

Invested Once. Affordable Forever.

How NeighborWorks® America Advanced
the Shared Equity Housing Field



ABOUT NEIGHBORWORKS AMERICA:

NeighborWorks® America, a congressionally chartered nonprofit corporation, is built to deliver housing solutions at scale. Through a national network of nearly 250 local organizations in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Tribal lands, we translate federal and private investment into measurable outcomes in communities across the country.

NeighborWorks leverages its national reach and expertise to build technical skills and organizational capacity, supplement financial resources, and amplify the efforts of these local and regional nonprofit organizations while also acting as a bridge to partners from across the nonprofit, for-profit and public sectors to achieve lasting results.

Acknowledgments

This final report reflects the collaborative work of many colleagues at NeighborWorks® America, organizations within the NeighborWorks network, and our partners. We would like to thank the many staff who participated in NeighborWorks America's internal work group, shaping this initiative thoughtfully from the start. We would also like to thank the network organization leaders and staff who identified priority areas, engaged deeply in peer learning, and shared their expertise and feedback to guide the initiative's evolution. And finally, we would like to thank the partners and consultants who shaped our approach and this body of work, offered technical assistance and expertise to the network, and supported approaches to share our learnings with the field.

We also want to acknowledge the generous support of the US Congress, who provided the direction and funding that made this work possible. NeighborWorks is proud to steward federal resources and is grateful for the opportunity to invest in strategies to create lasting affordability for American families and their communities.

For additional information about NeighborWorks America's work to support shared equity housing, please email sharedequity@nw.org.



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Executive Summary

Through five dedicated congressional appropriations beginning in 2019, NeighborWorks® America invested \$12 million to strengthen the national infrastructure for shared equity homeownership, an approach that makes ownership possible for families who cannot compete in the traditional market and keeps homes permanently affordable. Rather than allowing subsidies to cycle out when a home is resold, shared equity models use resale restrictions, community ownership, and ongoing stewardship to ensure that each home is affordable for the first buyer and remains affordable for every buyer who comes after. This model offers families something the rental market cannot: a stake in their community, a path to building wealth, and the stability of knowing their housing costs won't rise at a landlord's discretion.

With this investment, NeighborWorks engaged more than 100 NeighborWorks network organizations across the country, trained more than 600 practitioners, and delivered over 115 grants and service awards. Grantees accessed a suite of supports to build the skills to design, launch, and sustain these programs, leveraging \$135 million in additional capital and producing 1,213 new shared equity homes. Network organizations doubled their shared equity portfolios, growing from 2,754 units in 2019 to 5,546 homes across 28 states today, with a pipeline of more than 1,600 additional units projected through 2028.

These outcomes are the product of a coordinated field-building strategy organized around four pillars: case making, training, capacity building, and capital strategy. Each pillar addressed a distinct barrier to shared equity housing growth. The initiative was designed to meet organizations where they were, using a layered approach that combined grants, training, technical assistance, peer exchange, and evaluation to create a system of support no single intervention could replicate. Together, they helped move the field from fragmented and underfunded to operational, networked, and growing.



What the Investment Produced

Across the network, organizations built the knowledge, systems, and partnerships required to make shared equity homeownership durable at the moment of first purchase and for decades to come. The change is visible in places like Lincoln, Nebraska, where a community land trust that did not exist before now stewards more than 40 permanently affordable homes, giving families the stability of homeownership today and a pathway their children and grandchildren can inherit. In Charlottesville, Virginia, a partnership that grew its portfolio from 12 homes to 55 has kept dozens of families in neighborhoods they might otherwise have been priced out of. In Montana, which was named the least affordable state in the country in 2024, a resident ownership model has turned renters at the mercy of absentee landlords into homeowners with a direct vote in their community's future, supported by a new state financing program that could provide \$9 million in dedicated capital that will grow by about \$2 million annually. And in Vermont, one of the largest community land trusts in the country added 46 more families to permanently affordable homeownership in a single grant period.

