What is ATUN?
--Established about a year and a half ago, network of tenants unions
--Monthly meetings
--ATU agenda doc
--Register for more info here: bit.ly/ATUNintake
--Autonomous: operate independently of large foundation money and nonprofits (strings attached, particularly with supporting policies that harm tenants)
--Leadership is from the tenants
--Committed to base-building: while they are involved in policy, see those policies and fight for them as opportunity to build base
--Mutual aid = at center of what they do
--Also fight against gentrification: displacement/replacement of poor for profit (development without displacement not possible)
--Also committed to supporting new tenants unions

Mack (Sacramento)

Agenda Review

Why is it important to organize?
--Most people a paycheck or a few paychecks away from being unhoused
--Solutions presented by politicians not sufficient
--Having to choose between basic needs and keeping a roof over our head
--Crisis existed well before coronavirus pandemic, now just larger scale, all at the same time & in a different way
--At the end, will come down to: come up with the money, move, get evicted, or organize
--Stop mass evictions & foreclosure, collectively say no

Jade (Omaha)

Organizing Tactics
--Big demands → large majorities
--Can still start fighting before that

(1) What are your networks
(2) 5 people that will start group with you
(3) Invite to set up a meeting
(4) Contact ATUN (office hours)
(5) Make a plan! (Today at 4:00 p.m.)

--Get in touch with more networks of people/tenants and hear about what renting is like for them

(1) What are ways you can listen to the working class in your area?
(2) What do you already know about tenants in your area?

--Ways to do these things:

(1) Some networks start around KYR sessions
(2) Small fights get practice/build confidence
(3) Tenants town hall
(4) Create some demands for local elected officials and spread through networks

--Housekeeping

(1) Develop contact lists to connect with in an ongoing basis, for future actions
(2) Ask people to specifically do something
(3) Consistently follow up

ACTION

--Only tenants can win these rights, build power to get them

Reportbacks
(Southside) Tenants United, Chicago
- Experiencing growth in membership and people creating their own TUs, wanting to go on rent strike
- Connected with mutual aid networks
- Using eviction moratorium to support others nationally
- Growing anti-police sentiments, sense that we can’t go back to “normal”
- No illegal evictions yet but preparing to mobilize against them

Rapid City, SD - West River Housing Coalition
- Organizing in mobile home parks
- Focusing on one slumlord in particular that many communities were dealing with
- Fraudulent late fees
- About to escalate but had to hold off because of pandemic
- Landlord doubled down, handing out more late fees and evicting people (before moratorium in place)
- Starting public shaming campaign - has worked in the past
Houston, TX

- 7 days of tenant power:
  - Phone blast with particular targets each day
  - Broad demands around evictions, late rent fees, etc.
  - Some media exposure
  - Membership growth
- Building relationships with new people coming around in order:
  - 1 on 1 meetings over internet
  - Building foundation for when crisis passes
- Wall of shame for worst landlords
- Building databases: tenant info
- KYR infographic, TU guides in both English and Spanish: [all docs here](#)
- Creating statewide strategy in TX

Omaha Tenants United

- Membership / interest increase, mainly people who want to rent strike or have to rent strike - providing KYR info for these people, encouraging them to get neighbors on board
- COVID-19 related eviction moratorium but not broadly
- Petition and survey on Facebook to find out if people are able to pay rent, who their landlords are, etc.
- Documents in paper form:
  - Dropped off or printable to hand out to neighbors, with survey questions to help organize a whole building or neighbors
  - Provides an action item for new people: all questions laid out they should be having for 1-on-1 with their neighbors
- Some media exposure: “experts are recommending that you organize with your neighbors” - overall rent strike and organizing is starting to gain credibility - social media posts / propaganda helps
- Still within 5 day grace period to pay rent, but will start to see evictions that were already in motion

Q&A

- Worries about public organizing / repressive landlords
  - Need to do a lot of outreach to find tenants that are going to organize publicly.
  - Inoculate a lot.
  - Car protests
  - Lots of 1-on-1s over Zoom
  - Acknowledge peoples’ fears, turn to community for support - mutual aid pods can support for basic needs
- Outreach / building connections with other groups during pandemic
  - Social media
  - Flyering / poster with call number and meeting time
Online petitions and survey with contact info, following up with everyone who signs up
Onboarding zoom calls, 1-on-1 talking with people, with asks to do something

**Tactics for shaming slumlords**
- Email and phone zaps have been successful
- Social media
- Flyer / poster neighborhood
- Press releases
- Finding landlord’s neighborhood, sending pictures of black mold on postcards to landlord’s neighbors
- Embarrassing petition delivery at landlord’s place of work
- Poster on landlord’s lawn every day
- Letter stating intent to form Tenants’ Union posted on door, like the eviction notices they put on people’s doors

**Less dense urban housing, small time landlords, small number of tenants**
- Other buildings in support of small buildings
- Neighborhood committees - networks - who build solidarity campaigns against a specific landlord
- Build solidarity among tenants of same landlord in different neighborhoods

**Issues around lack of physical contact with neighbors: Whatsapp channels and other platforms helpful**

**Lawsuits versus organizing for protections? And how to reconcile varying opinions.**
- Sub-groups within Tenant Unions:
  - Landlord research
  - Rent strikes
  - Outreach
- People know that lawsuits are not particularly helpful right now

**Outreach and tactics for new tenant unions**
- Reach out to your friends, especially people who are going through these issues
- Invite a neighbor over
- Get creative - raves, potlucks, movie parties, etc., over the internet!
- Door knocking was what was done before - now, need to rely on existing networks: coworkers, friends, faith community, etc.
- Flyer / poster / have conversations along the way from point A to point B, including essential workers
- Volunteer at food banks, drop off centers, put flyers in bags
- One advantage: many people are in the same situation waiting to be organized - share your story
- Hand make a sign, or notes under doors: “I’m having a hard time paying rent. Are you in the same situation? Text this number.”

**Building already on rent strike but reluctant to start a union: make arguments that joining union is a way to attach a demand to what they’re already doing

**Next steps**
○ ID 5 people you could start a group with, ask them to ID 5 people each
○ Learn the laws and rights in your area
○ Find out who tenants go to when repairs aren’t being done, when lease is violated, etc.
○ Listen to each other - collect peoples’ stories - what are people experiencing, how do these stories overlap and create connections between people
○ Establish dues:
  ■ Suggested: $5 / month for employed people, $1 / month if you’re unemployed
  ■ Pay for printing
  ■ Rent meeting space
  ■ Interpretation equipment
  ■ Pay for Zoom line
  ■ Support each other
○ Don't get hung up on legal status / nonprofit status
● Office hours on Zoom for several hours  (zoom room 482-696-1152)
  ○ Monday 4/6 3-7 ET
  ○ Thursday 4/9 3-7 ET
● Regional meetings Saturday April 11th
● Next North American Town Hall Meeting: April 18th - next meeting, assessing for rent strike May 1st