

IMPACT REPORT

2024



Center for
**COMMUNITY
PROGRESS**

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO



Dear friends,

As we approach an exciting milestone—the Center for Community Progress’ 15th anniversary—I am filled with pride, gratitude, and anticipation for what lies ahead. This moment represents both an opportunity to reflect on all that we have accomplished and to look forward. We’re entering 2025 with a bold new five-year strategic plan to guide our work transforming vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties into assets for neighborhoods so the people who live there can thrive.

Community Progress accomplished a lot in 2024. Our team of national experts delivered technical assistance, helped craft innovative solutions, and drove critical policy changes in communities tackling unbelievably tough vacancy challenges. We also brought people together to learn and grow, and amplified the voices of resident advocates. Undoubtedly, our work has strengthened the foundation for sustained equitable revitalization efforts in communities across the country.

This past year, we also thought deeply about the future of vacancy and our role in the solution. Despite record-high competition for homes, and record-low housing supply across the country, many of the communities we serve have not felt relief, still facing more than their fair share of vacant properties.

While we will continue the work we’ve done for the last 15 years—like supporting efficient land banks, helping local governments reform tax and code systems, and creating spaces that nurture and grow the field—we must also respond to communities’ evolving needs. How can we help cities transform vacant properties into opportunities for affordable homeownership? Can vacant land help states prepare for and respond to extreme weather? And how do we support neighborhoods seeking to revitalize vacant storefronts downtown? I am confident that our dedicated and passionate team will find answers to these pressing questions.

As Community Progress embarks on our next chapter, we do so with hope and determination. Together, we will build on the successes of 2024 and harness the momentum of our anniversary year to create lasting, transformative change.

Thank you for your continued collaboration, generosity, and trust. I am honored to lead Community Progress into its next era and it is a privilege to continue working with all of you to create stronger, healthier, and more just communities.

Yours in partnership,

Kathleen J. Guillaume-Deleamar

Kathleen Jeanette Guillaume-Deleamar
President and CEO, Center for Community Progress

LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



I am honored to reflect on the incredible strides Community Progress has made in 2024 and celebrate the organization's unwavering commitment to addressing the challenges posed by problem properties. I am lucky to serve on this board and witness the profound impact Community Progress has on advancing neighborhood revitalization and fostering equity in communities across the nation.

This year was marked by thoughtful growth and a bold vision. The team at Community Progress not only built on the organization's legacy and expertise but also embraced innovation and learning—the organization is continually evolving to meet the needs of the communities it serves. As we enter Community Progress' 15th anniversary year, I am confident the organization will remain a national leader in equitable revitalization, serving neighbors and neighborhoods across the country for years to come.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our staff, partners, and supporters. Your contributions drive our shared mission and help us create tangible change. Thank you for your continued commitment to this vital work.

