



BLOCK *By* BLOCK

Renter Nation Assembly Toolkit

homesforall.org



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OVERVIEW & GROUNDING

Welcome!

Right to the City Alliance and the Organizing Committee of the Homes For All campaign extend our warm appreciation to you for your interest in this toolkit and the Renter Nation Assembly process. The intended audience for this document is/are: individuals and organizations involved in struggles against displacement and gentrification that are led by impacted residents, in cities in the United States.

This toolkit represents a phase of exciting growth and evolution for the Homes For All campaign: a series of coordinating convenings across the country (which we are calling *Renter Nation Assemblies*) that will breathe new life into local housing justice struggles and reinvigorate a national movement led by impacted residents. We are excited for you to join us!

This toolkit provides a road map for how to pull off a successful assembly in your city. However, your local context will determine its shape and character: local political conditions, power relationships, organizational terrain, strategic clarity and other factors will all play a role. The degree of our collective success will depend in large part on how well we forecast and contend with these and other key factors in order to create the momentum needed to achieve ground-shifting breakthroughs both locally and nationally.

We also know that how and why we join together to fight for Homes For All are as critical to our success as what immediate issues are most pressing for our communities. We hope that the strategic framework, case studies and tools in this document can help us develop a shared vision, culture and practice in our work together to address the crisis that our communities are experiencing.

Alleviating the situation is going to require deep advances in the fight to reclaim, remain in and rebuild our cities. We are called to take risks, set aside egos, and experiment with new ways of achieving mass popular participation. Our communities deserve nothing less. Thanks again for your energy, investment and leadership in moving this work forward.

Who We Are & How We Got Here

Right To The City Alliance: Birth and Evolution

Right to the City Alliance (RTC) emerged in 2007 in response to the dismantling and displacement of our communities through gentrification. Our coming together demanded a halt to the disregard, disrespect and criminalization of working class, low-income and poor people, people of color, LGBTQ communities, and youth of color in their historic urban neighborhoods.

Today we are a national alliance of over 50 grassroots racial, economic and environmental justice organizations across 25 cities and 18 states in the United States working together to build democratic, just, and sustainable 21st century cities. Our work is grounded in a global understanding of displacement and our relationships and strategies span multiple continents in an effort to build the influence and power of our communities around the world, especially in the global south.

Through joint national and regional formations, RTC works to build a national movement for urban justice and to strengthen the local community organizing of our member organizations to the level of national impact. In particular, RTC works to move significant, signature policy changes around the preservation and expansion of affordable housing, and democratizing land use policies and community development planning.

We believe that housing is a core pillar of economic and racial justice and an essential front of struggle in the fight for our right to the city. The foundation of the [Right to the City Alliance platform](#) here in the U.S. (not to mention [globally](#)) - essentially that poor and working class communities can remain in urban centers and be able to thrive under a human rights agenda - relies on the ability to protect our right to affordable, sustainable and dignified housing.

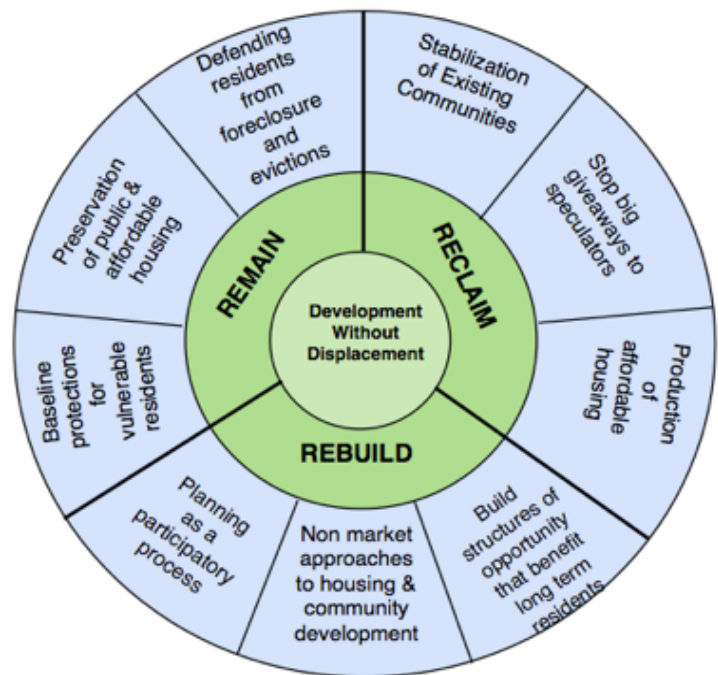
As such, over the last 4 years Right to the City Alliance has invested significant time and resources engaging the housing component of our platform, largely in the aftermath of the foreclosure crisis and more recently with the growing population of renters, a moniker that for us, includes homeowners or “bank tenants”. There are over 42 million renter households in the U.S., half of whom - over 21 million households - pay more than 30% of their income to housing, an amount that by the federal government’s very own definition is unaffordable. The growing crisis of housing affordability is concentrated among renters, especially low-income Black and brown communities in urban areas and research and analysis show that estimated total growth of renters between 2013 and 2023 will be between 4 and 4.7 million households, the vast majority being people of color and roughly half being seniors.

