

2022-2023 Community Revitalization Fellowship



Request for Applications

Release Date: January 13, 2022

Application Deadline: 5:00 p.m. EST on February 25, 2022



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About the Community Revitalization Fellowship

The Community Revitalization Fellowship (CRF) is a learning opportunity to help grassroots community leaders revitalize neighborhoods struggling with serious challenges related to vacancy, abandonment, and disinvestment. Over the course of the fellowship, fellows will visit and learn from each other's communities and efforts. They will build stronger relationships with local leaders at home, tackle important projects, and push for positive changes in their neighborhoods.

Each year, CRF engages six grassroots resident leaders from three communities (eighteen people in total) for the yearlong fellowship. The program involves three cross-community learning exchanges, a virtual revitalization workshop for residents in each community, and ongoing capacity building and mentorship support from national experts and local partners.

Throughout 2022–23, CRF will focus on helping residents lead community-based efforts to improve vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties through arts, culture, and creative placemaking.

CRF is designed as an opportunity for participating fellows to:

- **Gain knowledge** about neighborhood stabilization and revitalization strategies, tools, and systems
- **Lead** an impactful neighborhood revitalization strategy or project
- **Build connections** with other fellows within and across participating communities
- **Strengthen relationships** with local organizations, elected officials, and other local leaders
- **Increase the effectiveness** of their neighborhood interventions and advocacy

Applications are due by 5:00 p.m. EST on February 25, 2022

About the Center for Community Progress

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 mission of the Center for Community Progress is to foster strong, equitable communities where vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties are transformed into assets for neighbors and neighborhoods. 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. More information is available at www.communityprogress.org.

Who Should Apply?

The Community Revitalization Fellowship is designed for the unique needs of small- and mid-sized communities. **Individuals from communities—including cities, suburbs, and rural municipalities—with a population of 300,000 or less in the United States and Puerto Rico are eligible to apply for the fellowship.** Population is determined based on the population of the legal jurisdiction as a whole, such as a city or a town. If the overall city's population is greater than 300,000, it is ineligible for this program. For example, if your city has a population of 600,000, but the neighborhoods you hope to target have a population of approximately 50,000, your city is **not eligible** to participate in the fellowship because the city's total population is greater than 300,000.

Priority will be given to communities with serious challenges related to vacancy, abandonment, and disinvestment, particularly in communities of color. The lead applicant must be a local organization that has in-depth knowledge of the community's neighborhood associations and resident leadership as well as a commitment to resident engagement, experience in community and economic development, and the willingness to serve as the institutional partner (described below) to the community's cohort of fellows.

What is Creative Placemaking?

Creative placemaking is the practice of enhancing a neighborhood's quality of life through arts, culture, and intentional community development. This practice can take varying forms including (but not limited to) temporary visual art installations, performance events, and developing permanent brick-and-mortar spaces. However, creative placemaking is about more than just creating artistic attractions. By connecting to the community's identity through arts and culture resources creative placemaking helps a community understand its history and look ahead toward a most just and inclusive future together.

Creative placemaking is a community revitalization tool with three essential components:

Projects are place-based: Creative placemaking projects are always rooted in a specific place and are in service to the people who give it purpose. This includes making sure projects reflect the physical, social, and economic priorities of the community.

The process is community-centered: Creative placemaking must engage residents, business owners, leaders, and other people who want a say in shaping a community's future. These projects prioritize the people who experience the place in question.

Projects are integrated with other strategies: Creative placemaking always works alongside and in concert with local strategies for housing preservation and development, economic development, and resident-serving programs.

It is important that creative placemaking projects closely involve existing residents and community members in leadership and decision-making roles throughout the project's process.

In keeping with its mission, Community Progress is focused on arts, culture, and creative placemaking on problem properties. Problem properties are properties that are vacant, abandoned, deteriorated, or underutilized. While most neighborhoods have at least a few problem properties, Community Progress focuses on the places where problem properties are numerous enough to have a noticeable negative impact on quality of life, safety, property values, and other aspects of a neighborhood's well-being.

Cohort Roles and Structure

Institutional Partner – Lead Applicant

The institutional partner provides support, mentorship, and logistical help to their community's cohort of fellows during the application process and, if chosen, over the course of the fellowship. Community foundations, land bank authorities, or any established 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations with experience in revitalization and a deep commitment to resident engagement, are invited to apply.

