

TENANT UNION FLATBUSH

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HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR TENANTS ASSOCIATION

Why Organize?

- ★ Get to know your neighbors
- ★ Build community and create communal spaces
- ★ Mutual aid
- ★ Collective bargaining for repairs, and fighting rent hikes
- ★ Be part of a larger movement of tenants building community power
- ★ Emergency preparedness & Safety
- ★ Fight gentrification and influence neighborhood/community development

Step 1	JOIN TUF. As part of the tenants union, we'll help you through this process. Even more important, as a larger organization we will build the power necessary to challenge and transform the capitalist housing market.
Step 2	PLAN AND PREPARE. Gather outreach materials. Assess your situation and ask yourself if anyone in your building might be willing to help you.
Step 3	CONNECT AND BUILD. Talk to neighbors in your building, and get their contact information. Ask lots of questions about their situation, it's likely they have issues but it might take some talking to bring them out. Be conscious of the languages people speak! Ask neighbors or TUF for translators.
Step 4	BUILD A COMMUNICATION METHOD. Set up a system for tenants to stay in communication such as a WhatsApp group. Use the line of communication to promote a tenants meeting to discuss building issues and as a way to get to know each other.
Step 5	HOLD YOUR FIRST MEETING. Pick a time and place. Find a time when most interested people can join; you might want to rotate times to accommodate schedules, but don't worry if not everyone can make it. Designate roles. Facilitator, notetaker, someone to make an agenda; use this as a way to get people involved and invested in the process. Make a turn-out plan & agenda!
Step 6	TAKE ACTION! The TA should do whatever it sees fit to better the homes, lives, and financial situations of its members. Try some escalating pressure: send a collective demands letter, visit the landlord's office or house, etc. Connect with other buildings whether they already have formed TAs or need help in starting one. Connecting with other TAs in your neighborhood or city can be helpful in fighting for one general goal!

Tenant Union Flatbush (TUF) is an autonomous tenants union for renters of the wider Flatbush area. TUF is a tenant-led movement committed to fighting against high rents, evictions, disrepair & harassment.

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What Are My Rights in My Rent Stabilized Apartment?

If your apartment is rent stabilized, you have certain protections and rights in regard to your unit. Residential units occupied as primary residences in buildings with six or more units that were built prior to January 1, 1974 are or likely have been subject to rent stabilization.

Lease Renewals. Rent stabilized tenants are entitled to lease renewals for one or two-year terms. Your landlord must provide a renewal lease 90-150 days prior to the current lease's expiration. Even if your landlord fails to provide a renewal lease, you remain a rent stabilized tenant.

Rent Increases. Rent increases upon a lease renewal or an apartment vacancy are regulated and set by the Rent Guidelines Board. Rent can also be increased for improvements, renovations, or in cases of owner hardship with approval from New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR). Landlords must register and report the legal rent for rent stabilized units. Tenants with preferential rents as of June 14, 2019 are entitled to a preferential rent for the duration of their tenancy, regardless of what the "preferential rent rider" says. To obtain a copy of the rent history for your apartment, text "rent history" to 646-783-0627 or request it online at <https://portal.hcr.ny.gov/app/ask>.

Eviction Protection. Rent stabilized tenants can only be evicted for non-payment of rent or in certain other limited circumstances, such as breaching the terms of a lease or nuisance.

Rent Overcharges. If HCR finds that your landlord has charged you more than the legal rent, it may order the owner of the apartment to refund any excess rent collected for six years prior to your complaint. If it finds the landlord did this willfully, the owner may have to pay triple damages.

Rent Reduction for Decreases in Services. HCR may order a rent reduction if the owner of the apartment fails to provide required services or fails to make necessary repairs.

Right to Succeed. If the tenant of record vacates the apartment, and you are an immediate family member or have a close family relationship, and if you lived with the tenant of record for at least two years prior to when he or she vacated the premises (or one year if you have a disability or are over the age of 62), you may be entitled to succeed to (inherit) the apartment.

Harassment. The law prohibits harassment of rent regulated tenants. Owners found guilty of harassment may be subject to fines and civil and/or criminal penalties.

For more detailed information or to file a complaint against your landlord, call HCR at (718) 739-6400, visit <https://rent.hcr.ny.gov/RentConnect/Tenant/Overview> or <https://hcr.ny.gov/division-housing-and-community-renewal>, or send an email to rentinfo@nyshcr.org.

Legal Disclaimer: The information contained on this flyer does not constitute legal advice and must not be used as a substitute for the advice of a lawyer qualified to give advice on legal issues pertaining to housing.