Homes For All

RTC’s **Homes For All** (HFA) campaign, a campaign the was born out of a 2-year strategic planning and analysis process with over 20 RTC member organizations, works to engage those most directly impacted by the affordable housing crisis – low-income tenants, homeless families, families in foreclosure, and public housing residents - in a multi-year fight to win revenue, expand and preserve low-income affordable housing and decrease displacement in our cities.

With a membership of grassroots housing organizations led by impacted residents, RTC is well positioned to spread and replicate local campaigns to win ‘Development Without Displacement’ policies across key cities. Our Development Without Displacement model (adapted from “**Development Without Displacement: Resisting Gentrification in the Bay Area**” by Causa Justa::Just and shown in the figure below) illustrates our strategy for achieving such wins.

In order to build our grassroots power where our members have the most influence - at the municipal level - we are working with local RTC members to organize over 15 Renter Nation Assemblies at the neighborhood and city-wide level. Each assembly will bring together hundreds of low-income renters and impacted residents to share their experiences of the housing crisis and put their stories in the context of the national affordability crisis and political landscape. Through renter assemblies, impacted residents will discuss and decide on policy priorities, get engaged in local policy campaigns that are underway, and receive training in direct action, communications, voter engagement and other skills that will strengthen local campaigns.



The Renter Assemblies will be a tool to launching coordinated multi-city (what we call ‘trans-local’) campaigns to implement progressive housing policy that meets the needs of poor and working class communities of color and experiment with non-market approaches to housing and community development. The local assemblies will be a critical organizing tool and opportunity to strengthen the trans-local policy campaigns, and build momentum toward a national renter assembly in 2016.

Renter Nation Assemblies: WHAT

In 2015, Right to the City's Homes For All campaign is supporting a minimum of 15 cities/regions to hold Renter Nation Assemblies to galvanize people locally to win anti-displacement and affordability campaigns. Campaigns will focus on addressing the most pressing needs in each city. Many will seek to pass renters' rights ordinances and Renters' Bill of Rights. Some will entail winning a community land trust, equitable development and/or corporate landlord accountability. Each city/region will determine their own campaign plan based on existing work, capacity and its needs.

What are Renter Nation Assemblies?

The assemblies are *gatherings of renters, impacted residents and allies to strengthen the local housing justice movement and lay a foundation for a 2016 national gathering of renters and lower income residents.*

More specifically, assemblies will bring together renters, low-wage workers, seniors, immigrants, youth, union members, formerly incarcerated, LGBTQ and others who do not have affordable, stable homes.

Part of a Process of Building Power

Assemblies are not “one-off” events. They are part of a process of building power locally, carrying out local and regional campaigns and strengthening our housing justice movement nationally.

With assemblies, no one size fits all. Assemblies can be a community gatherings with as little as 10 or city wide gatherings with as many as 500 (or more) participants. They can only include impacted residents or they can also bring in current and potential allies. They must be goal driven but the particular goals will vary based on the needs of the local organizing. The goals may range from choosing a campaign, to developing a local housing platform and Renters' Bill of Rights, to galvanizing around an existing campaign.

What Will the Assemblies Have in Common?

While assemblies will vary from city to city, they will all strengthen local organizing and our larger translocal housing justice movement through the following:

1. Building a base of directly impacted residents, particularly working class people of color
2. Developing the skills and consciousness of those most impacted to facilitate their leading the movement, other sectors and allies
3. Building democratic practices of decisionmaking particularly in determining vision, platforms, principles, campaign strategy, demands, targets, and/or tactics

4. Connecting local struggles across cities and building towards a national gathering in 2016
5. Building alliances (wherever possible) with other sectors of the movement including LGBTQ, formerly incarcerated, immigrant, environmental, worker/labor, senior, disability rights, and veteran
6. Advancing the Homes For All Statement of Purpose, mission and goals

Renter Nation Assemblies: WHY

The Moment

Communities across this country are in crisis. Hardest hit are working class, lower income and communities of color. Incarceration rates (particularly for African Americans), deportations, unemployment, evictions/foreclosures and mental and physical health problems are all at extremely high levels.

At the center of this, our communities and our homes are being destroyed destabilizing families, seniors and our youth at unprecedented levels. Displacement is rampant with gentrification ravaging low income and communities of color across the country. Over a few years, entire communities are removed and replaced with higher income individuals.

Speculators, banks and large corporations are turning to land and housing to invest in and accumulate wealth more than anytime in history. Black and immigrant wealth stolen by banks through subprime lending scams represents one of the greatest thefts in the history of this country.

With housing and land at the core of the crisis, the time is ripe to build a robust housing justice movement led by tenants and low income homeowners in communities of color. A Renter Nation is growing in numbers and strength. 10 million households have joined the ranks of renters over the past 8 years and another 5 million will join over the next decade, almost all will be people of color and half will be seniors. Right now 21 million families and individuals do not have affordable rent and half of these pay more than half of their income to rent, leaving little to cover other basic needs like medicine, food, bus fare or daycare.