Network organizations
doubled their
shared equity
portfolios

2,754
units in 2019

5,546
units in 2026

Looking Ahead

The question of whether shared equity housing works has been answered with a resounding yes. The organizations, systems, financing tools, and practitioner expertise developed through this initiative represent a permanent addition to the field.

With this investment in the infrastructure as a foundation, NeighborWorks America will continue to build collaborative partnerships to advance shared equity housing within the NeighborWorks network and beyond. And the returns, for families and communities across the country, will compound for generations.

About the Full Report

The full report, *Invested Once. Affordable Forever.*, provides in-depth case studies, detailed program design, field-wide results, and the initiative's complete outcomes from eight years of work across the NeighborWorks network.

ACROSS THE NETWORK,
ORGANIZATIONS BUILT THE
KNOWLEDGE, SYSTEMS, AND
PARTNERSHIPS REQUIRED
TO MAKE SHARED EQUITY
HOMEOWNERSHIP DURABLE AT
THE MOMENT OF FIRST PURCHASE,
AND FOR DECADES TO COME.



WHAT WE LEARNED

Years of work across the network produced guidance for what comes next:

Meeting organizations where they are and giving them room to grow is critical.

Multi-stage, flexible funding structures that support the full lifecycle of shared equity development produce more durable outcomes than one-time production grants alone. Organizations that began with early feasibility grants went on to launch programs, while programs that launched went on to scale.

Peer learning is technical assistance.

Learning from organizations that had already navigated the same challenges in similar markets, accelerated organizational decision-making in ways that formal consulting alone could not replicate.

Capital strategy determines whether everything else scales.

Shared equity models often don't fit neatly within traditional lending frameworks. Expanding the capital tools available to practitioners is the highest-leverage investment available to the field right now.

Shared equity framing resonates when it is local and specific.

Shared equity housing resonates across geographies and ideological contexts when advocates speak in terms of local conditions, specific households, and concrete outcomes.

Introduction: The Case for Shared Equity Housing

For most Americans, homeownership is the primary vehicle for building wealth. It provides stability, equity and a stake in the future. But for millions of households, the gap between that promise and reality has been widening for decades. With many Americans being priced out of the traditional market by rising costs and stagnant wages, the dream of homeownership remains out of reach.

The divide between owning and renting compounds over time. When the market shifts, rents rise, or landlords sell, renters bear the consequences without the protections that ownership provides.

Shared equity housing helps close that gap. It is not an alternative to market-rate homeownership; it is an alternative to renting, and for the families it serves, that distinction is the difference between building wealth and never having the chance to begin.

Through five multiyear congressional appropriations totaling **\$12 million**, NeighborWorks® America's Shared Equity Housing (SEH) Initiative engaged more than 100 network organizations across the country, leveraged **\$135 million in additional capital**, and helped over 1,200 families become homeowners between 2019 and 2026. What's more, these homes are in communities where ownership would otherwise have been unattainable, and the shared equity models ensure those homes remain affordable for the families who come after them.

Instead of a collection of projects, NeighborWorks' investment strengthened the foundation of a field. It supported organizations, created systems, and preserved communities threatened by displacement. It helped families gain a stake in their communities for the first time. And it made a case, grounded in eight years of results, for why the Shared Equity Housing work is only beginning.

THE RESULT IS A HOME THAT WORKS
FOR THE BUYER WHO PURCHASES IT
TODAY AND REMAINS AFFORDABLE
TO A SIMILARLY INCOME-QUALIFIED
BUYER DECADES FROM NOW.



Shared Equity Housing Incorporates a Family of Models, Each Suited to Different Community Contexts:

COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS (CLT)

are nonprofit organizations with the goal of providing community control over land. To create and sustain affordable homeownership opportunities, they separate ownership of land from the home itself, with the CLT retaining the land to preserve long-term affordability while the homeowner builds equity in the structure.

DEED-RESTRICTED HOMES

carry resale price limits and buyer income qualification requirements written directly into the property deed, ensuring affordability is maintained with every transfer of ownership.

