Place-Based Trainings

THE CENTER FOR COMMUNITY PROGRESS’ PLACE-BASED TRAININGS BRING NATIONAL EXPERTISE TO YOUR COMMUNITY TO HELP PAVE THE WAY FORWARD. PLACE-BASED TRAININGS ARE A CUSTOMIZABLE LEARNING OPPORTUNITY THAT EQUIPS YOUR COMMUNITY WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NEEDED TO STRENGTHEN YOUR REVITALIZATION WORK.
Place-Based Trainings

Overview

Vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties are a big problem in many communities. When it comes to identifying the right solutions, it can be difficult to know where to begin. So many different departments and organizations are involved, and they don’t always speak the same language or meet regularly. The systems involved are complicated. The way those systems interact with each other is even trickier to understand.

The Center for Community Progress’ place-based trainings bring national expertise to your community to help pave the way forward. Place-based trainings are a customizable learning opportunity that equips your community with the knowledge and skills needed to strengthen your revitalization work.

How is a place-based training structured?

Our staff work with you to develop a place-based training for your community based on some combination of content from our six units. The six units are:

- **Using Data to Strengthen Neighborhood Interventions**: Using data to understand the conditions that shape revitalization opportunities and constraints and how to plan accordingly
- **Strategic Code Enforcement**: Developing code enforcement programs that respond to the varying needs and priorities of different neighborhoods
- **Rental Regulation**: Developing strategies, including registration and licensing programs, to identify and improve rental property conditions
- **Property Tax Systems**: Reforming tax policies so that they contribute to neighborhood stabilization
- **Land Banking**: Examining how to use this tool effectively to eliminate properties’ liabilities so they can be returned to productive use
- **Vacant Land Reuse**: Planning and implementing effective, equitable small- and large-scale vacant land reuse initiatives
Place-Based Trainings

Overview

Each unit includes sessions, or modules, totaling 26 different modules for you to pick from. For more detail, review the module descriptions starting on page 5. Think of these modules as the building blocks of your community’s place-based training. You can mix and match modules from different units to build a customized training. Our staff will work with you to pick the right modules for your community, developing a place-based training agenda that meets your needs.

For example, if your community’s land bank is just getting off the ground and local leaders have a lot of questions about land banking, an agenda that dives deep into land banking may make the most sense. In that case, your customized agenda would feature several modules from the Land Banking unit. Or if you’d like a broader understanding of many different systems involved in tackling vacant, abandoned, or deteriorated properties, your agenda might be include introductory modules from Neighborhood Markets, Delinquent Tax Enforcement, Strategic Code Enforcement, Land Banking, and Rental Regulation.

On page 21, sample workshop agendas provide examples of how a place-based training can be structured. Contact Courtney Knox at cknox@communityprogress.net to discuss what agenda would work best for your community.

How are modules structured?

Learning happens best when participants have the opportunity to interact and engage with the material. Therefore, our modules blend classroom presentations with interactive discussion, small group activities, and hands-on learning. Recognizing the importance of equipping participants with knowledge and skills to make change happen, module content emphasizes the practical over the philosophical, relying heavily on real-world examples of best practices.

How long is a place-based training?

We offer half-day or full-day place-based trainings depending on the number of modules included in your customized agenda.

Who should participate in a place-based trainings?

The appropriate audience for a place-based training depends on your community’s goals. Place-based trainings are primarily designed for local government, local nonprofits, philanthropy, anchor institutions, or in some cases private-sector stakeholders. However, place-based trainings can be successfully adapted for a community-based audience, including neighborhood and/or tenant associations. Place-based training agendas can be customized to fit the needs of your preferred audience, and our staff can offer guidance on who should be in the room.
How much does a place-based training cost?

Rates are based on the length of the training. For more information on cost please contact Courtney Knox at (877) 542-4842 ext, 20 or via email at cknox@communityprogress.net.

How do I request a place-based training?