The movement is beginning in our cities through fighting against displacement and high rents. Rooted in our hardest hit areas, predominantly working class and communities of color, we are organizing for just cause eviction and other basic renters' rights. Over time, we must grow in power to win Renters' Bill of Rights, rent control and a mass expansion of affordable, community controlled housing.

Why Now?

21 MILLION STRONG: Of the 43 million renter households in this country (35% of all households), HALF – over 21 million – do NOT have affordable rents. 1 out of every 4 pay over half of their income to housing. These numbers will rise by an estimated 4.7 million over the next 10 years.

WIDESPREAD ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE CRISIS: Mainstream media outlets, academics and many elected officials at all levels of government acknowledge the rental affordability crisis.

FAILED SOLUTIONS – TIME FOR A NEW DIRECTION: Policymakers continue to promote private market solutions and allow for rampant speculation. The recent housing market crash and failings of existing policies set the stage for a new direction towards greater community control over land and housing.

PEOPLE ARE READY: Growing resistance in cities across the country, people's material conditions, and changing attitudes and ideology – all point to people being ready to get involved and build a movement.

Benefits of an Assembly to Your Organization/Community/City/Region:

While each assembly, as is the campaign it is part of, is led and organized locally. Right to the City's Homes For All campaign will support in the following ways:

1. **National Platform:** Provide a process to participate in developing a Renter Nation Platform of Our Principles and Solutions
2. **Best Practices:** Provide spaces and trainings on sharing best practices and victories from across the country
3. **Joint Fundraising:** Collaborate on joint fundraising for your assembly and ongoing campaign work
4. **Popular Education:** Provide popular education materials based on "Rise of the Renter Nation: Solutions to the Housing Affordability Crisis"
5. **Trainings:** Provide trainings on models of tenant organizing
6. **National Convening:** Support delegates from your city/region to represent at the 2016 national renter nation convening
7. **Coordination Support:** Provide support in planning your assembly and coordination with other cities/regions

Renter Defined

We employ an expansive definition of “renter” and use it interchangeably with “tenant.”

A “renter” is:

1. Anyone paying rent or seeking to pay rent but may not have the resources to do so
2. Any resident that does not fully own and control their home and the land it's on

All of the following types of inhabitants fit within our definition of “renter” and are being considered in our proposed renters’ rights policies:

1. Renters/Tenants: Those currently living in a rental unit and paying rent
2. Home Occupiers/“Squatters”: Those occupying a home or building that is vacant
3. Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Tenants: Those living in a SRO building.
4. Homeless families and individuals: Those living on street, in a shelter or with someone temporarily
5. Bank Tenants: lower-income homeowners who pay a mortgage to a bank)
6. Mobile home park residents: Those who do not own the land their trailer home is on and pay land rent to the owner

Renter Nation Assemblies: WHEN & WHERE

When Will Assemblies Be Held?

They will be held throughout 2015. Each city is scheduling them based on what makes the most sense for their local work. The first assemblies will kick off spring/summer of 2015 building towards a national Renter Nation convening in 2016. Assemblies’ dates and locations will be available at homesforall.org.

What Cities are Participating?

Assemblies will be held in 15-20 cities in 2015.

Cities currently committed to and planning their assemblies include:

- Boston, MA
- Detroit, MI
- Jackson, MS
- Los Angeles, CA
- New York, NY
- Oakland, CA
- Poughkeepsie, NY
- San Diego, CA
- San Francisco, CA
- Santa Fe, NM
- Springfield, MA

Potential additional cities include:

- Atlanta, GA
- Miami, FL
- Minneapolis, MN
- Philadelphia, PA
- Portland, OR
- San Antonio, TX
- Seattle, WA

Broad outreach to new cities and states is ongoing.



Statement of Purpose

As we begin our assemblies, we want to feel grounded in the collective purpose that motivates our fight for the right to our cities, and the strategic role that the Homes For All campaign plays in achieving that.

This Statement of Purpose or “Mantra” is a tool we use for this.

Each of our experiences are unique. But we are joined by our desire to see transformation in our own lives, the lives of our families and loved ones and the health of our communities and the planet. To express this collective desire we work to embody a set of commitments that reflect our purpose and goals.

We are together today because we believe:

- Land & Housing are for people & planet, not for speculation and greed.
- Our communities need affordable and secure homes to thrive.
- Housing must be accessible, affordable, stable, high quality and community controlled in order to truly meet the needs of our communities and all people.
- The housing crisis is NOT over. The number of people in crisis in OUR communities is increasing.
- Big banks, the private market, investment and speculation will not help OUR communities but will further REDUCE affordability and security.
- Resolving the housing crisis creates jobs and is key to resolving the broader economic crisis.
- The government has the opportunity and responsibility to ensure affordable, secure housing for the public.
- We must organize and collaborate locally, regionally and nationally in order to resolve this crisis and build strong, affordable, healthy communities.

