



# The Homes For All GREENBOOK

Join the movement to fight for our homes, our communities and to win affordable, dignified, and permanent Homes For All people.

*"My house is not a house, it is my home. When your home, your family, your community is at risk of being ripped apart, there is no choice but to fight." —Petra Bennet, Colorado Homes For All*

**HOMES FOR ALL**

**RECLAIM. REMAIN. REBUILD OUR CITIES.**



If you're reading this you are probably one of the millions of people who are being forced to pay too much for housing, facing eviction, or constantly being forced to move. And maybe you're dealing with a slumlord or living in a home with mold, no hot water, rodents or other bad conditions.

### **First things, first:**

- 1) You're not to blame**
- 2) You're not alone**
- 3) We're stronger together**
- 4) You can fight back!**

We came together because we have seen first-hand how listening to one another and fighting for each other builds the power we need to fight this unjust housing system! We have fought foreclosures, evictions, rent increases, and displacement – and won! We have experienced the painful effects of eviction and the threat of losing our homes and communities and found that by joining together with others in the same situation we have found our voice and the power we needed to overcome the shame and hurt caused by the big banks, landlords and developers.

HFA has grown to include 71 organizations in 41 big cities and small towns and 36 states. Some have been around for decades, others for days; some have staff, some are volunteer only. We all believe housing is a human right and that every person deserves a safe, affordable and permanent home.

We believe that this movement will be strongest and most accomplishable, when it is led and directed by the people who are most impacted by oppression.

We believe that we can and will win a world where all people have safe, affordable and permanent homes by building a powerful movement of millions of people ready to support each other by taking risks and collective action to transform our world.

# HOMES FOR ALL CORE PRINCIPLES



**MUTUAL CARE & RESPECT.** Each person's emotional, spiritual and personal well-being is necessary to the health of our organizations and movement. We take care of ourselves and each other.



**EACH ONE, TEACH ONE.** It's up to all of us to grow the movement. Every HFA member, each one of us, is committed to training, supporting and mentoring the next member. We encourage each other to try new things and learn from each other's successes and mistakes.



**GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY.** We make decisions democratically, collectively and transparently, grounded in trust for each other. When differences or conflict arise we engage in honest, face-to-face and respectful dialogue to try to build understanding and unity so we can move forward.



**COLLECTIVE ACTION.** We take collective action side-by-side with others to take a stand against unjust laws and policies, defend each other against displacement and shine a light on corporations and individuals who harm our communities.

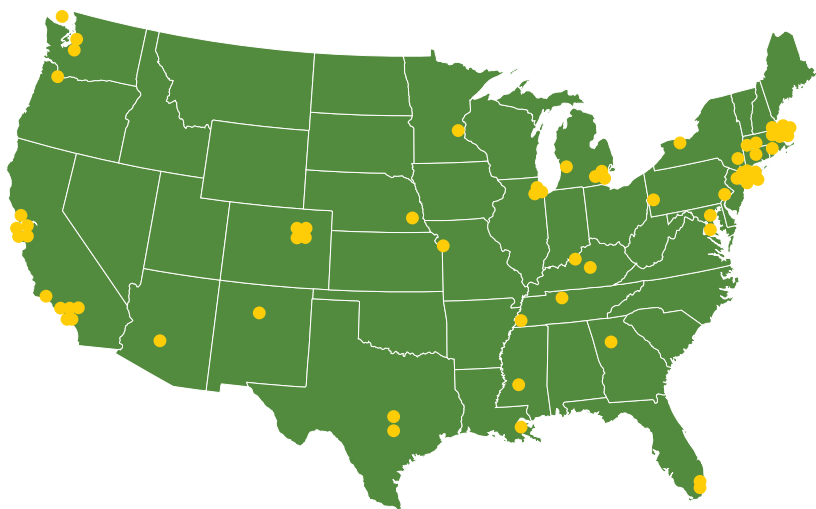


**WE GET FREE TOGETHER.** Homes For All is open to people of all races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, ages, immigration status, able-bodiedness, religious and spiritual beliefs, and who speak all languages. We do not tolerate bigotry within our movement.



**SOLIDARITY.** One for all, all for one. We don't always agree, but we believe in each other and know we need each other to win. We also know we can't win unless we are united and building together with other movements fighting for justice, liberation and equality.