- Institutional partners must have a demonstrated commitment to addressing community and economic development challenges and to ensuring that residents are meaningfully engaged in or leading these efforts.
- Institutional partners must show an understanding of historic and present-day policies and practices related racial inequities in land use, urban planning, and community investment.
- Institutional partners must also demonstrate meaningful relationships with a range of local government, nonprofit, private, and philanthropic stakeholders who help to shape revitalization decisions. They must be willing to help strengthen relationships between fellows and these stakeholders. More information about the institutional partner role can be found under "Commitments and Expectations" on page 8.

Fellows – Grassroots Community Leaders

Each community chosen for CRF will have a cohort of six fellows. This cohort comprises grassroots community leaders representing a diverse range of skills, connections to the community, and neighborhoods across the community. CRF aims to serve not just well-known community leaders, but also the "rising stars" whose volunteerism and advocacy could be elevated through participation in CRF.

- Community Progress expects that most or all fellows will be engaged in their neighborhoods as volunteers, not as career professionals. Fitting activism and volunteerism around job and family obligations is hard work, so CRF is designed to help fellows make the most out of the time they offer their communities.
- Grassroots community leaders must demonstrate current involvement in their neighborhood's revitalization. This could include, for example, leaders of block clubs or neighborhood watches, advocacy coalition leads, a member of a faith community that is active in neighborhood service, artists and designers of any artistic medium, culture bearers, members of arts and culture organizations, or other formal and informal associations.

Program Structure and Timeline

The Community Revitalization Fellowship is an eighteen-month-long program beginning in early 2022. During the fellowship, participants will join three in-person learning exchanges, four local cohort meetings, and one virtual community revitalization workshop.

The dates and locations of the three learning exchanges, as well as the Virtual Community Revitalization Workshop, will be developed in partnership with the cohort communities that are selected. More information about these events is below.

Learning Exchanges

When:	One (1) two-day learning exchange will take place in <i>each</i> of the cohort communities for a total of three (3) learning exchanges over the course of CRF. The tentative dates for the learning exchanges are: June 24-26; Jan 27-29, 2023 (alternative March 3-5); April 28-30, 2023 (alternative May 5-7, 2023)
Coordinator:	Center for Community Progress
Additional Support:	Hosting cohort community
Attendees:	Fellows, Institutional Partners
What:	The learning exchanges feature a mix of technical and leadership trainings by a faculty of national experts and local neighborhood tours of projects in the host community.
Additional Details:	Costs related to travel, lodging, and on-site meals are covered by Community Progress.

Virtual Community Revitalization Workshop

When:	The Virtual Community Revitalization Workshop will be provided to each cohort towards the end of the program. The exact date and time will be determined in partnership with the cohort community.
Coordinator:	Center for Community Progress
Additional Support:	Hosting cohort community
Attendees:	Residents and the fellows from the hosting cohort community

What:	The Virtual Community Revitalization Workshop is an opportunity for community members in each of the cohort communities to learn from national experts to increase their knowledge of practical, actionable ways to support revitalization on their own blocks. It helps to extend the impact of CRF beyond the community's six official fellows.
Additional Details:	Community Progress staff will work on session content in partnership with the host community. The workshop will be held via Zoom.

Local Cohort Meetings

When:	Before the first learning exchange, and after each of the three learning exchanges (four times in total over the course of the fellowship)
Coordinator:	Institutional Partner
Attendees:	Fellows
What:	These meetings are intended to help fellows set and make progress toward goals and continue the momentum generated during the learning exchanges.
Additional Details:	The institutional partner has the option of using the funding (described below) to support these meetings, as needed.

Tuition and Costs

Thanks to the generous support of the Oak Foundation and The Kresge Foundation, institutional partners and fellows are not responsible for any direct financial costs of participating in CRF. All travel, lodging, and on-site meal expenses associated with each learning exchange are covered for fellows and one representative from the institutional partner.

In addition:

- Each fellow will receive a \$230 stipend following each of the three learning exchanges attended (up to \$690 total).
- The institutional partner will receive \$14,000 in funding to support its participation in CRF. The institutional partner can use \$4,000 to reimburse for time spent on providing guidance, mentorship, and logistical support to the cohort. The remaining \$10,000 should be used to support arts, culture, and creative placemaking on problem properties. We have intentionally left the description of the use of these funds flexible because we know that each community has specific needs. However, we do ask the institutional partner to share in their application their ideas for how these funds can best support the goals of this program. The \$4,000 institutional

partners support will be provided in three equal installments, after the completion of each learning exchange. The remaining \$10,000 will be provided at the conclusion of the program.

In exchange, institutional partners and fellows are expected to commit the time necessary to full participation in CRF.

