

Organizing in RTC Zips--what's different about it?

Every building is going to organize around issues that affect them, whether it's repairs, harassment, overcharges, etc.--it might not be about evictions. But if tenants have RTC, what should you do differently, if anything?

1. Every tenant should know they have RTC, regardless of whether they have a case in court. For example, in Brooklyn, a landlord bought a building in a RTC zip, sued everyone for eviction and because tenants didn't know they had RTC, they didn't fight their cases and instead moved out.
 - a. Flyer every single door with the RTC flyer, FAQ and Eviction Free NYC postcard.
 - b. At a TA meeting, do a brief 10-15 minute teach in about the history of the campaign, making sure folks understand how it works if and when they get sued, and making sure they know that this is a right that the tenant movement won--they should feel powerful to claim that right! It should also help them feel less afraid to organize around things they care about, because landlords can't threaten them as easily as they used to be able to!
2. Ask tenants to let you know if they get 3 day rent demands, the precursor to an eviction case, and/or if they get court papers. Track those tenants in a database. Make sure those tenants know how RTC works and how to connect to an attorney in your borough.
3. If cases do start, ask tenants to tell you which legal services org is representing them, and/or the name of their attorney. Get in touch with that attorney to let them know there is a TA and larger issues going on. If evictions seem possible, ask them to alert you.
4. If evictions seem possible, consider working with the TA to set up an rapid response eviction defense network. The network could cook for the tenant, do childcare when they have court, raise funds to help pay back rent and/or put their bodies on the line for an eviction blockade.
5. Identify tenants at risk of eviction, who would be willing to risk a fight and do an eviction blockade. Set up a training on civil disobedience and eviction blockades so tenants can decide if they are ready to do this. Eviction blockades would require press work, lots of prep work, coordination with attorneys in the case of civil disobedience, legal observers and more.
6. In addition to individual eviction defense, as you work to develop a campaign plan to win the demands folks identify, consider bolder actions like rent strikes, 7A, etc., that might risk landlord retaliation like eviction cases, but that are less scary bc of RTC!