**Our movement is united by core values and beliefs about the world we are working to transform:**



**HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT.** Housing should be built & maintained to meet the needs of communities and provide stability for families and individuals, not create enormous profit for corporations.



**THE PEOPLE MOST IMPACTED MUST LEAD!** We believe that to win homes for all we need to overturn centuries of racist, sexist, classist and oppressive housing and economic policies that have impacted low-income and working-class communities, Black, Indigenous, Latinxs and Asian communities, women and LGBTQ communities the most. We believe our movement will be strongest when these people, who have seen the impacts of the crisis first hand, are leading the way to transform our world.



**LAND & HOUSING SHOULD BE COLLECTIVELY-CONTROLLED BY COMMUNITIES AND SUSTAINED FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.** We believe communities must control the resources – including land and housing – in our neighborhoods. We should relate to land and our earth as stewards, respecting the land with future generations in mind.

## KENNETHA PATTERSON, NASHVILLE TN



The month I was evicted, 20 other families were evicted from my same apartment complex. I wasn't organized. I was by myself. My children were very traumatized by having to move. Even though the same thing was happening to all of us, none of us knew to organize. We've witnessed people by droves being pushed out to the outskirts. I feel like the people that got pushed out built the city.

Around the time I was being evicted a few renters and organizers from Nashville drove up to the HFA National Assembly in Chicago in April 2016. They met people from across the country organizing against evictions and displacement and came back and started holding town hall meetings. I met them when I spoke out at the first town hall. From then on I've been involved.

In the midst of that, we found out that our apartment complex was being sold for \$20 million. So we got organized in my building. We started knocking on our neighborhoods doors and built our tenant union one person at a time.

We wrote letters to pressure the new owners. It scared the bejesus out of them that were actually organized, and in their face saying "No, you're NOT going to displace people!" We were not part of their plans. Our first victory was around repairs. And then we won rent control: now the rent can't go up more than \$35 every year.

At the beginning when I first started out, I felt so drained "I'm so tired of fighting and I don't wanna fight." Even in that same breath, I kept coming out swinging. And I'm going to keep fighting for safe, stable, affordable housing.

## JOIN HOMES FOR ALL TODAY!

Homes For All is an open movement and anyone can join. If there isn't an HFA group near you, you and a couple of others can start a new HFA group! We will support you.

Join an existing HFA group near you:  
[homesforall.org/members](https://homesforall.org/members)

Whether you're an individual or an existing organization here's are the **3 steps** to join Homes For All:



### STEP 1: BUILD A TEAM – FORM AN ORGANIZING TEAM AND JOIN HOMES FOR ALL

Find a group of at least 3 other tenants or residents who are fed up and ready to do something about the housing crisis with you. Tip: start with your friends, neighbors, co-workers or family.

**REMINDER:** With your organizing team take time to share your experiences. Talk about the vision of what you want to do together. Ask each other who else in your community is affected by the same issues? The more unified you can be, the stronger you will grow.



### STEP 2: SIGN THE HOMES FOR ALL PLEDGE

The pledge is at the back of this greenbook OR you can find it at [www.homesforall.org/pledge](https://www.homesforall.org/pledge). Signing the pledge means you pledge to support the principles and values of Homes For All.



### STEP 3: START ORGANIZING & GROW YOUR TEAM – REACHING OUT TO OTHERS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Set a time to go canvassing (door-to-door knocking) to connect with other residents. This might be in your apartment complex, on your block at a local school or community center. Figure out where the people you want/need to reach are at and go to them!

**! TIP 1:** A good rule of organizing is to spend two-thirds of your time listening when you're canvassing.

**! TIP 2:** Bring a form and keep track of the doors you knocked on, the response and what you talked about.

**! TIP 3:** Invite people to a next step – a community meeting or barbeque, and follow up!

*Want to talk through your plan to organize your community with other people who have done it in their community? Have questions about how to start organizing or fighting back against eviction?*

**Call the Homes For All Hotline: 1-800-CALL-HFA [1-800-225-5498]**

## DIFFERENT TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS IN DIFFERENT PLACES

Each community will need to build slightly different types of organizations. In some places organizing a building tenant union makes sense. In others it might be a city-wide tenant union. If you live in a manufactured home park you may want to build a Manufactured Home Park Association. If your community is facing tons of luxury development or being rezoned you might want to organize a community union made up of renters, working class homeowners and neighbors to fight for your vision of your neighborhoods future. You can learn more about these different models of organization at [www.homesforall.org/organizingmodels](http://www.homesforall.org/organizingmodels)

### DEBORAH ARNOLD, ATLANTA GEORGIA



Housing Justice League: We decided to start a tenants' union to build COMMUNITY POWER in our building. We went door-to-door and started holding meetings in our building. What was really so inspiring for me was that the other tenants SHOWED UP and they came out yelling "Nobody's going to put me out of my place!"