LIMITED-EQUITY COOPERATIVES (LEC)

provide shared ownership through a resident-governed structure, most often in multifamily buildings, where residents own shares in the cooperative rather than individual units. LEC owners have a proprietary lease that provides exclusive rights and responsibilities within their units, often including a resale formula to calculate an affordable sales price for future buyers.

RESIDENT-OWNED COMMUNITIES (ROC)

enable residents of manufactured housing communities to collectively own and manage the land beneath their homes, building security and stability in communities that are otherwise vulnerable to sale and displacement.

The common logic across models is that public and philanthropic subsidies are invested once and retained permanently, rather than cycling out of affordability when a home is resold.

What Is Shared Equity Housing?

Shared equity housing is an approach to homeownership that balances individual opportunity with long-term community benefits. Rather than allowing home values to rise without limit and push future buyers out of reach, shared equity models use community ownership, resale restrictions, shared appreciation, and ongoing stewardship to preserve affordability across multiple generations of ownership.

The result is a home that works for the buyer who purchases it today and remains affordable to a similarly income-qualified buyer decades from now. The subsidy that made the home affordable is not lost with a sales transaction; it stays with the house. Shared equity homeowners buy at an affordable price and sell at an affordable price, and 6 out of 10 go on to use their earned equity to purchase a market-rate home.¹

Who Does It Serve?

Shared equity housing serves families and individuals who are ready for the stability and opportunity of homeownership but cannot compete in the traditional market because it has moved beyond what their incomes allow.

These are working households: teachers, first responders, health-care workers, and service employees who are essential to the

communities they live in but are increasingly priced out of them. In rural areas, they are often residents of manufactured housing communities whose security depends on who owns the land beneath their homes. In rapidly changing urban neighborhoods, they are long-time residents facing displacement as values rise around them.

For these households, the alternative to shared equity homeownership is not a market-rate home. It is continued renting with no path to equity, no protection against rent increases, and limited control over the neighborhoods they call home.

Shared equity housing changes that equation, and for many families, it is a first step rather than a permanent one. Data from evaluated programs show that a significant share of shared equity homeowners — in a City of Lakes Community Land Trust evaluation, 70% of those who sold — went on to purchase market-rate homes.² Shared equity housing builds the financial stability and equity needed to make that next step possible.

¹ Grounded Solutions Network, *Shared Equity Housing By the Numbers (2024)*, https://groundedsolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/BY_The_Numbers_v2-1.pdf.

² NeighborWorks America, *Advancing the Promise of Shared Equity Housing Models (2023)*, p. 20. <https://www.neighborworks.org/research/advancing-the-promise-of-shared-equity-housing-models>.

FOUR PILLARS FOR BUILDING THE FIELD

The Shared Equity Housing Initiative was designed to both support individual projects and strengthen the conditions that allow shared equity housing to take root, scale, and endure. Across the network, that work advanced through four connected pillars: case making, training, capacity building, and capital strategy.



CASE MAKING

helped organizations build local understanding, stakeholder confidence, and public support for shared equity models.



TRAINING

gave practitioners the practical knowledge needed to design, launch, and steward programs.



CAPACITY BUILDING

strengthened the organizational systems, partnerships, and leadership alignment required for long-term implementation.



CAPITAL STRATEGY

helped organizations identify and structure the financing needed to move from promising models to durable production.



MAKING AN IMPACT

Building Awareness and Momentum for Shared Equity Housing in Scranton

NeighborWorks Northeastern Pennsylvania (NWNPEA)

IMPACT AREAS:

Case Making (Primary);
Capacity Building

FUNDING:

FY24 Feasibility Grant (\$25,000);
FY25 Planning Grant (\$50,000)

OUTCOMES:

Built an understanding of
shared equity housing with local
stakeholders and residents,
leading to a pilot home.

Shared equity housing cannot grow in communities where it is not understood. Before an organization can launch a program, it needs partners who believe in the model and funders who have evidence that it works. Before a government entity commits public dollars, it needs constituents and advocates who can help make the case.

Building that understanding across the field was the cornerstone of the Shared Equity Housing initiative's success.

