

HOSTING YOUR FIRST MEETING

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

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- When And Why to Organize
- How To Build Your Team
- Hosting Your First Meeting

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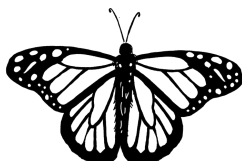
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These guides are built to be interactive and kept as
documentation of your experiences while organizing.
Write in them! Share with your community!



intro

This zine will help you host your first meeting!

Organizing cannot happen with only one person. To organize effectively you have to talk to your neighbors and other allies to find alignment.

Tenant organizing campaigns are a cycle, not a straight line. It's important to keep building your base and maintain connections throughout your campaign.



Flyer Making 101

One of the easiest ways to advertise and promote your meetings and events is through flyers. There are key elements to make an engaging poster that includes all of the necessary information for folks to understand the event you're promoting.

HERE'S AN EXAMPLE FOR A FLYER,



If you live in a multilingual community, make sure to translate your materials with DeepL Translate, with the help of bilingual leaders on your team, or with the assistance of a partnering organization.

You can always create large posters or signs by hand to advertise meetings or spread key information in limited places, like on bulletin boards or in common areas. This is an especially great way to get younger folks involved in the association.

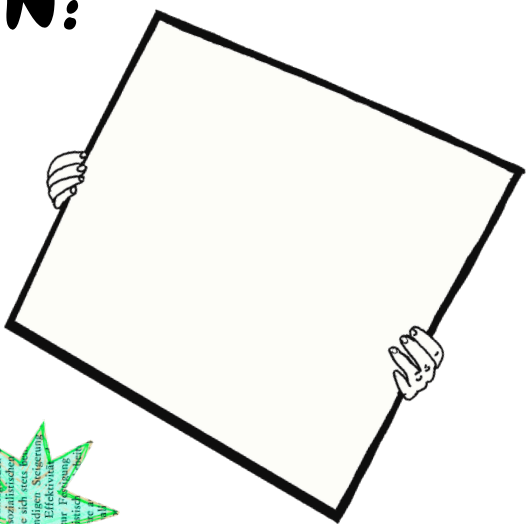
With the graphics on the next pages, assemble your own meeting poster! You can bring this poster to a scanner, size it up and use it in your own building!

CUT AND CREATE YOUR OWN POSTER

WHERE:

WHAT:

WHEN:



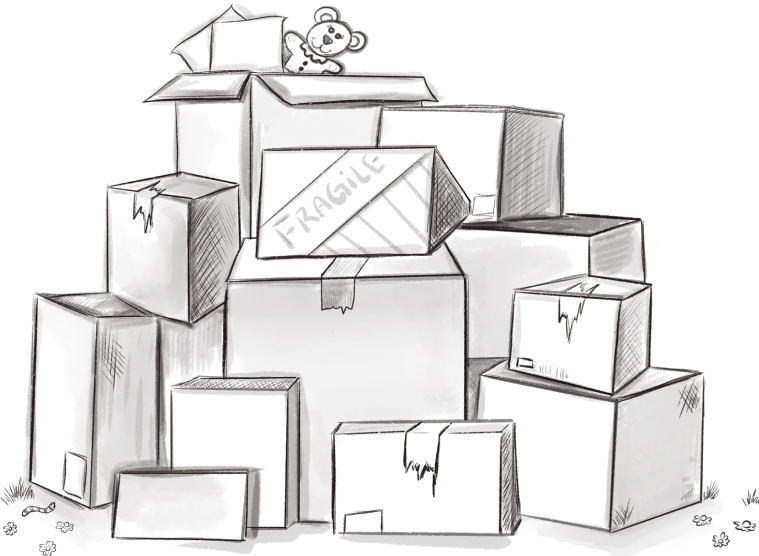
CUT HERE



LET'S JOIN TOGETHER AND TAKE ACTION!



QUESTIONS?



CUT HERE





If you're putting together a large meeting, it'll be a lot of work. You'll want **other neighbors** to help coordinate. Meet first with a small group of neighbors who are enthusiastic about coming together and are willing to do some preparation with you. Assembling an agenda will be a key step in the process, but before that you will make some other decisions.

TOGETHER YOU'LL NEED TO DECIDE A FEW THINGS:

Where should the meeting be held?

- Is there a common space in your building you can use? Sometimes an apartment or house can be large enough, or you can reserve a room at a public building like a library, church, or school.
 - Is the meeting space and facilitation format convenient and accessible for your neighbors?

When should the meeting be held?

- Make sure to pick a time that is most convenient for the majority of your neighbors. If many people work 9-5, then evenings or weekends are generally good times to meet

What will be discussed in the meeting?

- Create a meeting plan—it should be brief! This could look like an agenda, a to-do list, or goals for your meeting. We'll talk more about that later.



Who will do what?