We will help win Homes For All by building a powerful housing justice movement led by working class communities of color. This will entail:

- Committing to build broad and deep alliances into a housing justice movement
- Bringing our communities and organizations together to create winning campaigns & strategies
- Taking leadership from those most impacted
- Using our diverse cultures and the arts to expand accessibility to our work
- Committing to our continued education and training
- Connecting our struggles to impacted communities across the globe

What's Next: 2016 National Gathering

2016 National Gathering

In late spring/early summer of 2016, representatives from all our cities that held assemblies or are engaging in the work will gather together in one city. This will be the first national gathering of tenants and impacted residents in years. While it is premature to unite nationally to form a new national structure, it is not premature to unite nationally to advance the work we are doing locally and in through our assemblies.

Purpose

The purpose of the national gathering will be to:

1. Develop a common platform of principles and solutions
2. Further develop and connect our translocal campaigns across cities based on common demands e.g., renters rights campaigns, community land trust campaigns, etc
3. Further develop common messaging and branding that connect our campaigns
4. Share models of organizing, basebuilding and leadership development
5. Dialogue around next steps in building our housing justice movement

Our strength is at the local level. The central focus of Homes For All is to connect our local work across cities to strengthen support, power and momentum at increasing scale. Uniting across cities does not shift our primary focus but enables us to do our local work more strategically and in deeper coordination and partnership with other cities and organizations.

Coming together nationally brings similar benefits that we see locally when we start with neighborhood assemblies and build towards a city wide assembly that brings together all the different neighborhoods to work together more strategically.

Process

In the summer of 2015, we will initiate a planning committee to organize the national gathering. Representatives from the 2015 city assemblies and other cities engaged in the work will serve on the planning committee. The committee's goals will be:

1. Finalize purpose and program
2. Determine location and date
3. Ensure participation of directly-impacted residents - not only paid staff - in process
4. Fundraise to acquire resources to send representatives and cover costs of gathering
5. Determine all logistics

LOGISTICS & REGISTRATION

Hosting a Renter Nation Assembly

An assembly host organization bottom-lines the planning and execution of the assembly. Where possible, we encourage more than one host organization. Consider the following:

Tasks and Responsibilities for Host Organizations

1. Fill out the interest form [here](#) (scroll to bottom and click “Join Now”)
2. Recruit other Host Organizations
3. Fill out a *Detailed Logistics Survey* [Tony from RTC will follow up with you about this] so we can begin to promote and create materials for the assembly
4. Form a Planning Committee of representatives of all host organizations that meets regularly to recruit for, organize and execute the assembly
5. Seek input from participating organizations on the assembly program
6. Participate in pre-assembly Homes For All orientation
7. Review & provide feedback to Draft Renter Nation principles and Renters Bill of Rights
8. Utilize common [community agreements](#) and practices during all phases of assembly work)
9. Utilize common branding and messaging in outreach and assembly materials
10. Incorporate our principle statement into the assembly program
11. Announce the plans for 2016 national gathering of impacted residents and sign-up people
12. Document and evaluate the assembly

If you have any questions, please contact tony@righttothecity.org

Registration Infrastructure

After completing the *Detailed Logistics Survey* (Assembly location, contact info, etc) host organizations can create a customized online registration form for use in promoting the local assemblies.

A component of Homes For All campaign's strategic communications work involves using online communications and social media to lift up local stories and build identity and momentum at increasing levels of scale. In other words, we want to help you promote your local Assembly and be able to connect everyone across the country who is involved in the Assembly process with each other.

In practice that will involve sharing the data collected from local to national and vice versa. Local Host Organizations will have access to all registrant data for use with local outreach and communications work, and at the national level we will promote the local assemblies with other participant cities around the country through coordinated social media and email communications.

Here is a sample registration page: bit.ly/RN_Asmbly_Reg_Template

Logistics: Principles & Practices

The *Who We Are* and *Statement of Purpose* sections of this toolkit provide background on some of the deeply held values and principles that are important to our organizing methodology.

Thanks to the deep dedication of some amazing individuals and [organizations](#), movements for justice in the United States have been developing a collective understanding that [we can't change society if we don't also transform ourselves as people](#). And in turn, developing [theory](#), [analysis](#) and [practices](#) to go about doing so. In this section we try to briefly articulate how this might support the logistical planning and execution of successful Renter Nation Assemblies.

Some of this will feel familiar or obvious. Other aspects require deeper long term commitments to shift our organizational and movement cultures.

Principles for Planning and Execution of the Assemblies

1. **Logistics Reflect our Politics:** Our organizing is rooted in communities getting hit the hardest by discriminatory housing policies and an exploitative economic system that targets working class and people of color communities, women, LGBTQ & gender non-conforming folks, young people, immigrants and elders in ways that are often traumatizing. Given this, when it comes to logistics we might start by asking:

What do people need to feel that their dignity and life experience is valued?

What conditions enhance people's feelings of confidence, creativity, comfort and power?

We can't control every circumstance, but we can do our best to anticipate and prepare conditions for gatherings so that people can feel that their existence and dignity is honored - in a society that so rarely does so. A tight program and the best facilitation can suffer under conditions in which people don't feel comfortable.

