State of Land Banking

Results of the 2023 State of Land Banking Survey
Overview

The State of Land Banking Survey, first conducted in 2021, represents the only opportunity for the land banking field to tell its story with comprehensive data.

Citing this research:
Survey Methodology

Respondents

▲ 48% increase in respondents from 2021 survey
• 112 land banks started the survey
• 92 land banks completed the survey

Data Overview

• 66 total questions in an online survey
• All multiple-choice or checkbox questions required a response
• Open-ended questions did not require a response
• New land banks (est. 2020 or later) were excluded from inventory questions
Survey Respondents

Most Respondents
1. New York
2. Michigan
3. Pennsylvania
4. Georgia

Geographic Footprint
- 64% county
- 24% municipal
- 7% multi-municipal
- 4% regional
- 2% state

Legal Entity Structure
- 80% public authority
- 8% private nonprofit
- 7% other
- 3% program or division of government
- 2% unsure

Source: 2023 State of Land Banking Survey, Center for Community Progress
Survey Results
Top Priorities

81% of land banks consider supporting the creation of affordable housing a top priority for the next three years.

Top Five Priorities for Land Banks

Respondents selected up to three answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priorities</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Support the creation of affordable housing</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Address more vacant lots</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Conduct more rehabilitations</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Increase inventory</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Other (conduct demolitions, rehabilitate brownfields, build capacity, etc.)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional 3 rows not shown.

N = 112

Table: Center for Community Progress
Source: 2023 State of Land Banking Survey, Center for Community Progress
Top Challenges

65% of land banks consider funding to be one of the biggest threats to their land bank’s success in the next three years.

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**Top Five Threats for Land Banks**

Open response. The following are top 5 common themes described.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Threats</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Funding (finding consistent funding, increasing funding, diversifying funding, etc.)</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Inventory (lack of available inventory, access to inventory pipelines, cost of inventory, etc.)</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Local-level political leadership, transitions, willpower, legislation, and/or capacity</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Staff capacity</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Cost of building materials, construction costs, and/or contractor availability</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional 2 rows not shown.

N = 99

Table: Center for Community Progress
Source: 2023 State of Land Banking Survey, Center for Community Progress
Land Bank Inventory

Since 2021 Survey:
- **-14% decrease** in inventory from property tax or lien foreclosure
- **100% increase** in inventory from transfers from public entities
  - **No change** in inventory from private market purchases
- **17% increase** in inventory from donation

Where Land Bank Inventory Comes From

Where Land Bank Inventory Is Located

Source: 2023 State of Land Banking Survey, Center for Community Progress
Land Bank Inventory

Vacant lots continue to make up the majority of land bank inventory.

Since 2021 Survey:
- **30% decrease** in lots with structures
- **7.5% increase** in structure-free lots

Structure-Free Lots Comprise a Majority of Land Bank Inventory

- Structures (14%)
- Structure-Free Lots (86%)

N = 77

Chart: Center for Community Progress
Source: 2023 State of Land Banking Survey, Center for Community Progress
**Structural Condition**

81% of respondents track the condition of properties in their inventory.

76% of land bank inventory with structures is either poor or substandard/hazardous.

**Occupied parcels with structures in inventory?**
- Yes (22%)
- No (78%)

**Average percent buildable or not buildable lots in inventory**
- Buildable (70%)
- Not buildable (30%)

Source: 2023 State of Land Banking Survey, Center for Community Progress
Brownfields

Land banks have unique powers to help communities revitalize brownfields—properties contaminated by hazardous substances that make them difficult and costly to redevelop or reuse.

A third of respondents said they have acquired a brownfield property.

The Center for Community Progress has been awarded $500k by the EPA to advance brownfields remediation through land bank partnerships.

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A Third of Land Banks Have Acquired a Brownfield Property

- **Have Acquired a Brownfield (30%)**
- **Have Not Acquired a Brownfield (70%)**

N = 92

Chart: Center for Community Progress
Source: 2023 State of Land Banking Survey, Center for Community Progress
Software and Data

Do you have software to identify current and potential sources of inventory?

- Yes (64%)
- No (36%)

Do you have data-sharing agreements with local government partners?

- Yes (35%)
- No (65%)

N = 92

Chart: Center for Community Progress
Source: 2023 State of Land Banking Survey, Center for Community Progress
communityprogress.org
Property Disposition

91% of respondents have a policy governing how they acquire and dispose of properties.

As in the 2021 State of Land Banking Survey, local residents and institutions top the list of recipients of land bank properties.

Residents and Local Institutions Continue to be the Most Common Recipients of Land Bank Properties

Entities ranked below from most frequent to least frequent.

1. Local residents and/or non-incorporated organizations
2. Locally/regionally based nonprofit corporation
3. Locally/regionally based LLC or private entities
4. Government agencies
5. Out-of-state LLC or private entities
6. Out-of-state nonprofit corporation

Most Parcels Are Sold for Less Than Fair Market Value

- FMV (30%)
- Under FMV (64%)
- Land Swap (1%)
- Non-Monetary (6%)

Source: 2023 State of Land Banking Survey, Center for Community Progress
### Demographics of Land Bank Property Recipients

Nearly half of land banks reported not collecting any socio-economic information on recipients of land bank properties. 39% of respondents collect information about ownership intent and current residency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-Economic Information Collected on Land Bank Transferees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No socio-economic information collected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership (e.g., first-time homebuyer, owner-occupant, landlord)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residency (e.g., resident of the city where they are purchasing property)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race or ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 83

Source: 2023 State of Land Banking Survey, Center for Community Progress
Title Insurance

Over half of respondents reported using private title companies to issue title insurance policies on properties obtained through the tax foreclosure process, at least in certain circumstances.