Sincerely,

Donald Phoenix
Board Chair, Center for Community Progress

BY THE NUMBERS

5,887

People reached through
our programming

897

Attendees at the Reclaiming
Vacant Properties Conference

6,802

Hours of technical
assistance provided

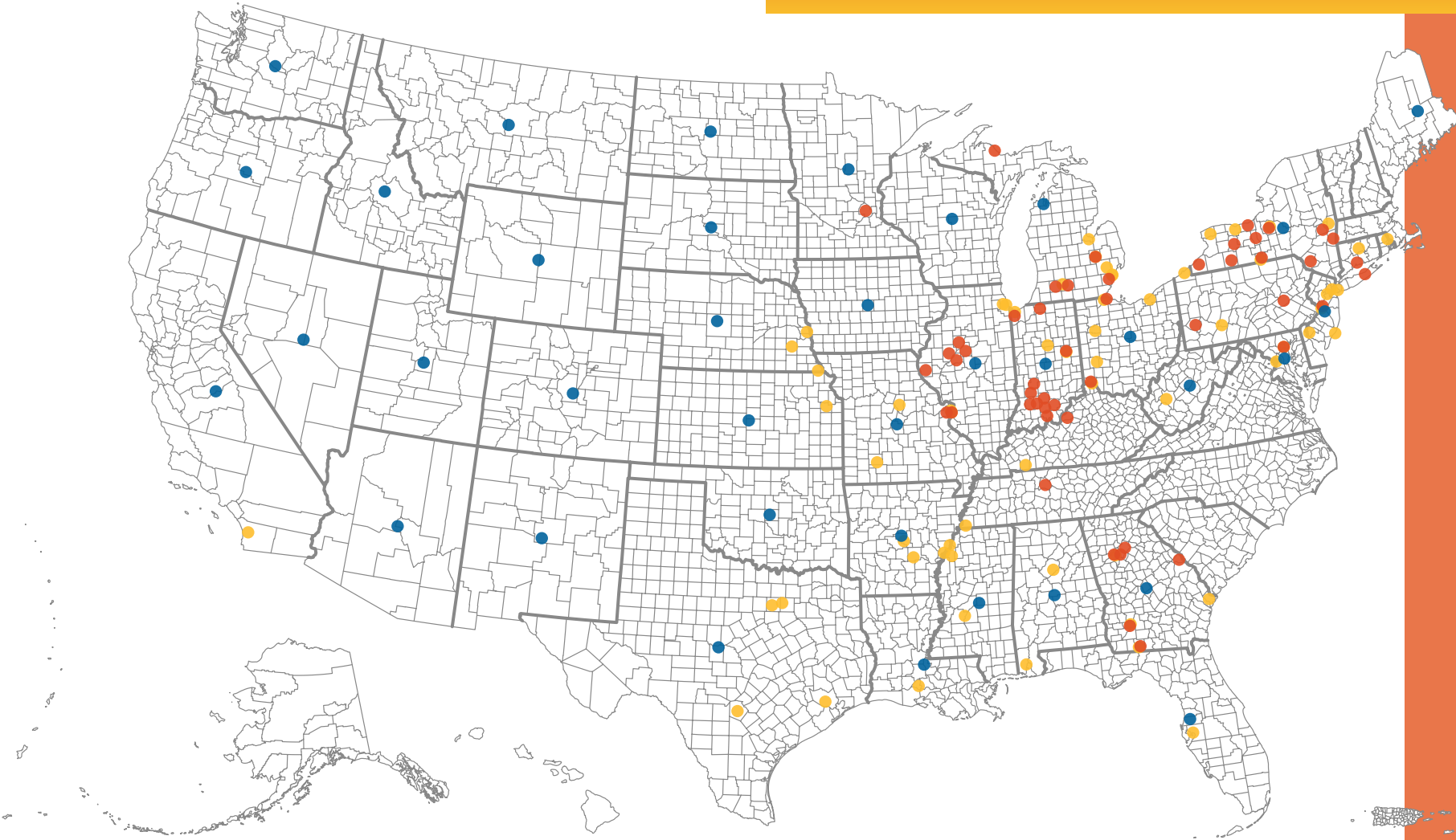
152

Unique geographies
benefited from our work

12

State and local places with
policy or practice changes
as a result of our work

Places that benefited from
Community Progress' work in 2024



County Municipality State



AWARENESS

BROWNFIELDS' UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

Brownfield properties, often referred to as “**brownfields**,” are challenging and costly to redevelop because of the presence or potential presence of hazardous substances or contaminants. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates there are more than 450,000 brownfields across the United States. The movement to redevelop brownfields and reclaim valuable, underutilized land to improve community health and vibrancy is growing. **Land banks** are entities with unique abilities to tackle brownfields and help communities reuse these properties. With a **major grant** from the EPA, we developed a **comprehensive suite** of factsheets, explainer videos, webinars, and other resources to help land banks across the country take steps to address brownfields.



TYLER V. HENNEPIN COUNTY

On May 25, 2023, the US Supreme Court handed down its **decision in Tyler v. Hennepin County**, positing that tax foreclosure is solely a debt collection tool and that local governments can recover only what they are owed in a tax foreclosure and no more. Community Progress has been working closely with state and local government officials as they identify and draft necessary reforms to state law. In **Tyler v. Hennepin County in 2024: Updated Analysis and Policy Reform Options**, we summarize what has happened since the Court’s ruling and recommend policy ideas that comply with the ruling while preventing vulnerable homeowners from displacement and loss of equity in the first place.



