

Shareable 

Mutual Aid 101: Solidarity, Survival, and Resistance

An introductory toolkit for mutual aid
organizing—from starting a group to
sustaining it for the long haul



Credits

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About Shareable

[Shareable](#) collaborates with organizers and allies to imagine, resource, network, and scale cooperative projects. We envision a just, connected, and joyful world where sharing is daily practice and communities flourish.

Since 2009, Shareable has been a leading news and action hub for the solidarity economy. We help communities meet direct needs and build collective capacity through educational co-labs, solutions journalism, and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

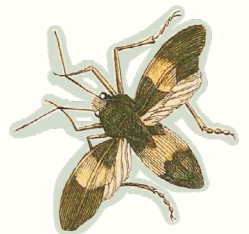
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Introduction

It's no secret that we're facing multiple crises, ranging from climate crisis to fascism. Our communities must rely on each other to survive and thrive: **Building robust and sustainable mutual aid networks is necessary to care for each other and build power.** Of course, mutual aid is not new—and neither are the effects of systemic oppression on communities at home or abroad.

In late 2024, after Donald Trump's re-election, Shareable staff saw the pressing need for a pathway to onboard and upskill those who would be engaging in the shared struggles to come. Working with our partners and collaborators, we designed a free and virtual mutual aid learning series for early 2025 that featured past writers, organizing partners, and guests from The Response podcast. It became abundantly clear that this training and peer support network was needed when over 1,000 people attended the first session!




To make the learning series as accessible as possible, this toolkit breaks down the recordings from the four live sessions hosted in February and March 2025. Whether you choose to watch the videos, read the key takeaways and summaries, or a mix of both, we hope this toolkit is helpful for you to start or to fine-tune a sustainable and robust mutual aid group in your community.

This toolkit is by no means exhaustive. For a deeper dive, check out the Resources section - an aggregated collection crowdsourced by Shareable staff and Mutual Aid 101 learning series presenters and participants!

And a note, many book recommendations were shared during the learning series and are linked in this guide. We included links to [Bookshop.org](https://bookshop.org) (which supports local, independent bookstores through online sales) or the official publisher's page, but many of these books are available for free on the [Anarchist Library](https://anarchistlibrary.org) or other sources.

How to use this toolkit

Recordings from our live sessions have been broken down into sections and chapters to make them easier to access. Each recorded chapter includes a written summary with key takeaways and linked resources.

When you see our “watch” symbol , the link will take you to a video or clip. Other resources have our “read” symbol  to mark links to written resources, and our “listen” symbol  for links to podcasts or similar resources.



Section 1: We're all we've got—intro to mutual aid

This virtual event took place on February 19, 2025. It laid the groundwork and set the tone for our Mutual Aid 101 series, engaging 2,200 registrants with more than 1,000 live participants.

In the session, Dean Spade defines mutual aid as the part of our ecosystem of liberation work where we're giving each other material support to survive existing systems. He distinguishes mutual aid from “charity” and illustrates that historically, social movements are successful when huge numbers of ordinary people organize to fight back, making it impossible for extraction and violence to continue.

Dean then explains common problems encountered by mutual aid groups and offers advice on how to mitigate them. He also provides practical and motivational tools for creating group culture, dealing with procrastination and perfection when they inevitably arise in movement work, and finding joy in working in community for collective liberation.

About the presenter, Dean Spade (he/him)

Author, organizer, and teacher

Dean has been working to build queer and trans liberation based in racial and economic justice for the past two decades. His books include *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During this Crisis (and the Next)*, *Love in a Fucked Up World: How to Build Relationships, Hook Up, and Raise Hell, Together*, and other publications. Dean also founded the *Sylvia Rivera Law Project*, a non-profit law collective that provides free legal services to transgender, intersex and gender non-conforming people who are low-income and/or people of color, and which operates on a collective governance model.





Welcome [1:56]

The host, Tom Llewellyn, introduced Dean Spade. Dean gave housekeeping notes and reviewed the agenda.



Mutual aid primer [2:41]

Dean opened the session by sharing photos and stories of past mutual aid actions, including food distribution projects, community free fridges, street medics supporting people at protests, and mutual aid after disasters.

Key takeaway

- ★ Mutual aid, from food distributions to street medics helping people at protests, is constantly happening around us, whether through neighbors coming together after a disaster or during movements like the Seattle Police Free Zone.
-



What is mutual aid? (Solidarity, not charity) [13:43]

Dean gave an overview of key mutual aid components, emphasizing that mutual aid is not charity. Charity maintains harmful systems like white supremacy and capitalism, while mutual aid seeks to do away with them. Real change starts from the bottom up.

Key takeaways

- ★ Mutual aid is materially supporting each other to survive existing systems and is based in a shared analysis about the root causes of crises. It also includes an invitation to collective action.
- ★ Mutual aid blames harmful systems for crises we face.
- ★ Charity seeks to blame those in crisis and mark people as “deserving” and “undeserving.”
- ★ Real change comes from the bottom up, never the top down: ordinary people create change. Essential mutual aid work is purposely written out of history (e.g., the Montgomery Bus Boycott was essentially a massive mutual aid project)

- ★ The state will only grant some relief to stabilize, never to solve problems fully. Relief is conditional, exclusive, and then revoked.
- ★ Mutual aid and movement work should be scaled up through collaboration, coordination, and networking, not centralization.
- ★ The government may co-opt and adopt successful mutual aid projects. It's important to not let up or demobilize! The government will gladly take it away if there isn't pressure on them.
- ★ The stakes of this work are extremely high. We're facing the climate crisis, a fascist regime, and will be encountering mounting disasters for the rest of our lives. Doing mutual aid work right now is the best way to prepare for disaster.
- ★ Organizers should recognize that organizational growth doesn't always have to follow traditional milestones or indicators, as Dean stated: "It's about shifting from thinking of scale as centralization of authority and bureaucracy to thinking of scale as coordinating, connecting, sharing wisdom, sharing resources..."

Resource

▶ ["Building Capacity for Mutual Aid Groups" video series featuring Dean Spade](#)

"It's only mutual aid, in my opinion, if it's based in a shared analysis about the root causes of the crisis... It's also only mutual aid if it also includes an invitation to collective action." —Dean Spade





Mutual aid: Common problems and what helps [5:39]

Dean reviewed common problems experienced by mutual aid groups, such as tight budgets, conditional funding, challenges in balancing the building of care structures with the need to address short-term crises with limited resources, and the need to address long-term crises, boundaries, and group conflict.

Key takeaways

- ★ Mutual aid organizers have to focus on other tools besides money, including building relationships, skills, and care structures. We'll never have enough money to combat the moneyed systems we're fighting.
 - ★ Don't blame yourself for the pressures a group faces—these are the conditions we are forced into. The conditions are the problem, not us.
 - ★ Let go of perfectionism. Perfect is not possible!
 - ★ Practice being imperfect learners together.
 - ★ Careful listening and not needing to always get your way are essential skills for building strong mutual aid groups.
 - ★ Trust the wisdom of the group.
 - ★ Practice direct communication rather than gossiping or “ghosting.”
-



Mutual aid principles [8:39]

Dean covered the specific elements and practices that set up a mutual aid group for success and longevity.

Key takeaways

- ★ Elements of a successful and sustainable mutual aid group include:
 - ★ Recognizing that “the system, not the people suffering under it, creates poverty, crisis, and vulnerability is the cornerstone of mutual aid.”
 - ★ Mutual aid is a commitment to the dignity and self-determination of people in need or crisis.
 - ★ Long-term commitment is essential.
 - ★ Political education is a common component of mutual aid groups.
 - ★ Humility and a willingness to accept feedback are critical.

