!

(tune of "Hot In Herre" by Nelly - use instrumental)

It's getting Hot in HERRRRRE
 The rent is TOO DAMN HIGH
 I am getting so hot
 I NEED A RENT FREEZE RIGHT NOW

Rent Freeze Baby (tune of Ice Ice Baby)

Crowd	Chant Team
RENT FREEZE, BABY	Whatcha really want?
RENT FREEZE, BABY	Whatcha really need?
RENT FREEZE, BABY	Until all the land is FREE
RENT FREEZE, BABY	EverY communitY (needs a)
RENT FREEZE, BABY	

Thank you
for helping
toward tenant
liberation and a
better world.

Oregon Tenant Power Handbook!
Community Alliance of Tenants
www.oregoncat.org
February 2020