"Having the NeighborWorks endorsement has been helpful for that local case making, because they can point back to the resources that NeighborWorks has available and say NeighborWorks, a leader in housing and community development, is supporting these models," said Paul Singh, vice president, Community Initiatives, NeighborWorks America. "So having that gives them extra credibility when they are making the case locally to policymakers or funders or other partners."

In Scranton, Pennsylvania and across Lackawanna County, rising housing costs are reshaping a community long defined by affordability. After years of post-industrial decline, the region is experiencing renewed investment and population growth, driven in part by new institutions, shifting migration patterns, and an anticipated Amtrak passenger rail expansion.

These new developments compound challenges that have been building in the region for decades. An aging housing stock requiring costly deferred maintenance, low production of new single-family homes, and a large older adult population without options to downsize have resulted in a

market that is increasingly unaffordable at both ends.

"There is a housing bottleneck," said Shane Powers, president & CEO, NeighborWorks Northeastern Pennsylvania (NWNPEA). "Not only are there really not a lot of smaller homes that are cost-effective for first-time homebuyers, there's very little for older adults to downsize to or right-size. And so this bottleneck creates a lack of suitable options for first-time homebuyers and small families."

Meanwhile, new construction tends toward market-rate or premium rental products, and remote work trends following the





pandemic have already pushed rents upward, making the affordability gap more acute even before any rail-driven demand materializes.

For NWNEPA, these conditions signaled an urgent need to explore new approaches to preserving affordability and expanding access to homeownership. Shared equity housing offered a solution that would address the bottleneck at both ends, but required careful exploration, community alignment, and cross-sector collaboration.

With support from NeighborWorks® America's Shared Equity Housing Initiative, NWNEPA began a structured feasibility and planning process to determine how shared equity models could work in their local context.

From Exploration to Alignment

The first phase of NWNEPA's work through the Shared Equity Housing Initiative focused on building knowledge and alignment, both internally with staff and board members and externally with community stakeholders and partners.

To help determine the right model to address the organization's needs, NeighborWorks America brought national shared equity expertise directly into the local conversation. Through the initiative,

NWNEPA was matched with Brenda Torpy, a technical assistance provider from Champlain Housing Trust – one of the country's most established community land trusts and a NeighborWorks network organization. Torpy traveled to Scranton to work alongside staff and community partners, providing direct, in-person engagement that gave NWNEPA hands-on support tailored to local conditions, including sample documents and model structures. The connection, made possible by the initiative's support, helped translate national best practices into a locally grounded strategy.

Building Partnerships for Implementation

As momentum grew, NWNEPA became part of a broader, coordinated effort to

explore the feasibility of shared equity housing in Scranton. NWNEPA convened more than 30 community leaders, including representatives from the City of Scranton, the Scranton Redevelopment Authority, the Scranton Area Community Foundation, United Neighborhood Centers of Northeastern Pennsylvania, and the Lackawanna County Land Bank, to explore how shared equity housing could work locally and what role each partner might play in its development and long-term stewardship.

These convenings built a shared understanding among stakeholders who had never encountered shared equity housing before and created space to surface concerns and align on strategy.

The Scranton Area Community Foundation emerged as a key partner, committing funds specifically to shared equity housing and serving as a convening force for ongoing coalition work. Together with public, nonprofit and community development partners, the foundation helped build the shared understanding and local alignment needed to move the model forward. Through that coalition-building, shared equity housing moved from an unfamiliar concept to a community-supported strategy with real institutional backing.

The Pilot: Proof of Concept and Lessons Learned

The organization completed a feasibility assessment and built internal capacity to support shared equity housing, including developing initial program procedures and aligning leadership around a path forward.

"There is a housing bottleneck, not only are there really not a lot of smaller homes that are cost-effective for first-time homebuyers, there's very little for older adults to downsize to... this creates a lack of suitable options for first-time homebuyers and small families."