About a quarter of land banks take action to obtain insurable title if no title company is involved.

Do Private Companies Issue Title Insurance Policies on Properties Obtained Through the Tax Foreclosure Process?

- Yes, in certain circumstances
- Yes, always
- No, but we take action to obtain insurable title
- No, and we do not take action to obtain insurable title

N = 83

Chart: Center for Community Progress
Source: 2023 State of Land Banking Survey, Center for Community Progress
Post-Disposition Legal Recourse

Three-quarters of respondents **have legal recourse following disposition** to ensure that transferees are abiding by the terms of the sales agreement.

Most Land Banks Have Legal Recourse to Ensure Transferees Abide by the Terms of the Sales Agreement

- Have Legal Recourse (76%)
- Do Not Have Legal Recourse (11%)
- Unsure (13%)

*N = 83

Source: 2023 State of Land Banking Survey, Center for Community Progress

Chart: Center for Community Progress
Land Bank Activities

Since 2021 Survey

Top three activities in 2021:
1. Basic Property Maintenance
2. Vacant Land Stewardship
3. Demolition

Which of the following activities has your land bank engaged in?

Over half of respondents are currently engaged in basic property maintenance and demolition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Current activity</th>
<th>Planned activity</th>
<th>Former activity</th>
<th>Unplanned, but interested</th>
<th>Do not do or plan to do this activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Property Maintenance</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demolition</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Lot Stewardship</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Creation</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Construction</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing Homelessness</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure Prevention</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate Change</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster Response</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 92

Chart: Center for Community Progress
Source: 2023 State of Land Banking Survey, Center for Community Progress
### Which entities does your land bank partner with?

Local government departments are the most common partner for land banks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>Yes, we currently do</th>
<th>We intend to in the next three years</th>
<th>Yes, in the past</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local government departments</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community organizations (non-incorporated)</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For-profit developers</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate brokers</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges/universities</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade unions/schools</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community land trusts</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade schools</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation land trusts</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 92

Chart: Center for Community Progress
Source: 2023 State of Land Banking Survey, Center for Community Progress
### Federal Funding

47% of respondents were directly funded by or involved in American Rescue Plan Act State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (ARPA SLFRF) projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Directly Funded</th>
<th>Involved</th>
<th>Not Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demolition</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure Repair</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure Construction</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure Maintenance</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Lot Maintenance</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Land Greening/Reuse</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**N = 95**

*Source: 2023 State of Land Banking Survey, Center for Community Progress*
Funding

Government grants and/or appropriations, real estate revenue, and recurring local funding (tax recapture, delinquent tax, and assessment collection) are the top funding sources for respondents.

Where Land Banks Get Their Funding

- **Real estate revenue** (33%)
- **Government grants and/or appropriations** (37%)
- **Tax recapture, delinquent tax, and assessment collection** (17%)
- **Other** (5%)
- **Foundation grants** (3%)
- **Fee-for-service** (2%)
- **In-kind, donations, and corporate grants** (2%)

*N = 87

Chart: Center for Community Progress • Source: 2023 State of Land Banking Survey

Source: 2023 State of Land Banking Survey, Center for Community Progress
Funding

Current Funding Adequacy and Future Expectations

• Does current revenue adequately cover basic operations?
  • Yes (63%)
  • No (37%)

• Funding from local governmental partners expected to...
  • Remain the same (48%)
  • Increase (32%)
  • Decrease (13%)
  • N/A (8%)
Staff and Leadership

Land bank staff and leadership sizes vary significantly based on inventory and community needs. Median number of full-time, part-time, and volunteer employees is one. Median number of board members is seven.

### Median Numbers of Land Bank Staff, Volunteers, and Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Type</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time employees</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time employees</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonal</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board members</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 92

Source: 2023 State of Land Banking Survey, Center for Community Progress

communityprogress.org
Staff and Leadership

58% of all respondents’ staff are white and 35% are Black or African American

Racial and ethnic composition of the staff and/or board reflect community served?

- 2023
  - Yes (66%)
  - No (34%)

- 2021
  - Yes (67%)
  - No (33%)

Racial and Ethnic Demographics of Full-Time, Part-Time, and Seasonal Land Bank Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic and Latino (of any race)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaskan Native</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 58

Table: Center for Community Progress
Source: 2023 State of Land Banking Survey, Center for Community Progress
31% of all land bank board members are community representatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community representatives</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected officials</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government employees</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector representatives</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofit representatives</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 80

Table: Center for Community Progress
Source: 2023 State of Land Banking Survey, Center for Community Progress
Key Takeaways

• Affordable housing emerging as a top priority
• Declining inventory emerging as a top challenge, which will likely continue given hot housing markets
• Many more land banks are facilitating rehabs as one of their top activities
• Land banks need support with continued advocacy and education to political leaders for more funding support
• Land bank staff and boards need to continue working towards racial equity and providing leadership opportunities to people who look like the communities they represent