



2024

**RECLAIMING
VACANT
PROPERTIES
CONFERENCE**

OCTOBER 9–11, 2024
Hyatt Regency St. Louis at
the Arch

ST. LOUIS, MO

2024

**RECLAIMING
VACANT
PROPERTIES
CONFERENCE**

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Conference Hotel

Hyatt Regency St. Louis
at the Arch

315 Chestnut Street,
St. Louis, MO 63102

Complimentary Wi-Fi is
available throughout the
conference space:

Network: @Hyatt_Meeting
Passcode: RVPC2024

About the Center for Community Progress

The Center for Community Progress helps people to transform vacant spaces into vibrant places. Since 2010, their team of experts has provided urban, suburban, and rural communities battling systemic vacancy with the policies, tools, and resources needed to address the full cycle of property revitalization. As the only national nonprofit dedicated to tackling vacant properties, Community Progress drives change by uncovering and disrupting the unjust, racist systems that perpetuate entrenched vacancy and property deterioration. Community Progress has delivered customized, expert guidance to leaders in over 300 communities and provided hundreds of hours of free educational resources as well as leadership programming to help policymakers, practitioners, and community members across the country return properties to productive use. To learn more and get help for your community, visit communityprogress.org.



Vacant Spaces into Vibrant Places

COVER: Daniel Schwen / Wikimedia

Welcome to **St. Louis**

From the Mayor of St. Louis

Dear friends,

Welcome to St. Louis, a city in the midst of transformation. As Mayor, I am proud to host the 2024 Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference in a community where we are tackling the challenges of disinvestment head-on to build a future rooted in equity and resilience.

St. Louis has long grappled with the effects of vacant and abandoned properties, but we are taking bold steps to turn the tide. Through using historic federal investments like the American Rescue Plan Act funds, we are revitalizing our neighborhoods by expanding affordable housing, supporting small businesses, and improving infrastructure. We believe that every block deserves to be safe, every family deserves a stable home, and every community deserves to thrive.

This work requires collaboration, innovation, and a shared commitment to reimagining how we use land, and leveraging the untapped potential of vacant spaces. Over the next few days, I encourage you to take full advantage of this opportunity to learn from each other, share your expertise, and be inspired by the progress happening in cities like ours. Together, we can reclaim vacant properties and transform them into assets that lift up our neighborhoods and provide residents with new opportunities.

Thank you for being part of this important work, and welcome to our city!

Warmly,

Tishaura O. Jones
Mayor of St. Louis

Convener's Welcome

Dear friends,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 2024 Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference here in St. Louis. Whether this is your first time joining us or you have been a part of the Center for Community Progress network for years, I am so glad you are here. We gather once again to connect, learn, and push forward together in our shared mission to transform vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties into assets for our neighborhoods and the people who live there.

St. Louis provides a fitting backdrop for this year's conference. The city has grappled with complex challenges yet boldly reimagined vacant spaces. You will see firsthand examples of how revitalization can take shape through our mobile tours and learn from your friends and colleagues in other cities across the country how they are tackling similar issues.

Throughout the conference, we will dive deep into the tools, strategies, and innovations shaping the future of community revitalization. All of you are here because you are focused on housing, land reuse, legal frameworks, and public policy that has the ultimate goal of making people's lives better. I encourage you to engage fully, exchange ideas, and explore new possibilities with the incredible community of leaders gathered here.

This work is not easy. It takes persistence, creativity, and collaboration to confront disinvestment and inequity. But I know that together we can achieve lasting change. The solutions we explore over the next three days will help us move closer to the vibrant, thriving communities we know are possible.

Finally, thank you to everyone who made this conference possible—our amazing team at Community Progress and the presenters, sponsors, and partners who brought their passion and dedication to this moment. And thank you for being here, for continuing to show up for your communities, and for your commitment to turning vacant spaces into vibrant places.

Warmly,

Kathleen J. Guillaume-Deleamar
President and CEO
Center for Community Progress

Our Partners

Host Committee and Content Advisors

Thank you to the individuals and organizations whose insight and effort shaped the Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference. Their participation made it possible to develop helpful, relevant, and forward-looking sessions at the 2024 conference and will benefit practitioners around the country.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 4theVille | Prime Heritage Legal Services, LLC |
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| North Pointe Neighborhood Association | Washington University in St. Louis |
| Northside Community Housing, Inc. | WeCollab |

Our Sponsors

The Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference is made possible through the generous support of many agencies, organizations, and companies committed to breaking the cycle of property vacancy, abandonment, and deterioration. This support benefits hundreds of communities across nearly every state.

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EXHIBITORS & FRIENDS



Community Showcase

ArtVP 2024 Jayvn Solomon's "Loutopia"

Take a coffee break and meet our exhibitors in the Community Showcase to learn more about products and services that can help you revitalize neighborhoods.



PHOTO: Community Progress

Spotlight Presentations

Want to learn about the latest technologies that can help you address vacant properties? Check out the Spotlight Presentations, a platform for vendors and exhibitors to showcase innovative products and services. Find them on the stage in the Community Showcase hall in between sessions to learn more about useful tools and services.

Every year, the Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference hosts an interactive art installation from a local artist that gives attendees a chance to envision the impact of creative placemaking on vacant property in a new way.

This installation is the latest in a series of Loutopia pop-up exhibits by local artist Jayvn Solomon. Loutopia celebrates the possibilities of vacant property through the power of placemaking. Solomon's conceptual art series utilizes lenticular graphics, interactive prompts, and community-painted games to reimagine how vacant spaces in St. Louis can better serve the community through the power of play and collaboration.



Meet the Artist

4th Floor ArtVP Exhibit Space

October 9

6:00 – 8:00 PM

October 10

12:30 – 2:00 PM



CREDIT: JAYVN SOLOMON

Agenda at a Glance

Wednesday October 9, 2024		
8:30 – 12:00pm	Creative Placemaking Service Project	N 4th St. Lobby
11:00 – 6:00pm	Registration Open	4th Floor
11:00 – 6:30pm	Community Showcase and ArtVP Open	4th Floor
1:00 – 2:30pm	Welcome and Opening Plenary: Nikole Hannah-Jones	Grand Ballroom
2:30 – 3:00pm	Book Signing with Nikole Hannah-Jones	4th Floor
2:45 – 4:45pm	Mobile Workshops #1	N 4th St. Lobby
	Commercial Corridors as Open Doors: A Tour of the Delmar Divide	
	Middle Neighborhoods Spotlight: Revitalization in South City	
	The Brickline Greenway: Connecting Community through Public-Private Partnerships	
	Vibrancy in Old North St. Louis: The Sunflower+ Project	
3:00 – 4:30pm	Breakout Sessions #1	4th Floor
	Addressing Building Reoccupancy in Urban Commercial Districts	Ballroom A
	Land Banks and Land Banking 101	Ballroom B
	Transforming Vacant City Lots into an Urban Farm Network	Ballroom C
	Updates on <i>Tyler v. Hennepin County</i> : Reforms from Key Communities	Ballroom F
	Using Data to Match Supply of Vacant Property with Demand for Housing and Revitalization	Ballroom G
	Partnerships and Pipelines: Data-Driven Strategies for Innovation and Impact	Ballroom H
4:30 – 5:00pm	Break	4th Floor
5:00 – 6:30pm	Breakout Sessions #2	4th Floor
	Deteriorating Condo Buildings and Community Resilience	Ballroom A
	Economic Justice and Vacancy: The City of St. Louis's Strategy in Action	Ballroom B
	Strategies for Investor-Owned Rental Properties	Ballroom C
	Tapping the Potential of Vacant Land for Community and Climate Resilience	Ballroom F
	Using Receivership for Strategic Code Compliance to Address Nuisance Properties	Ballroom G
5:00 – 6:30pm	Training Seminars #1	4th Floor
	How Land Banks Can Practice Intentional, Authentic Community Engagement	Mills Studio 3
	Using Behavioral Science to Improve Community Outcomes	Mills Studio 6
6:30 – 8:00pm	Welcome Reception	Grand Ballroom
Thursday October 10, 2024		
8:00 – 5:00pm	Registration Open	4th Floor
8:00 – 6:00pm	Community Showcase and ArtVP Open	4th Floor
8:00 – 9:00am	Breakfast	Grand Ballroom
9:00 – 10:30am	Breakout Sessions #3	4th Floor
	How Regional Land Banks Can Combine Services and Programs for Maximum Impact	Ballroom A
	Nongovernmental Legal Programs to Reduce Vacancy and Promote Equitable Development	Ballroom B
	Reusing Vacant Properties to Promote Art and Culture in Historically Marginalized Communities	Ballroom C
	Strategies for Affordable Housing Advocacy in Conservative-Led Legislatures	Ballroom F
	Supply-Side Solutions for the Housing Affordability Crisis: Federal Policy Proposals and Advocacy Strategies	Ballroom G
	Using Vacant Land to Anchor Community Power	Ballroom H

