

Module 04

# Coordinating with Internal City Partners

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Many City departments are working on issues that impact neighborhood health and safety. Code Enforcement needs a strong understanding of how these departments operate, address similar issues, and how to collaborate effectively.



Strengthening coordination and relationships can help Code Enforcement connect property owners with home repair resources, or work with police to address activities on vacant properties posing a public safety risk.

## MODULE OVERVIEW

### GOAL

Code Enforcement understands which City departments touch vacant and substandard properties and how to coordinate to address code compliance matters

### AUDIENCE

Code enforcement inspectors and staff

### TRAINING STAFF

Designated internal partners; Code Enforcement leadership

### TIMING

At onboarding (90 minutes) and at an annual refresher course for existing inspectors (90 minutes), could be done alongside onboarding; periodic trainings on process/protocol updates as needed

### TOPICS

City departments and programs; directions for how to contact and coordinate efforts to address problem properties

### MATERIALS

List of City departments and agency partners with contact information and directions for how and when to contact

## Key Training Components

### 1 Identify Key City Departments and Complementary Resources

Examples of City departments or partners could include:

- Community Development
- Cleveland Land Bank
- Housing
- Fire Department
- Police Department
- Mayor's Office, including the Problem Properties Roundtable
- Economic Development
- Aging

### 2 Establish a Clear Communication Process

Work with the identified departments to systematize coordination.

- **Designate Contacts:** Identify appropriate points of contact at each department and clarify when inspectors should contact them.
- **Define Roles:** Determine whether any inspector can reach out or if only a senior leader should coordinate communication.
- **Develop Resources:** Identify what information inspectors can and should share with the owner of a property about other City department programs or services (e.g., a one-page resource of housing repair/assistance programs).

### 3 Training and Knowledge-Sharing

#### City Department Presentations to Inspectors:

Ask relevant City departments to provide an overview of their role, how they interact with the types of properties and owners inspectors

frequently encounter, and key programs and services they offer that could help inspectors achieve compliance.

**Coordination Between Departments:** Discuss communication process for reaching out to the department for potential coordination.

**Onboarding Materials:** Ensure new hires receive training on different City department roles during onboarding.



### Field Spotlight: Cleveland, Ohio

The City of Cleveland's Problem Properties Roundtable brings together relevant City departments to coordinate an approach on particularly vexing properties. The roundtable takes a multifaceted approach to resolving issues by combining tactics related to code enforcement, public safety, utilities, and community relations.

The members of this group may be a good starting point to identify how to better share information, refer matters between departments, and help to educate each other on how and when to make referrals to, or partner with, other departments.

## Additional Resources

- [Webinar: VAPAC: A Cross Sector Coalition of the Willing Attacking Problem Properties in Cuyahoga County](#), SCEMA
- [Webinar: The Spirit of St. Louis: How Cross-Sector Partnerships and Collaboration Fuels Systems Change to Reclaim Vacant Properties](#), SCEMA

## Implementation Steps

### Short Term

1. Request departments that play an important role in providing resident services, like the Community Development Department, which manages grant programs for home repair, or the Department of Aging who has resources for senior homeowners, to present on available programs.
2. Approach members of the Problem Properties Roundtable to explore their interest and capacity in identify areas of partnership with Code Enforcement.

### Long Term

1. Establish a clear path for interdepartmental communication on specific matters—such as a point person to whom Code Enforcement can request help from or make referrals to. Consider creating a resource for inspectors that lists common situations that would warrant connecting with other departments.
2. Develop a comprehensive list of City departments, programs, and initiatives relevant to Code Enforcement's work, and clear directions for how Code Enforcement can engage each one and in which situations.