- ★ Conflict resolution skills and processes are needed.
 - ★ Transparency is important.
 - ★ Consensus-based decision-making rather than majority rule.
Prioritize participation!
 - ★ Hold open meetings and have pathways for new people to join.
-



Mutual aid vs. charity tendencies [3:46]

Dean reviewed the mutual aid vs charity tendencies (see chart linked below). Dean also explained that while not all non-profits are “bad,” they can be limited in their ability to be effective due to funding and bureaucracy constraints.

Key takeaways

- ★ Participants often have similar experiences when doing mutual aid work and charity work, showing that many groups share similar challenges.

Resources



[Mutual aid v. charity tendencies chart](#)



[“Queer Dreams and Nonprofit Blues” Dean Spade video series](#)



[The Revolution Will Not Be Funded by INCITE!](#)



[“Should Social Movement Work Be Paid?” video discussion with Dean Spade](#)



Group culture [4:41]

Dean named the elements of group cultures and how they can be maintained or changed. Tendencies—both positive and negative—that folks have experienced in various group cultures are explored. Ways to move towards the aspirational qualities of a healthy group culture are also discussed.

Key takeaway

- ★ All groups have cultures, including signals we give people when they first come in, how the space feels for participants, norms, and dominant feelings.

Resources



[Mutual Aid by Dean Spade](#)



[Group culture chart from Dean Spade](#)



Mutual aid and criminalization [6:12]

Dean named the elements of group cultures and how they can be maintained or changed. Tendencies—both positive and negative—that folks have experienced in various group cultures are explored. Ways to move towards the aspirational qualities of a healthy group culture are also discussed.

Key takeaways

- ★ Mutual aid includes rule-breaking and law-breaking! Any effective response will eventually be criminalized, so we need to get comfortable breaking rules and laws.
- ★ Those in power want our work to be above ground, but we need a vibrant underground in order to be effective.
- ★ Those in power are terrified of us coming together and supporting the most vulnerable in our communities.
- ★ During the Great Depression, hundreds or even thousands of people would defend families facing evictions by rallying outside homes. 77,000 families in NYC avoided eviction this way. Dean stressed, “If we were coordinated to take these risks together, we could actually stop the violence of these systems.

Resource



[In Defense of Looting by Vicki Osterweil](#)





Feelings, perfectionism, and procrastination [11:03]

Dean covered how avoidant feelings, perfectionism, and procrastination are common problems in organizing spaces and movement work. Prioritizing tasks and being clear about the why and the purpose of what you're doing are helpful tools to combat the common struggles that mutual aid organizers face.

Key takeaways

- ★ Perfectionism and procrastination are common obstacles. Most people live with one or both.
- ★ People are afraid of making mistakes for fear of being judged or “canceled.”
- ★ Perfectionism and procrastination show up differently for different people.
- ★ Imposter syndrome and difficulty prioritizing tasks are top examples of perfectionism and procrastination.
- ★ Creating a prioritized list for yourself is often essential for organizers and can be a “gift” to yourself.
- ★ Avoidance results from an overwhelming society and a society based on coercion. Recognize the ways avoidance shows up in your body.
- ★ Feeling “on purpose” helps organizers stay grounded. “I’m doing this because I want to help people in crisis in my community.”
- ★ Cultivate the purpose for those tasks that you don’t want to do.

Resources



[Workaholics Anonymous 12-Step Program for over-workers and procrastinators](#)



[Working compulsively vs. working joyfully chart](#)



[Life Chant by Diane Di Prima](#)





Questions and answers [14:29]

Dean's answers to questions during the live session are summarized below.

How do we address intense levels of conflict when trying to work together?

- ★ A big part of doing mutual aid and movement work is being willing to spend our whole lives encountering new people who may have not thought about systemic oppression very much, and who have yet to think about how our roles in society contribute to broader issues. Sometimes conflict can lead to splitting, but perhaps that's not always a bad thing—maybe two groups need to try it two different ways.
- ★ We need to orient care for people doing riskier work.
- ★ Figure out if someone is a target (e.g., a mayor or university president) or someone who could be moved (e.g., a neighbor). Try not to confuse the two and someone who could be moved as a target.

Resource



[We Will Not Cancel Us by adrienne marie brown](#)

How do you build consensus, especially while bringing new people into the group? How do you balance creating consensus while also keeping the group on track toward the original purpose?

- ★ Write down your principles. Be clear on your purpose.
- ★ When newcomers arrive, make sure you let them say the reason that brought them there. People need to be heard. Have regular orientation meetings to make folks feel welcome.

How do we engage with mutual aid work when having ongoing mental health issues or disabilities?

- ★ Often, disabled communities are where mutual aid happens the most.
- ★ Don't be afraid to ask for help and have boundaries.
- ★ Building relationships within our groups is critical.
- ★ Learn and educate yourself and others about ableism.

Can you speak on mutual aid organizing in rural communities or small towns? How can I get started when I'm in a small place?

- ★ Disaster prep mutual aid is easy to start anywhere and a way to bring people in that may not be politically oriented. Once people come, you can see what other connections you have.
- ★ Sometimes you have to go where anything values-aligned is happening, like a radical bookstore or a Food Not Bombs group in a park. Or start something! Find connections, even if you have to go two counties over—they may know someone in your county. Network with people who do similar work and hold similar values, even if small.

In many, if not most, organizing spaces, organizing is narrowly defined in ways that appeal to the state (protests, public comments, etc.), and convincing others to take a “do it yourself” attitude is incredibly difficult. What ways have you found useful to help people make this mental shift?

- ★ Getting out there and actually doing stuff and inviting others to join you (often repeatedly) is key.
- ★ We have to make organizing irresistible!



Closing [2:36]

“It really matters how we treat people because we are all we have.” —Dean Spade



Section 2: Building mutual aid projects

This section comes from the February 26, 2025 session which explored how to start and build momentum for a new (or renewed) mutual aid group.

The first half of the session featured Stephanie Rearick, a longtime organizer and advocate for cooperative economies. Drawing on her personal experience with TimeBanking, Stephanie shared advice on how to get started doing mutual aid. TimeBanking is an alternative economic model that exchanges time instead of money, where all work and contributions are valued and everyone's time is valued equally. It is a mode of exchange as old as humanity itself and can be a powerful way for individuals to discover and succeed in work they want to do with the support of their community, while also getting their own needs met.

Stephanie also talked about exploring the values, purpose, and intentions that form the roots of a strong mutual aid network, and also discussed how to find communities of place, passion, and practice to bring those visions to life.

About the presenter, Stephanie Rearick (she/her)

Humans United in Mutual Aid Networks (HUMANs)

Stephanie is the founder and former Co-Director of the Dane County TimeBank (DCTB)—a 2800-member time exchange—and Creative Director of Humans United in Mutual Aid Networks (HUMANs), a global cooperative network of peer support for building and living a mutual aid economy using cooperative economic tools to “hire” each other.





Welcome [2:31]

The host, Tom Llewellyn, introduced presenters Stephanie Rearick and Julian Rose (Julian's presentation has been edited into Section 3 in this toolkit).



Mutual aid networks introduction [2:28]

Stephanie introduced HUMANs, a mutual aid network working to create an alternative economy. HUMANs is “a cooperative network of peer support for building and living a mutual aid economy.”

Key takeaways

- ★ Every village, your body, and the cosmos are examples of mutual aid networks.
 - ★ Mutual aid is the natural way that people organize themselves.
-



New economic dynamics: Sharing and exchanging via TimeBanking [8:19]

Stephanie focused on the practice of TimeBanking. Throughout history, humans have practiced different approaches to sharing and exchanging economically to meet our needs. TimeBanking is one method to organize what can be offered and received within a community.

Key takeaways

- ★ TimeBanking is when people exchange time instead of money to mutually meet their needs.
- ★ All work is valued equally in TimeBanking.
- ★ Those in power work to make things that are naturally abundant (like caregiving, creativity, civic involvement, and community building) artificially scarce.
- ★ HUMANs have used TimeBanking to make visible what people have to offer in their community and make it easier for folks to know what resources are available.
- ★ It's essential to build communities of real trust.

