

2024 Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference: Request for Session Proposals

October 9-11, 2024 | Hyatt Regency at the Arch | St. Louis, Missouri

Overview

Reclaiming Vacant Properties (RVP) is the only national conference dedicated to strengthening neighborhoods to help address vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties. This October, the eleventh RVP is expected to bring 1,000 professionals together in St. Louis, Missouri to generate new ideas for solving shared challenges. Leaders from nonprofits, government, business, and grassroots organizations will gather with one central goal: to address the harm vacant properties cause in their communities. As people of color face disproportionate impacts from these crises, we will center their experiences in our solutions.

High quality conference sessions are key to equipping our attendees with the tools to effect change at home. If you are interested in submitting a session for RVP, please review the following guidelines and submit your session proposal(s) no later than **March 7, 2024, 11:59pm ET**.

Proposal Submission Timeline

January 23, 2024	RFP released
March 7, 2024	Session proposal submission deadline
April 18, 2024	Acceptance notifications

Evaluation Criteria

The Center for Community Progress evaluates all proposals using the following criteria:

- Clearly articulated focus and learning outcomes
- Thoughtful, cohesive, and well-written ideas and structure
- Showcases innovative and practical tools, strategies, policies, or programs
- Equips attendees with actionable ideas or relevant research to inform their work
- Presenters are qualified and relevant to the purpose and learning outcomes of the session
- Includes diverse voices that reflect the racial, ethnic, gender, and other diversity of the communities served
- Extra consideration will be given to session proposals that include panelists from multiple geographies (e.g., multiple cities, states)

The following will result in disqualification. Disqualified proposals will not be evaluated.

- Incomplete session proposals
- Session proposals that appear to be a product or service promotion
- Session proposals received after the submission deadline of March 7, 2024

Session Proposal Submission Process and Proposal Format

Session proposals must be [submitted online](#) by 11:59 pm EST on March 7, 2024.

Session proposals must include the following:

A. Session Organizer

The submitter or session organizer will be the primary point of contact. If the proposal is accepted, session organizers will be responsible for:

- Confirming the session title and description by **May 16, 2024**
- Confirming session moderators and speakers by **May 16, 2024**
- Organizing session content and scheduling regular calls with session moderators and speakers

B. Session Type (*Mobile Workshop or Breakout Session*)

Session proposals must identify which type of session the organizer is submitting.

Breakout Sessions are 90 minutes long and can be organized in a variety of ways (e.g., roundtable discussions, hands-on exercises, debates, panel presentations). **Breakouts may not have more than four speakers, including the moderator.** Please note that sessions may host up to 200 participants.

Mobile Workshops are 2.5 hours long, *including* transport time. Mobile workshops take the classroom into the community. They typically mix bus and foot transportation. Mobile workshops are not simply tours of the host city; rather, they should include a strong learning component through visits with local organizations, practitioners, or community leaders. Only two seats are reserved on the bus for speakers, however, additional speakers may meet the bus and participants at stops along the workshop route.

C. Intended Audience

Session proposals must identify the intended audience for the session: **beginner (1-3 years of experience in topic area), intermediate (3-6 years), or advanced (7+ years).**

D. Topic Areas

Applicants must align proposed sessions with at least one and **no more than two** of the topic areas below. The possible subjects listed under each topic simply provide examples and are not intended to be a comprehensive list of all possible subjects within each topic area.

1. Arts, Placemaking, and Culture

Possible Subject Matter: Partnering with artists and arts organizations on vacant property reuse • Using arts, placemaking, and culture to address neighborhood challenges resulting from public health, housing, and economic crisis • Supporting economic development through placemaking or the arts • Equitable, resident-driven development through creative placemaking • Embedding arts and culture in larger community revitalization initiatives • Vacant commercial properties

2. Code Enforcement and Rental Properties

Possible Subject Matter: Moving from reactive to proactive code enforcement of vacant and deteriorating properties • Cost recovery • Rental licensing and registration • Maintaining high quality housing stock to prevent vacancy

3. Disaster Recovery and Resilience

Possible Subject Matter: Proactive/preventative or reactive policies or programs to prepare for increased property vacancy and deterioration in the wake of natural or manmade disasters • Making the case for vacant properties strategies within climate change adaptation and resilience plans

4. Economic and Workforce Development

Possible Subject Matter: Strategies to unlock the economic potential in vacant properties (particularly in low-value property markets) • Initiatives to support wealth- and asset-building for residents • Leveraging vacant buildings and lots to support job creation • Vacant commercial and industrial property reuse.