Organizations wishing to request a place-based training should contact Courtney Knox at (877) 542-4842 ext. 20 or via email at cknox@communityprogress.net.

About the Center for Community Progress

The mission of Center for Community Progress is to foster strong, equitable communities where vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties are transformed into assets for neighbors and neighborhoods. Founded in 2010, Community Progress is the leading national, nonprofit resource for urban, suburban, and rural communities seeking to address the full cycle of property revitalization. The organization fulfills its mission by nurturing strong leadership and supporting systemic reforms. Community Progress works to ensure that public, private, and community leaders have the knowledge and capacity to create and sustain change. It also works to ensure that all communities have the policies, tools, and resources they need to support the effective, equitable reuse of vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties.

For more information on the Center for Community Progress, please visit our website at www.communityprogress.net.
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.
Strategic code enforcement is an innovative approach to code enforcement that can help local governments reverse the negative impact of vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties. Creating equitable, efficient, and effective code enforcement programs that go beyond property inspections and notices, instead weaving together regulation, policy, cost recovery, and “carrots and sticks,” can proactively improve communities through responsible property ownership. For most communities, a truly strategic approach to code enforcement marks a shift from status quo operations. This unit helps practitioners understand the elements of strategic code enforcement and the steps to take to strengthen a code enforcement program.

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:
Strategic Code Enforcement 101
Recommended Length: 45 - 90 minutes

A successful strategic code enforcement program moves beyond inspections and notices. It thoughtfully weaves together regulation, policy, cost recovery, and “carrots and sticks” into a comprehensive strategy to benefit community residents. It can help to eliminate backlogs of complaints through the sophisticated monitoring of warning signs and use of early interventions. Other elements include clear and effective enforcement mechanisms; working with other city departments and nonprofits to create programs for vulnerable owner-occupants or seniors who simply do not have the resources to bring the property up to code; providing “good landlord” incentives; connecting to other city programs, like nuisance abatement and demolition; and more. In this module, practitioners will be invited to look beyond the traditional and toward the potentially transformative role of code enforcement. They will explore a systemic, proactive approach that, when put into action, can make code enforcement more effective and, ultimately, much more efficient. Using real-world examples from around the country, this module will equip participants with an overview of the pros and cons of various code enforcement strategies and how to implement a more strategic approach.
Module 2:

Using Neighborhood Conditions to Inform Equitable Code Enforcement Strategies

Recommended Length: 90 minutes

Code enforcement gives local governments the ability to use their regulatory powers to improve quality of life for residents. A core challenge, however, is how to do so given limited resources. One way to address this challenge is through a neighborhood-sensitive approach to code enforcement, which is equitable, more resource-efficient and, ultimately, more effective at stabilizing and strengthening neighborhoods, because it tailors interventions based on actual neighborhood conditions. Such an approach is sensitive to the needs of vulnerable residents and homeowners. Understanding neighborhood dynamics, including vacancy rates, crime statistics, unemployment rates, or housing market conditions, better positions local government to implement code enforcement based on the unique conditions in each neighborhood. This module will explore how to develop a neighborhood-sensitive approach to code enforcement. It will include instruction on how to gather and aggregate the necessary datasets to reveal the factors contributing to a neighborhood’s wellbeing, with examples from other cities about how this data translates into tailored code enforcement strategies.

Module 3:

Code Enforcement Strategies to Motivate Responsible Rental Property Ownership*

Recommended Length: 90 minutes

Rental housing is a critical part of every community’s housing stock, yet it usually accounts for a disproportionate share of code enforcement challenges. While most communities have some irresponsible landlords who “milk” their properties for a few years of rental income and then walk away, communities also have many responsible landlords who intend to hold and maintain their properties. A strategic code enforcement program should not only crack down on irresponsible landlords, but instead develop a mix of strategies that reward responsible landlords and discourage bad ones. This module will provide practitioners with instruction on how to identify responsible and irresponsible landlords and apply code enforcement tools accordingly. It will address not just the “sticks” to compel compliance, but also “carrots,” to resolve challenges faced by well-intentioned landlords, who lack training or skills, have limited resources, or are impacted by adverse economic conditions in the neighborhoods where they own properties.

