

Strategic Plan



NATIONAL
COMMUNITY LAND TRUST
NETWORK

2014 – 2016



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This strategic plan is about significantly increasing the number of people with modest incomes who have the opportunity to build wealth and live in an affordable home of their own. Over the next three years we will significantly increase the number of permanently affordable housing units on the ground by coalescing as a sector, boosting the capacity of the Network, and ensuring that our members operate more effectively and sustainably. To meet this goal we will focus on four strategic priorities, each with a set of specific goals and deliverables.

2014-2016 Strategic Priorities

Advance the Industry	Advance our industry so that it is recognized, impactful, and reputable.
Catalyze Growth	Grow the impact and sustainability of our members and promote adoption of CLTs and permanently affordable housing programs.
Institutionalize Support	Garner formal support and political will from private and public institutions for CLTs and permanently affordable housing.
Optimize Impact	Further develop a high-capacity Network that fully engages its members and continuously acts in service of families and communities who experience marginalization.

Advance the Industry. The Network is expanding its membership beyond CLTs to include other organizations that adopt practices providing permanently affordable housing (PAH) and durable control of tenure. A broader member base will increase and unify the voice of the sector and streamline practices to recruit stronger financial and political support. Ultimately, sector development will result in an industry that is well-defined, well-known, reputable, quality-assured, and high-impact.

Over the next three years we will develop a legislative definition of permanently affordable housing as well as a brand identity and useful messaging adopted throughout the sector, complete evaluative research on the performance and outcomes of the sector, and create new legal documents aligned to the model ground lease to minimize barriers for institutional support. During the first half of 2014 the Network will engage in a joint planning process with Cornerstone Partnership/NCB Capital Impact to examine how the work of both organizations contributes to unifying the sector and achieving impact at a meaningful scale. We will consider a range of options for ongoing coordination and collaboration including the possibility of some form of merger.



Catalyze Growth. The Network will increase the pace and breadth of growth among members by raising awareness about what impact means (scale, sustainability, and reach), encouraging members to adopt goals for impact and measure performance; and developing tools that will help members understand how growth occurs in different environments, conditions, and situations. The focus on impact will also be seen in efforts to enable members to successfully compete for limited funding resources and to develop productive partnerships with

Vision for the Future

1. Significantly more permanently affordable homes are available throughout the country.
2. Federal, state, and local funding programs and policies incentivize permanent affordability and result in funding for the production of units as well as to support stewardship activities.
3. Accessible first mortgage products are available to our homebuyers in every region of the country: rural, urban, and suburban.
4. Permanently affordable housing enjoys wide recognition and respect and is considered a critical solution in meeting community needs.

lenders, city officials, housing finance agencies, appraisers, and Realtors. The Network will direct its capacity building resources to help members strengthen, sustain, and grow their impact through grants and scholarships, tools and resources, training, knowledge-sharing, and research on innovations or empirically-supported best practices.

Measuring the change effected in our members as a result of our capacity building program is extremely difficult. However, over the next three years we expect to incorporate program impact measurement and evaluation efforts into many of our activities. The quantity and quality of our tools and

resources will increase significantly including the addition of new online tutorials and advocacy toolkits, and members at all levels of expertise will find resources applicable to their needs. Other specific products will include: webinars, conference sessions, and technical assistance grants focused on impact; a new “Start-up Hub” on the website accompanied by webinars and adoption grant opportunities; tools and resources designed specifically around individual standards; webinars, “how-to” toolkits and marketing materials for lenders, Realtors, and other partners; and HomeKeeper adoption grants and a clear strategy to help facilitate small HomeKeeper users.

Institutionalize Support. The Network is working to institutionalize support from private and public entities that will result in funding, financing, and property for the sector locally and nationally. National policy efforts will focus on three major goals: 1) Increase access to mortgage financing for homebuyers in CLT or PAH programs; 2) Increase the availability of funding and properties for CLTs and PAH programs; and 3) Build strategic allies and a civically engaged membership to ensure policy wins.

Impacting public policy, particularly at the national level, is a slow process and some of our work over the next several years is really about laying the foundation for future wins by developing relationships with allies and elected officials and building a base of advocates among our membership. During the next three years we expect FHA to issue a waiver and rule



changes to allow FHA-insured loans for permanently affordable housing programs. We also expect to make substantial progress in our efforts to remove barriers for CLTs using HOME funds and generate regular and significant advocacy actions on the part of our members. In addition to national-level policy work, the Network will support member efforts at the municipal and state levels where there are significant opportunities to infuse permanent affordability into inclusionary zoning ordinances, transit-oriented development policies, and housing trust fund priorities.