Resource



[Humans United in Mutual Aid Networks \(HUMANs\) website](#)



[7 steps to help you start time-banking today](#)



How to get started with mutual aid work [9:25]

Stephanie shared several resources from HUMANs and other sources helpful for local organizing, joining an existing group, or creating a mutual aid network.

Key takeaways

- ★ Ask why you want to get started. What is your dream? What needs are you aiming to fill? What do you bring to the party? What is fundamental or core for you? What are you inviting people to help shape? How are they welcome to contribute?
- ★ It's key to find other members of your community who share your values and build communities of place, communities of passion, and communities of practice. Who in your community wants what you want, and how can you reach out to them?
- ★ TimeBanking aims to build an economic life that serves all people, and offers structure, especially for new folks in a community. Often, once relationships are formed, people stop recording time. The goal is to create enough structure for people to plug into a group and provide accountability so people can rely on aid.
- ★ TimeBanking aims to build an economic life that serves the people.

Resources



[Mutual Aid Network Basic Start-up Guide](#)



[Peer Support Network](#)



[Mutual Aid Marketplace](#)



[Open source tech tools](#)



Gatherings



Shared learning



Questions and answers [25:52]

Stephanie's answers to questions during the live session are summarized below.

Can you talk a little more about building and sustaining group projects? What can some quick wins or meeting material needs look like?

- ★ It's helpful to always begin by identifying a specific need you seek to fill. When building a project, see if you have someone in your network who has similar goals, and find someone willing to be outgoing and reach out to other organizations with similar goals to build connections.
- ★ Host informational sessions at a library to help find needs and help people plug in. Give people roles and tasks when they come to meetings so they're plugged in.
- ★ Always stay connected to the why and what your goals are. Very specific actions are great, e.g., connecting someone who is able to give rides to someone who needs help getting to doctor's appointments. Specific, concrete actions create and solidify habits. Furthermore, when you have wins and successes, you share them.
- ★ Be willing to acknowledge when things don't go well and reflect. When people attend an event, be sure to have their contact info on hand and stay in touch. It is key for organizers to support each other when taking risks.
- ★ If you have a conflict, stay in touch even if you have to go separate ways.

Can you talk more about TimeBanking and TimeBanking regarding disability?

- ★ TimeBanking shifted into mutual aid so sharing could take its appropriate place. Often, in our society, people are defined by their lack. TimeBanking gives people an opportunity to offer up their strengths, giving folks opportunities to feel valued in ways that they may not have felt valued before. Everybody's hours hold the same value.

Regarding markets in general, what is the parallel between time-based systems and capitalism? Please elaborate on the relationship between capitalism and a gift economy.

- ★ One hour for one hour is the only value exchange in the US that doesn't require the filing of any taxes.
- ★ TimeBanking is extremely subversive. People start in TimeBanking, and then it begins transitioning into sharing and community.

Burnout is very common in movement work and spaces of care, often causing many groups to splinter. What are your thoughts on navigating burnout?

- ★ Consider the 1:9:90 Rule (out of a group of 100, one person will take on most of the work, nine will be very active, and 90 will follow). You need different people to “start, tend, and reap in the garden.” Accept the inevitability of people dropping out and not freaking out about it, and aiming to create a broader pool of people to support and group. It's also very important to have fun with the people you organize with and do fun things regularly (art events, supper clubs, etc.) When people feel in community, they will stick around longer.

“Mutual aid is a group sport by definition.”
—Stephanie Rearick



Section 3: Decision-making, governance, and power

This section is from the second half of the February 26, 2025 session, which explored how to start and build momentum for a new (or renewed) mutual aid group.

In it, Julian Rose explored power dynamics and decision making processes within collective ownership. He acknowledged that conflict is often a downfall for mutual aid groups (and organizing more broadly), and explained that the key to surviving conflict is planning in advance for how to handle it. Good governance is critical for healthy relationships and sustainability in mutual aid networks.

Even in collective ownership models, groups have and grapple with power—individual and collective—in order to get anything done. Rather than relying on experience and sound decision making of individuals, Julian explained how governance structures are a way to be intentional about power dynamics. He also touched on different governance structures and decision making models (e.g. the difference between “consent” vs. “consensus”) to consider when starting a mutual aid group, using examples from his own experience with various organizing groups to illustrate those structures in action.

About the presenter, Julian Rose (he/they)

EndState ATL and New Economy Coalition

Julian is a community organizer, educator, and writer originally from Hartford, CT, and currently based in Atlanta, GA. His work focuses on Black Queer Feminism, abolition, and solidarity economy movement building. Julian’s political home is EndState ATL and he works at the New Economy Coalition. Other Atlanta organizing efforts he has been involved in include the Free Atlanta Abolition Movement, a Black-run bail formation, and Barred Business’ Protected Campaign.





Decision-making, governance, and power

[10:38]

Julian discussed decision-making, organizing democratically, types of governance structures, and collective ownership for mutual aid groups.

Key takeaways

- ★ Governance is a way to intentionally grapple with power and plan for conflict.
- ★ The best forms of governance look different for each group; there isn't one solution that fits all. For example, consensus decision making can work well for smaller groups, while complex and varied governance structures can work well for large groups (think “sociocracy” or majority voting).
- ★ Under collective ownership, all leaders have, want, and need power. Members should clarify their own relationship to power and empower leadership.
- ★ We need to use our personal power and shared power to get things done!
- ★ When members of a group don't understand how power is expressed or works for the group, it can create confusion and make it difficult to actualize goals.
- ★ For your group, try to find the right balance between relying on the experience of individuals and relying on governance, depending on what's best in your space.

“[Use] governance to make it clear to your organization the ways in which people can express power, both in interpersonal relationships and within your group.” —Julian Rose





Sources of power [4:10]

Julian stressed that while interacting in our communities, we need to be clear about what we're bringing into these relationships and decision-making processes.

Key takeaways

- ★ Ask yourself: What kinds of power am I bringing to these groups? Are those forms of power actually useful in advancing the aims of my organization?
- ★ Power is often seen as a bad word. Ask how we can heal our relationships with power so we can use it more effectively.

Resource



[Sources of Power](#)



Critical analysis of decision-making process [9:42]

Julian stressed that while interacting in our communities, we need to be clear about what we're bringing into these relationships and decision-making processes.

Key takeaways

- ★ Essential questions for organizing groups to discuss:
 - ★ If we are withholding/consolidating power, why are we doing that?
 - ★ What assumptions about people are baked into the decision-making structure?
 - ★ Are we taking shortcuts?
 - ★ In our structure/governance addressing our goals and needs?
- ★ Reflect on whether or not you or your group is functionally rebranding existing harmful dynamics. Are we staying true to our goals? Is our structure helping us meet our goals, and if not, how can we pivot?

Resource



[Tyranny of the Structureless from Jo Freeman](#)

“The structure that is valuable is the one that meets the goals and needs of the organization.”

—Julian Rose



Questions and answers [30:46]

Julian's answers to questions during the live session are summarized below.

What are your best practices for keeping a group efficient under a consensus-based power structure, especially when folks have trouble making decisions or aligning their schedules?

- ★ Indecision is a common problem, especially in horizontal structures where members balance full-time jobs and families.
- ★ Follow up with folks so they stay in the know. For example, if someone misses a meeting, make sure they get caught up. Taking robust notes and keeping a voting tracker (Loomio is a great voting tracker tool) helps keep the group organized.
- ★ Generally, consensus-based decision-making often takes longer, so organizers need to be comfortable slowing things down. If the decision-making process has clearly hit a wall, that's a good indicator that it's best to pause and pivot and address the decision/problem from a new angle.



Can you touch on the power dynamics that occur with issues pertaining to longevity, for example, a founder has a lot of institutional knowledge, but that sort of knowledge never really gets passed around well, so it can be very slow to pass the power of out that person's/people hands. Often this can lead to groups falling apart.

