
Quick Start Guide — Building People's Committees in New York

Purpose:

This guide offers simple, effective steps to help working people across New York State begin organizing local committees — whether you live in the city, suburbs, or countryside.

★ 1. Start Where You Are — Talk to Your People

Every committee begins with conversation. Ask your neighbors, co-workers, or fellow tenants:

- What's wrong around here?
- What are they fed up with?
- What would make things better?

You don't need to be an expert.

You need to listen.

★ 2. Form a Small Committee

A committee starts small — **5 to 10 people who are willing to meet regularly.**

No dues. No gatekeepers. No permission needed.

In urban areas: Start with a building, block, or workplace group.

In suburban areas: Start with a school parents group, neighborhood watch, or utility bill committee.

In rural areas: Start with a farmworker council, tenant association, or union caucus.

★ 3. Set a Regular Meeting Time

Pick a place and time that works:

- Apartment lobby, School cafeteria, Firehouse
- Diner, Park
- Zoom or WhatsApp group

Consistency matters more than numbers at the start.

★ 4. Make a List of Real Issues

At your first meetings, write down the problems facing your community:

- Evictions, rent hikes Unsafe housing Bad landlords
 - Police harassment Low wages, wage theft
 - School cuts Utility bills, water shutoffs Transit failures Discrimination, neglect
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★ 5. Divide the Work

Once the issues are clear, divide tasks:

- Someone watches city council, school board, or zoning meetings.
 - Someone talks to union members.
 - Someone checks in with elderly tenants, parents, workers.
 - Someone organizes local actions or cleanups.
 - Someone keeps records of complaints and victories.
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★ 6. Adapt to Your Area

Urban Committees:

Focus on building committees, block associations, tenant unions, union shops.

Suburban Committees:

Focus on utility campaigns, school organizing, neighborhood defense, workplace groups.

Rural Committees:

Focus on farmworker councils, tenant protections, union support, access to healthcare and transport.

Mixed areas (Hudson Valley, Capital Region, North Country):

Most places in New York are a mix.

The people who live there know best how to organize around their own needs.

7. Link Up and Take Action

Once you have a few meetings:

- Reach out to other committees in nearby towns, blocks, or counties.
- Share information and strategies.
- Stand together when it counts.

No one will save us.

Only the organized power of the people will break the Crown's grip.

How to Be Resourceful — Tips for Committee Organizers

You don't need money, credentials, or outside permission to start organizing.
You need connection, consistency, and a little creativity.

Free Communication Tools

- **WhatsApp / Signal:** Free group chats and calls.
- **Zoom (free version):** Virtual meetings.
- **ProtonMail / Gmail:** Create a shared committee email.

Free Organizing & Document Tools

- **Google Docs:** Share meeting notes, flyers, sign-up sheets.
- **Canva (free version):** Design simple flyers and posters.
- **Trello / Google Keep:** Keep track of tasks and contacts.
- **Mapping:** Use Google My Maps to map buildings, blocks, farms.

Where to Find Local Information

- **Your County Board of Elections website:** Find elected officials and public meetings.
- **Local news outlets:** Stay informed about local decisions.
- **Your school district website:** Monitor school board meetings and budgets.
- **Local union halls:** Many are open to community organizing partnerships.

Research Public Information

- **propertyshark.com (free search):** Find who owns local buildings.
- **FOIL Requests:** File public records requests in New York State (<https://www.ny.gov/foil>)

- **OpenCorporates.com:** See who owns businesses in your area.

Tips for Stretching Your Power

- Use what you have: a living room, a phone, a sidewalk.
 - Talk to people face-to-face — nothing beats trust.
 - Share tasks so no one burns out.
 - Never underestimate small steps — a tenant chat today becomes a citywide strike tomorrow.
 - Organizing is not about money — it's about people.
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