LAND BANKS IN NEW JERSEY

Although state-enabling land bank legislation passed in 2019, so far New Jersey has only one land bank. With support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and in partnership with the Housing Community Development Network of New Jersey (HCDNNJ), Community Progress started the [New Jersey Land Bank Launch Initiative](#) to explore how land banks could help the state address vacancy challenges. We produced [resources](#) to educate local leaders about land banks, provided technical assistance to the cities of [Salem](#) and [Atlantic City](#), and uplifted a powerful [case study](#) of how Newark Land Bank advances affordable homeownership opportunities. In New Jersey's post-pandemic housing market, a land bank is just **one of several legal tools** municipalities and partners can use to address scattered vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties.

ADDRESSING HEIRS' PROPERTIES AND VACANCY

When a property owner dies without a will or estate plan, state laws governing inheritance determine how the property is passed to "heirs"—the family members legally entitled to it—creating what is called an "[heirs' property](#)." This often results in a tangled title, which makes it difficult to maintain or transfer the property. Over time, unresolved issues can lead to properties falling into disrepair and eventual abandonment, harming neighborhood stability. Recognizing this growing challenge, Community Progress expanded our work on heirs' property in 2024. We developed resources to help local governments understand and address the issue, including a [factsheet](#) on how tangled titles contribute to vacancy, a [blog](#) highlighting collaboration strategies, and a [webinar](#) exploring heirs' property as a vacancy challenge.

2024 VAD ACADEMY

Every year, Community Progress offers a free virtual boot camp for public, private, nonprofit, and community leaders whose work and communities are impacted by challenges related to vacancy. Nearly 600 individuals joined us for the 2024 [VAD Academy](#) to learn about the latest insights and tools available to address vacancy and revitalize neighborhoods. Participants not only heard from industry experts, they also had the chance to ask faculty direct, detailed questions via the office hours panel discussions at the end of each day.

"For over a decade, Community Progress has been a valuable resource in our work to transform vacant spaces into vibrant places."

*Nina Rainiero, Housing and Community Development
Network of New Jersey*



DATA

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP IN VACANCY SOLUTIONS

In April 2024, our longtime partner JPMorgan Chase released **Tackling Persistent Residential Vacancy, Abandonment, & Disrepair**, a data-driven report that emphasizes place-based strategies to combat vacancy and property deterioration. As a trusted partner, Community Progress provided significant input, resulting in 19 citations and removal of the problematic term “**blight**” from the publication. We continue to collaborate with JPMorgan Chase as they promote the report and announce investments in cities nationwide. This partnership also led to Community Progress being the sole national organization represented at a Baltimore roundtable with local leaders to discuss actionable solutions.

LAND BANKS BY THE NUMBERS

Land banks are always evolving to meet the changing needs of the communities they serve—and it is crucial to document those changing trends and celebrate what’s working. In 2023, Community Progress conducted the biennial **State of Land Banking Survey** to understand where the land bank field is now and where it is headed. In 2024, we released **The Road Ahead for Land Banks: Opportunities for Growth and Greater Equity**, which highlights survey findings and trends alongside dozens of stories of impact from land banks across the country. The report and accompanying **survey dashboard** offer land banks, policymakers, philanthropists, and community members a window into the issues land banks are evolving to address, local innovations, and the field’s collective achievements.





STRENGTHENING PROTECTIONS FOR RENTERS IN DETROIT

Detroit's 2017 rental ordinance aimed to protect tenants by requiring landlords to register properties and pass maintenance and lead hazard inspections. But despite its noble intentions, few landlords complied: Of the estimated 78,000 rental properties in Detroit, fewer than 20 percent are registered and only 10 percent have obtained a Certificate of Compliance. To address these challenges, Community Progress conducted over a year of research and interviews on behalf of the City of Detroit, resulting in a **detailed report** outlining strategies to improve compliance and enforcement. Our work led to significant changes in October 2024, when the Detroit City Council **overhauled the ordinance**, adopting our recommendations to enhance enforcement, crack down on repeat violations, and improve tenant protections.