*This module incorporates elements from Modules 1-5 in the Rental Regulation unit.
Module 4:

Local Ordinances: The Building Blocks of Code Enforcement
Recommended Length: 90 minutes

A code enforcement department is only as good as the regulatory tools it has on the books, and the systems that are in place to use those tools. Many ordinances have been on the books for years and do not reflect up-to-date state law. Others may or may not be appropriate for current neighborhood conditions. In other cases, the ordinances on the books are well-crafted, but aren’t wielded as strategically as they could be. It isn’t always clear how to analyze the existing regulatory framework or where to look for best practices to implement. This module is an opportunity to take a step back and explore what makes a code enforcement ordinance equitable, efficient, and effective. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the components of effective and ineffective local code enforcement ordinances and explore examples from other cities of ordinances that work well and those that haven’t. At the end of this module, participants will be better-equipped to undertake an analysis of their own local ordinances, with a clearer sense of what best practices to consider in shaping (or re-shaping) their regulatory framework.

Module 5:

The Role of Community Partners in Supporting Code Enforcement Outcomes
Recommended Length: 45-90 minutes

There are only so many code enforcement officers in a community, and there are a whole lot of properties to keep an eye on. Since you can’t do it all from City Hall, residents and neighborhood groups can be powerful allies as the eyes and ears on the ground. They bring a tremendous amount of knowledge about what is happening on a given block, and a strategic code enforcement program will recognize and leverage that resource to improve community outcomes. Citizen participation and reporting is key to collecting property data, identifying unregistered rental housing units, and serving as an early warning system to support struggling homeowners before their properties fall into disrepair or foreclosure. This module covers methods to build stronger partnerships and more formalized communication channels with community residents and organizations. Such collaboration can assist with collecting on-the-ground information, raising awareness on how to be a good homeowner, tenant, or landlord, and reporting out on the program’s progress. It also explores how to build trust between code enforcement departments and residents. Participants will complete this module with clear examples of ways to build community partnerships that support and enhance existing rental housing registration and code enforcement efforts.
Rental housing is a critically important part of every community’s housing stock yet accounts for a disproportionate share of property-related challenges facing cities and towns. The need for rental regulation has become more urgent in many cities in recent years, as the wave of foreclosures resulted in the conversion of many formerly owner-occupied properties into rental units, sometimes bought by speculators. While there are many irresponsible landlords, some of whom plan to “milk” the property for a few years and then walk away, there are also many responsible landlords, who want to hold and maintain their properties. This unit helps cities develop effective rental regulation systems that reward responsible landlords, incentivize and make it easier for landlords to behave responsibly, and deter the genuinely bad actors who operate illegal, substandard, or unsafe rentals.

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:

Understanding How Neighborhoods Affect Landlord Behavior 101

Recommended Length: 45-90 minutes

Whether an owner will invest in maintaining a rental property is largely influenced by the property market in that neighborhood. The most effective rental regulation strategies adjust their approaches to enforcement based on these varying conditions. This module helps practitioners understand how to move toward a market-informed approach to rental enforcement in order to increase the stock of safe, well-maintained rental housing in all neighborhoods. Participants will learn how to analyze neighborhood-by-neighborhood property market conditions. They’ll then look at the relationship between those conditions and landlord behavior. Examples of tailored, market-informed rental enforcement from other cities will clarify how this approach can work in practice. Participants will learn how enforcement can be tailored based on, for example, the presence of problem landlords and of responsible landlords, complaint frequencies, or the concentration of student housing. All options will be appropriate for cities working with a tight or shrinking budget; in fact, the overall approach is intended to help cities maximize resource efficiency while also remaining effective and equitable.
Module 2: Identifying the Rental Property Inventory

