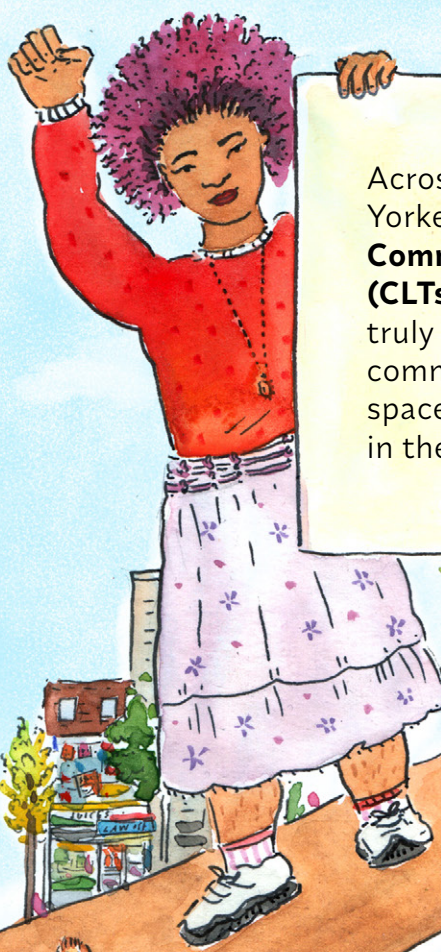
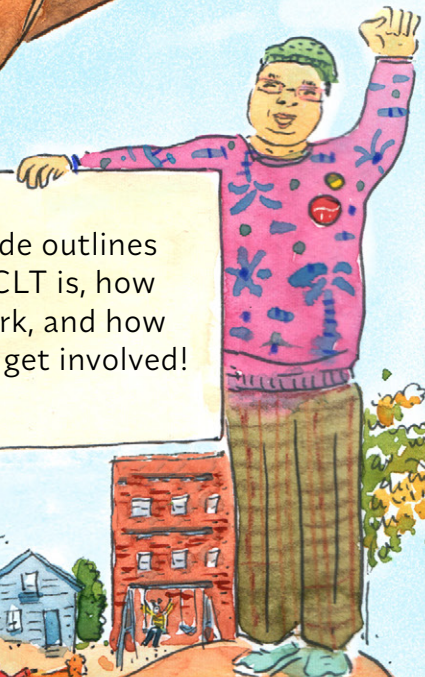


Bringing Land and Housing into Community Hands



Across the city, New Yorkers are organizing **Community Land Trusts (CLTs)** to create and protect truly affordable housing, community and green space, and small businesses in their neighborhoods.



This guide outlines what a CLT is, how they work, and how you can get involved!



PEOPLE
OVER
PROFIT



TOTAL
RESIDENTS
FIRST!



CLTs
NYC

MAKING
POLICY
PUBLIC

We can prevent homelessness & displacement.



We can create and protect truly affordable housing.



What is a Community Land Trust?

A Community Land Trust (CLT) is a community-led nonprofit that owns and takes care of land.

CLTs make sure the land and what's on top of it—housing, community spaces, and more—are used for the long-term benefit of the community.



We can protect our neighborhood against climate change and flooding.



We can keep small businesses and community spaces.



What are the roots of Community Land Trusts?

CLTs are based on Indigenous principles of responsibility, care, and connection to the lands we live on. CLTs manage and protect, or **steward**, land for future generations.

Across the country, CLTs support rural, urban, and suburban communities. Together, CLTs are building movements for community ownership, and land and housing justice.



NEW COMMUNITIES, INC. Albany, GA, 1969

This is one of the first models for CLTs and collective land ownership in the United States! New Communities, Inc. was formed to secure economic and political freedom for Black farmers who were being forced off their land during the Civil Rights Movement.

COOPER SQUARE CLT Manhattan, NY, 1994

Cooper Square CLT is NYC's longest-running CLT. It was founded by grassroots organizers and stewards close to 400 affordable apartments and dozens of storefronts in Manhattan's Lower East Side.



SOGOREA TE' LAND TRUST San Francisco Bay Area, CA, 2015

Sogorea Te' is an Indigenous women-led land trust in the Bay Area that is helping return Indigenous practices, language, and land to Indigenous people.



