

Community Land Trust Academy
A brief description and current status
for the CLT Network Meeting in Portland, Oregon on August 19, 2005

Background:

For many years, CLT practitioners have discussed the need for a “school” where community activists could be introduced to the model, new staff of CLTs could learn basic concepts and tools, and more senior staff could hone and share best practices.

The community land trust model is an innovative and long-lasting solution to providing affordable housing and promoting community development. Accompanying that innovation – and limiting its wider adoption – are legal issues, organizational issues, financing issues, marketing issues, and management issues for which there have been neither comprehensive answers nor consistent training.

To address this gap in training, CLT leaders from around the country have crafted a vision for a CLT Academy. We do not envision an academy confined to one location, but a set of courses with a defined CLT curriculum that could be delivered in different locations throughout the country. We recognize that a number of excellent programs already exist that provide training for the developers of affordable housing and practitioners of community-based economic development. Our purpose is to complement these programs with specialized training that is unique to the CLT model.

Goals of the CLT Academy:

The goal of the Academy will be to build the capacity of the CLT movement by providing expert training and peer-to-peer learning for CLT practitioners, giving them the practical skills and philosophical framework to operate successful community land trusts in their own communities. The Academy, when fully realized, will offer training opportunities in every region of the country on a cyclical basis.

The CLT Academy will eventually provide:

- An introduction to the CLT model for community activists wishing to start a CLT, and for lenders, lawyers, or public officials interested in supporting a CLT
- Introductory and mid-level training for staff and board members of CLTs
- An advanced track and peer-to-peer learning for senior staff of CLTs
- A forum where participants are challenged to refine the model and plan the movement
- A centralized on-line database library where working papers about various CLT issues, CLT applications, CLT best practices, and public policies favorable to CLT development are made accessible to practitioners.

Trainers / Leaders:

The trainers for the CLT Academy will be senior practitioners in the field whose dedication and understanding of the community land trust model has been tested by years of service. Trainers will include experienced staff from successful community land trusts and technical assistance professionals with extensive knowledge of the CLT model.

National Network Next Steps

Format of the Academy:

Regional Delivery: The academy will be presented in different regions of the country. The three main reasons for cycling the CLT Academy through different regions will be (1) to keep the cost low for participants, (2) to integrate regional differences in philosophy and practice into the program delivery, and (3) to facilitate the development of regional networks and peer-to-peer learning.

Duration:

Each program is likely to last for two and one-half days—starting with breakfast on the first morning and ending after lunch on the 3rd day.

Location / Setting:

The Academy will be offered at a residential retreat, college campus, or similar type of conference setting that can be obtained for an affordable price. The setting will have space for the entire group to gather, as well as break-out rooms. There will be delicious, nutritious, organic food, and a common dining room. Sleeping will be in dorm-style rooms.

Formation of Academy – Where we are to date:

Lincoln Institute for Land Policy funds Curriculum Development and Pilot Training: The Lincoln Institute has committed to fund the work necessary to develop the initial curriculum for a three-day training and to carry out the first training, currently planned for March 2006. The first location for delivery of the training has yet to be decided, but may be in the Northwest, since much of the leadership for starting the Academy has come from that region.

John Davis, a partner in Burlington Associates for Community Development, has been retained by the Lincoln Institute to develop a draft curriculum in collaboration with a 12-person Advisory Committee of CLT practitioners to be named in the fall of 2005. The Advisory Committee will come together in January 2006 to critique the curriculum during a one-day or two-day retreat. Additional refinements to the curriculum will be made in April 2006, drawing upon participant evaluations received from the first training.

For more information on the CLT Academy:

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