2. **Who Does What?** How we value the administrative, logistical and systems-related tasks associated with our work is a direct reflection of our love, care and respect for our communities and each other. Reflecting the **exploitation of women's labor** so fundamental to the development of capitalism, movements for justice have also historically undervalued certain types of contributions. Creating organizational roles and divisions of labor that reflect our politics and theory of leadership is a step in the right direction.
3. **Leadership Development:** Sharing skills and knowledge both internally and across sectors in the areas of organizational systems, operations, finance and logistics helps build strong leaders and sustainable organizations. The complicated and exhausting regulatory web which the state and nonprofit system have established requires ongoing leadership development training, resource sharing and technical assistance for frontline leaders. As our impact expands, so will the likelihood that we will be targeted by our opponents. We need to know where our vulnerabilities are so that we can **weather the storm** and we must continually invest in developing supports systems for both leaders at the front/external face of organizations, as well as "back of the pack" leaders holding organizations together on an administrative level.
4. **Movement Building:** Although resources and time are limited, the multiple crises facing our communities require us to build the broader unity at a level of scale that can deeply shift power. We must forge new strategic partnerships, **set aside ego**, deepen trust and transparently and equitably address imbalances in resources and capacity. The Renter Nation Assemblies provide innumerable opportunities to put this into practice.

Practices

Since this toolkit is a “living document” to support our Homes For All Assembly process, please share any ideas you might have for this section and any reflections on trying to implement them into your assembly.

1. **Gathering Data / Identifying Needs:** Survey tools (ie, google forms, survey monkey, etc) collect critical participant insights that guide our planning and increase collective investment in the work. Asking people to describe what makes us feel comfortable and valued in a space provides a blueprint for our logistics work plan.
2. **Establishing Community Agreements:** Articulating and agreeing to shared guidelines for *how* we want to work together helps build unity, trust, safety and accountability. We encourage assembly host committees to practice using these Community Agreements internally during the lead up to and execution of the assemblies and for any break-out sessions during the day of the event.

Suggested Community Agreements for Renter Nation Assemblies

3. **Mapping:** Maps are powerful ideological **tools** that can help us navigate **historical, social, political**, economic and physical landscapes and narratives. And they look cool. Providing mapping and route planning information across a variety of media platforms and transportation modes nurtures a spirit of accessibility and transparency. There are lots of ways to do this - giving people the information they need to get where they need to go is good practice. Email mark@righttothecity.org if you want to nerd out.
4. **Childcare:** Assess need and have providers lined up several weeks out. Trying to make sure the option is available as well as dedicated space and an experienced provider so that kids, grownups & caregivers all feel comfortable. Consider building kid-friendly activities into the convening if possible. Some cities have **childcare collectives** that provide and integrate childcare into social justice movement work.
5. **Translation/Interpretation:** A commitment to **language justice** is a critically important and ongoing challenge for our movements. In **preparing for the assembly, identifying translation and interpretation needs** amongst registered participants and working within the host committee (and in communication with host committees in other cities) to translate assembly materials and provide interpretation is a fundamental task for our work plan(s).
6. **Mobility & Access Planning:** **There is a big difference between basic access and real disability justice, but it happens too often that even securing accessible meeting space is an afterthought. A minimum practice is to ensure that gatherings are held in in ADA-compliant spaces; identifying and developing plans with registered assembly**

participants in the weeks leading up to the assemblies (again plans will emerge based on who is registering and what their needs are) is extremely valuable.

7. **Good Eats:** Assemblies provide a wonderful opportunity to break bread together, which nourishes our spirits, fosters community and builds awareness. Assessing dietary needs & restrictions on the front end is critical. The aim is to provide culturally relevant, delicious and healthy food that is prepared locally by friends who are invested in urban food justice and sustainable food systems. Street vendors and urban farmers, cooperatives and CSAs are all fantastic and plentiful resources, and supporting people of color-owned, women-owned and/or union or worker-owned vendors is a simple yet important way to practice our principles
8. **Money Matters:** *Where and how* we spend money in the service of our work can support (and also ultimately hinder) movements for transformative change. Seeking out vendors that are women-owned, people of color-owned, worker cooperatives and/or union shops - and being aware of corporations that are on local, national or international boycott lists - helps to sustain and strengthen our movements.



ASSEMBLY MODELS

Assembly Models

It is important to remember that assemblies are not an end goal unto themselves. They are part of a process of developing and executing campaigns that seek to build and shift power.

While assemblies will vary from city to city as is evident in the 4 models below, all assemblies in one way or another seek to strengthen local organizing and our larger translocal housing justice movement through the following:

1. Building a base of directly impacted residents, particularly people of color
2. Developing the skills and consciousness of those most impacted to facilitate their leading the movement, other sectors and allies.
3. Building democratic practices of decisionmaking, particularly in determining campaign strategy, demands, targets, and/or tactics.
4. Connecting local struggles across cities wherever possible and building towards a national gathering in 2016
5. Building alliances (wherever possible) with other sectors of the movement including LGBTQ, formerly incarcerated, immigrant, environmental, worker/labor, senior, disability rights, and veteran.
6. Advancing the Homes For All Statement of Purpose, mission and goals