10:30 – 11:00am	Break	
11:00 – 12:30pm	Breakout Sessions #4	4th Floor
	Community-Informed Demolition: Developing a Prioritization Algorithm from Resident Input	Ballroom A
	Delinquent Tax Enforcement Systems: Legal, Policy, and Practice Reforms That Promote Revitalization	Ballroom B
	How to Leverage Civic Participation in Community Planning and Building Climate-Resilient Places	Ballroom C
	Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Vacant Property Redevelopment	Ballroom F
	Leveraging ARPA Funds to Redevelop Vacant Properties and Transform Neighborhoods	Ballroom G
	Measuring Land Bank Impact: Lessons from Cook County and New York	Ballroom H
11:00 – 1:30pm	Mobile Workshops #2 lunch provided	N 4th St. Lobby
	Community and Partnership in the Jennings West Florissant Business Corridor and Beyond	
	Saving Wellston's Affordable Housing: Lessons in Advocacy and Coalition Building	
	Revitalization of East St. Louis	
	Community Recovery and Rebuilding: West Florissant Avenue 10 Years After Ferguson	
12:30 – 2:00pm	Lunch on Your Own	
2:00 – 3:30pm	Supporting Community Revitalization: A Conversation with Practitioners	Grand Ballroom
3:30 – 4:00pm	Break	
4:00 – 5:30pm	Breakout Sessions #5	4th Floor
	Achieving Energy Efficiency and Emission Reduction in Property Rehab (<i>sponsored by Wells Fargo Foundation</i>)	Ballroom A
	Affirmative Litigation to Address Problem Properties	Ballroom B
	How Communities and Universities Can Work Together to Green Neighborhoods Without Displacing Neighbors	Ballroom C
	How to Center Community Needs in Brownfields Redevelopment	Ballroom F
	Tax Liens, Tax Credits, and Sales Tax: Unexpected Tools for Equitable Community Revitalization	Ballroom G
	How Local Government Can Help Address Heirs' Property and Protect Generational Wealth (<i>sponsored by Wells Fargo Foundation</i>)	Ballroom H
4:00 – 6:00pm	Mobile Workshops #3	N 4th St. Lobby
	Arts and Innovation in the Gravois-Jefferson Historic Neighborhoods	
	Creative Partnerships to Reactivate Vacant Land in College Hill, Hyde Park, and Old North St. Louis	
	Mega Makeovers: Transforming Huge Vacant Spaces into Community Places	

Friday October 11, 2024		
8:00 – 10:15am	Registration Open	4th Floor
8:00 – 10:15am	Community Showcase and ArtVP Open	4th Floor
8:30 – 10:00am	Breakout Sessions #6	4th Floor
	Approaches to Expanding Access to Home Repair Programs	Ballroom A
	Eminent Domain as an Equitable Development Tool?	Ballroom B
	Preserving Middle Neighborhoods for Future Generations	Ballroom C
	Preventing Illegal Dumping through Community-Based Environmental Design	Ballroom F
	Taking an "All At Once" Approach to Vacant Lot Reuse	Ballroom G
	Transforming Vacant Spaces in Upstate New York through Arts and Culture	Ballroom H
9:00 – 10:00am	Film Screening: Genesee County Land Bank Authority Documentary	Gateway East
10:30 – 12:00pm	Brunch: Honoring Sundry Whiteside	Grand Ballroom

Breakout Sessions by Topic

TOPICS	Wednesday October 9, 2024 3:00 — 4:30pm	Wednesday October 9, 2024 5:00 — 6:30pm	Thursday October 10, 2024 9:00 — 10:30am	Thursday October 10, 2024 11:00 — 12:30pm
Arts, Placemaking, and Culture			Reusing Vacant Properties to Promote Art and Culture in Historically Marginalized Communities	
Building Rehab and Reuse	Using Data to Match Supply of Vacant Property with Demand for Housing and Revitalization	Deteriorating Condo Buildings and Community Resilience Economic Justice and Vacancy: The City of St. Louis's Strategy in Action		Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Vacant Property Redevelopment
Code Enforcement and Rental Properties		Strategies for Investor-Owned Rental Properties Using Receivership for Strategic Code Compliance to Address Nuisance Properties		Delinquent Tax Enforcement Systems: Legal, Policy, and Practice Reforms That Promote Revitalization
Disaster Recovery and Resiliency				How to Leverage Civic Participation in Community Planning and Building Climate-Resilient Places
Economic and Workforce Development			How Regional Land Banks Can Combine Services and Programs for Maximum Impact	
Housing Stabilization		Economic Justice and Vacancy: The City of St. Louis's Strategy in Action	Strategies for Affordable Housing Advocacy in Conservative-Led Legislatures	How to Leverage Civic Participation in Community Planning and Building Climate-Resilient Places Leveraging ARPA Funds to Redevelop Vacant Properties and Transform Neighborhoods
Institutional and Private Sector Partnerships	Addressing Building Reoccupancy in Urban Commercial Districts		Nongovernmental Legal Programs to Reduce Vacancy and Promote Equitable Development	Leveraging ARPA Funds to Redevelop Vacant Properties and Transform Neighborhoods
Land Banks and Land Banking	Land Banks and Land Banking 101 Updates on <i>Tyler v. Hennepin County</i> : Reforms from Key Communities Partnerships and Pipelines: Data-Driven Strategies for Innovation and Impact		How Regional Land Banks Can Combine Services and Programs for Maximum Impact	Measuring Land Bank Impact: Lessons from Cook County and New York
Mortgage and Tax Foreclosure	Updates on <i>Tyler v. Hennepin County</i> : Reforms from Key Communities		Nongovernmental Legal Programs to Reduce Vacancy and Promote Equitable Development	
Planning, Data, and Evaluation	Addressing Building Reoccupancy in Urban Commercial Districts Using Data to Match Supply of Vacant Property with Demand for Housing and Revitalization			Community-Informed Demolition: Developing a Prioritization Algorithm from Resident Input
Public Safety and Public Health		Deteriorating Condo Buildings and Community Resilience	Using Vacant Land to Anchor Community Power	Community-Informed Demolition: Developing a Prioritization Algorithm from Resident Input
State and Federal Policy and Programs			Strategies for Affordable Housing Advocacy in Conservative-Led Legislatures Supply-Side Solutions for the Housing Affordability Crisis: Federal Policy Proposals and Advocacy Strategies	
Vacant Land Stewardship	Transforming Vacant City Lots into an Urban Farm Network	Tapping the Potential of Vacant Land for Community and Climate Resilience		

Breakout Sessions by Topic

TOPICS	Thursday October 10, 2024 4:00 — 5:30pm	Friday October 11, 2024 8:30 — 10:00am
Arts, Placemaking, and Culture	How to Center Community Needs in Brownfields Redevelopment	Taking an "All At Once" Approach to Vacant Lot Reuse Transforming Vacant Spaces in Upstate New York through Arts and Culture
Building Rehab and Reuse	Achieving Energy Efficiency and Emission Reduction in Property Rehab	
Code Enforcement and Rental Properties		
Disaster Recovery and Resiliency		
Economic and Workforce Development	How to Center Community Needs in Brownfields Redevelopment	
Housing Stabilization	How Local Government Can Help Address Heirs' Property and Protect Generational Wealth	Approaches to Expanding Access to Home Repair Programs Eminent Domain as an Equitable Development Tool?
Institutional and Private Sector Partnerships	How Communities and Universities Can Work Together to Green Neighborhoods Without Displacing Neighbors	Eminent Domain as an Equitable Development Tool?
Land Banks and Land Banking		Preventing Illegal Dumping through Community-Based Environmental Design
Mortgage and Tax Foreclosure	Affirmative Litigation to Address Problem Properties Tax Liens, Tax Credits, and Sales Tax: Unexpected Tools for Equitable Community Revitalization	
Planning, Data, and Evaluation		Preserving Middle Neighborhoods for Future Generations
Public Safety and Public Health		Preventing Illegal Dumping through Community-Based Environmental Design
State and Federal Policy and Programs		Preserving Middle Neighborhoods for Future Generations
Vacant Land Stewardship	How Communities and Universities Can Work Together to Green Neighborhoods Without Displacing Neighbors	Taking an "All At Once" Approach to Vacant Lot Reuse Transforming Vacant Spaces in Upstate New York through Arts and Culture

Session Descriptions

Wednesday October 9, 2024

Pre-Conference Service Project

8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Dedicated to the memory of Elizabeth Alexander

Pocketparks, a nonprofit dedicated to transforming vacant plots into vibrant community spaces, invites you to participate in a creative placemaking workshop. Participants will contribute to cleaning, planting, painting, and assembling structures, showcasing the transformative potential of community-driven efforts.

Welcome and Opening Plenary

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

People, Not Just Property: A Conversation with Nikole Hannah-Jones

Location: Grand Ballroom

Systemic vacancy is a persistent challenge in communities large and small. While our strategies for addressing the physical aspects of vacant properties have evolved, our approaches to engaging the communities most impacted by them have a ways to go. How can we ensure that residents marginalized by disinvestment play a central role in shaping the solutions to community revitalization?

In this plenary session, we are honored to welcome Nikole Hannah-Jones, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and creator of The 1619 Project. Her work has redefined how we understand the role of race in American history, and she has spent her career bringing attention to the ongoing effects of racial inequality. In a conversation with Community Progress President and CEO Kathleen J. Guillaume-Deleamar, Hannah-Jones will share her insights on how community revitalization professionals can foster genuine partnerships with marginalized communities to address the lasting impacts of systemic vacancy.

Hannah-Jones' reporting has earned her a MacArthur "Genius" grant, a Peabody Award, two George Polk Awards, and the three National Magazine Awards. In addition to her role as a staff writer for *New York Times Magazine*, Hannah-Jones is the Knight Chair of Race and Journalism at Howard University, where she founded the Center for Journalism and Democracy. She is the co-founder of the Ida B. Wells Society for Investigative Reporting, which seeks to increase the number of investigative reporters and editors of color, and in 2022 she opened the 1619 Freedom School, a free, after-school literacy program in her hometown of Waterloo, Iowa.

SPEAKERS: Nikole Hannah-Jones, *New York Times Magazine* and The 1619 Project; Kathleen J. Guillaume-Deleamar, Center for Community Progress



Mobile Workshops #1

2:45 PM – 4:45 PM

Commercial Corridors as Open Doors: A Tour of the Delmar Divide

Location: N. 4th St. Lobby *Pre-registration required*

Delmar Boulevard is a street in St. Louis which marks a dramatic difference in income, race, and property ownership. Community developers are working to lessen the gap by returning vacant and deteriorated buildings to productive use to serve the majority-Black neighborhood north of Delmar. On this mobile workshop, participants will visit a former hospital turned co-working/living space, arts and culture venues, the job-training organization LaunchCode along Delmar, and hear how a culture of collaboration along the corridor has contributed to revitalization efforts.

