

# Partnerships

Strategic partnerships were one of the top two most widely endorsed practices contributing to organizational success in maintaining and greening vacant lots.

## Why Partnerships Matter

Nationally, according to respondents, partnerships were vital for expanding work, avoiding duplication of efforts, accessing information, and advancing best practice sharing, policy development, and systems change.

### 1. Help Grow Networks

Organizations that work with partners reach more people and often achieve better outcomes.

*“Always work with a partner. We rarely do an event where we are the sole presenter and organizer. By leveraging our partners, we increase our capacity and reach.”*

*“Find a great partner. Find a logical way to divide the work and work shoulder to shoulder. The outcomes will be better.”*

### 2. Help Address Capacity Gaps

Organizations that leverage complementary strengths can be more efficient with time and resources; especially in low-resource settings.

*“They complement their neighborhood projects with our additional funding. They often go after funds for acquisition and demo, we go after funds for reclamation.”*

*“Now, if it’s a severely blighted vacant lot with a significant amount of dumping, that’s just out of our capacity, so we partner with the city’s Department of Public Works. They do the initial cleanup if we provide the capacity to have it stabilized and kept clean afterward.”*



### 3. Fuel Innovation

Partnerships with governments are critical to advance new systems and policies that increase efficiency and capacity.

*“The Land Bank is working closely with the Clerks of the Circuit Courts, lead judge, and County Clerk’s office to more efficiently take thousands of tax certificates to deed.”*

### 4. Drive Long-Term Progress

Broad coordination between partners is essential to meet the long-term, systemic challenges of vacancy.

*“The teams work together closely because the need in our city is significant. With only a small staff of three in the planning division, change on a large scale is only possible through partnership.”*

# Practitioner Insights

## LESSONS FROM THE FIELD



### Assess the Community Landscape

When organizations understand where they can fit in and fill gaps, they prevent duplication and create a foundation for collaboration.

*“Evaluate the landscape of agencies, residents, and others doing work in the space and determine where gaps are before starting a new program. Often we can accomplish more together than separately.”*

*“Those who wish to contribute to revitalization effectively need to figure out how to fit within the larger landscape of existing revitalization work and identify ways to either complement what is already in place or to fill in gaps in existing work.”*

### Proactively Build Relationships

Relationships with other organizations and government entities can help advance shared missions.

*“Our top practice is purposefully looking to partner with other organizations in pursuit of our mission/objectives.”*

*“To create a meaningful pipeline of properties into the land bank, we must foster and maintain a strong partnership with multiple City agencies.”*

### Diversify Partners

Work with a range of partners, from government to faith-based organizations to expand your networks and accomplish more together.

*“We work with the municipal government to identify advocates and other community-based organizations to identify areas for partnership.”*

*“Many times churches are some of the only remaining active supportive organizations in neighborhoods, so they are a key point for outreach and partnership for everything from removing old tires and debris to mowing and planting.”*

### Seek Out Experience

Seek out experienced and knowledgeable partners to share information and expertise and to identify best practices to further your work.

*“We learn from others tackling the same challenges and use lessons learned to refine our approach.”*

*“We are still in the startup phase ourselves. So far, technical assistance [from our partner] has been most helpful as we are able to implement best practices.”*



The Keys to Success guides are companion products to *America’s Vacant Lot Landscape: Insights from the National Survey on Greening*, which can be found at [www.communityprogress.net/vacantland](http://www.communityprogress.net/vacantland).

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