



Advancing Racial and Health Justice Through a Right to Counsel for Tenants:

A Primer for the Public Health Field

March 6, 2024

Welcome!

Please introduce yourself in the chat
(name, pronouns, location, org affiliation)

**Add one thing you would like to
learn or discuss today.**



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HEALING THROUGH POLICY

Our speakers today

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Will Dominie | *Human Impact Partners*

Danya Keene | *Yale School of Public Health*

Pablo Estupiñan | *Strategic Actions for a Just Economy*

Jasmine Rangel | *PolicyLink*

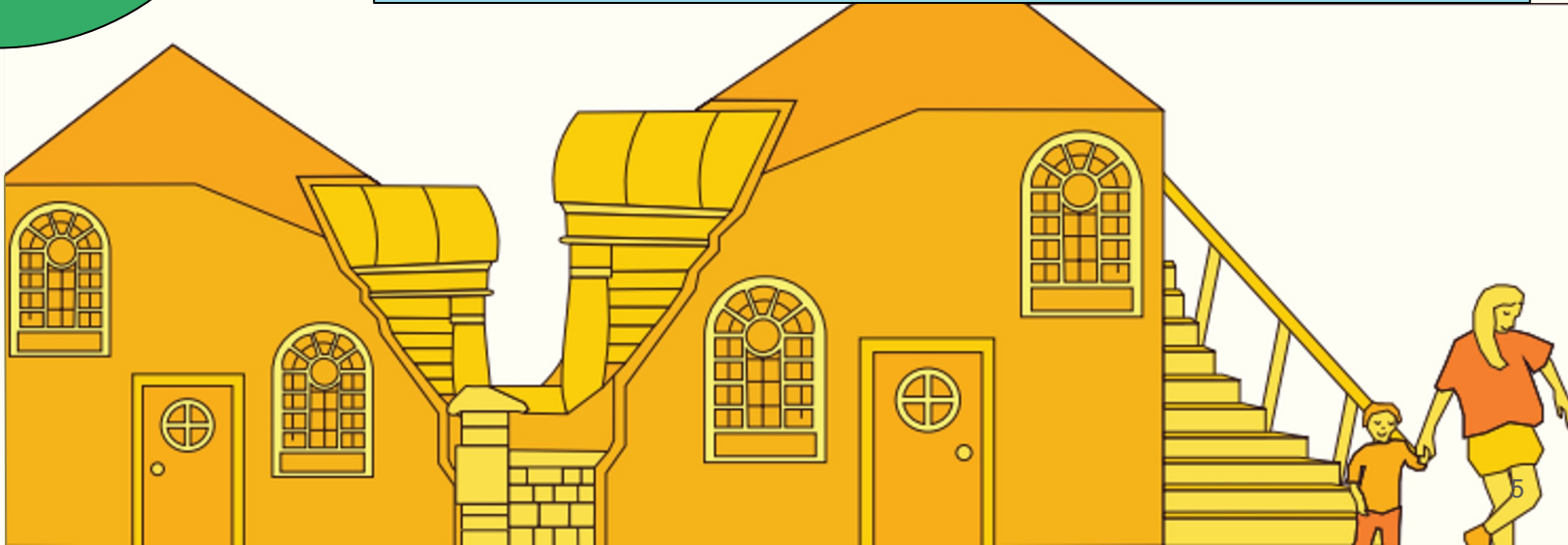
Maria Roumiantseva | *Nat'l Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel*

Melissa Marichal Zayas | *ChangeLab Solutions*

Agenda

- **Tenant RTC (brief intro)**
- **Background on RTC & public health**
- **A kitchen table chat (RTC & public health)**
- **Q&A**

*RTC =
right to
counsel*



Intro to RTC



Tenant RTC (a brief intro)

A **right to counsel for tenants** is a law that establishes a government-funded guarantee of legal representation *in eviction cases and other proceedings as may be set out in the law.*

RTC is **one of numerous** critical interventions necessary to keep more tenants (our neighbors) stably housed.



Tenant Outcomes in RTC Jurisdictions

New York City

In cases (*eviction and NYCHA termination*) with reported resolutions, **84% of households represented in court by lawyers were able to remain in their homes** (FY'23 OCJ Evaluation of UAC)

In past evals: decrease in filing rates, decreased default rates.

Connecticut

In 2023, CT-RTC providers helped clients achieve **64% of all clients' case goals** (*CT-RTC Evaluation by Stout Jan 2022-Nov. 2023*)

"...lawyers are able to help tenants stay in their homes when it is likely that they would otherwise have been evicted" (*CT-RTC Qualitative Evaluation, 2023*)

"...CT-RTC was able to help negotiate exits that both minimized adverse impacts for tenants and ensured the timely return of property to its owner." (*CT-RTC Qualitative Evaluation, 2023*)

Tenant RTC movement so far...

- 22 RTC jurisdictions
- Due in large part to **powerful tenant organizing movement** around the country



Highlighted states indicate city, county, or state-level RTC for tenants. Visit civilrighttocounsel.org for more.



RTCNYC Coalition (left) and KC Tenants (right).