SPEAKERS: Tonnie Smith, Delmar Main Street Initiative; Samantha Smugala, The Delmar Loop

Middle Neighborhoods Spotlight: Revitalization in South City

Location: N. 4th St. Lobby *Pre-registration required*

Middle neighborhoods are home to middle and working-class families, and hover on the edge between growth and decline. But modest investments in neighborhoods can sustain these places as safe, affordable places that offer a high quality of life and access to opportunity.

On this mobile workshop, participants will visit commercial reuse and substantial home rehabs in South City. Representatives from the National Community Stabilization Trust as well as Washington University Medical Center Redevelopment Corporation, and local practitioners from Dutchtown Main Streets and St. Joseph Housing Initiative will share stabilization tactics and project stories.

SPEAKERS: Chris Garland, National Community Stabilization Trust; Kimberly Smith-Drake, Washington University Medical Center Redevelopment Corporation

The Brickline Greenway: Connecting Community through Public-Private Partnerships

Location: N. 4th St. Lobby *Pre-registration required*

The Brickline Greenway is a major public-private partnership led by the Great Rivers Greenway. The 10-mile-long planned greenway connects 14 neighborhoods to four major parks in St. Louis: Fairground Park, Forest Park, Gateway Arch National Park, and Tower Grove Park. This mobile workshop will visit the planned northern segment of the greenway, which cuts through several historically disinvested communities of color and connects the Arts District with Fairground Park. Participants will hear about the partnerships that made leveraging this infrastructure possible and meet local developers, community members, nonprofits, arts organizations, and City staff to understand how this collaboration addresses vacancy, incorporates creative placemaking, and stimulates redevelopment.

SPEAKERS: Janet Attarian, SmithGroup

Vibrancy in Old North St. Louis: The Sunflower+ Project

Location: N. 4th St. Lobby *Pre-registration was required*

North and slight west of downtown sits Old North St. Louis, which has seen significant redevelopment over the last two decades. Led by the Sunflower+ Project, this mobile workshop will feature vacant land projects (pocket parks for urban farming projects), historic renovations, projects in progress, and new construction to LEED Platinum standards.

SPEAKERS: Richard Reilly, Missouri Botanical Garden/EarthWays Center

Breakout Sessions #1

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

Addressing Building Reoccupancy in Urban Commercial Districts

Location: Ballroom A

Small downtowns and commercial districts have a tremendous impact on the vibrancy of their communities. Reactivating vacant storefronts requires deep collaboration between local businesses, property owners, residents, and partner organizations to succeed. In this session, hear about the Main Street Four-Point Approach, a leading framework for downtown and commercial district revitalization. Presenters will share how each of the four points—economic vitality, design, promotion, and organization—are being implemented in the Dutchtown neighborhood of St. Louis. Tactics include assessing the district assets, engaging absentee property owners, and utilizing the legal system to tackle development challenges.

SPEAKERS: John Chen, Neighborhood Innovation Center; Robert Lewis, St. Louis University; Latasha Smith, DutchtownSTL; Keith Winge, Missouri Main Street

Land Banks and Land Banking 101 **Location:** Ballroom B

In the last decade, the number of land banks and land banking programs across the United States has increased to over 300 across 19 states. Land banks are public entities with unique powers to return vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties to productive use. While land banks are not a silver bullet to property vacancy, they can be a powerful tool to advance community-driven goals in support of more equitable, inclusive, resilient neighborhoods.

This session will cover the history and unique functions of land banks and how to evaluate if a land bank is right for a community. Participants will hear about land banks of various sizes and geographies that have built partnerships to support affordable housing, uplift racial equity, and address community priorities.

SPEAKERS: Brian Larkin, Center for Community Progress; Christa Stoneham, Houston Land Bank

Transforming Vacant City Lots into an Urban Farm Network

Location: Ballroom C

Community gardens and urban farms are the most well-known examples of vacant land reuse. But establishing these projects, especially on a large scale, can present significant regulatory and logistical challenges. Despite these hurdles, nonprofit Growing High Point transformed vacant lots across the city of High Point, North Carolina into an urban farming network. In this session, attendees will learn about navigating municipal regulations, installing farming infrastructure, soil remediation, maintaining lots effectively, building a food hub, and creating a mobile market for the urban farmers to sell their produce.

SPEAKERS: Andre Davis, Growing High Point; Patrick Harman, Hayden-Harman Foundation; Amanda Mitchell, Growing High Point; Thanena Wilson, City of High Point

Updates on *Tyler v. Hennepin County*: Reforms from Key Communities

Location: Ballroom F

Over the past year, states, counties, and municipalities have been working to reform delinquent tax enforcement systems to comply with the Supreme Court ruling in *Tyler v. Hennepin County*. Many reform efforts are still ongoing, as legislatures in several states are trying to amend statutes that have been on the books for decades. Join this session to hear from county and municipal representatives working to reform state and local laws, and the challenges and opportunities they've encountered along the way. Hear about what comes next in terms of tax reform to comply with *Tyler* while building a more equitable, efficient, and effective approach to delinquent property tax enforcement.

SPEAKERS: Susan Katzoff, City of Syracuse; Dan Rogan, Hennepin County; John Sidd, Hancock Estabrook LLP; Amber Villa, Massachusetts Attorney General's Office

Using Data to Match Supply of Vacant Property with Demand for Housing and Revitalization Location: Ballroom G

There is an ongoing discussion about using vacant homes to meet the housing needs of people struggling to find affordable housing. In this session, learn about the innovative approaches from the United Kingdom to use vacant properties to support the delivery of housing and social policy priorities.

Attendees will hear about the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership's eight-step guide to developing a strategic, data-driven approach to empty homes, including setting the legislative and policy context, sourcing neighborhood data, and action plans to put empty homes back to use, and how this can be used to help to address the need for affordable housing. Learn about projects the partnership has supported to encourage community ownership of property, reverse population decline, and provide affordable housing for workers.

SPEAKERS: Andy Moseley, Scottish Empty Homes Partnership; Eric Schertzing, Michigan Association of Land Banks

Partnerships and Pipelines: Data-Driven Strategies for Innovation and Impact Location: Ballroom H

Join this session to learn about practical tools and forward-thinking strategies for community development. With a focus on data-driven decision-making, attendees will learn how to use data to create real change. Speakers will share examples of successful public-private partnerships and explain ways to use data analysis and creative visualization to access new opportunities for community revitalization.

In this session, discover how to break down data silos in local government, build predictive algorithms, and take concrete steps toward measurable results. Learn how to use data visualization to inform smart decisions and foster collaboration with city and county governments, nonprofits, and grassroots organizations.

SPEAKERS: Laura Ginn, St. Louis Development Corporation; Walker Hamilton, City of St. Louis; Ricardo León, Cuyahoga Land Bank; David Menninger, University of Missouri at St. Louis; Matthew Thomas, Cuyahoga Land Bank

Looking for
speaker bios?

communityprogress.org/rvp24/agenda



Breakout Sessions #2

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

Deteriorating Condo Buildings and Community Resilience

Location: Ballroom A

The problem of aging condominium buildings with significant repair needs was thrust sharply into the spotlight with the 2021 collapse of Champlain Towers in Surfside, Florida. Large condo complexes have major repair and maintenance needs to repair and maintain their facades, foundations, and systems. When condo owners face a special assessment that is beyond their ability to pay or exceeds the equity in their property, some owners walk away. This session delves into the complex landscape of foreclosures impacting condo units, and how new state legislation, creative financing, and increased City inspections are being rapidly put in place to save condo buildings.

SPEAKERS: Karen Black, May 8 Consulting, Inc.; Dana Goldman, Law Office of Dana Goldman

Economic Justice and Vacancy: The City of St. Louis's Strategy in Action

Location: Ballroom B

The City of St. Louis's Economic Justice Action Plan includes many cross-departmental initiatives focused on vacant property revitalization. These include programs to stabilize and preserve vacant buildings whenever possible and demolish and deconstruct them when necessary. Other programs focus on helping residents steward, beautify, and develop vacant lots and green infrastructure. Still, other priorities include redeveloping properties into quality housing, preserving historic architecture, and home repair programs to enable owners to age in place.

In this session, learn about the creation and implementation of these various initiatives—which leverage federal, state, local, and private funding—and how they interact and evolve.

SPEAKERS: Jared Boyd, St. Louis Mayor's Office; Lance Knuckles, St. Louis Development Corporation; Nahuel Fefer, City of St. Louis; Neal Richardson, St. Louis Development Corporation

Strategies for Investor-Owned Rental Properties Location: Ballroom C

The rise of investor-owners in the rental housing market since the early 2010s has raised significant concerns not just for housing affordability, but for the health and safety of their tenants. Rental properties owned by an absentee investor may have dangerous conditions and deferred maintenance issues because the investor is trying to squeeze as much profit out of that property as possible. Learn about research-backed ideas communities can use to persuade decision-makers to act on problematic investor-owned properties. This session also highlights efforts to address investor-owned problem properties in Dallas and Cincinnati through the variety of tools available to code enforcement, legal departments, and redevelopment agencies.

SPEAKERS: Edward Cunningham, City of Cincinnati; Liz Eddy, The Port; Jill Haning, City of Dallas; Andrew Kieve, Tolemi; Benjamin Preis, Drexel University

Tapping the Potential of Vacant Land for Community and Climate Resilience Location: Ballroom F

As communities plan for heat waves, flooding, and unreliable energy infrastructure that threaten resident wellbeing, many are turning to vast inventories of vacant land as possible solutions. Hear about Detroit Future City's series of vacant land reuse initiatives, from individual project sites to neighborhood wide planning efforts. The session will highlight the McDougall Hunt Climate Resiliency Initiative, an ongoing engagement and planning effort in a highly vacant area of Detroit. Attendees will learn how to engage in vacant land reuse in historically disinvested, marginalized communities to incorporate climate resilience as well as affordable, attainable housing needs.