DUDLEY NEIGHBORS, INC. Roxbury, MA, 1988

Dudley Neighbors, Inc. is a CLT created by the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative that has transformed over 30 acres of vacant land into 225+ affordable homes, a community greenhouse and urban farm, and more.



How does a CLT work?



1. The CLT organizes and engages community members.

The CLT engages the community to make sure it's meeting their needs and stays aligned to their mission. Most CLTs have staff who meet with community members and handle day-to-day operations.

Each CLT also has a board of directors. The board typically includes long-time residents, local business owners, and people from local neighborhood organizations. Over time, the CLT board grows to include people who live in housing owned by the CLT, or who lease the CLT's land for other uses.



2. The CLT decides what community needs it will address.

The CLT hosts meetings and events to hear from community members about what needs the CLT should focus on. This could include creating or preserving truly affordable housing, making a community garden, or creating studio space for local artists.



3. The CLT makes a plan to get land.

This could look like getting vacant land from the city or partnering with homeowners at risk of losing their property. Some CLTs have even worked with tenant associations to purchase their buildings from neglectful landlords.

Getting land in NYC is hard! It's expensive, and policies favor big real estate developers. CLTs are working together to address these challenges. Turn to the back to learn more!



4. The CLT stewards the land long-term.

The CLT issues long-term leases to housing providers, small businesses, local organizations, and others who want to use the land.

The lease outlines affordability levels and other restrictions set by the CLT. The CLT enforces the lease to make sure the CLT's values are being met.

Residents and other leaseholders are organized and encouraged to participate in the CLT's events and decision-making.



How do I participate in a CLT?



Join the CLT

Join the board or a committee and help make decisions about what the CLT focuses on.



Attend Visioning Sessions

Go to visioning sessions or community meetings to shape the future of land and housing development in your neighborhood.



Help Raise Funds

Help the CLT raise funds to buy land. Ask your elected officials to pass laws that make it easier for CLTs to protect affordability and support its residents.



Help Steward the CLT

Offer hands-on support like keeping green spaces clean or volunteering at community events organized by the CLT.



What can a CLT bring to your community?

New Yorkers are organizing CLTs across the city to meet the needs of their communities. Learn what some CLTs have created and protected in their neighborhoods!

We want affordable housing!



EAST HARLEM/EL BARRIO CLT
East Harlem, Manhattan

Residents and community groups like Picture the Homeless organized and formed the East Harlem/El Barrio CLT in 2014. In 2020, the CLT acquired four multi-family buildings from the City. They're currently doing full renovations of the buildings to meet residents' needs and are preparing tenants to collectively manage their buildings.

To learn more, go to ehbcit.nyc



We want equitable and accessible community spaces!



MOTT HAVEN-PORT MORRIS COMMUNITY LAND STEWARDS
Mott-Haven and Port Morris, South Bronx

Amidst organizing against the company FreshDirect's move into the South Bronx and growing concern about air pollution, Mott Haven residents formed a CLT in 2015. One of its first projects was to envision the future of the Lincoln Recovery Center, an abandoned site where the Young Lords and other community leaders had historically provided holistic health programs. In 2028, the building will open as "the HEArts Center" and provide health, education, and arts programs for the neighborhood.

To learn more, go to thelandstewards.org



WESTERN QUEENS CLT
Long Island City, Queens

In 2018, then-Governor Andrew Cuomo cut a deal with Amazon to give them a partially-vacant City building for its new headquarters. Community groups in Queens fought back and defeated the plan.

This coalition of neighbors and community leaders formed a CLT and created their own plan for the building—the Queensboro People's Space. They're advocating for the City to approve their plan to bring deeply affordable artist spaces, local manufacturing, workforce training, food and nutrition programs, and more to the neighborhood.

To learn more, go to wqclt.org



We want to support and grow our local economy!



ReAL EDGEMERE
Edgemere, Queens

In 2012, Hurricane Sandy devastated Edgemere, a majority-Black neighborhood in the Rockaways. After many years of organizing, community members came together to form a CLT focused on climate justice and resiliency. In 2022, they achieved a historic milestone—acquiring 119 vacant lots from the City. The CLT and residents are working together to create affordable, flood-safe homes, neighborhood green spaces and parks, and advocate for equitable distribution of city resources.

To learn more, go to realedgemereclt.org



What do you want to see in your community?