Optimize Impact. A strong Network organization is vital in order to successfully support our members to achieve significant impact in their communities and for the field to positively impact society. Our job is to make our members' work easier so that they can increase the number of families who have the opportunity to live in an affordable home. To do that, the Network must have ample and sustainable financial resources, highly skilled staff capacity, and the vision and commitment needed to effectively professionalize and grow the sector. It must be valued by and show value for its staff, leadership, members, volunteers, allies, and partners. Over the next three years the Network will develop a more sustainable business model; grow our membership by 15%; develop a high-quality communications and fundraising function; improve our personnel benefits program; develop and implement a compensation policy; build a 6-month operating reserve; and design a measurement and evaluation system.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAN

The 2014-2016 Strategic Plan was developed over a nine-month period and involved the entire board of directors and staff, as well as members and funders. The strategic priorities reflect both our commitment to the success of the sector broadly and our dedication to our individual members.

Review and Measurement. This strategic plan is a living document—to be reviewed regularly and updated or modified as needed to meet changing circumstances and new opportunities. At least twice per year the board will review progress and address any issues that may impede success.

We strive to find meaningful ways to measure the impact of our work. To that end we plan to develop and implement an organization-wide measurement and evaluation system appropriate to our size and activities.

Member Engagement. The Network is committed to involving our members in the activities of the organization and in truly representing their needs in our work. We balance the desire to be flexible and nimble with our commitment to member engagement and transparency. We rely on our members to provide feedback on their needs through surveys, affinity groups, committees, and working groups and we use this information to formulate our policy agenda and capacity building services.



ABOUT THE NETWORK

The National CLT Network incorporated in 2006, thanks to the commitment and hard work of CLT practitioners and the support of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. The Network picked up the mantle from the Institute for Community Economics to provide support and leadership for CLTs around the country. What was once characterized as a grassroots “movement” spun off from the civil rights, land conservation, and community development movements, is increasingly becoming a “sector,” a professionalized field or industry. This sector includes CLTs as well as inclusionary zoning programs and other types of deed-restricted programs across the country that are committed to community control of land and the preservation of housing and assets in perpetuity.

Since 2006 the Network has built a strong infrastructure that now includes:

1. an active and organized membership of over 120 dues-paying organizations representing a variety of program types;
2. a strong staff of five led by an engaged board of directors;
3. a strong peer-to-peer network;
4. capacity building resources that include national conferences, a help desk, technical assistance grants, and a collection of tools and resources on a wide variety of topics;
5. an expansive collection of courses, webinars, seminars, and knowledgeable trainers;
6. support for critical research on CLTs and PAH;
7. a growing presence in the policy arena focused on direct and grassroots advocacy and education on issues affecting permanently affordable housing programs;
8. a website containing a CLT directory, searchable resources, and effective communications on upcoming events and opportunities for political engagement; and
9. a Research Collaborative comprised of an internet-connected community of roughly forty researchers and an ever-growing empirical library on CLTs and lasting affordability.

Mission

The National CLT Network nurtures and sustains healthy and economically diverse communities by supporting the work of community based nonprofits and local entities that provide permanently affordable access to land, homes, and related resources. The Network plays a leadership role in sector development, capacity building and policy work.



The Role We Play

1. **Standard-bearers of Excellence:** We respond to the needs expressed by our members, as well as setting the standards that push our members' towards professional excellence;
2. **Rooted Ambassadors:** We keep the history of CLTs alive and stay rooted in the values that shaped the CLT model, inspiring others with that history, while still adapting to emerging opportunities;
3. **Technical Experts:** We maintain a comprehensive library of model documents (policies, procedures, statutes, research findings, treatises, etc.) and other materials, producing and disseminating new model documents and research papers, providing trainings, and facilitating the delivery of technical assistance.;
4. **Connectors:** We are the portal to information and the convener that enables others to connect to people with the expertise they need at the time and the ability to connect peer organizations to one another (expertise provided by us and by others);
5. **Data Collectors and Storytellers:** We identify, support, facilitate, conduct and disseminate research and documented impact that enables our members to lead governments, bankers, and others in positions of power to adopt policies in support of the work.
6. **Effective Advocates:** We pursue an aggressive policy agenda in support of our members and support them in developing effective legislative advocacy campaigns in their communities.