SPEAKERS: Sarah Hayosh, Detroit Future City; Katrina Keeby-Watkins, Bailey Park Neighborhood Development Corporation; Shari Williams, Detroit Future City

Using Receivership for Strategic Code Compliance to Address Nuisance Properties Location: **Ballroom G**

Proactive and effective code enforcement works across City departments to identify key concerns, focus efforts, and advance cases efficiently. Partnering these efforts with health and safety receivership—placing custodial responsibility for the property with someone other than the owner—can provide a path forward for even the most challenging properties.

This session will discuss code enforcement and receivership efforts in Baltimore, Maryland; Memphis, Tennessee; California; and Massachusetts. Though each state or municipality works differently, they have found common ways to combat vacancy using cross-departmental coordination, strategic code enforcement, and receivership. Attendees will learn the importance of working across departments, how to develop proactive and effective code compliance, and how to institute an effective receivership program in their community to deal with the most difficult cases.

SPEAKERS: Erica Connelly, VPRC/CRG Foundation; Patrick Dandridge, Shelby County Tennessee; Dina Fein, Vacant Property Receivership Consortium; Jason Hessler, City of Baltimore; Dusan Pavlovic, Los Angeles County

Training Seminars #1

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

How Land Banks Can Practice Intentional, Authentic Community Engagement Location: **Mills Studio 3** *Pre-registration required*

Do residents approach your land bank with apprehension or mistrust? Have you left it to others to tell your land bank's story? If so, it's time to assess and reimagine your approach to community engagement.

Join this training to learn how some land banks are trying creative activities, policies, and products to go beyond just "checking the box" when it comes to community engagement. Training participants will learn about replicable engagement and communication strategies and hear from the Omaha Municipal Land Bank about the impact of their community engagement practices. Participants will leave with resources and practical ideas to test in their neighborhoods, but most importantly a stronger commitment to intentional resident engagement that fosters trust, respect, and better outcomes.

SPEAKERS: Andrea Purdy-Steenholdt, Omaha Municipal Land Bank; Ashley Rae Turner, Omaha Municipal Land Bank; Leslie Smith, Omaha Municipal Land Bank; Sara Toering, SJT Partners Law and Consulting

Using Behavioral Science to Improve Community Outcomes

Location: **Mills Studio 6** *Pre-registration required*

If you want to reduce repeat code violations, prevent illegal dumping, and help your land bank sell more properties, behavioral science can help!

Join this workshop to learn about how to use behavioral science to tackle community development and housing challenges. See real-world examples of the EAST framework (make it easy, attractive, social, and timely) in action, and get the opportunity to practice applying what you've learned. Participants will come away with ideas for how to improve a policy or process, identify barriers, design solutions, and scale what works. We encourage participants to bring existing resident communications or forms to redesign.

SPEAKERS: Leah Everist, BIT US; Gabriela Saade, BIT US

Thursday October 10, 2024

Breakout Sessions #3

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM

How Regional Land Banks Can Combine Services and Programs for Maximum Impact Location: **Ballroom A**

Most land banks are created at a local or county level as standalone entities. However, land banks created to serve a region or embedded within existing agencies can uniquely leverage different powers and combine multiple services and programs to maximize impact. Join this session to learn how two entrepreneurial land banks serving Northern Illinois and Western New York are driving revitalization with a focus on housing, brownfield redevelopment, and creative collaborations. Learn how land banks embedded within existing regional and county agencies can access powers, functions, and finances to maximize impact and resolve some of the most challenging VAD properties.

SPEAKERS: Matthew Chavez, Niagara Orleans Regional Land Improvement Corporation; Michael Dunn, Region 1 Planning Council; Amy Schifferli, Niagara Orleans Regional Land Improvement Corporation; Eric Setter, Region 1 Planning Council

Nongovernmental Legal Programs to Reduce Vacancy and Promote Equitable Development Location: **Ballroom B**

Nongovernmental legal programs can provide support to local governments seeking to tackle vacancy and abandonment. From problem property litigation to estate planning and heirs' property services, to tax equity programming and technical assistance, nonprofit law firms and law school partners can serve critical community development needs where city agencies need more capacity. In this session, speakers from law school clinics and legal aid programs in Missouri, Tennessee, and Maryland will share how they have worked with their local governments to help address vacant properties and support communities.

SPEAKERS: Brittany Hubbard, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri; Steven Kappen, Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service; Brandon Mason, Legal Aid of Western Missouri; Daniel Schaffzin, University of Memphis School of Law

Just finished a session? Tell us what you thought! **Take our survey:**

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Reusing Vacant Properties to Promote Art and Culture in Historically Marginalized Communities **Location: Ballroom C**

In 2018, Kevin King established The King's Canvas in the Washington Park neighborhood of Montgomery, Alabama. Like many Black communities across the country, Washington Park was fractured by the construction of an interstate highway in the 1960s. The King's Canvas operates as a creative haven, providing creative opportunities, entrepreneurial and personal development, and space and material access to historically marginalized artists. Through artistic expression and creative placemaking strategies, The King's Canvas also uses arts and culture to address community and economic development issue. Join this session for an in-depth case study of community-centered creative placemaking and the process of reactivating a vacant space to create social change and affirm community culture.

SPEAKERS: Kevin King, The King's Canvas; Rashim McKinney, Social Montgomery; Kasanta Sanders, Beloved Community Development Corporation MGM

Strategies for Affordable Housing Advocacy in Conservative-Led Legislatures **Location: Ballroom F**

Affordable housing is a challenge affecting all Americans in rural, urban, and suburban communities alike. Lack of affordable housing can contribute to community destabilization, driving out longtime residents and stymying economic development. However, policies to help create more affordable housing opportunities often face opposition in states where conservative-led legislatures pass laws to preempt local initiatives. This session shares some innovative strategies for city housing directors, mayors, and other local leaders to employ in helping advocate for greater access to housing opportunities. Attendees will learn how to leverage the limited tools available and push back against restrictive legislation.

SPEAKERS: Karen Black, May 8 Consulting, Inc; Nicole Heyman, City of Chattanooga; Kevin Roig, City of Chattanooga

Supply-Side Solutions for the Housing Affordability Crisis: Federal Policy Proposals and Advocacy Strategies **Location: Ballroom G**

Policymakers can no longer ignore the nationwide housing affordability crisis, felt most acutely by vulnerable populations in low- and moderate-income households. Driving this crisis is a supply shortage of nearly 4 million housing units. Affordable homeownership opportunities grow scarcer and scarcer as prices soar and cash-buying investors convert single-family homes to rental. While barriers exist to the production of new housing, the toolkit to solve this complex crisis must include preservation of existing housing stock and rehab or repurposing of vacant and abandoned structures. Hear from national policy experts working to drive supply-side homeownership solutions and learn how communities can advocate for positive change.

SPEAKERS: Robert Finn, Center for Community Progress; Chloe Grainger, National NeighborWorks Association; Mark Kudlowitz, LISC

Using Vacant Land to Anchor Community Power **Location: Ballroom H**

Getting major vacant land reuse projects off the ground demands a community involved in organizing and advocating for the amenities they deserve. This session highlights how, after five years of persistent, patient community organizing, two new park projects brought public green space to underserved neighborhoods in Fresno, California: Broadway Parque and Webster Park. Join this session to learn about how to identify the right vacant property for redevelopment, tell compelling stories for fundraising, build coalitions, and integrate community organizing into community development.

SPEAKERS: Kiel Lopez-Schmidt, South Tower Community Land Trust; Germán Quiñonez, South Tower Community Land Trust

Breakout Sessions #4

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Community-Informed Demolition: Developing a Prioritization Algorithm from Resident Input **Location: Ballroom A**

Demolition impacts the health and safety of nearby residents and the social fabric of a neighborhood. Communities experiencing disinvestment, systemic vacancy, and population loss must make difficult choices around which properties to prioritize with limited funding. To improve their decision-making process, the Genesee County Land Bank Authority (GCLBA) partnered with Tolemi to develop an automated scoring tool that incorporates inspection data and spatial layers.

Join this session to hear how the scoring tool offers a long-term sustainable solution to demolition planning. Attendees will learn how the tool was developed to democratize demolition decisions, promote transparency, and allow GCLBA to stay responsive to changing inventory and funding.

SPEAKERS: Melissa Hertlein, Genesee County Land Bank Authority; Darnell Ishmel, The CHANGE Foundation; Reza Jaffri, Tolemi; Christina Kelly, Genesee County Land Bank Authority

Delinquent Tax Enforcement Systems: Legal, Policy, and Practice Reforms That Promote Revitalization **Location: Ballroom B**

The delinquent property tax enforcement systems in many communities can trap vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties in legal limbo for years and result in properties in uninsurable title. This limits the ability of public and private actors to address these properties and inhibits purchasers from borrowing against or selling them, impeding rehab and neighborhood revitalization.

This session will explore how reforms to state and local delinquent tax foreclosure systems and partnerships with title insurers can improve the insurability of tax-foreclosed properties and promote revitalization. Attendees will hear from leaders in communities that have successfully made policy and practice changes to improve their delinquent tax enforcement systems and a title insurance industry representative.