Illustrative Program Timeline

Exact dates and times will be determined in partnership with selected communities.

- **May 2022:** First local cohort meeting in each community
- **June 25-26, 2022:** Learning Exchange #1
- **September 7-9, 2022:** Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference (see below)
- **November 2023:** Second local cohort meeting in each community
- **Jan 28-29, 2023:** Learning Exchange #2
- **March 2023:** Third local cohort meeting in each community
- **April 28-30, 2023:** Learning Exchange #3
- **May 2023:** Virtual Community Revitalization Workshop, one in each community
- **June 2023- Beyond:** While the 2022-2023 CRF will have officially concluded, Community Progress will conduct periodic follow up with the fellows and the Institutional Partners to learn about the impact of CRF in participating communities

Alternative Learning Exchange Dates

Alternative dates for the second and third learning exchange are tentatively planned for March 3-5, 2023 and May 5-7, 2023 respectively. Community Progress will work with each cohort to finalize the learning exchange dates after the participants are selected.

Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference

As part of their participation in the fellowship, participants will also be invited to attend the Community Progress' Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference, one of the most important national conferences in community development. The 2022 Reclaiming Vacant Properties conference will bring together leaders from various sectors from across the country and focus on positioning community leaders to radically imagine and create a future that centers equitable development and community resiliency. Community Progress will provide scholarships to attend the conference free of charge, cover the cost of lodging during the conference and provide stipends for travel. We will start planning these logistics in June 2022.

Commitments and Expectations

Commitments and Expectations of Institutional Partners

- Institutional partners will be expected to convene the six local fellows before the first learning exchange, as well as after each of the three learning exchanges (four times in total over the course of the fellowship). The structure of these meetings is flexible and could include, for example: a meeting to debrief from a learning exchange and plan next steps; a meet-and-greet with relevant local government or other partners; helping

out at a neighborhood clean-up; or other formats that make the most sense based on the community's and fellows' needs.

- Institutional partners will be expected to participate fully in three (3) two-day learning exchanges over the course of the fellowship. Two of the learning exchanges will involve traveling to each of the other two cohort communities. The third learning exchange will take place in the institutional partner's own community. (See "What's Involved in Hosting a Learning Exchange?" on page 9.)
- Institutional partners will help identify and implement strategies to strengthen relationships between fellows and local government, nonprofit, private, or philanthropic leaders. This may include navigating local bureaucracies and, where appropriate, helping advance the fellows' use of arts, culture, and creative placemaking as a tool for neighborhood revitalization efforts that emerge through participation in CRF.
- Institutional partners will also participate in periodic follow-up surveys and/or phone calls during CRF and for a period of up to twelve months following the program's formal conclusion to document the program's impact.

Commitments and Expectations of Fellows

- Fellows are expected to participate fully in three (3) two-day learning exchanges over the course of the fellowship. Two of the learning exchanges will involve traveling to each of the other two cohort communities. The third learning exchange will take place in the fellow's own community. (See "What's Involved in Hosting a Learning Exchange?" below).
- Fellows will participate in four local meetings organized by the institutional partners.
- Fellows will also participate in periodic follow-up surveys and/or phone calls during CRF and for a period of up to twelve months following the program's formal conclusion to document the program's impact. Our hope is that this program will empower residents to take on new policy initiatives and implement new arts, culture, and creative placemaking revitalization projects in their neighborhoods to improve vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties.

What's Involved in Hosting a Learning Exchange

Over the course of the fellowship, each cohort will host the other two cohort communities for one (1) two-day learning exchange. Each exchange will include a neighborhood tour highlighting relevant projects as well as the Virtual Community Revitalization Workshop for community members.

In order to ensure the learning exchanges and the workshop have a positive impact, each cohort will be expected to:

- Secure event space(s) for the learning exchanges and Virtual Community Revitalization Workshop
- Provide audio/visual equipment
- Identify potential local community leaders, advocates, government officials, or elected leaders who play an important role in vacant property revitalization and who can provide community context during the learning exchange and/or workshop
- Recommend and/or connect Community Progress with local vendors including food and local transportation to neighborhood sites.