Network Membership

Our members are primarily non-profit or governmental organizations securing land in trust and providing affordable owner-occupied homes that aim to preserve affordability over time. This includes community land trusts, inclusionary zoning programs, local governments, and deed-restricted programs. Our members are geographically diverse, providing a rich environment to demonstrate the value of the model in different regions, types of communities, and economic climates. In addition to housing, our members develop rural and urban agriculture projects, commercial spaces that serve local communities, affordable rental and cooperative housing projects, and conserve land or urban green spaces.

Network members gain the benefit of voting privileges, a collective voice for advocacy, discounts, and exclusive access to certain resources, scholarships, and grant opportunities. The Network works closely with organizational partners, allies, research collaborative members, CLTs in other countries, and funders to carry out our work.

Our Reach

Our work is focused on the United States, specifically in the areas where our members work (46 states) or where there is interest in starting a CLT / PAH program. At the same time, we value international collaborations and seek to support the growth and development of the model in other countries.



Our Approach to Capacity Building

The Network has always strived to be responsive to member needs and inclusive in its methods. We recognize that our greatest strength is our members' knowledge, experience, and generosity. When we build the capacity of our members we also build the capacity of the Network. We do this by:

- **Being member driven:** The Network exists to make the work of our members easier. We try to create a culture of openness that encourages members to communicate their needs to the Network and we, in turn, try to respond as quickly and as comprehensively as possible.
- **Leading through an engaged Capacity Building Committee:** The Capacity Building Committee, made up of CLT and PAH leaders and allies, provides expert guidance on curriculum content and technical assistance methodology. The committee ensures that the Network's capacity building work is comprehensive, coordinated, and effective.
- **Focusing on underserved communities and communities of color:** Like community land trusts themselves, the Network is dedicated to, whenever possible, focusing our efforts on underserved communities—both urban and rural—and on communities of color. We understand that this may not be the easiest way to work but we embrace the challenge as imperative.
- **Being budget conscious:** The Network strives to provide its capacity building opportunities in a way that is open and accessible. Many of our members provide vital services in their communities on tight budgets and so the Network tries to minimize user fees and take advantage of technology to efficiently provide training and technical assistance.
- **Creating an inclusive network of top-notch trainers and technical assistance providers:** The Network already has a team of expert trainers and technical assistance providers who have served the CLT community since before the Network's inception. We will proactively seek to expand these networks to include new members and to support and strengthen the services that they provide.



2014-2016 Strategic Priorities and Goals

Strategic Priority #1 Advance our industry so that it is recognized, impactful, and reputable.	2014	2015	2016
a) Create a working definition of scale for member organizations (e.g. percentage of affordable units in community or percentage of total units in community).	X		
b) Name and define our industry to galvanize support from a broad array of PAH practitioners for adoption and support in order to effectively advocate for public and private support.	X	X	
c) Create and implement a communications and messaging strategy to build a strong brand identity that is embraced by industry actors.		X	X
d) Produce a top-notch national conference that unifies, grows, and inspires the industry; fosters best practices and innovation; advances scale; and forges partnerships and relationships.	X	X	X
e) Conduct research on best practices, innovations, and assessments on aspects of our members and state of industry to ground our work in evidence-based practice and inform the priorities of the Network.	X	X	X
f) Create an alternative ground lease that will work with FHA waiver and rule changes.	X	X	
g) Create new legal documents for other PAH models (aligned to model ground lease) and actively promote adoption to minimize barriers for institutional support.		X	X
h) Support the creation of certifications that provides quality-assurance of industry players and results in access to first mortgage financing and funding.	X	X	X
i) Support the development of a national data repository and data management system based upon HomeKeeper so the Network is able to optimize data usage for evaluation.	X	X	X
j) Complete evaluative research on the performance and outcomes of the industry and disseminate results to members, allies, and public policy makers.	X	X	X