SPEAKERS: Libby Benton, Center for Community Progress; Allie Jett, Clayton County Land Bank; David Martyn, First American Title Insurance Co.; Rachel Waterman, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri; Kevin Windham Jr., Missouri House of Representatives

How to Leverage Civic Participation in Community Planning and Building Climate-Resilient Places **Location: Ballroom C**

Extreme weather events are a growing reason for property vacancy and abandonment. These events worsen existing vacancy issues and can rapidly shift conditions in a previously low-vacancy neighborhood, leaving communities to grapple with rebuilding and planning for the future. In this session, the Center for Rebuilding Habitat (CRH) will share their approach to community planning, with a heavy emphasis on civic participation, in the aftermath of Hurricane María's impact in Puerto Rico. Learn about the four components of CRH's model—inventory, analysis, planning, and advocacy—and how to leverage local policy change and resident mobilization in communities vulnerable to natural disasters and the effects of climate change.

SPEAKERS: Nicole Larregui Cintron, Centro para la Reconstrucción del Hábitat, Inc.; Luis Orlando Gallardo Rivera, Centro para la Reconstrucción del Hábitat, Inc.; Karla Hernandez Ortiz, Centro para la Reconstrucción del Hábitat, Inc.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Vacant Property Redevelopment

Location: Ballroom F

Redeveloping vacant properties often demands creative, entrepreneurial approaches to finding funding. This session features a panel of development entrepreneurs and multi-project finance professionals who will share a variety of unique, creatively funded vacant property reuse case studies to inform and inspire. Featured projects and funding models include: a block-level housing development using an owners' co-op model in Baltimore; a vacant high school turned mixed-use development in Kansas City; a multi-use Opportunity Zone development in Philadelphia; and a social impact-focused crowdfunding platform for real estate projects that helps build a network of impact investors willing to help fund them.

SPEAKERS: Kevin Doyle Jones, Swannanoa Watershed Action Network; Bree Jones, Parity; Aija Morris, LocalCode Kansas City; Gregory Reaves, Mosaic Development Partners JV

Leveraging ARPA Funds to Redevelop Vacant Properties and Transform Neighborhoods

Location: Ballroom G

In this session, learn how Jackson, Michigan and St. Louis, Missouri are working to reverse decades of economic decline with community-driven initiatives and ARPA-funded solutions. Jackson's 100 Homes Program leverages ARPA funds for down payment assistance and rebuilds neighborhoods with a data-driven infill housing strategy supported by lenders, builders, and community groups. St. Louis has allocated over \$40 million to revitalize vacant properties, funding projects like reactivating lots, rebuilding homes, and urban agriculture. Join this session to learn about creative programs and collaborative efforts and come away with a blueprint for how to create similar programs.

SPEAKERS: Rashonda Alexander, City of St. Louis; Nahuel Fefer, City of St. Louis; Shane LaPorte, City of Jackson; Cory Mays, City of Jackson

Measuring Land Bank Impact: Lessons from Cook County and New York

Location: Ballroom H

Communicating impact is essential to how land banks can build trust with residents, strengthen their reputation, and ultimately get more funding. Qualitative and quantitative metrics help communities better understand how land banks are transforming vacant properties, promoting homeownership, reusing brownfields, and driving economic development. Join this session to hear about how the Cook County Land Bank Authority in Chicago, Illinois and the New York Land Bank Association have measured and reported on their impact. Attendees will leave with concrete ideas about how to improve data and story collection to develop persuasive reports on their land bank's impact.

SPEAKERS: Jessica Caffrey, Cook County Land Bank Authority; Darlene Dugo, Cook County Land Bank Authority; Jocelyn Gordon, Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation

Mobile Workshops #2

11:00 AM – 1:30 PM

Community and Partnership in the Jennings West Florissant Business Corridor and Beyond

Location: N. 4th St. Lobby **Pre-registration required**

Mobile workshop participants will tour the Jennings' West Florissant Business Corridor. This corridor has been a critical part of Jennings since the inception of the city, and at one time was a thriving downtown area that has since faced numerous challenges to the built environment. Now, the corridor is receiving the attention needed to restore it to its thriving nature. Participants will also meet with the Vacancy Task Force to learn about new initiatives to combat residential and commercial vacancy and the community partners who have contributed to revitalization efforts.

SPEAKERS: Mayor Gary Johnson, City of Jennings; Simone Wright, City of Jennings

Community Recovery and Rebuilding: West Florissant Avenue 10 Years after Ferguson

Location: N. 4th St. Lobby **Pre-registration required**

Revitalization is about more than just improving local economies; it's about helping communities heal. Located in a historically low-income part of St. Louis County, West Florissant Avenue is the commercial corridor where the cities of Ferguson, Dellwood, and Jennings meet. Ten years ago, Ferguson teenager Michael Brown Jr. was killed by police a few blocks from this busy street. The protests and civil unrest that followed prompted local conversations about civil reform and how to reimagine this community space. On this mobile workshop, local partners will share how community vision and needs shaped the recovery and redevelopment of key spots along this corridor. Participants will visit R&R Marketplace—a long-vacant strip mall now becoming a hub for economic development—and new senior housing that had once been a burned down business.

SPEAKERS: David Doyle, Environmental Protection Agency; Michael Holmes, Urban League; Beverly Jenkins, Refuge and Restoration; Mayor Reggie Jones, City of Dellwood; Maude Trost, St. Louis Economic Development Partnership

Saving Wellston's Affordable Housing: Lessons in Advocacy and Coalition-Building

Location: N. 4th St. Lobby **Pre-registration required**

In 2018, the Department of Housing and Urban Development threatened to demolish 201 affordable housing units in the City of Wellston, an inner ring suburb in St. Louis County and one of the poorest communities in Missouri. In summer 2023, a developer broke ground to rehab and preserve these scattered site units. This mobile workshop will tell the story of the fight to preserve the Wellston community. Participants will visit completed and under-construction units, St. Augustine's Wellston Center Food Pantry, and Wellston City Hall and showcase tenants' tenacity and the potential of creative solutions to address large-scale problems.

SPEAKERS: Robin Harvey, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri

Revitalization of East St. Louis

Location: N. 4th St. Lobby **Pre-registration required**

In 1865, East St. Louis was established as a major transportation hub of the Midwest. The city flourished and quickly became known as the "All American City" for its industrial and economic growth. However, challenges including a decline in industry, racial unrest, political corruption, and poverty left the city with many vacant and abandoned properties. Today, a movement to revitalize neighborhoods provides reasons for optimism. In this mobile workshop, local partners will share strategies for creative neighborhood revitalization solutions that address systemic problems and sustain impact. Participants will visit organizations that have transformed vacant properties into new places and helped stabilize the community.

SPEAKERS: Sandra Northern, Eagle's Nest of St. Clair County

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Plenary Session

2:00 PM – 3:30 PM

Supporting Community Revitalization: A Conversation with Practitioners

Location: Grand Ballroom

This plenary session will explore how dynamic nonprofits operating across diverse geographies access the assistance and funding they need—public and philanthropic—to do their work. Presenters will share how they have successfully leveraged federal, state, and philanthropic capital to develop innovative vacancy solutions, create affordable housing supply, and preserve generational wealth through homeownership for their communities. One champion of this work will share their philanthropic approach to neighborhood revitalization and moderate a discussion with local partners from across the country.

SPEAKERS: Luis Orlando Gallardo Rivera, Centro para la Reconstrucción del Hábitat, Inc.; Bree Jones, Parity; Olivia Barrow Strauss, JPMorgan Chase; Tammy Thompson, Pittsburgh Land Bank; Michael Woods, Dream Builders 4 Equity

Breakout Sessions #5

4:00 PM – 5:30 PM

Achieving Energy Efficiency and Emission Reduction in Property Rehab sponsored by Wells Fargo Foundation Location: Ballroom A

As communities confront heat waves, flooding, and unreliable energy infrastructure, problem properties present a unique opportunity for climate mitigation. Rehabilitating these properties can bolster climate resilience and contribute to a greener future. This session will highlight opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by upgrading existing buildings to energy-efficient standards during the rehabilitation process. Attendees will learn how enhancing existing buildings' performance, rather than opting for new construction, can significantly lower emissions and promote more energy-efficient, walkable neighborhoods.

SPEAKERS: Melissa Keeley, George Washington University; Monica Ray, Congress Heights Community Training & Development Corporation

Affirmative Litigation to Address Problem Properties Location: Ballroom B

It is not uncommon for cities to encounter a single actor who owns a large inventory of VAD or otherwise problematic properties. Affirmative litigation against these bad actors can compel improvements or a sale at a larger scale than reactionary code enforcement strategies. Additionally, moving larger portfolios back to occupancy can help cities meet their growing need for housing. This session will address how cities can use proactive, affirmative litigation to address problems associated with large-portfolio owners, and how local media can be leveraged to deter owner-neglect. Join this session to learn about the analysis, investigative research, and reporting required to uncover bad actors hiding behind shell LLCs, and to document the nuisance conditions at their properties, both vacant and occupied. Speakers will also discuss a multi-pronged affirmative litigation approach to dealing with bad actors of large problem property portfolios.

SPEAKERS: Erica Faaborg, City of Cincinnati; Peter Hoffman, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri; Ryan Krull, St. Louis Magazine; Brooke Lipscomb, City of Cincinnati; Myia Wood, City of St. Louis

How Communities and Universities Can Work Together to Green Neighborhoods Without Displacing Neighbors Location: Ballroom C

Vacant lot greening can raise concerns about environmental gentrification, as the resulting "beautified" land makes a neighborhood more appealing to economic growth. This session tackles the challenge of environmental justice without environmental gentrification. Attendees will learn about the partnership between the University of Pittsburgh School of Law and community residents to green vacant lots and explore related laws and

policies. Presenters will share lessons from co-leading this community-engaged education project on the public health, safety, and economic impacts of vacant lot greening. The facilitated discussion will go into how affordable housing and environmental justice advocates can codesign a vacant lot proposal that advances their complementary goals of promoting a livable and affordable neighborhood.