“Community Progress’ thorough, well-researched report significantly shifted Detroit’s rental compliance conversation and made the new ordinance possible.”

Andie Taverna, Mayor’s Office, City of Detroit





TOOLS, STRATEGIES, AND FUNDING

...a representative of the Department of Building Inspection...
...your property. You are hereby ordered to correct the...
...within the specified time frame, you will be...
...by the District without further notice. If you fail to...
...will be placed against your property in the form of a Special Assessment...
...your property could be sold in a tax sale. A Notice of Inspection...
...ED WITHIN 7 Days from Posting of this Notice

Law	Description	Location of Reported Violation
DCMR § 302.1	Excessive trash, constituting unsanitary/unhealthy conditions	N/A
DCMR § 302.4	Prohibitive excessive vegetative growth	N/A
Official Code § 2-3131.12 (1)	Unsecured vacant property, door, windows, area ways, and other openings are not weather tight	N/A
DCMR § 302.4.2.2	2nd or more a notice is issued for the same condition during the same growing season; the District may summarily abate the nuisance	N/A
Code §	Vacant property exterior walls are not free of graffiti, holes, breaks, or loose...	N/A

Handwritten notes on form: HIGH GRASS, OVERGROWTH

CODE ENFORCEMENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Despite the limited success of traditional code enforcement practices, many local governments feel “stuck” in their traditional approach. Strategic code compliance is a more effective approach to achieve compliance and support community safety, housing security, and racial justice. Alongside the launch of our new resource, **Reevaluating Code Enforcement: A New Approach to Problem Properties**, Community Progress offered two rounds of **technical assistance scholarships** to select communities committed to trying a more strategic code enforcement approach on vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties. The first round of scholarships were awarded to Birmingham, Alabama; Cleveland, Ohio; and Lima, Ohio. The second round of scholarships opened in November 2024. We are excited to help community changemakers move away from traditional and less effective methods of code enforcement and advance an approach that addresses vacancy more equitably, efficiently, and effectively.

ADVANCING LAND BANKING THROUGH FEDERAL POLICY

In April 2024, Senators Bob Casey (D-PA) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) introduced the bipartisan **Neighborhood Revitalization and Land Banking Act** (S. 4146). With strong input from Community Progress, the bill aims to empower rural, urban, and suburban communities by supporting land banks as a key tool for neighborhood and economic revitalization. Proposed measures include grants for tracking property conditions, funding for revitalization planning and implementation, a property remediation fellowship program, and technical assistance for emerging and under-resourced land banks. The introduction of this legislation reflects growing federal recognition of the importance of addressing vacant properties as a foundation for sustainable community development.

LEGISLATIVE WINS IN MISSOURI AND ALABAMA

Effective legislation is key to helping governments tackle problem properties. Through the **Land Bank Incubator Scholarship Program**, Community Progress supported efforts to craft transformative policies that led to **major legislative wins in Missouri and Alabama**. In Missouri, HB2026 authorizes municipalities statewide to create land banks and creates a new judicial property tax foreclosure option designed to more quickly return vacant properties to productive use. In Alabama, SB9 allows the City of Birmingham to add nuisance abatement and code enforcement costs as priority liens on vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties and then foreclose these liens using a judicial process, designed to protect property interests and produce insurable title. This new tool will improve the City's ability to recoup its costs and move vacant properties to new ownership. These victories underscore the importance of strong partnerships, legislative champions, and the expert guidance Community Progress provides. We are excited to continue working with leaders in both states to implement these new tools and drive neighborhood revitalization.



“With Community Progress’ support, St. Louis County and other communities now have legal tools to repurpose vacant properties.”

St. Louis Land Bank Coalition

PARTNERS

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE DETROIT LAND BANK AUTHORITY

The DLBA—the largest land bank in the country by property inventory and staff size—selected Community Progress to develop its strategic plan for the next five years to respond to changing markets, inventory, and community needs. Building from more than a decade of partnership and support, we launched a robust strategic planning process that engaged DLBA staff, board, community partners, and nearly 1,400 residents. The **final plan** outlines 10 goals and over 100 activities that will position the DLBA to leverage its land bank tools to address vacancy and strengthen neighborhoods for years to come.

