

# National Land Bank Network Rural Land Bank Learning Exchange

As of 2024, there are over 300 urban, suburban, and rural land banks across the United States helping communities tackle the growing problem of vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties.

Rural land banks make up a core part of the land banking field. According to the latest National Land Bank Network (NLBN) State of Land Banking survey, over 30 percent of respondents identify their geography as rural or part rural. In addition, almost 25 percent of properties in land bank inventories nationwide are in rural areas. Rural land banks also face a unique set of challenges, including lack of sufficient funding, capacity, and infrastructure, as those resources are often directed to more densely populated metropolitan areas.

As the only national organization committed to the advancement and support of land banks and land banking, NLBN is committed to supporting organizations of all geographies. To support rural land banks, NLBN is excited to announce the Rural Land Bank Learning Exchange. The learning exchange is an opportunity for rural land bank leaders and partners to connect and learn about the challenges and opportunities specific to addressing vacancy in their communities.

## About the Learning Exchange

During the learning exchange, rural land bank leaders and their partners will learn from field experts and each other through a virtual session and in-person site visit. The learning exchange is designed to build stronger relationships among the participating land banks, inspire and workshop equitable and effective solutions, and provide ongoing support from national experts. The content and structure of the learning exchange will be customized to selected participants.

**Applications are due on March 20, 2024 at 5 PM ET.**

## Learning Exchange Schedule

Date	Description
<b>February 20, 2024</b>	Rural Land Bank Learning Exchange announced.
<b>February 28, 2024</b>	<a href="#">Informational webinar</a> at 12 PM ET.
<b>March 20, 2024</b>	Applications due by 5 PM ET.
<b>April 8, 2024</b>	All applicants notified.
<b>April 16, 2024</b>	Rural Land Bank Learning Exchange cohort announced.
<b>May 14, 2024</b>	Kick-off call with participants.
<b>Summer 2024</b>	Learning Exchange (2.5 days, dates/location TBD).
<b>Summer/Fall 2024</b>	Virtual Session (date/time TBD).
<b>October 9-11, 2024</b>	2024 Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference Onsite Participant Gathering.
<b>December 4, 2024</b>	Wrap-up call with participants.

## Program Information

### Who is eligible to apply for the Rural Land Bank Learning Exchange?

(1) Any rural land bank or land banking program; (2) located in an area where property vacancy, abandonment, and disinvestment are a significant challenge to the community; that (3) is a member of the National Land Bank Network is eligible to apply. Priority will be given to applicants who demonstrate engagement with residents and other community partners.

Not an NLBN member yet? [Join for free here.](#)

### Who should be part of my delegation?

Your delegation can include up to four participants, including the lead applicant. Land bank staff, land bank board members, land bank residents and community advisory committee members, and other community partners (elected officials, local government partners, nonprofits, etc.) should be considered as possible delegation members. Ideally, the delegation should be comprised of at least one land bank staff member alongside other community members who can meaningfully collaborate with you to tackle your community's VAD challenges.

### What qualifies as a “rural” land bank or land banking program?

For the Rural Land Bank Learning Exchange, we are defining “rural” as a non-urban geographic service area of a land bank or land banking program with a population of less than 50,000.

### When are applications due?

Applications are due **Wednesday, March 20, 2024** by **5 PM ET**. [Complete and submit your application via the link in the NLBN Member Portal.](#)

### When will applicants be notified?

Selected participants will be notified by **April 8, 2024**.

Participants will be required to:

- Attend a “meet and greet” kick-off call on **May 14, 2024**.
- Participate in a two and a half day on-site learning exchange in **Summer 2024** (location and exact dates to-be-determined).
- Participate in a virtual learning session in **Summer/Fall 2024** (date and time to-be-determined)
- Attend the [Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference](#) **October 9-11, 2024** and the onsite participant gathering.
- Participate in a year-end wrap-up call on **Wednesday, December 4, 2024**.
- Participate in up to three follow-up surveys and/or phone calls following completion of the learning exchange and the Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference.

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## When and where will the learning exchange take place?

The learning exchange will take place over two and a half days in **Summer 2024** in the community of one of the participating land banks. Exact dates will be selected based on participant availability.

## What can I expect at the learning exchange?

The learning exchange will offer:

- Presentations from experts in the land banking field, customized based on the interests of selected participants.
- Discussions between participants on topics pertinent to rural land banks, including programming, operations, funding, and board governance.
- A mobile workshop, visiting work on the ground and project sites of the local land bank or land banking program and community partners.
- Ample opportunities to learn, share, and connect with staff and partners from other rural land banks.

## What does this opportunity cost?

The Rural Land Bank Learning Exchange is free of charge to all participants. NLBN will cover travel, lodging, and on-site meals.

**Additional questions?** Please attend our [informational webinar](#) and/or email Christina Carter-Grant, Associate Director of the National Land Bank Network, at [ccarter@communityprogress.org](mailto:ccarter@communityprogress.org).

## 2024 Rural Land Bank Learning Exchange Application

Please submit the following info by **Wednesday, March 20 by 5 PM ET** via the application linked in the [NLBN Member Portal](#).

- Lead Applicant (Must be a land bank or land banking program):
- Point of Contact
  - Address
  - Phone
  - Email
  - Organization
  - Title
- Provide background on your land bank
  - Year created
  - Number of staff (shared and/or full-time)
  - Number of properties (if any) in inventory
  - Population of geography served
  - Other defining characteristics for rural as per NLBN survey, or targeted areas
  - Has your land bank previously participated in any Community Progress or NLBN event or program? If so, please specify.

### DELEGATION INFORMATION

Please list up to three additional participants for your delegation in the learning exchange. Land bank staff, land bank board members, land bank residents and community advisory committee members, and other community partners (elected officials, local government partners, nonprofits, etc.) should be considered as possible delegation members.

- Name, affiliation, email address
- Name, affiliation email address
- Name, affiliation, email address

### AVAILABILITY

Please indicate your delegation'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. (Select all that apply):

- July 9–11, 2024
- July 16–18, 2024
- August 20–22, 2024

Should your community be selected to participate, would you be willing to be the host location for the learning exchange? (Select one only):

- Yes
- No

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## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

- What are the greatest success(es) your land bank (and community) has achieved?
- What are the greatest challenge(s) your land bank (and community) face?
- What are the top three organizational topic areas your land bank would be most interested in learning about? (e.g., operational funding, program funding, staff capacity, board development, policies and procedures, strategic planning, budgeting, resident and community engagement, etc.)
- What are the top three general programmatic topic areas your land bank would be most interested in learning about? (e.g., heirs properties, affordable housing, commercial vacancy, absentee landlords, brownfields, etc.)
- Are there any specific land banks and/or land bank programs (e.g., shared housing and building code enforcement, affordable housing partnerships, manufactured housing, rehab, vacant land reclamation, etc.) that you would be interested in learning about?