Strategic Priority #2 Grow the impact and sustainability and promote adoption of CLTs and permanently affordable housing programs.	2014	2015	2016
a) Educate our members about scale and provide program assessment and evaluation tools along with business planning grants that enable them to gauge their organizational health and take steps to increase sustainability and impact.	X	X	
b) Support organizations exploring, planning for, and implementing CLTs and other permanently affordable housing programs by providing a “Start-up Hub” on the website, three part webinar series, and capacity building grants.			
c) Develop a robust collection of tools, resources, and sample documents appropriate for all PAH programs (include adapting Capacity Building Institute tools, tools for meeting industry standards, and online tutorials).	X	X	X
d) Help members successfully stretch to new funding resources by providing training, toolkits, and notices of upcoming funding opportunities.	X	X	X
e) Create educational tools and resources for CLT and PAH partners such as lenders, HFAs, city officials, appraisers, and Realtors that promote and facilitate productive working relationships.	X		
f) Develop and disseminate tools and resources to encourage members to become active advocates.	X	X	X
g) Develop and implement a “State/Local Strategy” to help CLTs and PAH programs incorporate permanent affordability into local policies, programs or initiatives relating to public transit projects, inclusionary zoning, or state or local housing trust funds.	X	X	X
h) Develop a strategy for identifying struggling CLTs and a triage plan for the affordable units on the ground.		X	X
i) Expand the number of members using HomeKeeper by offering adoption grant opportunities for large programs and exploring a strategy to make HomeKeeper a more reasonable investment for small programs.	X	X	X
j) Design, develop, and deliver the curriculum as well as logistical support for two CHIP Capacity Building Institutes per year and other place based trainings as appropriate.	X	X	
k) Establish and facilitate opportunities for small groups of members to meet informally to discuss and problem-solve around specific topics to promote peer learning and knowledge sharing.	X	X	X
l) Plan and implement a leadership development capacity building institute focused on organizational sustainability and programmatic growth.		X	X



Strategic Priority #3 Institutionalize support from private and public entities for CLTs and permanently affordable housing programs.	2014	2015	2016
a) Increase access to financing for homebuyers in CLTs or PAH programs.			
1. Obtain a waiver and rule changes for FHA-insured mortgages.	X	X	
2. Work to get primary market access and/or Market Access Fund credit enhancements for CLTs and PAH programs into Housing Finance Reform.	X	X	X
3. Assist with the potential development of a national mortgage product that meets the needs of CLTs and PAH programs.	X	X	X
4. Recruit existing mortgage lending institutions to originate Fannie Mae home purchase and refinance loans that serve various housing types and geographies.	X	X	X
5. Implement a partnership with Partnership for the Common Good's CapNexus platform to provide our members with access to lenders and investors for project-based financing	X		
b) Increase the availability of funding and properties for CLTs and PAH programs.			
1. Develop and implement a strategy to advocate to preserve or increase funding for HUD programs.	X	X	X
2. Work to change HOME rules to require or give preference to "permanent affordability".		X	X
3. Seek HOME guidance to clarify new rules to minimize barriers for CLTs and PAH programs to be sustained and expanded (e.g. ground lease fees, admin for stewardship).	X	X	
4. As needed, change eligible uses in certain FHLB Affordable Housing Programs (AHP) where CLTs and PAH programs want to apply for funding.	X	X	
5. Work to get the Market Access Fund component of Housing Finance Reform to support "permanent affordability."	X	X	X
6. Explore possibility of advocating for Federal Housing Finance Agency to create an "Equity Fund" that would provide participations in a loan pool managed by local intermediaries, which would grant second loans (structured to act as "subsidy") to eligible buyers of CLTs and PAH programs.	X	X	
7. Participate in the Equity Caucus and as appropriate work to change FTA's New Starts and Small Starts programs to require or give preference to "permanently affordability".	X	X	X
c) Build strategic allies and a civically engaged membership to reach other objectives.			
1. Coordinate and collaborate with strategic allies that have policy goals aligned with the Network's.	X	X	X
2. Cultivate a civically engaged membership that will mobilize and act when needed.	X	X	X



Strategic Priority #4 Develop a high-capacity Network that fully engages its members and provides excellent customer service.	2014	2015	2016
a) Engage in an in-depth planning process to evaluate the current mix of services and capacities between the Network and Cornerstone Partnership, facilitate a series of conversations between NCB Capital Impact leadership, Network leadership, and the Ford Foundation, and propose a course of action.	X	X	
b) Develop a highly effective fundraising and communications function within the Network and ensure that we regularly communicate with members about Network activities, opportunities, and resources.	X		
c) Regularly engage members through committees, affinity groups, and other opportunities.	X	X	
d) Improve the Network's personnel benefits program with the goal of increasing consistency and coverage.	X		
e) Build an operating reserve with the goal of 6 months of reserves by 2016.		X	X
f) Increase earned income equal to 30% of the annual budget by 2016.	X	X	X
g) Develop and implement a competitive and consistent compensation policy.	X	X	
h) Develop and implement an organization-wide measurement and evaluation system appropriate to our size and scale.		X	X
i) Achieve a 90% renewal and a 5% rate of growth in the annual membership drive.	X	X	X
j) Continue to implement new Salesforce features to ensure the most effective use.	X		
k) Produce and distribute an annual report.	X	X	X