We confronted management and the owner about the issue and called on our local and national allies for support. The landlord thought we were a complex of people who were uneducated, but we showed her who we were. We refused to leave and were ready to fight. We got a 5 year contract extension written in stone guaranteeing us affordability until 2022 — that's rent control right there!



NYC NYCHA PublicHousingProtest 2017.  
Photo credit: David Branigan



## BUILDING POWER & YOUR ORGANIZATION

In each of our cities, our path to building organizations has been different, but we've learned from each other that there are certain steps that are important and helpful. We often do multiple steps at the same time, and sometimes revisit an earlier step. These suggestions should help you get started, not limit you!



### GET EVERYONE TOGETHER – HOLD REGULAR (WEEKLY OR MONTHLY) COMMUNITY ASSEMBLIES OR BUILDING MEETINGS

Housing problems often leave us with fear or shame we must confront to move forward. We do this by getting together regularly, sharing our stories, listening to each other, supporting each other, and identifying our common suffering and ideas for solutions. This is a process, and it takes time, so it's important to build trust and consistency.

Some things to consider when planning a meeting agenda are:

- A. **PREPARATION:** create an agenda; identify a facilitator; let people know about the meeting in advance. Keep in mind any need for interpretation, food and childcare, and a location and time that works well for folks.
- B. **OPENING:** make everyone feel welcome and give them an opportunity to introduce themselves; review your principles and purpose; choose a notetaker and timekeeper so meetings run smoothly and on time.



**TIP:** In Minneapolis & Boston new members pledge the group that they want to “stand and fight for their homes” and the rest of the group chants back “we will stand and fight with you!” Building this sense of solidarity and unity is really important in your community assemblies or meetings!

- C. **CREATE NEXT STEPS:** identify the problem you are addressing and make plans on how to solve it; make key decisions democratically. Create “action items” as you go so people know what they need to do.

Detroit16 Court House Action Outreach 2017.  
 Photo credit: Detroit Peoples-Platform



- D. **PARTICIPATION AND ROLES:** allow and encourage everyone to participate. Sometimes it may help to break into small groups or pair up for deeper discussions; provide opportunities for everyone to take different roles.
- E. **CLOSING:** make announcements, evaluate the meeting, pass the hat and lift people's spirits with a song or a chant.
- F. **FOLLOW THROUGH:** It's important that we carry out decisions we made and follow through with our commitments; the notes are helpful to remind us what these were.

**Fight Fight Fight,  
Housing Is  
A Human Right!**



### **IMAGINE THE FUTURE YOU WANT – DEVELOP A SHARED VISION, GOALS AND DEMANDS TOGETHER.**

We've learned that the strongest organizations are ones that take time to develop shared vision, goals and demands together. Ask your group: what do we want to be different about our community in 3, 5, 10, 30 years? What kind of power do we want to have as a group or a community? What do we want to win together? How big do we need our movement to be to be successful?

These questions can help you set internal goals and external goals to help you develop a strategy and a plan for how to organize. \*\*\* The **Homes For All Renters Bill of Rights** has sample demands that groups across the country have used to fight for Homes For All.



### **DEVELOP A STRATEGY, LAUNCH YOUR FIRST CAMPAIGN**

When you are clear on what you want (your demands) ask each other – and allies in your community: who are the people, organizations or institutions we need to pressure to get what we want? Who has the power to give us what we are demanding?

When you start getting clear on demands and targets think about who are the people in our community we need to bring into our movement to support us? Who are the people who are against us? What actions or tactics will it take to win our demands and advance our vision? How do we want to grow and gain new skills through our campaign? How can we bring more people into our organization to grow our power?

