

## **Can't Pay Rent?**

### **Keep Your Home with Eviction Defense**

Many people in New York haven't been able to pay rent due to the effects of the coronavirus. If this is the case for you, or if you have gone on rent strike to support people who can't pay rent, we support you!

Right now, there is a moratorium on evictions, but this will be over in August and we need a plan to keep everyone in their homes. Unfortunately, the legal system is designed to benefit landlords. We want to help people stay in their homes and build up counter-power in our neighborhoods! Here are steps you can take to build an eviction defense group to help you, your friends, and your family stay in your homes:

1. Form an eviction defense group. This can be family, friends, neighbors, or people in your building who are facing the same problems, or even those who have paid rent but still want to support those who can't.

*Talking to your neighbors if you don't know them well:*

- Explain that you live in the building/neighborhood and that you've been having trouble with the landlord. Ask if they've lost work, had trouble paying rent or other bills, and if they're worried about paying rent in future. Ask if they've had other problems with the landlord. Listening carefully shows that you care.
- Tell your story. Explain the difficulty you're having and how it's affecting your life and the lives of those who live with you. It's okay to communicate your emotions - it will help your neighbors understand why it's important for you all to work together.
- Ask if they'll help you fight for everyone's rights. Invite them to start working with you and your other neighbors to keep the building safe from evictions and other landlord abuses. Explain your plan and see what they think. Get their contact information and stay in touch with them as you work together to protect your homes.
- If your direct neighbors aren't interested in being involved, you can look up other buildings owned by your landlord on these websites:
  - <https://whoownswhat.justfix.nyc/en/>
  - <https://a836-acris.nyc.gov/CP/>

2. Once you have a few people who are committed to work together, decide on basic principles. It's important for these principles to reflect solidarity with one another and a promise to not compromise on the struggle. These principles represent promises to each other that you are in it together! Two essential principles are: 1. No one will call the police at any point. 2. No one will negotiate with the landlord behind anyone's back.

3. Draft demands. This could include staying in your home, not paying back rent, decreasing rent, but might also include repairs or other necessities. It is useful to have a conversation with your landlord first to try to reach an agreement. If you have had a conversation with your landlord or your landlord has already made it clear they will try to evict you or anyone else in the group, you can plan to take action immediately, before the threat of eviction arises.
4. There are also a few safety measures you can take before you begin your series of actions, in case the landlord tries to retaliate.
  - Change the locks on your door.
  - Make sure you have (and can maintain) access to your water flow and electricity.
  - Build a phone tree for immediate assistance in case the landlord sends people to harass anyone in the group.
5. Deliver your demands to the landlord in the form of a letter. It is a powerful gesture to deliver this letter as a group.
6. If the landlord doesn't concede to the demands, your group can engage in a series of actions, that escalate from a simple action to more assertive ones, all to put social pressure on the landlord to do the right thing. Here is an example of a series of escalating actions:
  - Put up fliers on your neighbors' doors about what your landlord is doing.
  - Hold a demonstration outside your building where you hand out fliers to other tenants and neighbors about what the landlord is doing.
  - Put up fliers around the neighborhood about what your landlord is doing.
  - Hold a demonstration outside the landlord's office.
  - Put letters in the mailboxes of your landlord's neighbors about his actions.
  - Hold a demonstration outside your landlord's house. You may be able to find that information here: <https://www.familytreenow.com/>
7. If these measures fail and your landlord wants to proceed with an eviction, you should wait for the court case, rather than moving out when your landlord asks. This will often give you more time, and sometimes will yield a positive result. You may also continue your campaign leading up to and during the court case.
8. If it comes to this, you will have time to rally more people to your cause. This is a good time to build relationships with other groups who are working on eviction defense. In this way, we can build bigger defense networks. We can help you with that!

9. This is a good time to publicize the issue more widely. It's better to use smaller and more sympathetic media to get support rather than mainstream media. Large news outlets come with their own intentions which often undermine your goals.
10. If the court case fails, and the landlord still hasn't conceded, you can rally the larger network to have a demonstration outside your home.
11. We have engaged in these struggles before and have successfully kept people in their homes. We would love to sit down and talk with you about any questions you have about this process. We are all volunteers and do this for because we believe everyone should have a home. Please contact us at any time for advice or help: [revolutionaryabolitionistmovement@protonmail.com](mailto:revolutionaryabolitionistmovement@protonmail.com).

**#EvictionDefense**

**#CopsOutOfNeighborhoods**

**#CancelRent**



**The Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement is committed to abolition of the oppressive property relations at the core of rising rents, gentrification, displacement, poverty and homelessness.**

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