MODEL 1: San Francisco CA, Causa Justa::Just Cause

Synopsis: Over a 6 month period, Causa Justa::Just Cause (CJJC) conducted 5 neighborhood assemblies all leading up to a large city-wide assembly. Together the assemblies brought together 600 impacted residents throughout San Francisco. The purpose of the assemblies were to decide on a ballot initiative that would forward their goal of halting displacement, limiting speculation and moving towards greater community control over land and housing. The result of the assemblies was to seek to pass an anti-speculation tax. Despite over \$1 million spent by the opposition (developer and real estate industry), the ballot initiative lost narrowly by 2%. From CJJC's experience, the key ingredients to successful assemblies are as follows:

1. Affirmative turn-out goals, to make sure the most impacted folks are present
2. Having a key decision for folks to make (for us it was voting on a ballot initiative)
3. Be aware of who is doing the logistics and reproductive labor, putting something this big together takes a lot of work and everyone should have role in it.
4. Language access is key, we have 3 languages happening simultaneously
5. Programs/agenda development should also be a participatory process

For full description see:

- [CJJC SF Tenant Convention Detailed Description](#)
- [CJJC Short Description](#)
- [Ballot Initiative Ordinance](#)

MODEL 2: Sante Fe NM, Chainbreaker

Synopsis: Chainbreaker conducted small house meetings (assemblies) for several months in order to build a housing committee and determine the goals of a campaign. The result is the development of a Renters' Bill of Rights resolution that Chainbreaker will seek to get passed by the city council in the Spring 2015. Their strategy is to get full support from the city council to raise awareness of the housing crisis and lay the foundation for introducing and passing an Equitable Investment policy that would require a study prior to any city spending in a neighborhood to determine if the investment represents disproportionate resources going to certain neighborhoods (typically white and higher income) versus equitable investment across neighborhoods.

For full description, see:

- [Santa Fe Assembly Model](#)
- [Santa Fe RBOR Resolution](#)

MODEL 3: Jackson MS, Cooperation Jackson

Synopsis: Malcolm X Grassroots Movement organized a People's Assembly in 2011. The assembly brought together residents from Jackson. The outcomes of the assembly were as follows:

1. Participants agreed to building a solidarity economy should be a core part of the economic development portion of the People's Platform. Cooperation Jackson has taken some directive and legitimacy from that.
2. The decision to run Chokwe Lumumba for Mayor officially came from the People's Assembly, and was part of a 6 month deliberation process from 2011 - 2012. The campaign was launched in 2012 after this deliberative process.

3. The Assembly took a vote against Charter School legislation in 2011. This resulted in the legislation losing overwhelmingly in Jackson, but passing on a state level.
4. The Assembly mandated the Lumumba administrations put the 1% Sales Tax to gain more revenues for the repair of the cities infrastructure on a public referendum. This vote was carried out in January 2014 and was approved by 94% of the voters who turned out for the special election.
5. The Assembly mandated Councilman Lumumba to lead the charge to save JTRAN (Jackson's Public Transportation System) and give the JTRAN workers a raise. This was brought to the Assembly for adoption by JTRAN organizers. This was passed by the Assembly in 2011 and eventually passed by City Council in 2012.

For full description, see:

- [Jackson Peoples Assembly Model](#)
- [Cooperation Jackson Assembly Presentation](#)

MODEL 4: New York State, Anti-Fracking Campaign

Synopsis: In November 2014, the anti-fracking coalition organized a statewide assembly to create space to share information and successful tactics in challenging the Fracking industry.

This assembly was the culmination of grassroots organizing in small towns throughout New York state. Leading up to the assembly and escalating after it, grassroots organizations and residents in small towns built momentum through both direct action, information sharing and passing local resolutions and ordinances to ban fracking locally. Over the course of a few years culminating 2014 and early 2105, the grassroots organizations that have been fighting back tipped the political scales ultimately pressuring Governor Cuomo to ban fracking in the state of New York.

For a more detailed summation, see: bit.ly/How_NY_Won_Fracking_Ban

TOOLS & MATERIALS

Sample Assembly Program

Assembly programs will be uniquely tailored to meet local goals and will certainly vary from city to city. This [Sample Assembly Program](#) is a starting point to support Host Committees in program development.

Communications

Right to the City and the Homes For All campaign believe that it is essential to share common narratives, talking points and media training to effectively leverage our power as a growing movement for housing justice. We strive to have both winning local and national campaigns and winning stories that EFFECTIVELY combat displacement and the negative effects of gentrification nationwide. We believe in a democratic process for shaping and endorsing this national narrative. Through this communal experience, we shape talking points that honor the principles and values of our work, and determine a common agenda in how we communicate within our bases and with the media.

Training

We offer training in how to plan a story-based narrative campaign strategy predicated on the model developed by the Center for Story Based Strategy.

We meet with local spokespeople to share tips and talking points that are important in advancing our trans-local agenda.

Social Media

We work together on social media to cross promote each other's actions and amplify our cause by using common hashtags, tweets and posts and sharing organic, viral media that is created by our base.

Shared Templates

We share templates, images, posters, along with creating our own original media in order to show synchronicity in our organizing.

[CLICK HERE](#) to access a shared folder with examples of:

Logos in development
Sample flyers
Example press advisory
Fact Sheet
Infograph

Can't Wait List

Telling Our Truth Through Our National Story Bank

A person telling their story is one of the most powerful ways to communicate our message. Whatever city or community we are in and whatever our particular fight, directly-impacted residents must tell their stories. These stories are a critical way our organizations and our movement can make our truth, our ideas and our solutions visible.