RURAL LAND BANK LEARNING EXCHANGE

Rural land banks are essential players in the land banking field. Over 30 percent of National Land Bank Network **survey respondents** identified the geography they serve as “rural” or “part rural.” Despite their importance, rural land banks often face unique challenges, including limited funding, capacity, and infrastructure, which are often directed to metropolitan areas. To address these challenges, Community Progress launched the **Rural Land Bank Learning Exchange**. This initiative brought together rural land bank leaders and partners for a collaborative program featuring virtual sessions, an in-person site visit, and expert guidance.



BUILDING CONNECTIONS AMONG ATLANTA DEVELOPERS

With the generous support of over \$1 million from the JPMorganChase Foundation, Community Progress launched an initiative to help mission-driven developers in the Atlanta region. This initiative supports the revitalization of metro Atlanta neighborhoods by helping Atlanta-based developers better understand how to access land and financing that produces more affordable, energy-efficient, climate-resilient housing in communities impacted by vacancy and disinvestment. The initiative promotes equitable development by focusing on the needs of developers who serve historically underinvested communities, taking into consideration the unique challenges faced by low-income communities and communities of color, and builds a valuable cohort who can leverage their partnerships to advance their shared mission.





BUILDING LEADERSHIP IN LAND BANKING

The National Land Bank Network (NLBN) launched the **Emerging Leaders Mentorship Program**, an initiative to strengthen the land banking field through collaboration and knowledge sharing. The program paired 14 experienced land bank leaders with emerging professionals eager to grow in their roles. Many land bank leaders must navigate the complexities of tackling vacancy in their communities without much support, which is why this project was critical to building connections, leadership skills, and securing the future of the land banking field. From April to October 2024, participants met in monthly one-on-one sessions, virtual group meetings, and received tailored guidance from Community Progress. By fostering relationships rooted in professionalism and respect, NLBN empowered mentees and provided mentors the opportunity to shape the future of land banking leadership.



COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION FELLOWSHIPS

Community Progress continued supporting resident leaders from three communities through our highly sought-after **Community Revitalization Fellowship** (CRF) program in 2024. CRF equips fellows to better advocate for and lead change that improves vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties through creative placemaking. This year's **18 fellows** represent the communities of Lafayette, Louisiana; Memphis, Tennessee; and Rochester, New York. Each community cohort will receive a \$10,000 grant to develop and execute their own creative placemaking projects.





UPLIFTING LOCAL LEADERS IN ARKANSAS

For 18 months, Community Progress worked closely with three Arkansas communities—Elaine, Helena-West Helena, and Pine Bluff—through the **Delta Rising Program** to address the unique challenges these rural southern communities experience with vacant properties. Community Progress organized five virtual “lunch and learn” meetings highlighting **local success stories and national best practices**, an in-person gathering in Helena-West Helena in March 2024, and provided scholarships for leaders from each community to attend Community Progress’ national Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference.

“Visiting cities through CRF showed me our community wasn’t alone. Seeing how other communities developed ways of dealing with similar challenges inspired my approach to action in my neighborhood.”