Recommended Length: 90 minutes

Rental registries are only as good as the number of properties registered and the information collected. A successful registration ordinance collects comprehensive property owner contact information, allowing the municipality to alert property owners to emergencies, provide notice of code enforcement violations, and share information about property owner obligations. While no municipality can expect to have 100% of rental properties registered, the target for an effective program should be at least 80%-90%. This can only happen through a systematic, proactive effort. Whether you are just exploring a rental registration and licensing program or looking to optimize your current program, this module will explore tools and strategies to proactively identify the rental property inventory and encourage landlords and property investors to comply with registration requirements. This module will emphasize tenant and landlord outreach strategies, community reporting, and registration requirements. Best practice examples will be shared with participants to provide a framework for participants to think through the current structures they have in place.

Module 3: Fostering Compliance by Rewarding Success

Recommended Length: 90 minutes

To foster a sound rental housing stock, cities should not simply crack down on violators, but instead develop a mix of strategies designed to encourage good landlords and discourage bad ones. Landlord incentives complement a regulatory strategy by building an ever-growing pool of responsible landlords who meet good practice standards, and directly benefit from doing so. By providing resources to landlords, including model leases, sound property management techniques, tenant selection criteria, and access to fast-track permit approval, municipalities can position landlords to be successful. This module will explore realistic, cost-effective “carrots” as well as “sticks” for communities to consider. Whether participants are undertaking development of rental registration and licensing ordinances or are looking to optimize an existing program, this module will provide the framework necessary to establish or retool a program. By exploring how to foster compliance with rental registration and licensing programs, this module lays the foundation necessary to move toward a performance-based rental regulation system.
Module 4:

Implementing a Performance-Based Rental Regulation System

Recommended Length: 90 minutes

A performance-based system uses historical property performance data to set a tiered inspection schedule. The data is used to reduce the frequency of inspections and lessen the financial burden for well performing properties, enable municipalities to focus resources on problem properties, establish remedial measures for problem landlords, and reward high-performing landlords. The two key elements needed to build a performance-based rental regulation system are: (1) a well-functioning rental property registry and landlord licensing process; and (2) historical data on rental property performance beyond just inspection data, including outstanding property taxes, code violations, citizen complaints and police incidents. This module will explore the responsibilities of municipalities and landlords under a multiple tiered performance-based system. Participants will develop an understanding of the pros and cons of both a one-size-fits-all system and a tiered inspection regime. Guided by examples of best practices in other cities, they will learn the elements of an effective performance-based system and leave with a clearer sense of the steps that need to be taken to build the system.

Module 5:

Building Relationships with Community and Industry Partners

Recommended Length: 90 minutes

A rental registry is an effective regulatory tool for collecting basic data on a rental property’s location, ownership and management. But a rental registry alone does not paint the full picture of rental property conditions, tenant concerns, property owner struggles, or neighborhood stability. Forming strong partnerships between the municipality and neighborhood associations, industry trade associations, and tenant advocacy groups, and establishing an avenue for them to provide information to the municipality, is critical to the success of a rental regulation system. Partnering with community and industry partners provides an opportunity to build trust between city hall, residents, and landlords. Once established, partners will provide the on-the-ground information needed to identify bad actors, support tenants and responsible landlords, and prevent property and neighborhood decline. This information increases the ability of the municipality to regulate housing quality and support neighborhood stability while ensuring efficient use of limited resources. This module will provide a framework for how to develop and maintain strong partnerships with residents, landlords, tenant advocacy groups, rental associations, and management companies for on-the-ground data gathering.
Property taxes supply local government with the revenue needed to provide essential services. Any loss of this revenue, whether from decreased property values or from nonpayment of taxes, directly impacts local government’s ability to provide these services. Because of this and the importance of protecting vulnerable residents from losing their homes, having an efficient, effective, and equitable delinquent property tax enforcement system is critical. All states have mechanisms for local governments to enforce the payment of delinquent taxes – or to force the transfer of property ownership when the enforcement process fails to result in payment of the delinquent tax. Enforcement processes vary by state and sometimes by municipality, and are complex. This unit helps practitioners to understand the core elements of property tax systems and how they link to other neighborhood stabilization efforts.