The Role of Center for Community Progress

Community Progress offers the Community Revitalization Fellowship thanks to the generous support of the Oak Foundation and The Kresge Foundation. Community Progress' role includes:

- Managing the planning and development of each learning exchange and each Virtual Revitalization Workshop in partnership with each hosting community
- Providing a faculty of national experts and local practitioners from around the country to guide participants through a mix of classroom sessions and small working group activities at each of the three learning exchanges
- Providing ongoing informal support and guidance to institutional partners and/or fellows over the course of the fellowship
- Arranging travel, lodging, and on-site meals for fellows for each learning exchange
- Providing stipends to fellows and funding to institutional partners as described in "Program Structure and Timeline" above

COVID-19 Safety Precautions

Our highest priority for CRF learning exchanges is to provide as safe of an experience as possible for all participants, staff, and partners by following best practices recommended by public health experts. Depending on available COVID-19 data and best practices recommended by federal, state, and local public health experts and agencies, participants at in person learning exchanges may be required to be vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus, wear masks, submit a negative COVID-19 test prior to each in person event, and/or engage in other activities to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Onsite safety protocols will be shared 30 days prior to the learning exchanges and will be in compliance with all local, state, and federal rules and regulations, as well as regulations of all event spaces. Should circumstances related to the COVID-19 virus require, Community Progress reserves the right to modify the format of in-person exchanges or events, which may include holding such events virtually.

Application Schedule

Task	Date	Description
Application Release	January 13, 2022	Communities interested in participating in CRF are invited to apply.
Informational Webinar	February 3, 2022 12:00 p.m. EST	Community Progress will provide details of the fellowship and answer questions from webinar participants. Register here for the webinar.
Applications Due	February 25, 2022 5:00 p.m. EST	Institutional partners must submit applications to crf@communityprogress.org by 5:00 p.m. EST.
All Applicants Notified	By April 8, 2022	Community Progress will notify all applicants of their application status.
Participant Preparation	April – June 2022	Community Progress will work with institutional partners from each community to determine dates, times, and logistics for learning exchanges.
Program Implementation	June 2022 – May 2023	See page 8 for the anticipated program timeline.

Selection Criteria

Community Progress will evaluate each application based on the following criteria:

- Evidence that property vacancy, abandonment, and deterioration are a significant challenge to the community. Priority will be given to communities where this most directly impacts communities of color.
- The institutional partner has an existing relationship with government, civic, and resident leaders that can be built upon over the course of the fellowship.
- The institutional partner has experience with resident engagement and racial equity in the context of community and economic development.
- Proposed fellows have experience in community-driven interventions and/or advocacy to address vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties through arts, culture, and creative placemaking.
- The institutional partner and proposed fellows have a commitment and ability to meet expectations for participation and project implementation.

Informational Webinar and Questions

All organizations and individuals who are considering applying for the 2022-2023 Community Revitalization Fellowship are invited to join an informational webinar about the application process on Thursday, February 3, 2022, 12:00 p.m. EST

The webinar is optional and [registration is required](#).

Additional questions regarding this opportunity can be submitted by email to crf@communityprogress.org. Questions must be received by 2:00 p.m. EST on Wednesday February 23, 2022, to guarantee a response.

How to Submit Your Application

The full application begins on page 14. Only complete applications will be considered for acceptance. Applications should be a single PDF and should be emailed to crf@communityprogress.org. Applications must be received at 5:00 p.m. EST on Friday, February 25, 2022. Late applications will not be considered.

Thank you so much for your interest in the 2022-2023 Community Revitalization Fellowship. We look forward to seeing your application!

2022-2023 Community Revitalization Fellowship Application

Application Checklist

- ✓ **Cover Sheet**
- ✓ **Institutional Partner Questionnaire**
- ✓ **Six (6) Fellows Questionnaires**
- ✓ **Responses to Narrative Questions**
- ✓ **Optional Supplemental Materials**

[Download a Microsoft Word version of the Application here >>](#)

Application Cover Sheet

Please complete the following cover sheet and include at the front of your application.

Lead Applicant (Proposed Institutional Partner) Information			
Lead Applicant:			
Organization Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Foundation <input type="checkbox"/> Land Bank <input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit		
Mailing address:			
Executive Director:			
Project Manager: (staff person who will oversee involvement with CRF)		Job Title:	
Email Address:		Phone:	
Website:			
Mission Statement:			
Community Information			
City and State:			
Population:			
Do the proposed fellows work in a targeted neighborhood(s) or community-wide? <i>*Please list targeted neighborhoods if any</i>			
Resident Leaders (Proposed Fellows) Must include Six Fellows			
Name	Email Address		
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
Please indicate your cohort's availability during the following dates to either host a learning exchange, or travel to cohort communities for a learning exchange. Indicating dates of unavailability will not disqualify your application.			
	Available to Host (Yes/No)	Available to Travel (Yes/No)	
Exchange #1: June 24-26, 2022			
Exchange #2: Jan 27-29, 2023			
Alternate date Exchange #2: March 3-5, 2023			
Exchange #3: April 22-23, 2023			
Alternate date Exchange #3: May 5-7, 2023			

Institutional Partner Questionnaire

This questionnaire should be completed by the **lead applicant (proposed institutional partner)**.

