



Housing Justice League Newsletter

March 2018

UPCOMING EVENTS

Check www.housingjusticeleague.org/events/ to confirm time and location of events!

Saturday March 24

BeltLine4All Popular
Education Workshop

10:30 am 876 Allene Ave
SW, Atlanta, GA 30310.

Come learn about Housing
Justice League's
resident-led research on
the impact of the BeltLine
on rising property taxes
and rents and what we can
do to protect residents
right to remain.

Tuesday March 27 Housing
Justice League

phone-a-thon 7:00 - 8:30

pm Community Youth
Center 1040 Crew St SW

30315. Come help HJL
phonebank to raise money
for upcoming housing
justice leadership
conferences for members!

Tuesday April 3 HUD

Tenant Association

Training 6:30 pm.

Focusing on how to start a
tenant association in
HUD-subsidized housing.
Please email
housingjusticeleagueatl@
gmail.com if you plan to
attend!

Housing Justice League (HJL) is a community-led organization. Our mission is:



"to empower renters and homeowners to self-organize and defend their right to remain. We fight to preserve affordable housing, prevent gentrification, and build neighborhood power for an Atlanta-wide housing justice movement."

We are always looking for ways to work with and support community members dealing with housing issues. We are excited to hear your ideas and for new leadership. Come to our monthly meetings to join or start your own tenant association, volunteer for a campaign, or help with community outreach.

TENANT ASSOCIATIONS

HUD TENANT LEADERS DEMAND CONGRESS DECLARE TRUMP'S 2019 BUDGET "DEAD ON ARRIVAL"

The National Alliance of HUD Tenants (NAHT) is planning a national Day of Action on May 1 at noon against Trump's budget proposals that will leave many people homeless and at high risk of death. See NAHT's full article below to learn more about the devastating impacts Trump's 2019 budget would have on tenants who rely on HUD-subsidized housing:

Elected leaders of the national US tenants union today demanded immediate rejection by Congress of President Donald Trump's 2019 budget request, released on February 12.

"Trump's budget will push millions of people from their homes; starve seniors, children and families; and deny health care to millions of people," said Ed Lucas, President of the National Alliance of HUD Tenants (NAHT), who lives in a resident-owned, HUD-assisted building in Chicago. "People will die if these proposals see the light of day. Congress should declare Trump's 2019 budget 'dead on arrival' instead."

address the \$40 billion backlog of needed health and safety repairs in Public Housing. Overall, the \$6.8 billion in proposed cuts would be the deepest cuts in HUD's history.

Trump again proposes draconian rent increases for millions of Americans who receive HUD rental assistance. Trump's budget would raise rents for most tenants from 30 to 35% percent of income, triple "minimum rents" paid by the most destitute, and eliminate deductions that keep rents affordable for seniors and disabled people. The budget repeals Section 8 Enhanced Vouchers, which would immediately displace more than 30,000 families and seniors across the nation. Overall, rents would jump overnight an average of 20% for 4.6 million households--and an incredible 83% for HUD tenants in Puerto Rico!

"Trump wants to cut taxes for the richest of the rich, paid for by raising rents on the poorest of the poor," comments Deborah Arnold, 54, a minister and community activist and NAHT Vice President from Atlanta, Georgia. "80% of HUD tenant households are led by women. We, too, demand that Congress reject Trump's vicious assault on the women, children, elderly and disabled people who live in HUD housing."

Trump will soon propose "work requirements" for HUD rental assistance, Food Stamps and Medicaid. NAHT leaders denounced these proposals as administratively wasteful, ineffective and punitive, especially in the absence of jobs, training, and resources necessary to make them work. "Trump lives in public housing--the White House. Will a work requirement be imposed on him?," asked Geraldine Collins, 63, a disabled, retired medical administrator and NAHT VP/East who lives in senior housing on Manhattan's Upper West Side. "Congress should make Trump do something



National Alliance of HUD Tenants

**TENANTS UNITED
TO SAVE OUR HOMES**

Trump's budget proposes to cut 200,000 people from Section 8 Vouchers next year--10% of the total--and an astounding 37% from Public Housing operating budgets, already underfunded at 85% of needs. Trump proposes zero funds to



useful, rather than tweeting, playing golf, watching cable TV, and destroying the nation's social safety net."

