

## #CancelRent COVID Outreach Script

Input information on a copy of the >>>> [CALL LOG](#) <<<< and email it to [newbrunswicktenantsunion@gmail.com](mailto:newbrunswicktenantsunion@gmail.com)

### **\*ADJUST SCRIPT as needed\***

#### **INTRO**

Hi\_\_\_\_\_, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm a member of the New Brunswick Tenants Union (*If you are from another organization, mention it!*), and we are calling you because of the current COVID crisis and our difficulty paying rent. Are you experiencing this yourself? *[[actively listen!]]*

We believe that everyone deserves to have a good home no matter their situation in life. We can only do that if tenants know their rights and organize - the way massive change has happened in the past is through organized action where hundreds of people demand their government listen to their needs. Tenants are stronger when they act together.

- If they are a tenant from the clinic, talk about that.
- If they are not, mention that NBTU has been working for 2 years with tenants in New Brunswick who are fighting back against bad landlords

(Caller can relate their own story of why organizing as a tenant is important)

#### **ISSUES**

**Q1** Did you know that currently in NJ, there is an eviction moratorium (ban, freeze, halt) that will last until two months after the state of emergency ends? That means you will still owe your rent, but any eviction will be delayed. *(The bill does not ban charging late fees)*

**Q2** How are you doing with all that is happening right now? TAKE TIME TO ACTIVELY LISTEN!

**Q3** Do you think you will be able to pay your rent for May and June?

If no or difficult, one option is to write a letter to your landlord to ask for a payment plan. We can send you a [letter](#) template. In this situation and all situations, be sure to get all agreements in writing, because landlords frequently go back on their word - that can be through a certified letter, email, or text.

**Q4** Are the people in your home who work getting their normal paycheck?

If you are having issues with work whether it's unsafe working conditions or loss of hours, can we connect you with an organizer at New Labor? New Labor is an organization that educates, organizes and fights for better work conditions.

**Q5 First Temperature Check** How supportive are they: you do not need to ask them, you can make a guess on a scale of 1-5, how ready they are to organize with 1 as not ready and 5 as very ready.

- If they share an injustice: Do you think it's fair that...?
- If they have a good housing situation: We don't know the long term effects of this situation yet, do you want to get involved with folks who are working to make sure that everyone keeps a roof over their heads during this national emergency?

After listening actively, connect their experiences with the system of renting.

## **INOCULATION**

Under the current system, despite the eviction moratorium, many landlords still expect people to pay their rent in full after the moratorium ends. For people who have been out of work for months, that is going to be incredibly difficult. If we don't fight now, many people will go into serious debt or be evicted. While some rental assistance programs are being discussed, there's been no indication that these programs would apply to our undocumented neighbors.

Landlords are not your friends, they are going to use the system to cheat you at every opportunity. Many states are already passing suspensions on mortgage collection, which is only really helping wealthy homeowners and landlords, while ignoring the needs of the most vulnerable tenants.

We want to fight to make sure that as there are bills passed to protect landlords and their mortgages, tenants get protections passed so they can stay in their homes.

## **VISION**

**(strength in unity)**

We are fighting for a rent forgiveness/cancellation with **no back rent owed** after the eviction moratorium ends. Renters should not be held responsible for paying rent on their homes when they were out of work because of a natural disaster.

The COVID-19 crisis is part of a long pattern of mistreatment of the working class. Serious change needs to happen. To do this, we have to actively organize and stay organized, even when the state of emergency is lifted. We need long term

protections in place to keep people in their homes and prevent landlords from exploiting renters.

**Q6 Mutual Aid:** If you're sick, don't leave the house. If you need someone to pick up and drop off groceries, medications, or supplies, reach out to us and we will connect you to someone who can make a delivery.

## **ASK**

**Q7 Can you share your email so you can sign onto the Cancel Rent Now petition and then call Governor Murphy at (609) 292-6000** with this [script](#) or email him [here](#).

We want people like you involved so we can make these demands and more, like the suspension of rent for everyone.

If No: People like us need to be involved. Tie personal housing stories back to the issues. If still no, tell them you will be texting them and ask them to share with neighbors and friends and say "Thank you very much for your time."

**Q8** If Yes: How many people do you know who are renters? Would you be willing to do 5-10 phone calls to your friends and neighbors like I'm doing right now with you? Explain details and ask for email so you can send the script and spreadsheet and say "Thank you very much for your time."

**Q9 Second Temperature Check How supportive are they: you do not need to ask them, you can make a guess on a scale of 1-5, how ready they are to organize with 1 as not ready and 5 as very ready.**

**Q10 Jot down any helpful notes from the conversation**