Solomon Davis, 2024-25 CRF Fellow

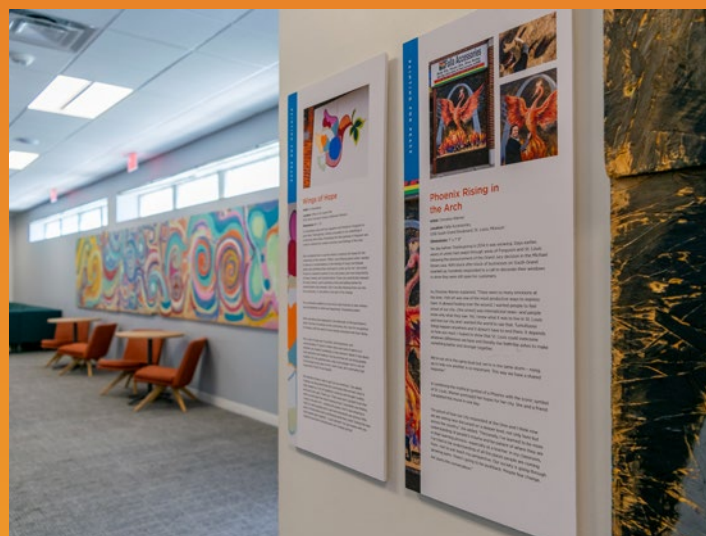


2024 RECLAIMING VACANT PROPERTIES CONFERENCE

RECLAIMING VACANT PROPERTIES: A NATIONAL GATHERING DEDICATED TO THE POWER OF COMMUNITIES

At our eleventh **Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference** (RVP) we gathered nearly 900 leaders from community organizations, businesses, nonprofits, land banks, local governments, and more in St. Louis. Over the course of three days, we learned, built connections, and inspired one another to continue the difficult but important work of equitable revitalization. The conference featured an opening conversation with award-winning journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones, and sessions that offered real-world examples of how to reclaim properties, involve residents in the decision-making process, navigate complex political climates, and more.

RVP 2024 highlighted the importance of people in communities. From the emotional remarks of our President and CEO Kathleen J. Guillaume-Deleamar as she shared her personal story of living in a disinvested community, to seeing real examples of repurposed spaces in St. Louis, to the closing performance by high school students from Sumner High, **RVP 2024** was a resounding call to center residents in all that we do.





THANK YOU

The Center for Community Progress relies on the generous support of a diverse revenue base. The following list reflects all funding received and total active agreements between January 1 and December 31, 2024. We are especially thankful for our long-term partnerships with the visionary individuals, organizations, and institutions whose gifts span multiple years. We are grateful for your continued support of our mission to foster strong, equitable communities and end systemic vacancy and abandonment.

\$1,000,000+

- JPB Foundation*
- JPMorgan Chase Atlanta*
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*

\$500,000-999,999

- JPMorgan Chase Global*
- Melville Charitable Trust*
- Prudential Foundation*
- The Kresge Foundation*

\$100,000-499,999

- Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation
- Bank of America
- Chicago Community Trust
- Environmental Protection Agency*
- General Motors
- Truist Bank
- Wells Fargo Foundation

\$25,000-99,999

- Bank of America
- Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta
- Erb Family Foundation
- LISC Atlanta*
- NeighborWorks America
- NeighborWorks America Georgia
- Rocket Community Fund
- Ruth Mott Foundation
- Walton Family Foundation
- WK Kellogg Foundation

RVP SPONSORS

- Vanguard*
- JPMorgan Chase Global
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- Wells Fargo Foundation

- Catalyst*
- Greater Springfield Board of Realtors, Inc.
- Kansas City Regional Association of Realtors, Inc.
- Melville Charitable Trust
- St. Louis Realtors
- ThirdSpace Action Lab

- Trailblazer*
- Fannie Mae
- Freddie Mac
- Tolemi

- Collaborator*
- BJC Healthcare
- Invest STL
- Legal Services of Eastern Missouri
- Onity
- St. Louis Development Corporation
- St. Louis Economic Development Partnership
- Washington University of St. Louis

- Exhibitors and Friends*
- DAWGS Vacant Property Security
- eProperty Innovations, LLC

- IFF
- St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative
- Technical Assistance Brownfields, Kansas State University
- Terracon Consultants, Inc.
- The Neighborhood Foundation
- Tower Grove Community Development Corporation
- Vacant Property Receivership Consortium

GOVERNMENT & COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Calhoun County Land Bank Authority
- City of Hopkinsville, Kentucky
- City of Lincoln, Nebraska
- City of San Antonio, Texas
- Detroit Future City
- Detroit Land Bank Authority
- Grounded Solutions
- HR&A Advisors, Inc.
- Main Street America
- New York Land Bank Association
- South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority
- Southern Indiana Development Commission
- Thomasville/Thomas County Land Bank Authority
- Troy Community Land Bank
- University of Michigan, School of Public Health

* Asterisks indicate multi-year gifts.

All photography in this report by Community Progress.