- In your small leadership group, assign different roles for the meeting, including someone to sign people in, a note-taker, and at least one person to facilitate.

How will you get turnout to the meeting?

- Posting signs and posters around your building is an excellent way to spread the word.
- If you have contact information for your neighbors, remind them on the day of the meeting and do a quick door-knock an hour before to get better turnout.



CHOOSING AN ISSUE

Tenant associations are equipped to tackle shared problems with clear targets (decision-makers) and demands/solutions.

You'll probably find that your neighbors have many concerns and problems with the property, landlord, and community. While there may be a number of problems, not all can be resolved at once.

The tenant association must decide which are top priority. We recommend working on one or two issues at a time. Some examples of issues and solutions:

- If residents are facing high yearly rent increases, a solution could be rent freezes for a year.
- If residents are not getting repairs, the solution could be timely and quality repairs from management.

THE BEST ISSUES TO ORGANIZE AROUND ARE



ACTIVITY: SPAGHETTI ON THE WALL

Give everyone the chance to be heard, and see what the most common problems are.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Have everyone write down the top three problems they are experiencing on post-its.
- Have a volunteer collect the issues and put them up on the wall or a large piece of paper.
- The facilitator works with everyone to organize the problems into broad categories (ex: Repairs, Communication, Safety, etc.).
- Once all problems have been sorted into broad categories, it is easy to identify which category has the most issues listed under it and then rank them by priority level.
- Take the top two problems and as a group, brainstorm possible solutions
- Take a majority vote to determine the top three solutions everyone thinks the association should focus on



Community Agreements



At your first meeting, you should establish community agreements based in mutual respect and shared struggle.

Some examples of community agreements

1. Be Curious, Open, and Respectful - call in, not out/throw sunshine, not shade
2. No one knows everything - together, we know a lot
3. We can't be articulate all the time - give the benefit of the doubt and ask questions
4. We take care of ourselves - stretch, eat, drink, use the restroom, rest, etc.
5. Confidentiality - don't speak for others without explicit permission; don't share something communicated in a private or safe space
6. One mic - one voice at a time
7. Take Space/Make Space - if you are usually quiet, challenge yourself to take more space, and if you usually talk a lot, be mindful to leave room for quieter voices
8. Avoid Jargon, Acronyms, and Industry language - use inclusive language that is accessible for people
9. Be aware of time - "enough, let's move on" (ELMO) means if what you wanted to say has already been said, don't say it
10. Speak from your own experience - use "I" statements rather than generalizations



My Community Agreements

take a moment⁴
to write down
your
association's
agreements!

This is a living
document available
at every meeting as
shared grounding
and accountability.



SETTING AN AGENDA

Agendas ensure that meetings stay on topic and moving, so that time is well-spent. Agendas help neighbors plan ahead and prepare and keep everyone engaged with planned breaks and activities. Here's a sample agenda:

Purpose: To get to know each other, talk about our housing challenges, and make a plan to support each other moving forward

Agenda

1. Welcome - 10 mins
 - a. Consider a grounding practice, prayer, etc...
 - b. Why are we here?
2. Introductions - 10 mins
 - a. What is your name? How long have you lived here?
3. Meeting Community Agreements - 5 mins
4. Issue discussion - 25 mins
 - a. What are the issues that everyone is facing in our building?
5. Next steps - 10 mins
 - a. Set next meeting
 - b. Talk about what next steps need to happen between meetings and at the next meeting
6. Evaluation
 - a. One word from everyone about how they are feeling to end the meeting

CREATE YOUR OWN AGENDA!

Using the example above, try making your own agenda in the space below!

HOW TO AVOID COMMON ORGANIZING MISTAKES

Share responsibilities: Sharing the responsibilities of building and maintaining the association, rather than expecting one or two neighbors to do the majority of the work, can prevent burnout. It also ensures that many voices are included and that the association will continue to function even if some neighbors move or have changes in capacity.

Attend meetings: Life happens, and sometimes you can't attend every meeting. But if meeting attendance dwindles, the power of the association begins to weaken because collective decision-making is almost impossible, and involved tenants lose momentum. If you want change, you have to show up and make it happen!

Focus on building-wide, winnable issues: This doesn't mean you can't support each other as individual neighbors when someone needs help. But making individual issues the work of the entire association might reduce engagement because most tenants' interests are no longer being represented.

- Some individual issues have the potential to become building-wide issues, like rent increases, notices to vacate, or lack of response to maintenance requests. Use your best judgment when deciding which issues you will tackle together.

EVALUATE YOUR MEETING!

Everything worth doing is worth evaluating. Take some time here to reflect on your first meeting. How did it feel to set or follow an agenda? What went well, what could have been better?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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While backed by non-profit institutions, these zines were compiled by a group of renters working for our collective liberation.

May we bring forward a better future for us all.