EAST NEW YORK CLT
East New York, Brooklyn

In 2020, an intergenerational group of organizers and community leaders formed the East New York CLT to protect affordable housing and ensure community-led development. In 2024, the CLT made history when it worked with tenants at 248 Arlington Avenue to buy their privately-owned 20-unit building from their neglectful landlord. The CLT is now rehabilitating the property and will convert it into a permanently affordable cooperative, collectively owned by the current residents.

To learn more, go to eastnewyorkclt.org



We want tenants in control of their building!



We want cultural spaces!

What's something you love about your neighborhood?

BLAC LAND TRUST
Central Brooklyn

Across Central Brooklyn's historically Black neighborhoods, residents are being displaced by real estate development and losing beloved Black cultural spaces. The BLAC Land Trust stewards land across these neighborhoods and is working to develop buildings and green space, preserve cultural institutions like the Flatbush African Burial Ground, and create worker-owned cooperatives.

To learn more, go to growhousenyc.org/land-liberation



We want tenants in control of their building!



You can draw or write in the boxes below!

What would you be sad to lose in your neighborhood?

What do you want your neighborhood to look and feel like in 10 years?

We want to protect our neighborhood from climate change!



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To learn more, go to realedgemereclt.org



Join a CLT!

New Yorkers should determine the future of their communities. Are you and your neighbors concerned about your ability to stay in your neighborhood long-term? Do you want to join the fight for land and housing justice?

Connect with a CLT!



Check out this map to learn more about local CLTs: neweconomynyc.org/cltmap

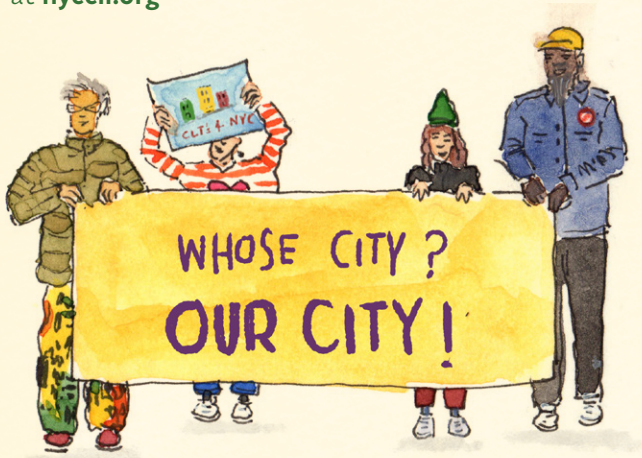
If there's no CLT in your neighborhood, reach out to the NYC Community Land Initiative to learn how you could start one.

CLTs across the city are advocating for funding and policies to support this work—get involved!

CLTs need **money** for staff and to buy and develop land. Organize with others so that City and State governments, private foundations, and individual donors support CLTs and neighborhood-led development.

CLTs need **legislation** that supports community ownership and permanent affordability for residents. This could look like giving local CLTs and tenants the first opportunity to purchase buildings when they're for sale or when the City is developing public land. Ask your elected officials to support CLTs and policies that center housing as a human right and land as a community resource!

Learn more about these policies and initiatives at nyccli.org



COLLABORATORS

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South Bronx Unite: Matthew Shore

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The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) is a nonprofit organization that uses the power of design and art to support meaningful civic engagement, in partnership with marginalized communities. Through Making Policy Public, CUP partners with policy advocates and graphic designers to explain complicated policy issues, like this one. welcometocup.org

Ishita Jain is an illustrator and designer from New Delhi, now based in New York City. She draws on location and documents the people, places and stories that surround her. ishitajain.in

New York City Community Land Initiative (NYCCLI) is an alliance of community, affordable housing, and social justice groups fighting for CLTs and nonspeculative housing to address root causes of homelessness and displacement. nyccli.org

New Economy Project works with community groups to build an economy that works for all, rooted in cooperation, racial and neighborhood equity, and ecological sustainability. As a co-founder and coordinator of NYCCLI, New Economy Project supports the formation and expansion of CLTs across the city. neweconomynyc.org

South Bronx Unite is a nonprofit community-based advocacy organization that brings together neighborhood residents, community organizations, academic institutions, and allies to fight for environmental justice, health equity, and right to self-determination. Their Community Land Trust, known as the Mott Haven-Port Morris Community Land Stewards, is a proud member of NYCCLI. southbronxunite.org



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