Developing a strategy for your campaign is not an easy process. We don't always agree on every idea, so it takes time to develop a solid plan that members agree to and are ready to carry out. The process is as important as the campaign. You can always reach out to other HFA members for ideas and support in developing your campaigns!

! **TIPS a) Education:** we're often made to feel like the issues we face are individual or unique — take time to understand why displacement, eviction, rising rents and gentrification are happening everywhere. Also, take time to learn your rights and how others have taken action to protect themselves and their homes.

**b) Escalation:** A plan must have multiple steps, each one escalating the pressure we put on the target. Sometimes we win after step 1 or 2 and others we have to keep ratcheting up the pressure.

## NORTH BAY ORGANIZING PROJECT, SANTA ROSA CA

We were actually doing voter engagement in a couple of our neighborhoods when we came across an apartment complex of eight families who were having their rent increased by \$500 and they were dealing with rats, roaches, and mold – really slum conditions.

The tenants started meeting on a regular basis to figure out what to do. They declared, "No Rent for Rats!" and went on a rent strike for two months to launch their campaign. We talked about our struggle in churches, quinceñeras and the vineyards where tenants work. Other apartment complexes came forward with similar evictions and joined the fight. We continued to take action. We took direct action on the landlord and marched to the City Hall.

In 2016 the tenants successfully forced the Santa Rosa City Council to take a stand and pass a rent control policy that the tenants themselves had helped develop and in 2017 the original tenants won a \$2.75 million lawsuit against the landlord. Now we're creating a city-wide Santa Rosa Tenant Association to fight for rent control for all renters.





**STORY AS STRATEGY** By sharing our stories we connect with each other and break free from fear, isolation and trauma caused by the crisis. Through stories we teach and learn from each other, find our power, tell our truths and share the solutions we need. By changing the conversation, we lay the seeds for changing the world. Our stories transform us & the world.



### TAKE COLLECTIVE ACTION

When you have a plan it's time to start taking action together. Actions could start with delivering a petition, holding a press conference or holding a vigil and then escalating to demanding negotiations with a landlord or developer or going on a rent strike.



**TIP 1:** Try to anticipate what the reaction or response from our target will be so you can be prepared. Be ready if they try to harass or threaten anyone; have a plan to support one another and respond swiftly to harassment together.



**TIP 2:** The Ruckus Society has tons of resources for planning actions at: <https://ruckus.org/training-manuals/the-action-strategy-guide/>



### REFLECT AND EVALUATE

Learn from mistakes and from what worked well. Did we achieve our goals? What went well? What could we do better next time? Are we stronger? Is our target weaker? How did it feel to work together? How could we support each other better? What are lessons we can take from this experience?



**TIPS:** Set a clear time to perform an evaluation when everyone who participated in taking action can be a part of it. Whenever possible do an evaluation right after the action while it is fresh on everyone's mind.

***Remember, our movement is built on mutual care, trust and respect – so it's important to be open and honest with each other and take on differences with the spirit of wanting to get stronger together.***



## CONNECT WITH OTHERS AND GROW YOUR POWER

Whether you have organized a tenant union in your building, a community union in your neighborhood or a manufactured home park association, the next step is to start connecting with others around your city and region. We must unite across our city if we are to have the power we need to win. Start organizing other buildings who have the same landlord (or one's that don't). Reach out to other tenants unions or park associations to form a city-wide union to fight collectively.

### We can't be free until we are all free — working with others across issues and communities is critical!

Our organizing teams, tenants unions or community groups can and must also fight for issues beyond housing. The people who will join our organizations aren't just being impacted by housing injustice, because our lives aren't that simple. We're being impacted by immigration/deportation, mass incarceration, sexist behaviors and systems and more.

*"There is no thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives."*  
—Audre Lorde

As independent organizations led by your members, your organization can be powerful parts of broader efforts to demand and win systemic change that impacts our communities such as in areas of criminalization/policing, racial and gender justice, schools, workers rights, community development, transit justice and more.

Homes For All believes that we MUST take time to build relationships with and coordinate with other social justice movements to build power across issues and fight for a city-wide people's agenda.





## JOIN HOMES FOR ALL TODAY!

Join Homes For All to get connected and build a locally powerful, national movement with other communities across the country who are taking back control of their neighborhoods, fighting for their homes and reclaiming their community futures!

