

New Jersey Land Bank Launch Scholarship

Scholarship Application Questions

Preview the application questions below. Applications are due **Friday, December 1, 2023, at 5:00 PM EST**. [Complete the application here.](#)

Contact Information

[single line response boxes]

First Name:

Last Name:

Email:

Job Title:

City Department/Organization:

City:

Entity Type

[select one]

- Municipality
- Municipal Redevelopment Agency
- County Improvement Entity
- Nonprofit
- Coalition of Nonprofits

Understanding the Need

To assess whether a land bank could be helpful to address existing challenges, a better understanding of the scope and scale of these properties is needed. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability, to give our team an understanding of the VAD property challenges. Your responses do not need to be long, and if you are not sure, or there is insufficient data, please indicate that in your response.

1. What is the service area for the proposed new land bank? (For example, at the city level, across multiple jurisdictions, etc.). [single line response box]
2. What types of properties cause the most harm in your community (e.g., abandoned houses, vacant lots)? [max. 200 words]
3. Where are problem properties located (e.g., in certain neighborhoods)? [max. 200 words]
4. What is the scale of these properties (e.g., number or density) [single line response box]

5. Who owns these problem properties (local government, tax lien investors, private owners, etc.) [max. 200 words]

Existing Interest in Land Banks

Please help us understand if your community is at the beginning stages of building support or if there are existing efforts that can be leveraged for this engagement.

1. Have there been any efforts over the last few years to learn more about land banks or create a land bank in the specified service area? If so, please share who have been the biggest champions thus far. [max. 200 words]
2. What do you feel are the existing barriers for implementing a land bank? [max. 200 words]

Collaboration

Effectively addressing the challenges of vacancy and abandonment requires coordinated efforts from numerous partners and stakeholders. Involving those most impacted by vacancy and abandonment is critical to doing this work equitably.

1. What partners would be engaged during the project (e.g., government leaders, residents, development companies, nonprofits, and/or philanthropic partners) and what roles do you anticipate them playing? [Please format response as follows: entity, and 1-2 sentence on role.]
2. Who are the communities that will be most impacted by the creation of a land bank and how will you engage those communities in this project? [max. 200 words]

Technical Assistance Goals

Technical assistance services advance the priorities identified by each community. The following questions are meant to better understand your goals for working with us in this engagement.

1. What form of technical assistance do you feel would be most helpful given your community's current knowledge of the challenges of VAD properties and opportunities for a land bank? Review the examples below, and select all that apply.

Consensus-Building and Education: Equipping local decision-makers, community partners, and residents with valuable knowledge will be a critical component of all engagements. An engagement, however, may focus almost exclusively on developing a robust education campaign with one-on-one meetings, focus groups with stakeholders, and/or larger convenings of a broad range of stakeholders who are interested in learning more about land banks.

VAD Systems Assessment and Land Bank Feasibility: In order to determine if a land bank is an appropriate tool to address the VAD properties that exist in a particular community, an assessment of the "problem property inventory" as well as the key legal systems and practices (including data collection and management, code enforcement, delinquent property tax enforcement) may be a more appropriate and essential next step. Under this type of engagement, Community Progress will review key parcel datasets as well as the legal framework, policies, programs, and capacity related to the systems that impact these problem properties to assess the potential need, effectiveness, and utility of a new land bank.

Land Bank Implementation Decision Guide: If there is already sufficient evidence to demonstrate a land bank is an appropriate tool to address VAD properties and there is support from local stakeholders, a decision guide could be developed that would include preliminary recommendations for structure and framing for the land bank agreement, a critical document that will determine the efficacy and utility of a new land bank. Such a guide may also include recommendations related to aligning the land bank with other systems, priorities, and programs.

2. Briefly explain your selections. [max. 200 words]
3. What does success look like at the conclusion of this engagement? [max. 200 words]

Municipal Support

In New Jersey, a land bank is formed by a municipality's decision to enter into a land bank agreement with an existing public or private entity. The municipality also dictates the powers of the land bank via that agreement. Therefore, cooperation from the municipality in the proposed service area is essential.

1. **If you are a non-municipal entity:** please describe your current relationship with municipal partners and provide specific examples of how your organization is working with them to advance equitable neighborhoods. [max. 100 words]
2. **If you are a municipality:** please describe any inter-departmental initiatives to address VAD properties and advance equitable neighborhoods that have not already been discussed. [max. 100 words]
3. All applicants must include a letter of support in exploring a local land bank from the Mayor's Office of the municipality that may benefit from the land bank. The letter should outline their interest in exploring a potential land bank as well as their commitment to collaborate with local partners and the Project Team. The letter does not need to commit to launching a land bank.
Applications without a letter of support from the Mayor's Office will not be considered.

Supplemental Materials (Optional)

You may include additional documents and materials to complement your application such as maps, datasets, recent reports, relevant policies, and news articles. Please limit supplemental documents to eight pages.