SPEAKERS: Stephanie Dangel, University of Pittsburgh; Jacquelin Walker, University of Pittsburgh

How to Center Community Needs in Brownfields Redevelopment

Location: Ballroom F

Many communities experiencing high rates of vacancy and abandonment can point to the decline of a major industry that once powered the local economy, like automotive or industrial manufacturing. But when these jobs leave, the infrastructure and environmental contamination remains, threatening public health and wellbeing. Remediation and reuse of these brownfield properties can advance local priorities like local job creation and climate resilience. There have been significant federal investments in brownfield assessment and cleanup that can help make this possible. In this session, Groundwork USA, a national network of place-based environmental justice organizations, will facilitate a discussion with local leaders from Groundwork Jacksonville and Groundwork Rhode Island about how they have incorporated community needs into land restoration projects to build social, economic, and climate resilience through placemaking and workforce development. Attendees will gain an understanding of strategies that support the inclusion of resident voices into land reuse planning.

SPEAKERS: Genea Foster, Groundwork USA; Ella Kilpatrick Kotner, Groundwork Rhode Island; Gloria McNair, Groundwork Jacksonville

Tax Liens, Tax Credits, and Sales Tax: Unexpected Tools for Equitable Community Revitalization Location: Ballroom G

This session will explore how tax policy can be used to benefit communities rather than distant investors. Speakers will examine tools like tax lien sales, historic tax credits, and sales taxes, which often generate private wealth while local residents bear the costs. Focused Community Strategies from Atlanta will share how they acquired tax liens associated with vacant properties and created a pipeline for affordable housing developments. Reimagine Development Partners from New Orleans will discuss how their residents can use historic tax credits to drive and obtain the revenue from local development. Finally, attendees will hear from leaders in Elaine, Arkansas about their visioning process for downtown Elaine, which led to the town's first-ever sales tax ballot initiative. Come away from this session learning how these tax policies can promote equity and community-led development.

SPEAKERS: Amoz Eckerson, Eckerson Architecture; Lisa Hicks Gilbert, City of Elaine; Sara Toering, SJT Partners Law and Consulting; Jim Wehner, Focused Community Strategies

How Local Government Can Help Address Heirs' Property and Protect Generational Wealth sponsored by Wells Fargo Foundation

Location: Ballroom H

When a property owner dies without a will, or when an estate hasn't been probated, it can leave property ownership split across multiple family members, resulting in a lack of clear title to the property. This lack of clear title prevents "heirs" from accessing resources like tax exemptions or repair loans to help maintain the property. In the worst-case scenario, this can lead to deterioration, vacancy, and abandonment. While nonprofits and legal service providers have programs to help families resolve heirs' property issues, local governments are beginning to develop programs as well to prevent future vacancy. This session will review how local government can identify potential heirs' properties and highlight emerging practices for municipalities to address and prevent vacancy and deterioration among heirs' properties.

SPEAKERS: Alison Goldey, Chatham/Savannah Land Bank Authority; Teresa Kileen, Washtenaw County; Matt Kreis, Center for Community Progress; Catherine McClary, Washtenaw County Treasurer's Office; Gerald E. Smith, St. Louis County

Mobile Workshops #3

4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Arts and Innovation in the Gravois-Jefferson Historic Neighborhoods

Location: N. 4th St. Lobby *Pre-registration required*

From 2017 to 2018, Dutchtown South Community Corporation (DSCC) led the creation of the Gravois-Jefferson Historic Neighborhoods Plan. The plan was the culmination of countless meetings that gathered residents from four neighborhoods to lay out their vision for the future. Mobile workshop participants will visit three neighborhoods innovatively implementing the plan: Cherokee Street Cultural District and its newly opened Love Bank Park, the St. Louis Art Place Initiative's arts-based community development in Gravois Park, and various DSCC projects in Dutchtown South such as the Mixed-Income Neighborhood Trust.

SPEAKERS: Jennifer Allen, St. Louis Art Place Initiative; Karisa Gilman-Hernandez, Dutchtown South Community Corporation; Kaveh Razani, St. Louis Art Place Initiative; Emily Thenhaus, Cherokee Street Community Improvement District

Creative Partnerships to Reactivate Vacant Land in College Hill, Hyde Park, and Old North St. Louis **Location:** N. 4th St. Lobby *Pre-registration required*

The College Hill, Hyde Park, and Old North St. Louis neighborhoods contain more than 1,000 vacant and abandoned properties, representing 25 percent of parcels. Many of these properties are vacant land. Community green space is a powerful reuse option for vacant lots, strengthening community, increasing neighborhood pride and safety, and driving further investment. Mobile workshop participants will visit ten green space developments along a two-mile stretch, including College Hill Lavender Farm, Prairie Square, Peace Park, Ratio Park, Be Well Cafe & Farmer's Market Bazaar, Old North Chess Park, Wingman Park & Reading Garden, 13th Street Community Garden, and Northside Workshop. Participants will hear from resident leaders and representatives from local organizations and government agencies about aligning partner and funder missions with community vision, the role land banks can play, and the ways these projects can contribute to economic and workforce development.

SPEAKERS: Laura Ginn, St. Louis Development Corporation; Jessica Payne, 13th Street Community Garden; Mike Ziegler, St. Louis Development Corporation

Mega Makeovers: Transforming Huge Vacant Spaces into Community Places **Location:** N. 4th St. Lobby *Pre-registration required*

While most vacant properties in St. Louis are residential lots, large vacant buildings remain a barrier to wider neighborhood regeneration. Former schools, warehouses, office buildings, and apartment complexes present different challenges than residential properties, and the cost of rehab often prohibits private developers from taking on the risk. Cities must work creatively to address these properties. In this mobile workshop, attendees will visit two formerly vacant large properties that are currently being rehabbed by the City of St. Louis in partnership with community organizations, nonprofits, and forward-thinking developers. Participants will visit Baden School, which is under construction as new senior residential units, and the former Killark Electrical building, which is being transformed into an economic development incubator and municipal service center. Participants will hear about the challenges and opportunities presented by these major projects.

SPEAKERS: James Fister, City of St. Louis

Friday October 11, 2024

Breakout Sessions #5

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM

Approaches to Expanding Access to Home Repair Programs

Location: Ballroom A

Housing deterioration is a serious problem. Deteriorating homes harm the physical, mental, and financial health of their occupants and undermine community stability. Programs that help residents repair their homes are critical to help prevent property vacancy and abandonment and advance economic and racial justice. Join this session to learn about how cities like Philadelphia, Cleveland, and St. Louis have scaled up their home repair programs and created comprehensive, collaborative systems to better address necessary home repairs and stabilize their housing inventories.

SPEAKERS: Keesha Allen, Home Repair Resource Center; Karen Black, May 8 Consulting, Inc.; Constance Siu, North Newstead Association; Todd Swanstrom, University of Missouri at St. Louis

Eminent Domain as an Equitable Development Tool? **Location:** Ballroom B

Eminent domain has long been used as a vehicle for the displacement of underrepresented communities. However, new approaches to the law show promise for helping historically disinvested neighborhoods tackle challenges like heirs' property, vacancy, and gentrification.

This panel will feature speakers from Savannah, Georgia to discuss how eminent domain can be used to help resolve heirs' property title issues to the benefit of family members and neighborhoods. Speakers from St. Louis will discuss how they used development incentive laws like eminent domain to address large-scale land speculation and help prevent displacement through property tax abatements for long-time residents.

SPEAKERS: Rasheen Aldridge, City of St. Louis; Alison Goldey, Chatham/Savannah Land Bank Authority, Inc.; Tara Hicks, City of Savannah; Peter Hoffman, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri; Sheila Rendon, St. Louis Place Community Association

Preserving Middle Neighborhoods for Future Generations

Location: Ballroom C

Often described as neither the strongest nor weakest communities, "middle neighborhoods" are home to middle- and working-class families, and hover on the edge between growth and decline. But with modest investment to sustain them, these middle neighborhoods can remain safe, affordable places that offer people a high quality of life and access to opportunity.

This session explores data about the shifts and movement of middle neighborhoods from the 1970s to today. Attendees will learn about tactics and policy approaches to stabilize these communities.

SPEAKERS: Tom Goddeeris, Detroit Future City; Kris Hoff, National Community Stabilization Trust; Tiffany Smith, Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago; Kimberly Smith-Drake, Washington University Medical Center Redevelopment Corporation; Christopher Tyson, National Community Stabilization Trust

Preventing Illegal Dumping through Community-Based Environmental Design Location: Ballroom F

Dealing with illegal dumping is an expensive and tedious cycle. A local government might clean up a dumping site only to get a call a few weeks later about more trash and debris in the same place.

However, new research is showing the promise of community-driven interventions to not just clean up dumping, but prevent it. Join this session to hear about how the Genesee County Land Bank Authority, Michigan Youth Violence Prevention Center, and Clean & Green community-based groups in Flint piloted low-cost environmental designs that could deter dumping while creating a beautiful space for the community.

SPEAKERS: Melissa Hertlein, Genesee County Land Bank Authority; Darnell Ishmel, The CHANGE Foundation; Christina Kelly, Genesee County Land Bank Authority; Roshanak Mehdipanah, University Of Michigan; Kevin Michaels, University of Michigan

Taking an “All At Once” Approach to Vacant Lot Reuse Location: Ballroom G

Dive into the transformative potential of an integrated approach to community revitalization. This session presents an alternative to a traditional step-by-step method—instead, learn how to use concurrent strategies that blend arts, placemaking, community development, mapping, and planning to repurpose vacant lots and rebuild connections within neighborhoods and communities. Through case studies of vacant land projects of all sizes—from small lots to large parks—learn how to support real-time community needs and plan for the future at the same time. Attendees will gain insight into developing programming that meets diverse community needs, learn about fostering neighborhood relationships with community engagement best practices, and understand actionable diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies.