### **Here's some other places HFA members can reach out to to get support from other members!**

Post on the HFA Facebook Group: The HFA Partners Facebook group is a private group for HFA partners share information, post questions and connect. Join at: [www.facebook.com/groups/HFAPartners/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/HFAPartners/)

Check out the Homes For All Member Website at: [www.HomesForAll.org/membersite](https://www.HomesForAll.org/membersite) for updates, calendar of committee meetings, events and trainings; resources and more!

Signal Text Groups: HFA uses Signal Messaging to coordinate and communicate. We have many groups to coordinate our work by area and by working group. Download signal at [www.signal.org](https://www.signal.org) and contact [info@homesforall.org](mailto:info@homesforall.org) for more information

Quarterly Online Orientations: Once every 3 months we hold public orientations and training calls to introduce new and interested members to Homes For All. Register at: [www.homesforall.org/orientation](https://www.homesforall.org/orientation)

#### **Resources:**

- Movement images and editable docs: download flyers, logos and more here ([weblink](#))
- Fundraising support
- Homes For All library and reports

Exchanges: reach out to another HFA groups in your state or region to set up an exchange to learn from others organizing in your region. They will get to learn from you too! See the map for contact information here.

Monthly Tenant Union Trainings: We host online tenant union trainings on the 4th Wednesday of every month at 3PM ET / 12PM PT. Register at [www.homesforall.org/tenantuniontrainings](https://www.homesforall.org/tenantuniontrainings)

## FROM FACING DISPLACEMENT TO COLLECTIVE OWNERSHIP: THE DENVER MEADOWS STORY.



Denver Meadows is a mobile home park community located in Aurora, Colorado. 110 families and 600 people — mostly latinx immigrant families with children — live on the park. In 2016 Maria Dolores started receiving notices on her door for having visitors, too many cars, leaving things out in her yard.. After months of harassment by management, she had enough and reached out to HFA Member 9to5 Colorado.

With 9to5's support, Maria and other residents started knocking on doors and hosting house meetings. They learned the owner was planning to sell the land for redevelopment. They mobilized 200 community members and allies to show up and overwhelmed the meeting with more than 6 hours of community testimony. The planning commission voted against rezoning.

Soon after, more than 100 residents met with the owner. He told them was going to close the park no matter what the planning commission decided and that they'd lose everything if they didn't leave.

In response, Maria and her neighbors launched a campaign to win community control over their land & housing. They formed a Manufactured home park' association to better organize the community and stand together.

First they got the city to freeze any rezoning plans, guaranteeing that the park had to remain a mobile home park.

After that, the landlord began retaliating. He raised their 'lot rent' 3 times in less than a year from under \$800 to over \$950, which didn't include mortgage payments. He threatened them for hosting meetings, towed cars and sent several residents eviction notices. Residents kept fighting and even found an organization called Resident Owned