Name of person who will serve as main point-of-contact for CRF:

Title:

Email:

Phone Number:

1. Please describe how your organization engages or supports residents in shaping their neighborhoods and/or effecting positive change in their communities. [250 words]

2. Has your organization been involved with project implementation or advocacy focused on engaging residents through arts, culture, and creative placemaking to revitalize neighborhoods? If so, please describe. [250 words]

3. Please describe your experience in community and economic development. Speak specifically to how that work connects to advancing racial equity. [200 words]

4. Please highlight two relationships you have with stakeholders from local government, nonprofit, private, or the philanthropic community who influence revitalization efforts and how you would strengthen relationships between fellows and these stakeholders. [200 words]

Resident Leader Questionnaire

This questionnaire should be completed by each of the six community leaders applying for the fellowship.

First and Last Name:

Email address:

1. Please list and describe your current involvement in local community groups. These groups could be neighborhood associations, block clubs, arts and cultural organizations, faith institutions, or other formal or informal organizations in your community.
Example: Member, Oak Street Block Club

2. What projects or advocacy work have you been involved with that have focused on revitalizing your neighborhood through creative placemaking, other arts and cultural activities, or community engagement? How does that work connect to advancing racial equity?

3. What do you hope to gain by participating in the Community Revitalization Fellowship?

4. Is there anything else you would like to share about your occupation, education, volunteerism or life experiences that you feel makes you a strong candidate for the Community Revitalization Fellowship?

Narrative Questions

The Community Revitalization Fellowship is intended to help communities struggling with serious challenges related to vacancy, abandonment, and disinvestment. Your answers will help us better understand your community, its challenges, and its opportunities. You may be detailed in your responses.

1. Who and what areas of your community will be served by the Community Revitalization Fellowship? Please be specific about neighborhoods, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups, and other relevant characteristics. [300 words]
2. Describe the scope of vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties in your community. Include the scale of the problem, the economic conditions, or other trends affecting your city and state, as well as how the challenges are affecting your residents. Please use data to support your description. [300 words]
3. If selected, your cohort will have the opportunity to lead a tour of arts, culture, and creative placemaking projects on vacant, abandoned, or underutilized properties in your community. On the tour, visiting fellows will learn from your challenges and successes, see revitalization projects, and hear from local partners. Please describe up to three arts, culture, and/or creative placemaking projects in your community that you would be excited to showcase as part of this tour. For each project, please answer the following questions:
 - a. Project title or short descriptor
 - b. Were the proposed fellows involved in the project? If so, how?
 - c. What type of problem property did the project address? (e.g., vacant lot, abandoned building, underutilized park)
 - d. What was the approximate budget?
 - e. How was the broader community engaged in the project?
 - f. How has the project impacted your community?
 - g. Did this project include any coordination or support from local government? If so, please describe that relationship.

[1,200 words. Up to three additional pages of photos may be included as part of the “Optional Supplemental Materials” section of this application.]

4. Effectively addressing the challenges of vacancy and abandonment requires coordinated efforts from numerous partners and stakeholders. Describe the current partners in this work (e.g., government, residents, development companies, nonprofits, and/or philanthropic partners) as well as the nature of the collaboration. In your answer please specifically describe the institutional partner’s and/or proposed fellows’ relationships with these stakeholders. [300 words.]
5. If selected, the institutional partner will receive \$14,000 in funding as described in “Program Structure and Timeline” above. The institutional partner can use \$4,000 to reimburse for time spent on providing guidance, mentorship, and logistical support to the cohort. The remaining \$10,000 should be used on a project to support arts, culture, and creative placemaking on problem properties. Please describe the decision-making process you will employ to determine

the use of the funding. If you have an existing idea or need for the funding, please describe that here. [250 words]

6. How will you ensure there is sustained active engagement among fellows throughout the fellowship and after the program concludes? [150 words]

Optional Supplemental Materials

Applicants may include additional attachments (including photos, data summaries, maps, reports, relevant policies, and news articles) to help the fellowship selection team better understand the challenges and opportunities in your community. This section is limited to a maximum of ten pages and must be a part of the application PDF.