- ★ “Founder’s Syndrome” is common. Organizers need to be prepared to meet people where they are, with the depth and knowledge that they have. For example, a mix of veteran members and brand-new members requires proactivity from both groups. Asking a lot of questions, asking and giving as much context as possible are key components. Lastly, making sure that veteran folks introduce new folks to key players in the organization’s sphere, so the longevity of these relationships increases.

Can you touch on power dynamics and the feeling of the need to consolidate power for safety and privacy reasons? How do you balance the safety of people and privacy with the desire to bring in a lot more people and grow the groups?

- ★ The state has long targeted mutual aid. Many mutual aid groups have leaned into robust onboarding processes. It’s important to get to know people and ask others to vouch for folks. It’s important that there is a pathway for gaining power within an organization, especially by participating in decision-making and governance processes. At times when groups are completely sealed off, there needs to be a good reason for that.
- ★ When conflict does arise, having processes to address conflict is essential so conflict doesn’t turn into a “witch hunt.”
- ★ Safety must be a broader culture, not just about keeping people out of decision-making processes.

Can you speak to any vetting process experience you have?

- ★ EndState ATL has a four-month onboarding process, which can be its own bottleneck, and accommodations will sometimes need to be made. When there is a long-term onboarding process, the folks who aren’t serious will likely filter out. If the state wants to infiltrate the group, then it would need to invest considerable effort into doing so.

Burnout is very common in movement work and spaces of care, often causing many groups to splinter. What are your thoughts on navigating burnout?

- ★ It's tempting to only rest and pull away, but in addition to rest, we also need reinvigoration. How do we reinvigorate each other? Organizers are often afraid to cancel and reschedule, and that fear can often drive burnout.



Closing [2:19]



Section 4: Legal basics

In this fifth section, Erika Sato of the Sustainable Economies Law Center offered an overview of financial practices around giving gifts, receiving and distributing mutual aid donations, and how third-party services like Venmo and bank-to-bank transfers can impact taxes and income. They also gave a broad overview of types of incorporated and unincorporated entities, liability shields, and some pros and cons of these options.

During the live session, this section was presented as part of the third event in the series, combined with the section on surveillance, cybersecurity, and financial tech, which is in the next section.

About the presenter, Erika Sato (they/them)

Sustainable Economies Law Center (SELC)

Having started working with SELC in 2020 as an intern, then as a fellow, and now as a staff attorney at the law center, Erika Sato (they/them) has helped mutual aid groups form during the early and ongoing days of the COVID-19 pandemic

Erika has spent time with the Landless Workers' Movement (MST) in Brazil, learning about collective land ownership, squatters' rights, and collective decision making. They completed their J.D. from Harvard Law School, where they were an editor of the Harvard Law Review and active in the QTPOC affinity group community.





Welcome [1:59]

The host, Tom Llewellyn, introduced presenters Erika Sato, Elijah Baucom, and Sarah Philips (Elijah's and Sarah's presentations on cybersecurity and Fintech have been edited into Section 5 of this toolkit).



Legal structures for mutual aid groups [25:21]

Erika concentrated on laws that provide financial structure options for mutual aid groups, depending on their needs and wants. There are small, simple operations for groups that won't have a lot of funding or more complex financial operations for groups with larger capacities and money inflow.

Key takeaways

Legal structure option 1: Peer-to-peer giving

- ★ The organization doesn't control the money itself. Instead, direct cash transfers are made peer-to-peer. This is the most simple and direct option, but organizers lack control or clarity over what is happening. There are also low tax risks.

Legal structure option 2: Volunteer collects and distributes funds

- ★ One option is that an individual reports the income and expenses on Schedule C.
- ★ Participants have to pay little to no taxes, but it is not recommended to do this for more than a year.
- ★ Alternatively, an individual may act as an agent or trustee of an organization, and the organization reports the income.
- ★ These, unfortunately, cannot be classified as a gift.

Legal structure option 3: Start an organization to receive and pay out funds

- ★ Various organizational structures exist, mix and match elements to create an organization that works for you.
- ★ Unincorporated associations are often a great option for mutual aid groups.
- ★ Formal incorporation or registration is another option, which offers a liability shield, but creates rigidity and a culture shift. A common example is 501(c)(3) status.
- ★ If an organization chooses not to incorporate, other options are available to limit liability.

- ★ If an organization seeks tax-exempt status, that will create limits on what that organization can legally do.
- ★ Record-keeping will be necessary, which may go against the spirit of mutual aid organizing.
- ★ Other drawbacks for 501(c)(3) status include having to publicly disclose information, the likely need to hire professionals, and limits on what the organization is allowed to do.
- ★ Fiscal sponsorship is a contractual relationship where one organization borrows an organization's tax-exempt status. It may be a great option for many mutual aid groups. Essentially, one organization becomes a "project" of another organization.
- ★ Lawyers are necessary for movements to have, but at times, the movement may best be served by not listening to those lawyers.

Resource



[Liability Love Letter for Mutual Aid Groups \(the "love letter" is in the appendix at the end of the document\)](#)



Questions and answers [3:22]

Erika's answers to questions during the live session are summarized below.

What are the tax liability implications for collecting funds via services like Venmo and Cash App? Do the gift rules apply there because it's something that's being tracked digitally?

- ★ It depends. If you're receiving the funds via Venmo or Cash App, then that would still be a gift (make sure that the person sending funds doesn't mark it as being for goods and services).
- ★ On the other hand, when collecting the money as a pool and then redistributing it out, that would not be a gift for the person receiving the money because there's an expectation that the money will be used and given back out again. Look into reporting funds taken in this way as income and expenses or have an organization report the income and expenses.

What are the liability implications around sharing food?

- ★ The liability implications for sharing food depend on state laws.

How would a national-level mutual aid organization that works mainly online choose a state to file taxes or become incorporated? Are there states that are more friendly for such a group than others?

- ★ Regarding non-profit organizations, Sato usually recommends that they incorporate in the state where their operations are based. Other factors, like having employees, would also impact such a decision.



Section 5: Surveillance, cybersecurity, and fintech

This fifth section covers surveillance, digital security, and financial technology (Fintech) with a focus on how these areas connect to mutual aid projects. These topics are deep and complex, so the presenters covered some basics that offer themes and starting points.

Elijah Baucom and Sarah Philips presented in the second and third parts of the Mutual Aid 101 series third session, along with Erika Sato, who covered legal basics in the previous section.

About the presenter, Elijah Baucom (he/him)

Everyday Security and the UC Berkeley Cybersecurity Clinic

Elijah Baucom is the Director of the UC Berkeley Cybersecurity Clinic, which trains “teams of students to help social sector organizations build the capabilities they need to proactively defend themselves against malicious governments, powerful corporations, hate groups, and extremists.” He is also the founder of Everyday Security, which offers security consulting services for smaller entities like individuals, non-profits, cooperatives, and small businesses—in a space where security consulting is often tailored to, and only financially accessible to, larger entities and governments.



Baucom spoke about the importance of security across different areas, including physical security, emotional security, financial security, communal security, and digital security. There was an emphasis on surveillance, the collection and selling of data, and how defense against surveillance connects to the past and present mutual aid efforts.

About the presenter, Sarah Philips (they/them)

Fight for the Future

Sarah Philips is a Houston-based organizer, writer, and creator, as well as a campaigner for Fight for the Future. Fight for the Future is a tech justice and digital rights organization, bringing together artists, engineers, activists, and technologists advocating for and engaging in direct digital actions across a range of issue areas, from climate to digital rights.



Philips spoke about financial technology (fintech) for mutual aid. Giving an example, Philips spoke about how the Atlanta Solidarity Fund, an incorporated bail fund, was criminalized, raided, and faced money laundering indictments which hinged on surveilled PayPal transactions.