SPEAKERS: Ryan Bunch, Toledo Design Collective; David Ross, The Arts Commission; Alicia Smith, Junction Coalition

Transforming Vacant Spaces in Upstate New York through Arts and Culture Location: Ballroom H

Artists play a crucial role in helping communities reclaim and transform vacant spaces. This session features two artists in upstate New York who launched new projects in vacant and underutilized spaces. The Black Library in Monticello, New York is a space dedicated to showcasing books, art, and discussions by Black creators and promoting greater understanding of Black history and culture. Springville Center for the Arts is a rural multi-arts center housed in a former Baptist church that offers live performance, art exhibitions, workshops, internships, after-school and summer programs, and more. Attendees will also hear about possibilities for collaborating with artists on equitable community development.

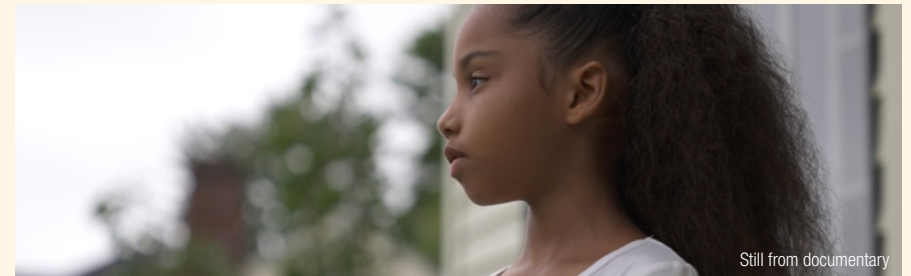
SPEAKERS: Max Collins, Springville Center for the Arts; Bella Desai, Creatives Rebuild New York; Kevin O’Connor, RUPCO; Douglas Shindler, The Black Library

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Movie Screening

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM



Still from documentary

Genesee County Land Bank Authority Documentary

Location: Gateway East (18th floor)

The Genesee County Land Bank Authority is the first land bank of its kind in the United States. To mark its 20th anniversary in 2024, this film, directed by Robin Schwartz and Grayson Beras, illustrates the many ways the land bank is transforming Flint, Michigan and beyond. Hear the real stories of the people caring for vacant land, planting gardens, rehabbing abandoned homes, carrying out demolitions, becoming first-time homeowners, building new businesses, investing in Flint, and breathing new life into this resilient, enduring city. Flint embodies a spirit of champions, hope, and perseverance with the land bank at its heart. There will be an opportunity for a brief Q&A with the land bank’s leaders following the documentary.

Closing Brunch

10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Honoring Sundry Whiteside

Location: Grand Ballroom

Join us for a special closing brunch in honor of Sundry Whiteside, a tireless advocate for community revitalization in St. Louis. Sundry’s commitment to putting the “neighbor” back into “neighborhood” left a lasting impact across the city. As Board President of the St. Louis Association of Community Organizations and Co-Chair of the St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative, Sundry’s transformative leadership advanced lasting initiatives across the city, and earned her numerous accolades.

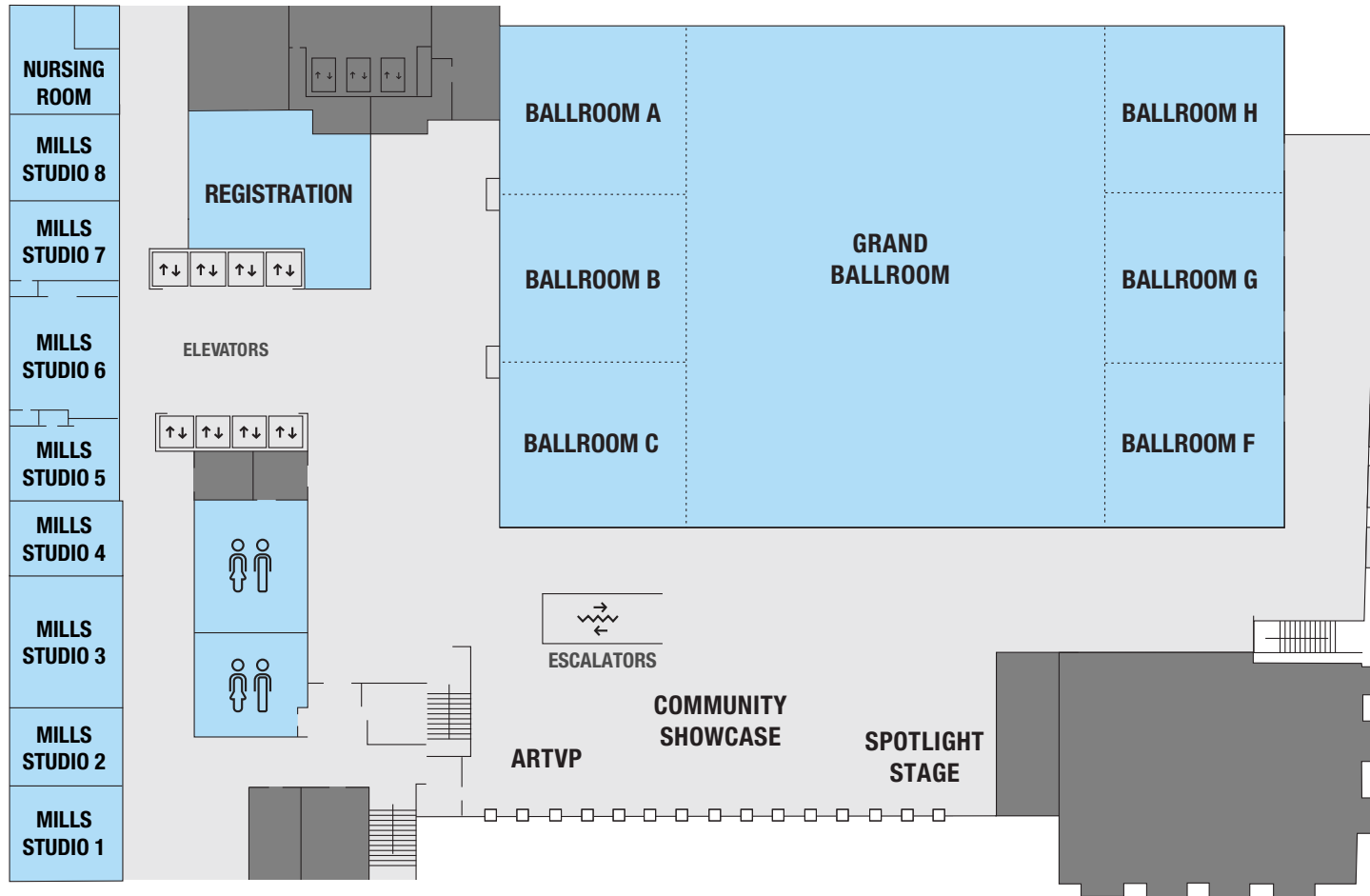
To celebrate her legacy, the choir from Sumner High School will perform. Together, we reflect on Sundry’s extraordinary contributions and are inspired to continue the work she championed.