The module in this unit is only offered as part of a larger half- or full-day agenda. Contact Courtney Knox at cknox@communityprogress.net to discuss a place-based training structure that would work best for you.

Module 1:

**Delinquent Property Tax Enforcement 101**

Recommended Length: 90 minutes

Property taxes are governed by state laws that vary dramatically and are typically enforced at the county level. The systems many local governments use to collect delinquent property taxes often trap deteriorating properties in legal limbo, incentivize abandonment, and lead to a loss of equity or even homelessness for vulnerable homeowners. At the same time, they can also be used to resolve many of these issues. Reform of the state and local laws governing property tax enforcement is on the minds of community advocates and governments across the nation. Modern, equitable property tax enforcement systems can help ensure responsible ownership of vacant properties, protect vulnerable homeowners, provide resources for land banking and neighborhood stabilization, and ensure that interest and penalties associated with delinquent tax enforcement are returned to the taxpayers caring for vacant properties. This module will explore key elements of efficient, effective, and equitable delinquent property tax enforcement systems, provide an overview of the variation in systems seen around the country, and offer a primer on how to determine whether reform is needed in a given community. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the links between property tax enforcement, vacancy, and neighborhood stabilization, and learn some best practices in property tax system reform.
A land bank is a tool that facilitates the return of vacant, abandoned, and/or tax-delinquent properties to productive use in support of local land use goals. Land banks can help resolve some of the toughest barriers that keep properties stuck in decline and assist in reestablishing property markets, stabilizing property values, and returning properties to productive use after sudden shocks or long-term decline. This unit will help participants understand how to operate a land bank efficiently, effectively, and equitably, as part of an overall stabilization and revitalization strategy – not as a silver bullet. Modules explore effective state enabling legislation, linkages to the tax delinquent enforcement system, land bank management, community engagement, disposition strategies, and other aspects of land banking. Whether developing new programs and procedures, or seeking to strengthen existing ones, new and established land banks alike can find value in this unit.

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:

Land Banking 101
Recommended Length: 45-90 minutes

In the last decade, the number of land banks in the United States has increased exponentially, to nearly 170 across at least a dozen states. Land banks are public entities, typically authorized and created pursuant to state law, that have the potential to nimbly acquire vacant, abandoned, and/or tax-delinquent properties and return them to productive use more easily than would otherwise be possible. As a result, understandably, interest in land banking remains high. At the same time, land banks are not a silver bullet, and it’s not always clear if or why a land bank could be a good addition to a community’s existing toolbox. This module will share the history of land banking and help participants understand the powers and functions of land banks. Participants will learn when and how land banks can be most effective, with real-world examples of how land banks of varying sizes have been adapted to different local contexts. They’ll also develop a clearer sense of what land banks can and cannot be expected to accomplish, and how a land bank can round out other revitalization efforts.
Module 2:

Enabling Legislation for Land Banks

Recommended Length: 90 minutes

Many, if not most, of the core powers that make a land bank a particularly unusual and attractive tool, such as the ability to wipe away back taxes, must be enabled by state or local law. This can feel like a heavy lift. This module, however, will help you understand the path forward. It will explore what powers to consider and what makes legislation effective and ineffective. Case studies of bipartisan efforts from several states will be unpacked and evaluated, and legislation from multiple states will be compared. Participants will receive guidance on building effective coalitions, including urban-rural collaborations, around shared interest in land banking and will leave this session with a clear sense of next steps to develop and pursue effective land bank legislation.