Understanding risk and safety protocols

[4:48]

Elijah opened the section explaining how understanding the risks and threats posed to you or your organization is important for making informed decisions.

Key takeaways

- ★ Security consists of measures and practices to protect from threats, harm, or unauthorized access.
- ★ Security refers to a state or condition of being free from danger or threat and measures taken to achieve and maintain that state.
- ★ A lack of security can leave individuals and organizations in a state of constant dysregulation.
- ★ Security is multifaceted, including physical, emotional, financial, communal, and digital security.
- ★ There is no liberation without revolution.



Oppressive systems, Big Tech, surveillance capitalism, and mutual aid [9:52]

Elijah covered how Big Tech directly upholds and influences every oppressive system in our society via its enormous data collected by surveilling every tech user.

Key takeaways

- ★ We must work externally and internally to not be complicit with oppressive technological systems, just like how we need to work not to be complicit within capitalism, white supremacy, patriarchy, imperialism, colonization, etc.
- ★ Big Tech (mainly Amazon, Meta, Google, Microsoft, and Apple) has an enormous impact on the global economy, society, and culture, and has a direct impact in upholding every toxic system (genocide, white supremacy, patriarchy, capitalism, etc).
- ★ Surveillance capitalism (defined by data collection, data monetization, data usage, and lack of consent and oversight) is a modern economic order that involves the mass collection of people's data to predict and alter their behavior while greatly profiting.
- ★ Tech should be for the benefit of all humanity and not for greed, surveillance, war, domination, and control.
- ★ Many governments are fighting to gain access to encrypted data, for example, ICE seeks access to encrypted data.

“Capitalism needs race, caste, and class to survive, while mutual aid can transcend race, caste, and class.” —Elijah Baucom



Questions for Elijah Baucom [1:42]

Do you have any recommendations for books or other accessible resources that teach about digital security?

- ★ Accessibility has historically been neglected and must be prioritized. Elijah made an open call for collaboration to create accessible materials that fill the gap.

How can folks follow your work?

- ★ Check out: [Everyday Security](#)
-



Fintech for mutual aid [16:16]

Sarah explained how financial transactions are the weakest points for mutual aid groups doing discreet work. While there aren't currently any perfect alternatives, we need to be aware of the risks to make informed decisions.

Key takeaways

- ★ There are many threats facing mutual aid networks. We need to organize against these infringements of our rights.
- ★ The criminalization of [Stop Cop City](#) is laying the groundwork to go after everyone. Authorities used data from transactions by organizers to press charges.
- ★ The ludicrous state repression against the [Atlanta Solidarity Fund](#) relied on PayPal data to levy charges against organizers
- ★ Fintech corporations and the state are trying to challenge existing structures to impede organizing and building templates to replicate the harm to other groups.
- ★ Financial institutions enable financial suppression. We need better options for transferring money.
- ★ Many organizations (e.g. abortion funds) found that financial transactions were their weakest security point.
- ★ Crypto offers more capabilities for privacy-preserving options but creates many challenges as well, including user adoption, accessibility, understandable hesitancy, and actually accessing the cryptocurrency via traditional financial institutions.
- ★ There's no magic answer to our fintech problems, but we do need to find or create one.

Resources



[Report Release & Call To Action: Financial Confidentiality in the Age of Digital Surveillance from Fight for the Future](#)



[Mutual Aid Groups: Invitation to Participate in Case Study to Make Something Better than PayPal and Venmo from Fight for the Future](#)

“Everything is impossible until it isn’t.”
—Sarah Philips



Closing [1:37]



Section 6: Mutual aid in action case studies

In the final session of the Mutual Aid 101 series, six presenters gave brief summaries of their hands-on work with mutual aid networks started in Atlanta, Boston, New Orleans and elsewhere, spanning from disaster relief to pandemic relief to reproductive justice mutual aid.

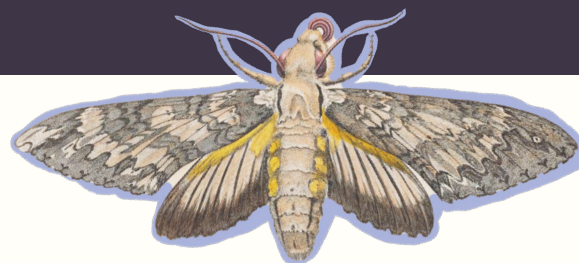
Following a short summary from each of the presenters, attendees selected a breakout room with one or two of the presenters, where folks could ask questions and discuss topics around different types of mutual aid. The breakout room sessions were not recorded, but the short presentations are linked below with written summaries and key takeaways.

About the presenters

Sanae L. Alaoui (they/them)

MAMA Fund

Sanae Alaoui is an Atlanta-based community organizer, poet, artist, and a collective member of the Metro Atlanta Mutual Aid (MAMA) Fund. MAMA Fund was started as a Facebook group in 2020, as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and has distributed \$800K to community members over the years. Since 2024, MAMA Fund has also started a TimeBank to enable members to engage in non-monetary mutual aid more easily.



Alexa Bee (they/she) & Rain (they/them)

Mutual Aid Disaster Relief

Alexa Bee is an Arizona-based organizer who works with a grassroots network known as Mutual Aid Disaster Relief. Rain is an organizer based in the Gulf South. This network was started in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and currently operates as a network that connects groups and helps share resources and information, rather than actively deploying people to disaster-affected areas.



Valinda Chan (they/she)

Mutual Aid Eastie

Valinda Chan is a Boston-based organizer who is a Core Team Member at Mutual Aid Eastie. Mutual Aid Eastie was started in March 2020, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic to provide infrastructure for rapid response to community needs. Over time, the network has shifted to longer-term support for the community, and offers spaces (resource sharing, office hours, meetings, and reciprocity circles) for community-based mutual aid.



Laurie Bertram Roberts (she/her)

Mississippi Reproductive Freedom Fund

Laurie Bertram Roberts works with the Mississippi Reproductive Freedom Fund in Jackson, Mississippi, which was founded in 2013. The Mississippi Reproductive Freedom Fund provides contraception, information and education, funds, food, and transportation, and more and operates with a reproductive justice framework, which includes the, “right to parent, the right not to parent, and the right to parent in safe and secure communities with all your basic needs met.”



Vicky Osterweil (she/her)

CAW

Vicky Osterweil is a writer, organizer, and agitator based out of the so-called Philadelphia and a member of the new anarchist media collective, CAW, and who engages in underground mutual aid work focused on trans care and reproductive care.



Welcome [0:45]

The host, Tom Llewellyn, introduced the six presenters.



Mutual aid and the solidarity economy

[6:30]

Sanae L. Alaoui introduced [MAMA Fund](#), a successful and high-impact mutual aid fund that was born out of a 2020 Mutual Aid Facebook Group. MAMA Fund has distributed \$800K to community members in need over four years, offering relief to many in their community.

Key takeaways

- ★ Don't be afraid to say no to funding that has strings attached or is compromised. For example, Amazon offered MAMA some money, but compared to their revenue, it's such a paltry donation amount, that it's clearly not an ethical source.
- ★ MAMA operates on trust and honesty, allowing folks in need to access help with no questions asked. Whereas formal or traditional aid organizations would have been means-tested.
- ★ MAMA Fund is a model of building alternative infrastructure for a post-capitalist future rooted in radical, queer Black feminism while also recognizing and responding to the immediate community needs for various resources via rapid response.
- ★ MAMA Fund also began time banking to bolster non-monetary mutual aid infrastructure.



Mutual aid and disaster relief [10:04]

Alexa Bee and Rain co-presented on [Mutual Aid Disaster Relief \(MADR\)](#). Born after Hurricane Katrina, MADR, formed as a community-led response to the great need that communities faced after disasters.