Lucas, 59, Marine Corps vet and director of a neighborhood job training center in Chicago, added, "Trump's termination of community development grants and cuts to job training will lay waste to entire cities and rural areas, too. These policies will truly cause 'American carnage'." Trump's budget proposes complete elimination of Community Development, HOME and Choice Neighborhood grants to cities; Neighborworks, Community Action and Americorps programs that aid low income communities; Legal Services for the poor; and Low Income Heating Assistance, as well as deep cuts to job training, public education, work-study, and rural assistance programs.

Beyond that, Trump has proposed to slash virtually every mandatory "safety net" program for the

American people, including Medicaid, Medicare, and Food Stamps. Trump's cuts would pay for a net \$1.5 trillion tax cut for the 1% and giant corporations, and huge hikes in the Pentagon budget, including first strike nuclear weapons, increased war spending, and the border Wall.

Comments Rachel Williams, 62, an Army widow, minister and longtime community activist in Beaumont, Texas and NAHT Board VP/South: "Adding millions to the ranks of destitute and homeless people is deeply cruel and un-American. Homeland security begins with a home!"

Adds Eleanor Walden, 87, a long time civil rights and social justice activist living in senior housing in Berkeley, California, "Trump's budget and other actions criminalize immigrants, poor people and people of color while subsidizing division and hate among the American people. Trumps budget is a recipe for war, inequality, racism, and fear.

HOUSING JUSTICE LEAGUE STARTS TENANT ORGANIZING TRAINING SERIES

On Tuesday, March 6 Housing Justice League held its first tenant organizing training session of the year for HUD tenants. We are hoping to make these training sessions a monthly event and we are in a process of looking for a more accessible location in which to hold them. The session was meant to serve as an introduction to tenant organizing and covered topics including:

- How landlord/tenant law fails tenants and protects landlords
- How tenant associations build power to stand up to the power of landlords
- HUD tenants winning the right to organize free of retaliation and other tenant victories
- Organizing basics: talking to your neighbors and going door-to-door
- Tenant rights under HUD

For now, our training sessions will focus on organizing in Project-based Section 8 housing, but we hope to make them available and useful for tenants in private housing in the near future. There is an added layer of challenges in organizing with tenants in private housing because these tenants do not have the "right to organize" free of retaliation protected under federal law and enforced by local

HUD offices as HUD tenants do. Furthermore, in private housing residents are more dispersed and eviction rates are higher, making it more difficult to bring tenants together. We are in the midst of developing resources and organizing manuals that will help tenants in private housing know their rights, avoid evictions, and organize and share this knowledge with their neighbors. Stay tuned!

If you are a tenant and would like participate in a training, there are two ways to go about it

1. You can message the Housing Justice League at housingjusticeleagueatl@gmail.com about attending the next scheduled training
2. or you can inquire about hosting a training at your complex.

Housing Justice League provides training services at no cost. Now more than ever, Atlanta needs a tenant movement to combat rising rents and unbridled development. We are committed to building this movement, one tenant association at a time.



BELTLINE FOR ALL CAMPAIGN

#BELTLINE4ALL POPULAR EDUCATION WORKSHOPS CONTINUE

This month Housing Justice League is continuing its popular education workshop series on the BeltLine's development for our BeltLine For All campaign. After our first workshop in early February at the Heritage Station apartments in the Pittsburgh neighborhood of Atlanta, we held workshops in Chosewood Park and Peoplestown. HJL volunteers canvassed communities and local businesses to inform residents of the upcoming development and raise awareness about the upcoming development and the harmful effects it will have on the lives of Southside residents. These workshops are only the beginning stages of our efforts to mobilize residents facing displacement from the effects of Atlanta's culture of exploitative development. If you would like to join our efforts and be a part of our campaign team, send us an email at housingjusticeleagueatl@gmail.com and come to one of our campaign team meetings! We will be holding meetings soon to accommodate space for new people and inform newcomers of our efforts up to this point. We need more energy and ideas to contribute to this movement.

