

RTC History Activity: Facilitation Guide

What is RTC and why did the tenant movement fight for it?

10 minutes

(Note: if you're short on time you could cut this whole first section)

- Show Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrlsSrRCuyg> (5 minutes)
 - **Note:** The film has subtitles in Spanish! Make sure to hit the "cc" button at the bottom right corner of the screen to turn the subtitles on.
 - Load the video before you play it so that it doesn't stall or download it beforehand if you don't have internet access.

- After the movie, ask: What did we learn about why tenants fought for RTC?
 - Take answers popcorn style.
 - Conclusion points to add if they aren't brought up:
 - There are about 25,000 evictions in this city. 77% of families who were evicted, wouldn't have been if they had attorneys. That means landlords evict people not because they are right, but because they have power. RTC shifts that power. Not only will tenants start to win their cases, but we think landlords will stop suing tenants like they have been and this epidemic of evictions that our communities face will start to end. And that creates space for us to fight different battles.
 - RTC reminds us that we have rights. Also, it isn't just about court and evictions. It's about every time tenants are scared to call 311, to complain to their landlord, to organize in their building. RTC reminds people that being behind on your rent is their fault! It's the fault of a city where housing isn't a right and landlords have too much power. Most everyone's rent is too high---so that's a political problem, not a personal one.
 - RTC will also inspire tenants to organize in their buildings, because they know if their landlord retaliates, they will be defended---because we, the tenant movement created a NEW RIGHT in this city.

How did the tenant movement win RTC?

20 minutes

- *Activity Prep:*
 - Copy the timeline on bright colored paper, with English on one side and the corresponding Spanish slide on the other. Make an additional copy of the activity for yourself (sometimes people can't find the paper and you need to step in and read a particular card). If you have interpretation services, make sure the interpreter also has a copy!
 - Have tape and wall space where you can put the history up.

Facilitation Guide:

1. RTC is historic! How did we win this amazing victory? We are going to do an interactive game to tell the story of the campaign. Some of you have a piece of bright yellow paper under your chairs! If you do, please find it and pick it up now. Each piece of paper tells a bit of our story as the coalition!!!
2. Each paper is numbered. Who has number 1? Can you please come up to the front of the room and read it out loud?
3. After each history point is read, tape it on the wall.
4. Who has number 2? etc. There are a total of 20 slides.
5. When you finish the timeline, ask: Any reactions or lessons? Anything you learned that you didn't know?
6. The timeline ends in October 2017. But the coalition hasn't stopped organizing. Since October:
 - a. Evictions have gone down by 24%. Filings have gone down by 10%. 15 zip codes have RTC (zip codes are being phased in over 5 years. Zip codes will be irrelevant by 2022).
 - b. Judges and court staff tell tenants about RTC and the court culture is changing.
 - c. In April 2018, the coalition held town halls in every borough to explain how RTC works, which over 600 tenants attended. Over 5,000 tenants received information about RTC during outreach for the town halls.
 - d. Organizing groups have been doing leadership trainings and tenant workshops with tenants who come to the town halls.
 - e. Organizing groups are forming tenants associations in every borough where folks have RTC to build tenant power.
 - f. In June 2018, the coalition announced RTC 2.0 legislation:
 - i. Increase income threshold from 200%-400%;
 - ii. Mandate funding for organizing;
 - iii. Cover more cases like appeals, and cases in other venues (supreme court, HPD hearings, etc.).
 - g. The coalition created new resources for tenants to know their rights:
 - i. www.evictionfreenyc.org
 1. Now in English and Spanish.
 2. Working on translating it into French and Haitian Kreyol.
 3. Raising funds for other languages.
 - ii. FAQs
 - iii. Outreach fliers
 - iv. New logo
 - h. The law funds lawyers, not organizers! The coalition is actively fundraising to support neighborhood based groups doing tenant organizing.
 - i. We received an award from the National Low Income Housing Coalition in DC!
 - j. Working with other cities to pass RTC! Currently 14 other cities are working to pass RTC!

- i. We took a group of 10 tenant leaders to Boston to meet with Vida Urbana about their eviction blockade model!
 - ii. We took a group of 50 tenant leaders to DC to see the “EVICTED” exhibit and met with a group of local lawyers and organizers working on RTC.
 - k. We’ve done numerous presentations and panels about RTC to get the word out.
 - l. We are starting a courtwatch program in the Bronx to monitor landlord behavior and to support tenants as they claim their right to an attorney!
7. The coalition meets monthly and has 5 main working groups:
- a. Tenant organizing;
 - b. Tenant attorney pipeline;
 - c. Court based implementation;
 - d. National coordination and
 - e. RTC 2.0.

You can sign up for general updates, to volunteer and to donate on our website

www.righttocounselnyc.org