Key takeaways

- ★ The people of the community are those that are most knowledgeable about how to get their needs met.
- ★ MADR is a network not a deploy force. Think of the connective tissue that helps make the whole stronger. MADR operates on five core principles:
 1. Community-led response
 2. Solidarity, not charity
 3. Shared resources

4. Long-term commitment
5. Social justice orientation

Resource



[Mutual Aid Disaster Relief \(website offers tons of great resources\)](#)



Designing for reciprocity [5:08]

Valinda Chan introduced [Mutual Aid Eastie \(MAE\)](#), which began as a rapid response force and has evolved into long-term communal relationship building, focusing on reciprocity circles, resource sharing, “office hours,” and neighbor meetings. *Note: Mutual Aid Eastie is part of Shareable’s Library of Things fellowship.*

Key takeaways

- ★ For their work to be sustainable long-term, MAE recognized the need for community spaces.
- ★ Reciprocity circles are a space where community members share skills and talents with each other. For example, MAE hosts language exchanges and craft circles.
- ★ Resource sharing is exemplified through MAE small food pantry set up outside MAE office. Here, neighbors can share not only food, but books, tools, and other resources that neighbors want to share.
- ★ Office hours operate as a weekly third space for community members where neighbors can come together for coffee, pastries, and to build relationships.
- ★ Neighbor meetings also offer a space for neighbors to come get to know each other.
- ★ Looking forward, MAE seeks to grow their reciprocity circles to create as much community connection as possible, as sustainably as possible.





Mutual aid and reproductive justice [3:37]

Laurie Bertram Roberts gave an overview of [Mississippi Reproductive Freedom Fund \(MRFF\)](#), which began in 2013 as a comprehensive reproductive freedom fund in Jackson, MS, to help not only with abortion care but also all aspects of reproductive justice.

Key takeaways

- ★ Comprehensive reproductive justice encompasses not only abortion access and access to contraceptives but also the right to parent, not to parent, and the right to parent in safe and secure communities with all your basic needs met.
- ★ MRFF not only wanted to fund abortion care but also wanted to show up for the community's food needs, parenting needs, and disrupt harmful systems with mutual aid as much as possible.
- ★ MRFF also works to keep children out of the system so child protective services (CPS) doesn't split up families for being unable to meet certain needs. MRFF works to provide those needs for families.

Resources



[The Response Podcast: Abortion Access and Reproductive Justice in a Post-Roe Landscape with Laurie Bertram Roberts](#)



Trans and queer underground organizing [9:22]

Vicky Osterweil used historical examples of past struggles to explore the intersections of mutual aid with healthcare, queer healthcare and reproductive healthcare.

Key takeaways

- ★ The state dictates the distinction between underground and aboveground work, especially mutual aid.
- ★ When a mutual aid group gets too powerful, it will be made illegal. For example, community members who were feeding the homeless in Asheville, North Carolina, were charged with felony littering.

- ★ The Underground Railroad exemplifies the power of a decentralized network, especially vigilance committees.

Resources



[CAW Journal](#)



[Deep Care: The Radical Activists Who Provided Abortions, Defied the Law, and Fought to Keep Clinics Open by Angela Hume](#)



[Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad by Eric Foner](#)

“When we think about mutual aid at scale, we also have to think about the ways that building networks of power that are not visible to us from our small networks, but that, in aggregate, become a movement that can overthrow the white supremacist regime. Especially when it backs up street action.” —Vicki Osterweil



Resources

The following resources were crowdsourced from presenters and participants in the Mutual Aid 101 learning series. Unless otherwise noted, all resources, articles, books, etc, are the creators' own work and may or may not have been reviewed by Shareable. We will continue to add resources to the web version of this guide at MutualAid101.org.

If you would like to suggest resources to add the web version of the toolkit, please contact info@shareable.net.

General mutual aid toolboxes



Community Guide for Grassroots Groups

This guide from Muslims for Justice focuses on fiscal sponsorship, bail funds, and mutual aid basics.



How-to guides from Shareable

Shareable's growing collection of over 300 how-to guides to make sharing easier covers topics from food, transportation, community, and much more.



How to start a mutual aid network

This Shareable how-to guide by Aaron Fernando was updated in 2024.



HUMANs Tools and Learning Materials

"The HUMANs (Humans United in Mutual Aid Networks) are a global cooperative network of people, organizations, and projects working to create means for everyone to discover and succeed in work they want to do, with the support of their community."



Mutual Aid Resources from Mutual Aid Hub

A collection of mutual aid resources focused on COVID, getting started, and digital tools.



Mutual Aid Toolbox from Big Door Brigade

This expansive Mutual Aid Toolbox from Big Door Brigade is a live toolbox with compiled resources covering topics such as bail funds, housing, and childcare.



Resources from Interrupting Criminalization

“Interrupting Criminalization is a movement resource hub offering information, cross-movement networks, learning, and practice for organizers, practitioners, and advocates on the cutting edge of efforts to build a world free of criminalization, policing, punishment, and violence.”



“Some Actions That Are Not Protesting or Voting”

A “reference guide for alternative ways to resist that are not only protesting or voting. The guide includes a number of different mutual aid resources and ideas on how to engage with one’s community.”

—Misty, from *Mutual Aid 101 Learning Series*



The Resilience We Want: A process guide to creating a hub for local resilience & mutual aid

This Shareable guide, designed as a companion to The Response Podcast, focuses on making your community space into a hub for local resilience and mutual aid.

Starting a mutual aid group



How to create a mutual aid group by American Friends Service Committee

Updated in February 2025, a short guide on creating a mutual aid group in your community.



Mutual Aid Network Basic Start Up Guide from HUMANS

A short guide of key questions and considerations for stating a mutual aid network in your community.



Take One Step, Every Day by Vicky Osterweil

A February 2025 article with helpful insights on how to start doing mutual aid work.’

Governance and structure



A Consensus Handbook by Seeds of Change

This guide by Seeds of Change focuses on “Cooperative decision making for activists, co-ops and communities.”



Building Capacity for Mutual Aid Groups (Workshop 1): No Masters, No Flakes!

“A workshop with Dean Spade exploring group culture, capacity, overwork, procrastination, and perfectionism in mutual aid groups.”



Building Capacity for Mutual Aid Groups (Workshop 2): Decision-Making

“A workshop with Dean Spade on planning and making decisions together in mutual aid groups.”



Consensus (Direct Democracy @ Occupy Wall Street)

“A look into the “HOW” of the Occupy Wall Street movement: The consensus process.”



Dean Spade: Should Social Movement Work be Paid?

“In this talk, Dean Spade will explore a vexing question being discussed in many movement groups: should people be paid to do this work?”



Microsolidarity

“It explains how much structure you need for your group depending on its size. For example, if you are 3-6 people, norms can be informal. However, if the group is 50 people, more formal structures might be needed.” —Joshua, from *Mutual Aid 101 Learning Series*



Sociocracy Guide

“Sociocracy, or Dynamic Governance, is a system of governance of groups, regardless of their size, that encourages co-participation and co-responsibility of group members. The sociocratic group will behave like a living organism capable of self-organizing and self-correcting: it is a resilient system.”

★ [Governance: the language of collaboration](#)

★ [Power](#)



Some Remarks on Consensus (David Graeber)

This 2013 article on consensus was originally published on OccupyWallStreet.net



Time co-op and TimeBanking resources by Kommunity Koin

Kommunity Koin offers systems and resources for TimeBanking.

Security and privacy



Awesome Privacy

“List of free, open source and privacy respecting services and alternatives to private services.”



Data Removal Guide from Intel Techniques

”This is the third step of a four-step process to request, freeze, and remove your personal information from within data broker, credit reporting, and password exposure services.”



Cybersecurity and digital privacy guides

Guides covering basic cybersecurity and privacy for families, new tech devices, older family members, and how to minimize surveillance risk on social media by Cyberlixir.



Everyday Security

“Providing comprehensive Management Consulting, Web Development, Cyber Security, & IT solutions through leadership, vision, and training to Everyday People and to companies that support Everyday People.”