Module 3:

Land Banking for Board Members and Management

Intended Audience: Land bank staff and board members

Recommended Length: 90 minutes

Land banking is a high-stakes endeavor. Land banks work in the service of, and are accountable to, the community in which they operate. They are usually most active in highly distressed neighborhoods with many vacant, abandoned, and/or tax-delinquent properties, where the need for positive change is acute. In that context, land bank board members and management bear the responsibility for creating a land bank that transparently and effectively meets the needs of the community. This module gives land bank board members and management the framework for crafting an effective mission and vision for the land bank and developing effective, efficient, and equitable policies and procedures to guide the acquisition, maintenance, remediation, and disposition of property. Participants will explore a framework for developing measurable goals for the land bank that ensure work will meet the needs of the community and residents that they serve.
Module 4: Engaging Community and Forming Partnerships: A Core Component of Land Banking

Recommended Length: 45-90 minutes

There is no substitute for the engagement of community residents and other stakeholders who understand a community’s history and goals. Most successful land banks have found creative and consistent ways to engage residents and form other nonprofit, public, and private partnerships to shape priorities for land bank interventions and develop short and long-term strategies. This module will present methods for land banks to go beyond just informing community residents and other stakeholders of the land bank’s vision and activities, instead ensuring that residents and others play an integral, institutionalized role in shaping and implementing land bank strategies on the front end. It will explore board, advisory group, and staffing decisions, resident education strategies, and multi-channel outreach efforts to partners who are working toward similar goals. This module will also explore how land banks can implement practices that affirm a strong commitment to inclusiveness in decision-making and disposition.

Module 5: Land Bank Disposition: Effective Methods for Returning Property to Productive Use

Recommended Length: 90 minutes

For land banks, acquiring vacant or abandoned properties is just the beginning. Next, they face a challenge that can be even trickier: developing effective systems to transfer properties back to responsible owners. It’s not just about getting a particular property into the hands of someone that will maintain it and pay property taxes – although that’s of critical importance – but also about ensuring that property disposition strategies are consistent with the land bank’s mission and priorities, as well as other existing community plans. This module will highlight the advantages and limitations of specific disposition strategies, including side lot programs, auctions, partnerships with other organizations like CDCs, and direct sales, among others. In addition, speakers will share examples of technology platforms and creative marketing strategies that can support the success of disposition programs. Finally, speakers will address how specific disposition strategies play out differently in different market contexts and how these variations impact the development of a property disposition program.
Vacant Land Reuse

Vacancy challenges are not only about empty houses, but also about empty lots. Swaths of vacant land from large-scale demolition of residential or industrial buildings and streets pockmarked with vacant lots where houses once stood can perpetuate a downward cycle of disinvestment. Vacant land reuse can catalyze inclusive, sustainable, and comprehensive neighborhood stabilization and revitalization while serving as a canvas to engage and empower residents, community based organizations, and city governments. Built upon an understanding of the historical context that caused vacant land to emerge as a prevalent issue in cities, this unit will explore the foundations of quality, equitable vacant land reuse planning and implementation.

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:

Vacant Land Reuse 101

Recommended Length: 60-90 minutes

Efforts to reuse vacant land can serve as the starting point of a sustainable, inclusive, and comprehensive community development process. Vacant land can serve as a canvas to engage residents and provide opportunity to take action. Within the historic context of power structures and oppression manifested through land access policies and practices, this module provides an overarching introduction to the foundations of quality vacant land reuse planning and implementation. Understanding neighborhood and city context; data, policy, and processes; community engagement and partnerships; project design (including planning, funding, and implementation); and maintenance contribute to a revitalization process that improves neighborhood conditions and empowers people. Each of these facets of a planning process can—and should—adapt to the unique needs and context of each community. This module will equip participants with a more complete understanding of a strategic approach to vacant land reuse planning and implementation.
Module 2:
The Lay of the Land: Data, Policy, and Processes
Recommended Length: 90 minutes

Vacant land reuse decisions happen within the context of local needs, assets, and priorities. Vacant land ownership, access, and reuse possibilities vary dramatically from municipality to municipality. The need for transparent, accessible information, policies, and processes, however, does not. Successful and catalytic vacant land reuse projects depend upon a local context that enables and supports them. This module will help you to understand the basic elements of creating a system supportive of vacant land transformation including: having transparent and accessible data (on ownership, zoning, etc.); enabling or facilitating local ordinances and policies; and designing clear, accessible processes (land acquisition, permitting, etc.). While the primary audience for this module is local government, it can be successfully adapted for a community-based audience – focusing more on the details of the local data, policy, and processes and/or how to advocate for a more transparent, accessible system to be implemented.