The popular education workshops have already been successful in better informing people about the impending effects of the BeltLine on their communities and spurring conversations about resident concerns. Residents attending the Chosewood Park and Peoplestown workshops shared that they had already experienced rising property taxes. Long-time resident of South Atlanta, Bonita Justice, spoke about her concerns over rising property taxes on her home, that have been rising as the BeltLine encroaches on the city's Southside. Mrs. Justice also discussed concern over the increasing amount of offers from predatory property-buyers swarming her mail, offering to buy her home for far less than they will surely sell it for after "flipping it" and putting it back on the market after the BeltLine construction is underway. The nearby and rapidly-gentrified area of Grant Park demonstrates clearly the effects of this development pressure, as well as who is intended to benefit from it.

Cornelius Justice, another resident who attended the South Atlanta workshop and son of Mrs. Justice, discussed how the newly-paved roads end before reaching his family's street, but that they provide easy access to the homes being renovated and bought by newer residents to the area. The reality of who development in this city is intended to benefit is all too apparent in Atlanta neighborhoods as they experience gentrification. Newer residents get immediate priority through infrastructural improvements like newly paved roads, while poorer residents are often displaced before long-awaited essential amenities like grocery stores come. These new amenities often cater to newer residents with greater financial resources, remaining inaccessible to the poor and working class.

The stark contrast between neighborhoods that have undergone rapid gentrification and those that have not can be seen by comparing Grant Park to the neighborhood directly to its south called Chosewood Park. The train tracks running across Boulevard divide the rapidly gentrifying Grant Park from Chosewood Park, which continues to show strong markers of historical disinvestment. Immediately upon crossing into Chosewood Park one finds large chunks of land left undeveloped, such as the fenced lots that are the former home of the Englewood Manor apartments, demolished in 2008 by the HOPE VI program's surge to dismantle public housing. These apartments went unreplaced in a city that is now experiencing an affordable housing crisis. It is imperative that we collectively address this crisis before living in Atlanta is only a luxury afforded to the rich.

Residents learning about what the BeltLine could mean for them are beginning to organize. Efforts outside of Housing Justice League are forming as well, and there is still much that can be done to ensure that new development does not have to occur at the expense of those that live in historically marginalized communities. In the face of unconstrained, destructive private investment, longtime residents must stand together and use their



historical understanding of Southside neighborhoods to develop autonomous political organizations that can push for community control and self-determination. Housing Justice League is looking forward to the next steps that will be taken

through this campaign and we hope all Housing Justice League members and other impacted residents can join as we work to realize our vision of a city whose future is shaped by its residents, and not the corporations that promise it investment.

POSITION AVAILABLE: MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT HOUSING JUSTICE LEAGUE

Job description:

The Housing Justice League is at a pivotal moment. It is clear that we must continue to not only grow our base, we must also develop sustainable funding sources. We seek to develop a robust member-based funding system that will allow HJL to continue to be a source of strength and power building amongst low to middle income communities, as well as give us some autonomy from institutions that could derail the resident-led aspects of our work. For these reasons we are seeking someone who can help us develop a system for recruiting, communicating with, and receiving monthly/yearly membership fees from new and old members or HJL who have the capacity to give.

Qualifications:

- Social media literate, data entry, online communication, basic writing skills, communication.

- Understanding of and commitment to the principles and concerns of Housing Justice League reflected in our Code of Conduct. Housing Justice League believes housing is a human right regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, age, economic background, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or immigration status.

Tasks include: Developing membership spreadsheet, recruiting dues-paying members from existing HJL contacts, developing communication system for dues paying members

Time commitment: 5 hours per week

Compensation: \$15 dollars an hour paid bi-monthly

Please submit your resume and cover letter detailing relevant experience and why you are interested in the position. All applications should be emailed in PDF format to housingjusticeleagueatl@gmail.com by April 6.

HJL-SPONSORED EVENTS

Thursday March 28 3:00 pm Online Tenant Union Training with Homes for All:

Are you and your neighbors facing rising rents? Is your landlord threatening you with eviction, deportation or retaliation? Are you and your family forced to live in bad conditions? Now is the time to organize a tenants union to fight back! Join Homes For All's Monthly Tenant Union trainings. Each month we'll dive into the basics and next steps of organizing tenants unions in your building, your neighborhood and across your city!

Each training will have space to take your questions about how to organize with other tenants, and have other renters and organizers on to provide peer feedback and advice!

These trainings are ideal for tenants and/or local organizers who are either just starting to organize or who have been organizing tenants unions and want to get support and training.

go to <https://homesforall.org/tenantuniontrainings/> to register!