Have I Been Pwned?

“Check if your email address is in a data breach.”



How to Live Without Google: Alternatives That Protect Your Privacy

A simple and straightforward guide on alternatives to Google.



meet.coop

A renewable energy powered online meeting and conferencing tool run on cooperatively owned infrastructure.



Opt Out of Biometric Theft, Facial Recognition Tech, and Data Scraping

A guide with privacy recommendations including best digital security practices.



Privacy Guides

“Privacy Guides is a not-for-profit, volunteer-run project that hosts online communities and publishes news and recommendations surrounding privacy and security tools, services, and knowledge.”



Personal Security Checklist from Digital Defense

A comprehensive checklist for a more secure digital life and privacy.



Terms of Service Didn't Read

This tool summarizes terms of service to help make more informed privacy decisions when signing up on differing websites.



Surveillance Self-Defense

“Surveillance Self-Defense is a digital security guide that teaches you how to assess your personal risk from online spying.”

Platforms and apps



Exchange Ave

“Online resource for trading, bartering, or just giving away”



Loomio

An app for consensus decision making without meetings. Check out the [Shareable article on Loomio](#).



ProtonMail

An end-to-end encrypted mail and office platform with other features similar to Gmail and Google Drive.

Conflict, group dynamics, burnout, and capacity



Dean Spade: Facilitating Conversations about Capacity in Mutual Aid Groups

This short video excerpt asks key capacity-related questions for mutual aid groups to consider.



Dean Spade: Burnout in Mutual Aid Groups

This short video excerpt discusses the causes of burnout and recovery tips.



"In It Together: A Framework for Conflict Transformation In Movement-Building Groups" by Interrupting Criminalization

"This toolkit provides a step-by-step diagnostic tool to assess conflict in movement-building organizations and groups and provides strategies, tools, and resources to transform that conflict."



Transformative Justice video series from Barnard Center for Research on Women

"This series on transformative justice has some great stuff on shame and accountability"





When We Fall Apart: A Movement Primer by Dragonfly Partners & Interrupting Criminalization

“This workbook was created to help individuals and groups collectively navigate a breakup from another individual or group. It offers up a collection of thoughts, insights, and lessons gathered from people in the social justice movement who have experienced an intragroup breakup and survived to tell the tale, learn lessons from it, and keep moving forward.”



We Will Not Cancel Us by adrienne maree brown

“The book calls for discernment, care, transformative justice and to learn from the mushrooms about composting toxins.”

Community mapping and pod mapping



How to Create Neighborhood Pods by MAMAS

A how-to guide covering how to start and build a neighborhood mutual aid pod, a flyer template, a conversation starter guide, and a community resource list.



Pod Mapping for Mutual Aid by Rebel Sidney Black

An introduction into pod mapping written in early 2020.



Pods and Pod Mapping Worksheet by Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective

This resource explains pod mapping and includes a printable worksheet to fill out and distribute to facilitate a pod mapping exercise.



Community defense and de-arrest



Community Defense: Beginners Guide & Interactive Workbook

“Community defense is the way we come together as friends, family, neighbors, lovers, coworkers, gardeners, artists, cooks, crafters, speakers, educators, healers, story-tellers and so on to liberate ourselves from oppressive relationships with state systems.”



De-Arrest Primer

“This zine provides a basic introduction to de-arresting, aka free folks from the grasp of law enforcement officers (LEOs). It covers a number of different tactics and goes over some of the risks involved.”



ICE Raids Toolkit: Defend Against ICE Raids and Community Arrests

Updated in 2021, this is a “comprehensive guide and organizing resource to fight back against the Trump administration’s ef

COVID, pandemics, and disability justice



a long winter crip survival guide for pandemic year 4/forever

A guide by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha and Tina “constant tt” Zavitsanos that includes crowd-sourced tips.



How Disabled Mutual Aid Is Different Than Abled Mutual Aid

An informative blog post by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha highlights the strategies and tactics that disabled people use and continue to use to take care of each other during COVID. (Sourced from a mutual aid notion page)



Mutual Aid Pandemic Relief

An expansive list of mutual aid resources collected by Mutual Aid Disaster Relief.



Pandemic Mutual Aid toolkit from AOC and Mariame Kaba

“This toolkit includes step by step instructions for how you can build your own mutual aid network while staying safe from the spread of COVID-19.”

Disaster relief and emergency preparedness



Disaster Response resources

Collected by Mutual Aid Disaster Relief



Mutual Aid Networks That Emerged in Housing Crisis Are Mobilizing Amid LA Fires

A helpful article by Schuyler Mitchell in *Truthout*.



The Response: How Puerto Ricans are Restoring Power to the People

“The award-winning 30-minute micro-budget film, “The Response: How Puerto Ricans Are Restoring Power to the People,” explores how the mutual aid centers sprung up across the island while centering the voices of those involved in these bold grassroots relief efforts and the movement for popular power that is continuing to emerge.”



Abolition and bystander intervention



Mutual Aid Toolkit

Survived & Punished NY created this toolkit, explaining that, “We initially created this toolkit as a guide for people and communities who had reached out to us with an interest in fundraising for Survived & Punished NY’s commissary giving project specifically, but we also hope this guide can provide an abolitionist analysis to support the creation of transformative mutual aid projects across many types of communities and movements.”

Legal defense, bail funds, and jail support



From Big Door Brigade:

- ★ Here is a best practices guide for setting up legal defense funds.
- ★ Here is an awesome guide for community bail funds in the criminal legal system.
- ★ Here is a directory of community bail and bond funds that are regularly posting bail/bond and organizing for the end of detention in multiple forms across the country.
- ★ Here is a useful article about jail support projects that includes links to many such projects.
- ★ Here is a guide on how to do jail support.

Financial and legal structures



Guide to Options For Handling Money in Mutual Aid Groups

A short and helpful guide from the Barnard Center for Research on Women breaking down different ways groups can handle money.



Legal Issues in Mutual Aid Operations: A Preliminary Guide by Michael Haber

“This is a preliminary guide to legal issues that impact groups engaged in mutual aid. It is targeted to groups that have been responding to the COVID-19 crisis in New York, but has information that may be relevant for groups engaged in mutual aid in other contexts and other places.”



Mutual Aid Legal Toolkit: FAQs from Mutual Aid Organizers

An extensive legal toolkit covering entity information, established charitable organizations, liability, governance and decision making, managing funds, bartering, and data security.

Mental health



The Future of Mental Health is Mutual Aid

A zine that is “a guide to anti-carceral, politicized peer support for a liberated future” by @embracing.ambiguity. Also available in Spanish.



Mental health zine library from Mutual Aid Social Therapy

An expansive collection of mental health focused zines in English and Spanish

Reproductive justice



Repro Legal Helpline

The Repro Legal Helpline provides many reproductive-focused legal services and resources.



Repro Mutual Aid Toolkit by Abortion Access Front

This reproductive focused mutual aid toolkit covers how to support clinics, practical funds, and more.

Food distribution, community fridges, and herbal care



10 Ways to Get Involved With Food Mutual Aid

“Activist and author Robin Greenfield offers his suggestions for strengthening your community through food.”



The Anarchist's Cookbook

An in-depth book on anarchist organizing, food distribution projects, recipes, and more by Food Not Bombs.



Community Fridges: Legal Questions and Answers

A collaborative guide that provides answers to frequently asked questions around food distribution and legality.



How to create a Free Farm Stand in your community

This Shareable how-to guide offers insights on how to create a Free Farm Stand with fresh fruits, vegetables, and more.



How to set up a mobile mutual aid herbal apothecary

This Shareable how-to guide breaks down how to create a free mobile mutual aid herbal apothecary in your community.



The Solidarity Apothecary courses and workshops

The Solidarity Apothecary offers many free intersectional courses on herbalism and organizing.