Module 3:
It Takes a Village: Collaboration and Engagement
Recommended Length: 60-90 minutes

Cities and neighborhoods are rich ecosystems, with networks of neighbors, organizations, and agencies, all of which should be leveraged in a vacant land reuse project or plan. Engaging and fostering collaboration to maximize the positive social, economic, and environmental impact of vacant land projects is equal parts art and science. This module will cover well-established, creative collaboration tools and strategies, while showcasing a range of national examples of multi-stakeholder collaborations on vacant land reuse projects and plans. Participants will be guided through how to bring diverse stakeholders together to engage and collaborate on any type of project – large or small.
Module 4:

Ideas to Action: Project Design, Planning, and Implementation

Prerequisite: Modules 2 & 3, if unfamiliar with vacant land systems
Recommended Length: 90-120 minutes

When implementing any new vacant land project—whether that means tackling a single problem lot in a neighborhood or developing a citywide vacant land strategy—a little planning and design go a long way. Building on Module 3, this module will introduce participants to potential vacant land “treatments” or designs—ranging from passive to active, art to infrastructure, agriculture to recycling, and standalone to comprehensive. With ideas spinning, we’ll walk through basic project planning, including objectives and action steps, task delegation, supply and resource procurement, and budget development, as well as implementation. Participants will receive templates for site design, project planning, and budgeting.

Module 5:

Sustaining Impact through Maintenance

Prerequisite: Module 1
Recommended Length: 60-90 minutes

The visioning stage of a vacant land reuse project is usually the most exciting, but those dreams will only come to fruition—with long-term positive impacts—if ongoing maintenance is planned from the start. Maintenance and upkeep often fall to the bottom of the priority list. Maintenance is more than cutting grass, picking up trash, and responding to complaints; it is an opportunity to build local relationships, mitigate environmental liabilities, unlock new sources of financial capital, and facilitate shared responsibility for the care of community assets. The focus of this module will be to “start with the end in mind,” by strategizing methods to leverage good planning and design, stakeholders, collaborations, and resources (financial and otherwise) to support project maintenance. Showcasing initiatives that considered maintenance up front in their design process, this module will help participants consider their own unique blend of ingredients to incorporate into an intentional maintenance strategy.
### Sample Half-Day Agenda

#### Strategic Code Enforcement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:30 - 12:45 PM</td>
<td>Welcome and Introductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45 - 1:30 PM</td>
<td>Strategic Code Enforcement 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 - 1:45 PM</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45 - 3:15 PM</td>
<td>Using Neighborhood Conditions to Inform Equitable Code Enforcement Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15 - 3:30 PM</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 - 5:00 PM</td>
<td>Local Ordinances: The Building Blocks of Code Enforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 - 5:15 PM</td>
<td>Closing Remarks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sample Full-Day Agenda

#### Vacant Property Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30 - 8:45 AM</td>
<td>Welcome and Introductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:45 - 10:15 AM</td>
<td>The Fundamentals of Property Market Dynamics 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 - 11:45 AM</td>
<td>Delinquent Tax Enforcement 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 - 12:15 PM</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15 - 1:45 PM</td>
<td>Strategic Code Enforcement 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45 - 2:00 PM</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 - 3:30 PM</td>
<td>Understanding How Neighborhoods Affect Landlord Behavior 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 - 5:00 PM</td>
<td>Land Banking 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 - 5:15 PM</td>
<td>Closing Remarks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>