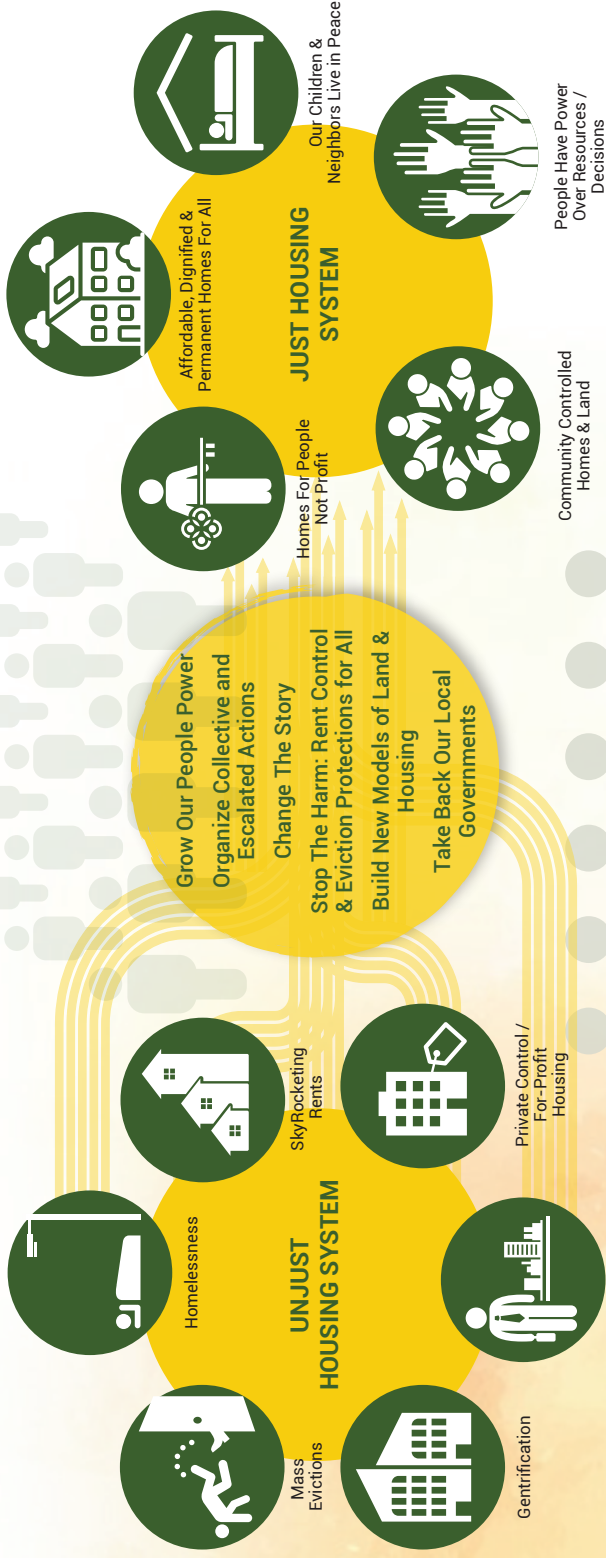
Communities USA (ROC USA) that was willing to purchase the park and finance it to the residents as a cooperative. They made an offer to the owner. The owner responded by saying "the park is not for sale", and raised the rent again.

In response the community marched to the owners offices along with their children and delivered a huge check with their offer to buy the park. They called every media contact they had. Over 500 letters were sent to all of the owners' properties and family members, and his associates.

As a result of their organizing the city unanimously passed a 10 month moratorium on the redevelopment of ALL mobile home parks, meaning owners can still sell or close their parks, but can not change the land use in anyway. The park closing has been delayed and they are now in negotiations with the owner and the city.

# HOMES FOR ALL STRATEGY TO WIN

Organizing to transition from an unjust, exploitative housing system to a world with just, sustainable homes for all



**HOMES FOR ALL**

**RECLAIM. REMAIN. REBUILD OUR CITIES.**

# HOMES FOR ALL PLEDGE

(also available at [www.homesforall.org/pledge](http://www.homesforall.org/pledge))

*We pledge to uphold the core values and principles of Homes For All and participate in building the Homes For All movement:*

Homes For All Core Values:

- ★ Housing Is A Human Right — Communities and People Before Profits!
- ★ The People Most Impacted Must Lead!
- ★ Land and Housing Should be Collectively Controlled by Communities and Sustained for Future Generations.

Homes For All Movement Principles [see inside for more details]

- |                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| ★ MUTUAL CARE & RESPECT | ★ EACH ONE, TEACH ONE |
| ★ GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY  | ★ COLLECTIVE ACTION   |
| ★ WE GET FREE TOGETHER  | ★ SOLIDARITY          |

Have you started organizing in your community already?

- ☐ Yes we have a tenant union, community union or manufactured home park association!
- ☐ Yes we formed our organizing team
- ☐ Not yet

☐ **Agree with the values & principles? Ready to join the fight for Homes For All?**

Organization / Group Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

**Names & Contact Info of your organizing team members:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**What HFA committee would you be interested in joining?**

HFA Committees are the heart of how we learn and share with each other across cities and develop coordinated strategies and tactics. Most meet monthly on a Zoom video webinar meeting and gather face-to-face during regional and national assemblies.

- ☐ Renters Rights Committee — organizes for campaigns like rent control, just cause eviction, tenants unions and more!
- ☐ Development Without Displacement committee — supports campaigns for equitable development and to win control over decisions that affect our communities futures!
- ☐ Our Homes Our Land committee — supports groups in building community land trusts and other alternative models to put land & housing in the control of the community — not corporations!
- ☐ Research Committee
- ☐ Political Training Committee
- ☐ Communications Committee