LGBTQIA+



“We Must Fight In Solidarity With Trans Youth” from Interrupting Criminalization

An expansive brief to empower organizers with “practical strategies to fight in solidarity with trans youth.”

Housing and tenant organizing



Autonomous Tenants Union Tactics Vol. 1

“This zine gives an overview of tactics that may be useful in fighting landlords during tenant organizing. It covers a range of common tactics including call-in campaigns, delegations, flyering, press conferences, postcards, banner drops, and communicating with elected officials. For each there is an overview of the tactic as well as tips for implementing and deploying them. It’s a nice introduction to a variety of commonly used but often poorly applied tactics.”



Building Solidarity Network Guide

“A guide to building a successful solidarity network along the lines of the Seattle Solidarity Network, written by two SeaSol organisers.”



How To Organize a Tenancy Bloc with Your Neighbors

How to organize with those who share the same landlord to get your housing demands met from the Ithaca Tenants Union.

Podcasts and videos



The Mutual Aid Podcast

“The podcast where we discuss all things mutual aid: as practice, history, theory, and much more.”



What is mutual aid?

Short explanatory video from writer and organizer Dean Spade



The Response Podcast

Shareable’s podcast consists of an interview and documentary series. Interviews feature organizers, educators, and practitioners who offer unique perspectives on themes ranging from mutual aid to revolutionary theory.

Books

The following books have been recommended by the organizers, presenters, and participants of the Mutual Aid 101 series. Check back to [our online bookstore](#)*, as more titles will be added throughout the year.

**Our bookstore is hosted on Bookshop.org, where every purchase you make financially supports Shareable and independent bookstores where you live.*



Mutual Aid Building Solidarity During This Crisis (and the Next) by Dean Spade

“This book is about mutual aid: why it is so important, what it looks like, and how to do it. It provides a grassroots theory of mutual aid, describes how mutual aid is a crucial part of powerful movements for social justice, and offers concrete tools for organizing, such as how to work in groups, how to foster a collective decision-making process, how to prevent and address conflict, and how to deal with burnout.”



Love in a F*cked-Up World by Dean Spade

“Lifelong activist and educator Dean Spade dares us to decide that our interpersonal actions are not separate from our politics of liberation and resistance. Many activist projects and resistance groups fall apart because people treat each other poorly, trying desperately to live out the cultural myths about dating and relationships that we are fed from an early age.”



In Defense of Looting by Vicky Osterweil

“From slave revolts to labor strikes to the modern-day movements for climate change, Black lives, and police abolition, Osterweil makes a convincing case for rioting and looting as weapons that bludgeon the status quo while uplifting the poor and marginalized.”



A Paradise Built in Hell by Rebecca Solnit

“A Paradise Built in Hell is an investigation of the moments of altruism, resourcefulness, and generosity that arise amid disaster’s grief and disruption and considers their implications for everyday life. It points to a new vision of what society could become—one that is less authoritarian and fearful, more collaborative and local.”



Let this Radicalize You: Organizing and the Revolution of Reciprocal Care by Mariame Kaba and Kelly Hayes

“Longtime organizers and movement educators Mariame Kaba and Kelly Hayes examine some of the political lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the convergence of mass protest and mass formations of mutual aid, and consider what this confluence of power can teach us about a future that will require mass acts of care, rescue and defense, in the face of both state violence and environmental disaster.”



The Future is Disabled by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha

“Piepzna-Samarasinha writes about disability justice at the end of the world, documenting the many ways disabled people kept and are keeping each other--and the rest of the world--alive during Trump, fascism and the COVID-19 pandemic. Other subjects include crip interdependence, care and mutual aid in real life, disabled community building, and disabled art practice as survival and joy.”



The Revolution Will Not Be Funded by INCITE!

“The Revolution Will Not Be Funded gathers essays by radical activists, educators, and non-profit staff from around the globe who critically rethink the long-term consequences of what they call the ‘non-profit industrial complex’.”



Emergent Strategy by adrienne maree brown

“Inspired by Octavia Butler’s explorations of our human relationship to change, Emergent Strategy is radical self-help, society-help, and planet-help designed to shape the futures we want to live in. Change is constant. Rather than steel ourselves against such change, this book invites us to feel, map, assess, and learn from the swirling patterns around us in order to better understand and influence them as they happen.”



Jackson Rising: The Struggle for Economic Democracy by Ajamu Nangwaya and Kali Akuno

“Jackson Rising is an exploration of an experiment in radical social

transformation and governance that is directly challenging the imperatives of neoliberalism and the logic and structures of the capitalist system in Mississippi and beyond.”



Practicing New Worlds by Andrea Ritchie

“Drawing on decades of experience as an abolitionist organizer, policy advocate, and litigator in movements for racial, gender, economic, and environmental justice, Ritchie invites us to think beyond traditional legislative and policy change to create more possibilities for survival and resistance in the midst of the ongoing catastrophes of racial capitalism--and the cataclysms to come.”



Collective Courage: A History of African American Cooperative Economic Thought and Practice by Jessica Gordon Nembhard

“First published in 2014, Jessica Gordon Nembhard’s Collective Courage quickly became an important tool for understanding the history of cooperative economic enterprises in the African American community.”



Mutual Aid: An Illuminated Factor of Evolution (Illustrated) by Peter Kropotkin

This is an illustrated version of Peter Kropotkin’s 1902 collection of essays, a seminal work on cooperation and critique of the hypothesis of competition and Social Darwinism.



Mutual Aid: An Illuminated Factor of Evolution (free online) by Peter Kropotkin

A free, text-only version of Peter Kropotkin’s 1902 collection of essays, a seminal work on cooperation and critique of the hypothesis of competition and Social Darwinism.



Pandemic Solidarity: Mutual Aid during the Covid-19 Crisis, edited by Marina Sitrin & Colectiva Sembrar; foreword by Rebecca Solnit

“Looking at eighteen countries and regions, including India, Rojava, Taiwan, South Africa, Iraq and North America... These stories reveal what an alternative society could look like, and reflect the skills and



relationships we already have to create that society, challenging institutions of power that have already shown their fragility.”



Red Flag Warning: Mutual Aid and Survival in California’s Fire Country, edited by Dani Burlison and Margaret Elysia Garcia; foreword by Manjula Martin

“Through essays and interviews, Red Flag Warning sheds light on how wildfire impacts our communities and offers wisdom on living with fire from Indigenous Californians, community organizers, mental health care workers, environmentalists, fire analysts, sustainable loggers, parents, and more.”



The Age of Insecurity: Coming Together as Things Fall Apart by Astra Taylor

“In this urgent cultural diagnosis, author and activist Astra Taylor exposes how seemingly disparate crises--rising inequality and declining mental health, the ecological emergency, and the threat of authoritarianism--originate from a social order built on insecurity.”



Peter Gedlerloos’ downloadable books on The Anarchist Library

A free downloadable collection of writing by anarchist organizer and writer Peter Gedlerloos.



Revolution in Our Time: The Black Panther Party’s Promise to the People by Kekla Magoon

“In this comprehensive, inspiring, and all-too-relevant history of the Black Panther Party, Kekla Magoon introduces readers to the Panthers’ community activism, grounded in the concept of self-defense, which taught Black Americans how to protect and support themselves in a country that treated them like second-class citizens.”



Power Hungry: Women of the Black Panther Party and Freedom Summer and Their Fight to Feed a Movement by Suzanne Cope

“In early 1969 Cleo Silvers and a few Black Panther Party members met at a community center laden with boxes of donated food to cook for the neighborhood children. By the end of the year, the Black Panthers

would be feeding more children daily in all of their breakfast programs than the state of California was at that time.”



The Black Panther Party: Service to the People Programs by the Huey P. Newton Foundation

“The Black Panther Party represents Black Panther Party members’ coordinated responses over the last four decades to the failure of city, state, and federal bureaucrats to address the basic needs of their respective communities. The Party pioneered free social service programs that are now in the mainstream of American life.”