Right to the City has developed the [Can't Wait List](#) (CWL). The CWL is a national storybank that allows anyone to tell their story and share it with others throughout the country. Impacted residents type in the story online and upload a photo. Then other residents, reporters and supporters can view the stories online. You can search for stories based on city, state or even name.

The [Can't Wait List](#) also allows each person to calculate exactly how much of their income they spend on housing. For most of us, it is TOO MUCH - over 30% of our income - and many spend over HALF of their income on housing.

Purpose of the Can't Wait List

The purpose of this site is to unite people across the country who don't have affordable, dignified, or stable housing. By sharing our stories, we will illustrate the impact of the housing crisis on our families, the economy and the country as a whole.

Feel free to share your stories of searching for affordable housing, being gentrified out of your neighborhood, facing displacement or eviction. The more stories we collect, the better we can make an argument to change housing policy at both local and national levels.

The Can't Wait List is a project of the [Homes For All](#) Campaign. Homes For All is building the power of our communities to advocate for local and national policies that will expand truly

affordable*, quality housing.

* HFA defines affordable housing as housing that is free from the threat of displacement, quality, community controlled, accessible, environmentally sustainable, and affordable to all.

www.cantwaitlist.org

Direct Action

Direct Action is a core part of our strategy to win. Thus, we encourage organizations wherever possible to connect direct action with their assemblies. The actions do not have to occur on the same day(s) as the assembly but can occur as part of the build up or followup to an assembly.

Many organizations are skilled in direct action from years of experience. We are including some materials that may be helpful in planning a direct action particularly for less experienced organizations.

These materials are located here: bit.ly/DirectActionResources

We hope to build our Homes For All direct action toolkit with your organization's support. Please send along helpful materials and tools that you recommend including in this section. The [Ruckus Society](#) is always a good starting point.

TRAININGS

Available Trainings

Leadership development and training is a critical part of our work. It is through developing the skills and consciousness of impacted residents that our movement grows in strength and capacity. Political education and training helps develop strategy and vision and ensures that leadership and participation in the movement is comprised of directly-impacted residents.

Thus, we encourage organizations to incorporate trainings into their assemblies. Right to the City and Homes For All have 17 trainings that we can conduct and/or provide to your organizations. The title and a short description of each training is below. Each training has its own curriculum and lasts 3-4 hours. The trainings can be done individually or grouped with others.

Popular Education

These trainings ground residents and organizers in the history, analysis and solutions of land and housing crises and struggle in this country.

1. **The Rise of the Renter Nation.** Transformative Demands to Address the Housing Crisis. Provides an analysis of the ongoing housing crisis as well as grassroots solutions and transformative demands that communities have developed, or are exploring.
2. **History of Land and Housing in the United States.** Provides a historical perspective of the relationship between capitalism, white supremacy, land and housing.

Organizing

3. **How to Organize Tenants.** Models and Case Studies from the Bay Area. Explores why and how to organize tenants in a community and city.
4. **Just Cause Eviction.** Why Its Important and How to Win It. Shares a case study of winning just cause eviction in the Bay area.
5. **Community Land Trust 101.** Provides a basic history, definition and explanation of how Community Land Trusts work.
6. **Facilitation Skills:** Trains groups/member-leaders in the basics of good facilitation skills.

7. **Canvassing.** Trains groups/member-leaders in how to build and run a successful neighborhood or city-wide canvass using either volunteers, paid staff or both. Includes **How to Write a Strong Rap** which can be broken out as its own module.
8. **Power Mapping.** Trains groups/member-leaders in traditional power mapping - adapted from the Midwest Academy, SOUL and SCOPE.

Communications

9. **Narrative Story Based Campaign Strategy Training.** A training on identifying the story of a campaign (key characters, conflict, plot, assumptions) and looking at points of intervention - how social change can reframe a particular narrative and transform it through action and media strategy. (this curriculum is credited to the Center for Story based Strategy).
10. **Spokesperson Training.** Provides a review of some of the talking points of the national Homes For All campaign, local talking points as developed and a review of some techniques to use when speaking to media outlets

Civic Engagement

11. **Introduction – Civic Engagement: Why Should We Care?** Makes the argument for why engaged voter organizing is a key component of municipal, regional and national organizing and campaign strategies and its role in building real community power.
12. **Our Base: New Majority Rising Electorate.** Explores the face of the rising electorate in the U.S. and examines the projection of growth in key municipalities. Uses New Majority Jeopardy (a game we invented) to discuss the demographic shift taking place within the U.S. electorate and pinpoint strategic organizing opportunities.
13. **Developing a Municipal Platform / Agenda.** Brings groups/member-leaders through a mock process of creating a city issue-based platform/agenda.
14. **City Checklist - Who Runs This \$H!T?** Creating an analysis of the political landscape of your City to inform electoral or issue based campaigns.
15. **Using the VAN.** Trains groups/member-leaders in how to use the Voter Activation Network.
16. **Developing a Field Plan.** Plotting your canvassing plan into a timeline campaign plan that supports your overall campaign goals.
17. **Passing Resolutions and Ordinances.** Uses the Power Mapping module to help groups map the power structure in their region/municipality and create a campaign for passing local resolutions and/or ordinances (currently tailored to housing policy).