PHOTO: Humans of St. Louis

Conference Map

Hyatt Regency St. Louis



Things to Know

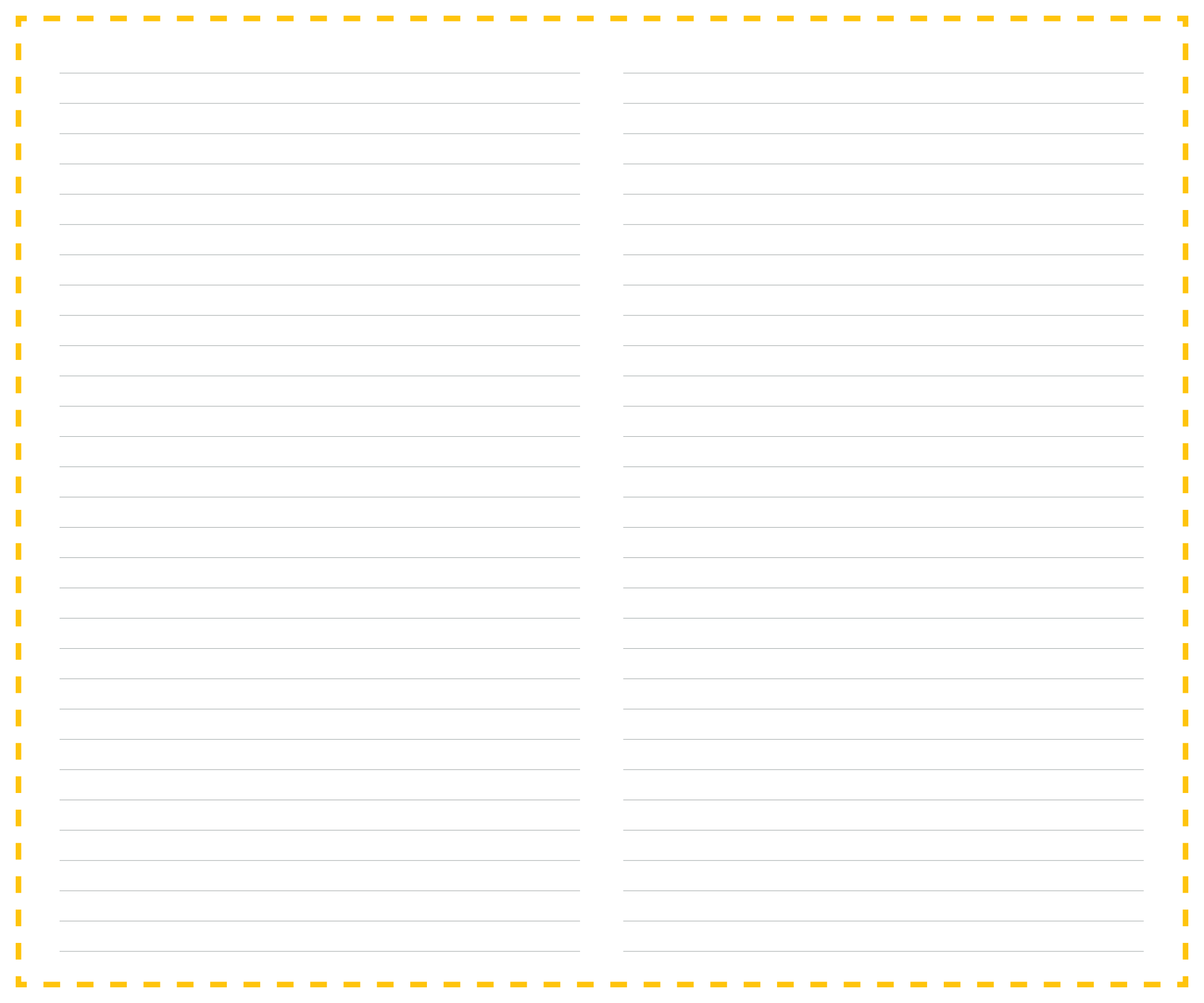
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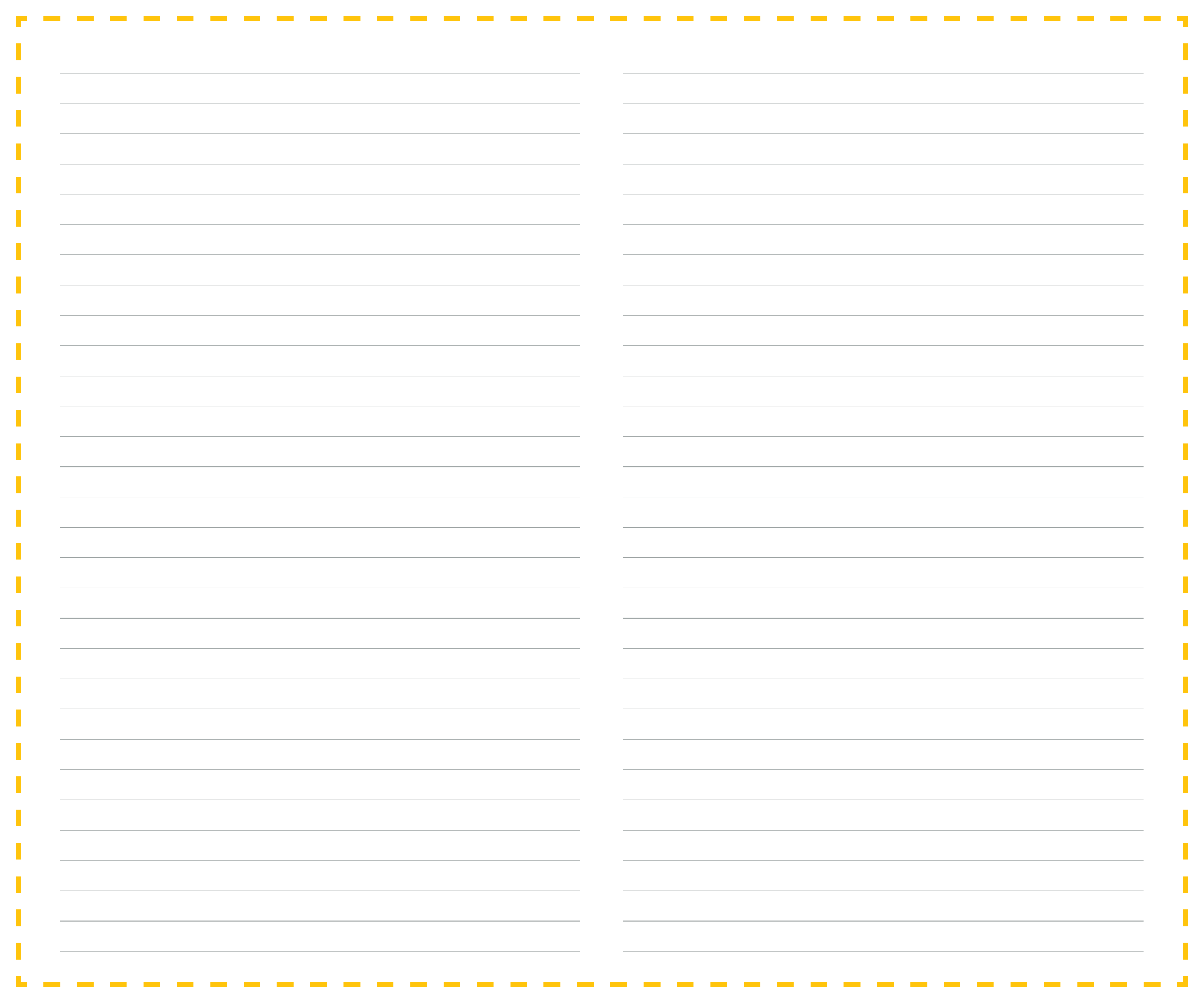
Return to the registration table for lost and found, first aid, and any other questions or help you might need during the conference.

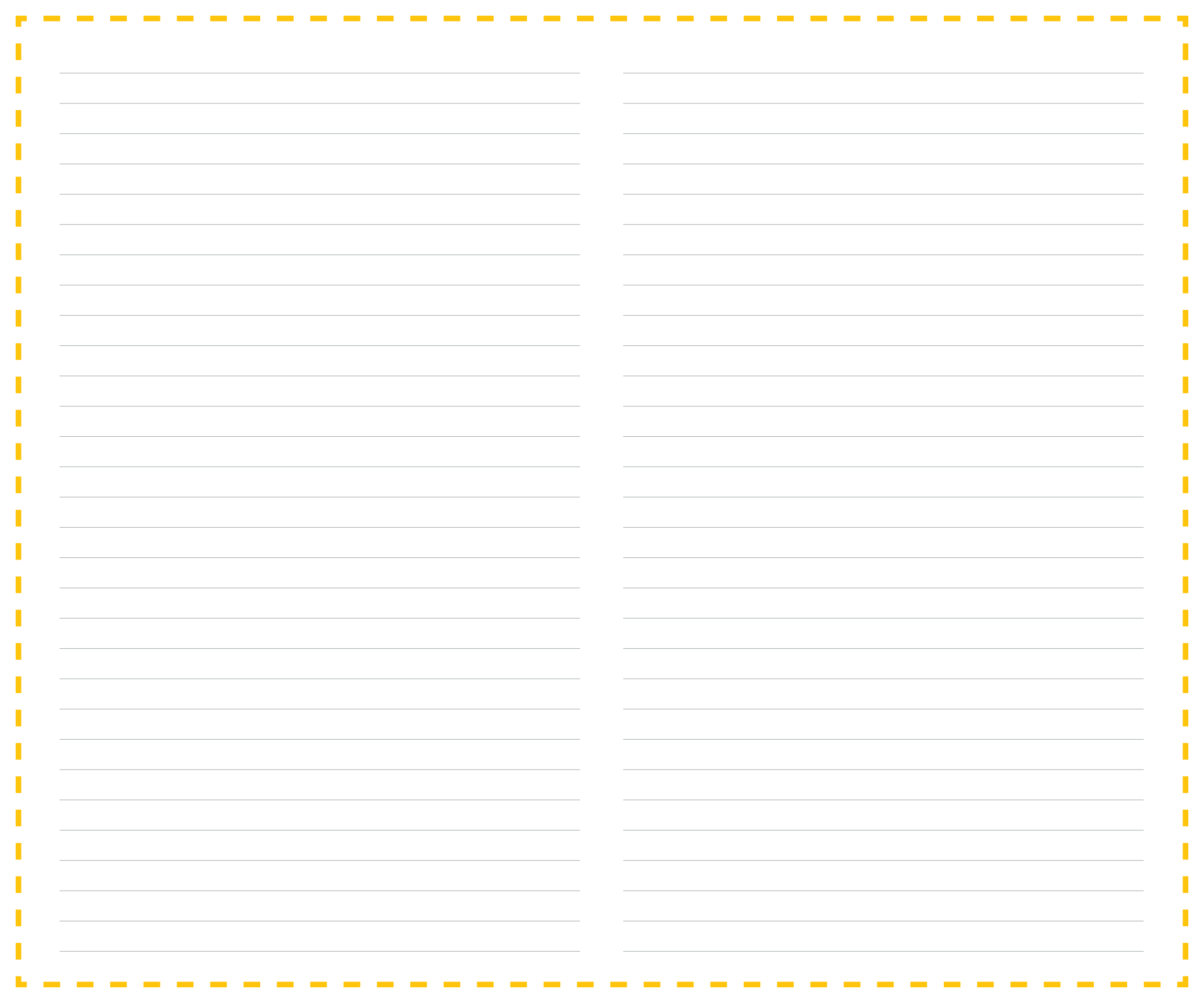
Photography

The Center for Community Progress will be taking professional photos and videos throughout the conference. Your presence in this public event will constitute your consent to Community Progress to use these images in future promotional and educational materials (in print, on our website, and social media) produced by our organization.

For programming in Gateway East or Gateway West, take the elevators to the 18th floor.









Center for **COMMUNITY PROGRESS**

Flint (Headquarters)

111 E. Court St, Suite 2C-1
Flint, MI 48502

Atlanta

299 Joseph E. Lowery Blvd NW,
Suite 203
Atlanta, GA 30314

Washington, DC

1101 14th St NW, Suite 510
Washington, DC 20005

Chicago

100 S. State St, Suite 405
Chicago, IL 60603

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