5. Housing Stabilization

Possible Subject Matter: Home repair and rehabilitation financing or grant programs to address property deterioration • Property deconstruction or demolition strategies • Addressing contractor base to support rehabilitation and repair • Rehabilitation of vacant properties for quality affordable housing • Wealth preservation through housing market stabilization • Heirs' property • Access to capital for homebuyers • Alternative ownership models

6. Institutional and Private Sector Partnerships

Possible Subject Matter: Partnering with anchor institutions and philanthropic entities • Opportunity Zones • Attracting mission-oriented developers • Revitalizing business districts • Revitalizing commercial properties

7. Land Banks and Land Banking

Possible Subject Matter: Management, transparency, and oversight • Funding mechanisms • Successful partnerships • Innovative acquisition, disposition, rehabilitation and maintenance programs • Community engagement

8. Mortgage and Tax Foreclosure

Possible Subject Matter: Delinquent tax enforcement systems and innovations to address vacant and deteriorated properties • Sale of property tax liens • Preventing mortgage foreclosure • Equitable reuse of REO properties • Complying to changing legal environments

9. Planning, Data, and Evaluation

Possible Subject Matter: Property data systems and cross-department collaboration on data • Understanding markets and market-informed approaches • Comprehensive planning for vacant properties and revitalization • Measuring progress • Evaluating success

10. Public Safety and Public Health

Possible Subject Matter: Partnerships with local law enforcement • Crime reduction tactics related to vacancy and abandonment • Partnerships with local hospitals and other public health organizations • Improving public health by addressing vacancy and abandonment

11. Building Rehab and Reuse

Possible Subject Matter: Creative financing mechanisms for rehab or reuse of residential, commercial, or industrial properties • Rehab programs that focus on improving building performance and resiliency • Historic preservation strategies • Access to capital for rehab

12. Vacant Land Stewardship

Possible Subject Matter: Alternative reuse options like green infrastructure or energy production • Positioning vacant land to address climate change • Innovative finance models • Community wealth-building through vacant land reuse • Effective maintenance strategies • Funding and ownership structures for long-term alternative use • Acquisition and disposition strategies

13. State and Federal Policy and Programs

Possible Subject Matter: Navigating federal or state funding opportunities like ARPA, CDBG-DR, FEMA, USDA • Making the case for funding • Partnering effectively • Advocacy models for local, state, or federal policy reform

E. Session Title

Session titles should not exceed 175 characters. Community Progress reserves the right to edit the proposed session title.

F. Session Description

Session descriptions will be used to market the session and will be displayed on our website, printed in the final program, and potentially included in other published materials. The session description should be no more than 1,250 characters. Try to limit background context and focus your description instead on what will be covered within the session. Community Progress reserves the right to edit the proposed session description.

G. Learning Objectives

Learning objectives are the knowledge and skills that participants will gain by participating in your session. We ask that you provide three learning objectives, not to exceed 150 characters each, or approximately 30 words. Please note that simply sharing information about an interesting program or project **does not** constitute an adequate learning objective. Rather, the session must explicitly address the relevance of any program or project presented for potential audience members and their communities.

H. Speakers and Moderators

We strongly recommend that speakers and moderators are confirmed prior to proposal submission. Session selection is partly based on speakers. **You will be required to submit contact information for speakers and moderators.**

All speakers are required to register for the conference. The conference rate for speakers and moderators attending the entire conference is \$150. There is no fee for speakers who are only attending their session.

Additional Information

- Be creative! Preference will be given to sessions with an innovative, interactive format that engages participants.
- Community Progress reserves the right to combine compatible proposals. If we determine your proposal must be combined with another in order to be accepted, we will contact you to discuss how to proceed.

Contact Information

Questions about this proposal process should be directed to Thamarrah Jones at tjones@communityprogress.org. We will do our best to address all questions, however, **questions received less than 72 hours prior to the March 7, 2024 deadline may not receive a response.**

Additional information about the 2024 Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference is available at communityprogress.org/rvp24.