

# Twelve Cities Selected to Address Vacant Properties at the Vacant Property Leadership Institute

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FLINT, MICHIGAN, UNITED STATES, June 22, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Delegations from twelve cities across four states have been selected to attend the 2022 [Vacant Property Leadership Institute](#) (VPLI), a training program focused on equipping leaders with the skills to address vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties for the benefit of their communities. Made possible through the generous support of the [Wells Fargo Foundation](#), VPLI is a program of the Center for Community Progress (Community Progress) and [National League of Cities](#) (NLC).

Delegations from each of the following cities will participate: College Park, GA; Perry, GA; South Fulton, GA; Chicago, IL; Decatur, IL; Kankakee, IL; Peoria, IL; Rockford, IL; Louisville, KY; Winchester, KY; Milwaukee, WI; Racine, WI. Cities were selected through a competitive, two-round application process.

"NLC is proud to partner with the Center for Community Progress to support twelve cities in the development of equitable neighborhood development strategies," said Clarence Anthony, CEO and Executive Director of the National League of Cities. "The Vacant Property Leadership Institute will serve as a unique opportunity for the participating cities to learn sustainable strategies that are centered in racial equity and contribute to the eradication of inequities within the local infrastructure."

The selected cities include rural, suburban, and urban communities and range in population from just over 14,000 to over 2.7 million. They also face similar challenges such as high rates of vacancy, faulty mortgage foreclosure processes, tax delinquency, ineffective property maintenance systems, and other issues. These cities were selected for VPLI because they demonstrate strong leadership, are committed to racial equity, and represent unique opportunities for developing new solutions to shifting the systems responsible for vacant, abandoned, and other problem properties.

VPLI will focus on how to operationalize equitable development practices to remedy vacancy, abandonment, and deterioration (VAD) and return buildings and land to productive use. Some of the strategies to be explored include data and market analysis, delinquent tax enforcement reform, strategic code enforcement, land banking, and more.

"Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, communities across the country were already faced with

daunting challenges in regard to vacant properties and their associated outcomes,” said Dr. Akilah Watkins, President and CEO of Community Progress. “The twelve cities selected to participate in the Leadership Institute each represent a unique opportunity to advance strategies for addressing vacancy in ways which are efficient, effective, and center racial equity. We are excited to provide them free educational programming and tailored technical assistance as they begin the long road to recovery.”

Community Progress and NLC are excited to re-launch the Learning Institute model through a joint initiative to identify, equip and support a network of leaders with the knowledge and tools needed to strengthen and invest in neighborhoods challenged by VAD properties. VPLI offers participating cities opportunities for cross-city knowledge sharing through a virtual learning network, followed by an in-person learning experience. This initiative combines Community Progress’ leading national expertise in helping communities develop efficient, effective, and equitable solutions to vacancy and abandonment with NLC’s longstanding history serving the interests of 19,000 cities, towns, and villages in the US to build strong communities by expanding capacity, providing in-depth research and tools, and developing and implementing on-the-ground solutions.

#### About Center for Community Progress

Founded in 2010, the Center for Community Progress is the national leader for building strong, equitable communities where vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties are transformed into assets for neighbors and neighborhoods. Today, Community Progress has affected change in more than 48 states and seven countries through leadership education and collaborative systems, policy, and practice reforms. Simply, we work to transform “Vacant Spaces into Vibrant Places.”

#### About National League of Cities

The National League of Cities (NLC) is the voice of America’s cities, towns, and villages, representing more than 200 million people. NLC works to strengthen local leadership, influence federal policy, and drive innovative solutions. Overall, the work of NLC seeks to help mayors, councilmembers and other local elected and appointed leaders build better communities.

#### About the Wells Fargo Foundation

The Vacant Property Leadership Institute is made possible by grant funding from the Wells Fargo Foundation. This grant is part of the Wells Fargo Foundation’s efforts to keep more than 200,000 people affected by COVID-19 housed with grants to nonprofit housing organizations across the U.S.

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