Neighborhood conditions shape the opportunities for and constraints on revitalization – and those conditions can vary from block to block. Strategies undertaken without a fine-grained understanding of local conditions, including local property markets, can be not only wasteful, but actively counterproductive. A range of data can help you to choose strategies that address emerging challenges, help stabilize the community, fulfill the community’s revitalization vision, draw responsible investment, and foster equitable revitalization. This unit explores how to use data to choose equitable revitalization strategies that are based on a nuanced understanding of neighborhood conditions, including property markets.

The modules in this unit can be mixed-and-matched with modules in other units to create a place-based training just right for your community. Contact Courtney Knox at cknox@communityprogress.net to discuss a place-based training structure that would work best for you.

Module 1:

The Fundamentals of Property Market Dynamics 101

Recommended Length: 60-90 minutes

How real estate markets work, and the flow of demand and supply for a neighborhood’s land and buildings, determines many aspects of a neighborhood’s trajectory. This includes house prices, whether buyers are homebuyers or investors, and whether owners are improving their properties or allowing them to deteriorate. When trying to address issues of vacancy and abandonment, it is crucial to understand the role markets and demand play in creating and perpetuating problem properties, including abandonment, tax delinquency, and the activities of predatory landlords. Understanding the neighborhood’s market fundamentals can enable one to understand what strategies are most likely to be effective, and affect one’s ability to successfully implement an equitable revitalization strategy. This module explores how markets work, the relationship between markets, vacant properties, and owner behavior, and how those three factors combined impact neighborhood outcomes.
Module 2:

Gathering and Aggregating National, Local, and Institutional Data Sources

Recommended Length: 90 minutes

The ability to locate, gather, and aggregate comprehensive data regarding local property markets and community conditions is the foundation of a data-informed revitalization strategy. There is no single metric that provides sufficient information about the market conditions within a community. Therefore, local decision makers must rely on a series of different indicators. Often, however, it's unclear which datasets provide important information, how reliable they are, and where to find them. In addition, cities have many different datasets, but the data are located in different departments and often aren’t comparable – for example, one department may use street addresses while another uses parcel numbers. This module addresses: the types of data needed to understand market conditions; methods of data collection, including online federal and proprietary sources, windshield surveys, and city or county departmental data; and how to resolve common incompatibilities between datasets.

Module 3:

Analyzing Data to Understand Neighborhood Conditions

Prerequisite: Module 1
Recommended Length: 90 minutes

Individual datasets can give us basic quantitative information about neighborhood conditions, like the number of vacant properties or foreclosures. Sophisticated analysis of multiple datasets, however, can provide insights into underlying factors affecting neighborhood markets that are surprising even to people who have worked in a given neighborhood for years. By linking multiple datasets, one can get a handle on both the neighborhood’s current condition and how it's trending (block by block), and how it compares to other neighborhoods in the same city or metro, offering insights into factors that are likely to be critical for mounting successful revitalization efforts. In this hands-on session, participants will analyze multiple datasets to understand market conditions in a hypothetical neighborhood – using data sources that are readily available in most communities, but that many communities do not currently use or analyze, despite their value for planning and evaluating revitalization efforts. Participants will explore the nuances of neighborhood conditions that are uncovered as new layers of data are included and develop a clear sense of how these data analysis techniques could be usefully applied in their community.
Module 4:

**Using Data to Craft Effective, Efficient, and Equitable Revitalization Strategies**

Prerequisite: Modules 1 & 3  
Recommended Length: 90 minutes

Revitalization strategies are not one-size-fits-all. An intervention that works well in one neighborhood may be ineffective or even harmful in another. In some cases, neighborhood conditions can vary dramatically even block by block. Data, therefore – at the most granular, parcel-based level, and at the neighborhood and city levels – should inform any interventions. This module builds on Module 3 to examine how to tailor, and evaluate, revitalization strategies to meet community goals based on the nuances uncovered through data analysis. Participants will explore how to use a neighborhood market assessment as a tool for strategy development. They will delve into how the effects of tax foreclosure, demolition, code enforcement, housing rehabilitation, and green reuse differ across neighborhood contexts, and how to adjust revitalization strategies to get the best results.

Module 5:

**Data Transparency as a Tool for Education and Accountability**

Recommended Length: 45 minutes

Making data publicly available and easily accessible can build trust within a community, educate community leaders and residents about what is happening in their neighborhoods, give residents the ability to track progress over time, and keep public officials accountable to their constituents. However, data is often difficult to find, hard to understand, and not easy to visualize. Data must be made accessible, and represented visually in a way that helps users understand the information and relate to the revitalization efforts underway in their neighborhoods. Participants will learn about best practices in data transparency, accessibility, and usability from other cities. This module will examine various techniques for using data to measure progress, sharing data and progress through reporting, presentations, and web-based systems, and how to use it to track change, as well as how to address the challenges that cities face when presenting data to a broad audience.