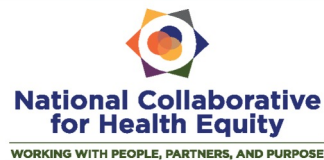
Background on RTC & public health



HEALING THROUGH POLICY: CREATING PATHWAYS TO RACIAL JUSTICE



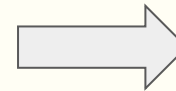
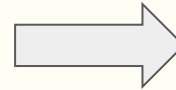
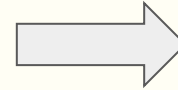
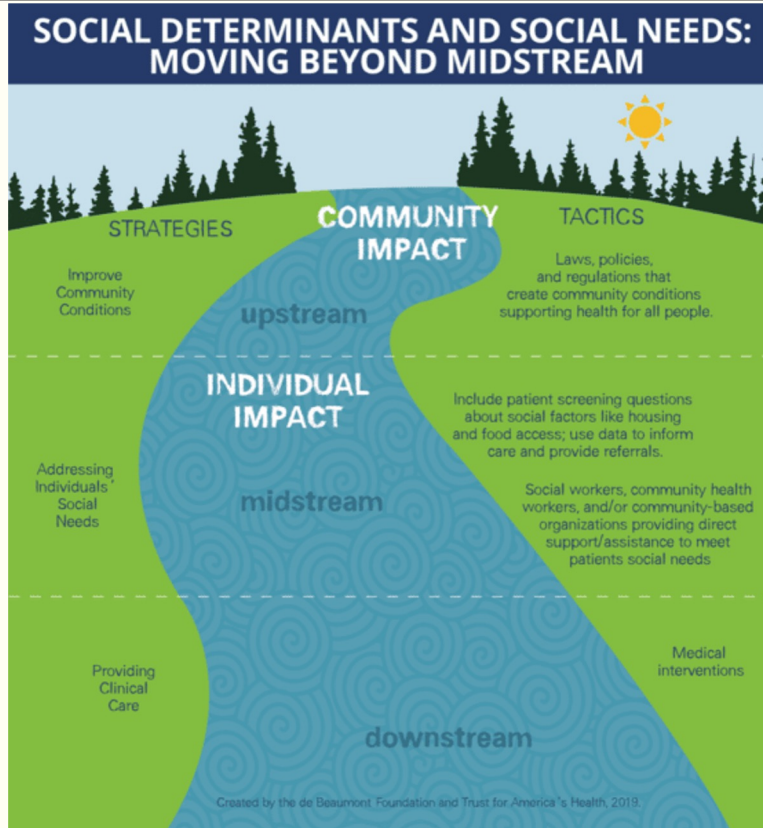
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IN COLLABORATION
WITH **RESULTS**

FOR **AMERICA**

Social determinants of health | health & racial justice



"Meeting Individual Social Needs Falls Short Of Addressing Social Determinants Of Health", Health Affairs Blog, January 16, 2019.

RTC and Racial & Health Justice

- Evictions **jeopardize several of the vital conditions** needed for people & communities to thrive:
 - Safe and stable housing, employment and financial security, education, access to healthcare, and social connection
- Adults and children who have been evicted are more likely to experience **negative health outcomes**.
- The threat of eviction **establishes a power imbalance** from the start of the landlord-tenant relationship, deterring people who rent their homes from seeking to enforce their housing rights.



Source: Hartford Courant

RTC and Racial & Health Justice

- Black renters, especially Black women living with children, are at the greatest risk of having an eviction filed against them.
 - Between 2007 and 2016, approx. **1 in 5 Black renters** had an eviction case filed against their household, compared to **1 in 24 White renters**. (Graetz et al., 2023)
- Black and Latine households are more likely to live in unhealthy housing.
- People with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and people with low incomes are also disproportionately impacted by housing insecurity.

RTC and Racial & Health justice

Eviction cases involve the application of a complex set of federal, state, and local laws and move fast.

*But on average **only 3%** of tenants in eviction cases have an attorney (as compared to 83% of landlords).*

RTC has the potential to redress inequities in health, housing stability, housing quality, and tenant-landlord power by helping to:

- Keep tenants stably housed
- Identify and address unhealthy housing conditions
- Empower tenants to exercise their rights and work together to advocate for additional protections

How PH Practitioners Can Support Policy Development

Work Across Departments & Serve as a Convener

Make the Public Health Case

Support Community Leadership

How PH Practitioners Can Support Implementation

Establish Cross-Sector Partnerships

Strengthen Community Outreach & Referral Networks

Train Government Officials and RTC Program Staff on the Connections Between Housing, Health, & Equity



**Kitchen table
chat on RTC &
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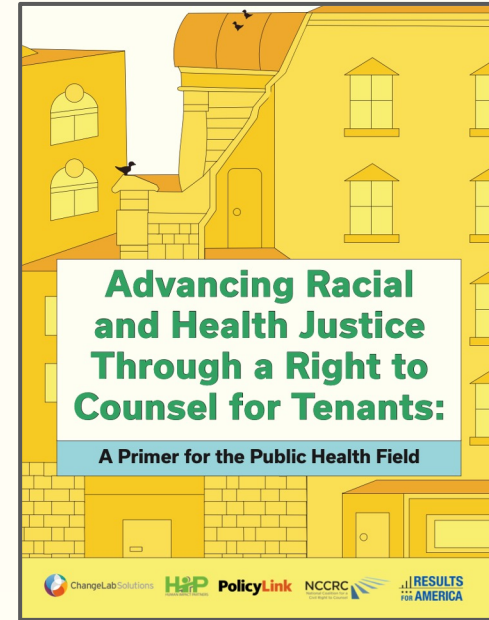
Strategic Actions for a Just Economy

Questions?





Brief now available:
<http://humanimpact.org/right-to-counsel>



Public Health Week (April 1-7)

Please take the post-webinar survey