READINGS

Background

- Rise of the Renter Nation Report - bit.ly/renternationreport
- Rise of the Corporate Landlord Report - bit.ly/corplandlordreportdl
- Causa Justa::Just Cause: Development without Displacement- Resisting Gentrification in the Bay Area - goo.gl/lFimDH
- The Case for Reparations - goo.gl/iWMaJg
- Ferguson: Gentrification and its Discontents - goo.gl/13eB9d
- Extreme Gentrification in the Bay Area - goo.gl/dOdM95
- History of Land & Housing in the US Timeline - goo.gl/hNGJX9
- History of Land & Housing Powerpoint - goo.gl/HlxJFT

International

- How to Stop an Eviction: The PAH of Spain - goo.gl/Dvovjb
- The atmospheric person: Value, experiment, and "making neighbors" in Madrid's popular assemblies - goo.gl/l2z6qT

Alliance Building

- Cognitive dimension in cross-movement alliances: the case of squatting and tenants' movements in Warsaw - goo.gl/iHgShn

Media & Organizing

- NOI Organizers Toolbox - goo.gl/54GM3E
- CWA Digital Organizing Toolkit - goo.gl/QNSHkl
- Communications Tools for Strategy Development - goo.gl/Bnv0mq
- Leadership Conference Grassroots Campaigns Toolkit - goo.gl/kVVJEy
- Out of the Shadows, Into the Streets: Transmedia Organizing and the Immigrants Rights Movement - goo.gl/nE4uyG

CITY REPORTS

Producing Knowledge to Win Homes For All

Right to the City Alliance will support a limited number of cities and host organizations in developing a city-focused housing report.

Why City Reports?

First, a number of our partner organizations are already doing or planning to do city reports as part of their local campaigns.

Second, last year, in developing and sharing our Rise of the Renter Nation and Rise of the Corporate Landlord reports, we learned some important lessons. A well done, well designed report can help to accomplish the following:

1. Establish your organization as a credible source of analysis and viable policy solutions
2. Influence and win over elected officials and policymakers
3. Garner support from allies

Blueprint for a City Report

The purpose of City Reports will be to influence the targets of our campaign to pass our proposed ordinance/policy or grant our demands.

Thus, the primary audience for the report are the targets of our campaign. For policy campaigns, the report will seek to influence elected officials and policymakers who have the power to pass the policies we are proposing.

Although each city has a unique context, the reports will be linked together to draw attention to how the housing crisis is affecting all cities. The reports will all share the following:

1. Common frame and narrative
2. Common design elements
3. Branding as part of Homes For All campaign

City Report Template

1. Executive Summary
2. Analysis of the Local Problem
 - a. Utilize Right to the City and Homes For All frame and narrative, including race/class/gender lense
 - b. Provide context of local housing crisis and national housing crisis
 - c. Address 5 policy pillars articulated in Rise of Renter Nation
 - d. Provide pertinent data and statistics with graphs and charts
 - e. Include stories and photos from impacted residents
3. Proposed Solution(s) to the Problem
 - a. Utilize Right to the City and Homes For All frame and narrative, including race/class/gender lense
 - b. Provide context of local housing crisis and national housing crisis
 - c. Address 5 policy pillars articulated in Rise of Renter Nation
 - d. Provide successful examples or models from other cities if available

Support from Right to the City Alliance

RTC will provide the following support to a limited number of cities based on our capacity:

1. **Narrative strategy support:** Support the local report team in utilizing the above blueprint. RTC will support your writing to expose what's at stake, propose solutions, and highlight the leadership of people most affected by the issue. The model can be adapted in any number of ways to reflect your organizing culture, campaign focus, and local conditions.

RTC will also help to ensure that the proposed solutions engage the "5 Pillar" approach of effective housing policy: 1- Ensure affordability, 2- Improve quality and health standards, 3- Enforce full accessibility, 4- Increase stability and permanence, 5- Create community control.
2. **Data:** Identify strategic, relevant data-points that help to strengthen and clarify your argument. (This will vary based on your campaign, i.e. renter demographic trends, foreclosures, AMI v. specific neighborhood income levels, public housing and Section 8 waiting list indicators, redlining local history, etc.).
3. **Examples of other Models/Wins Around Country:** Identify successful models that exist in other cities, if available.
4. **Editing and proofreading consultations:** Each city will identify a writer from your organization or associated resource allies to write the report. RTC's research committee offers editing consultation and a final proof-read for mechanical errors.
5. **Design:** Support in utilizing our basic design elements including bold, impact layouts, pull-quotes, side bars, image placement, and a limited number of infographics.

Process

Step 1: Present RTC with a 2-3 page synopsis of report idea and who comprises the local report production team (email synopsis to tony@righttothecity.org)

Step 2: RTC research committee representatives have call with the local report team to discuss details of RTC's role and the timeline

Step 3: Ongoing calls to discuss and edit drafts