SHANE POWERS, PRESIDENT & CEO, NEIGHBORWORKS NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

The technical expertise and community partnerships helped steer the organization toward selecting a deed-restricted shared equity model. Unlike a community land trust, which requires an organization to permanently hold title to land, in a deed-restricted model, affordability restrictions are written into the home's deed, ensuring that when it is sold, it must be sold at an affordable price to another income-qualified buyer. The subsidy stays with the house without the organization needing to own the land beneath it.

This model aligned naturally with NWNEPA's existing strengths in buyer education and one-on-one counseling. The model also addressed the organization's focus on older adults and right-sizing. Price restrictions can be structured to keep homes affordable for residents on fixed incomes, and equity can be passed to family members without income restrictions, countering a common concern that shared equity limits intergenerational wealth.

With this foundation in place, NWNEPA completed its first shared equity home sale using the deed-restricted model in 2025.

NWNEPA also recognized that sustained, accessible education would be essential to making the model work at scale. The complexity of resale rules can be disorienting for buyers unfamiliar with shared equity. In response, NWNEPA began developing broader community education programs targeted at prospective buyers, older adults considering right-sizing, and residents who may not yet see themselves as homeownership candidates.

Two additional homes are now in the pipeline. These single-story properties on Lackawanna County Land Bank lots target older adults at 50% and 80% of Area Median Income looking to downsize into stable, affordable homeownership rather than enter assisted living or remain in homes they can no longer adequately maintain.

Early Results and What Made Them Possible

NWNEPA's participation in the Shared Equity Housing Initiative produced



outcomes that would not have been achievable without it.

The initiative opened access to a national network of expertise that a 19-person organization in Scranton could not have built on its own. "It opened up doors to other technical experts and resources we didn't know existed," said Powers. "And now we're not only building those resources, we're bringing that expertise to this region, which serves residents broadly."

The initiative also provided the operational bandwidth, through staff time, consultant access, and funding for community convenings, that allowed NWNEPA to build momentum at a pace the organization could sustain.

The technical groundwork established through the initiative translated into real dollars. The feasibility work, coalition building, and community education directly supported NWNEPA's successful application for \$400,000 from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency to fund the construction of new shared equity homes.

"I certainly don't think that we would have been as successful in securing funding from Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency to go build those two new houses if we hadn't gotten this funding on the front end and done the pre-work," said Powers. "It gave us technical credibility in that

application; it was something that we had taken the time to learn about."

Looking Ahead

Having completed the feasibility and planning work and the pilot with two homes under construction, the organization is looking toward implementation at scale.

NWNEPA is actively pursuing that next stage, including a multi-year grant to fund a dedicated director of affordable housing initiatives and conversations with for-profit developers about partnerships that could expand the pipeline beyond what scattered infill can produce.

The bottleneck that defined Scranton's housing market four years ago is the same one NWNEPA is now equipped to address, with a proven model, committed partners, and a clear path forward. The model that was once theoretical has provided a real foundation for the future of shared equity housing in Lackawanna County. It is embedded in NWNEPA's strategic plan, backed by local partners and public funders, and the stage is set to produce homes for families who had few options before.

"When we originally applied, we knew so little," said Powers. "And I don't know if any of us really knew enough to say what could this look like for the organization – how powerful this could be from an affordability standpoint."

Continuing The Case for Shared Equity Housing

Why It Matters

The case for shared equity housing is both a housing argument and a fiscal one.

Affordable housing subsidies are scarce. When they are applied to market-rate homeownership to help a buyer purchase a home that will later sell at full market value, the benefit is real but temporary. The subsidy leaves with the seller.

Shared equity housing connects the subsidy to the home and makes that subsidy permanent. Every dollar invested in a permanently affordable shared equity home continues to serve income-qualified households in perpetuity. Over time, this multiplying effect represents an extraordinary return on public investment.

“Getting away from the stigma that it’s not wealth building... recognizing the need for long-term, perpetual affordability in housing is really important if we’re going to make this work for the next few generations,” said Eileen Anderson, senior director, Northeast Region, NeighborWorks America.



The Benefits Extend Well Beyond the Balance Sheet:

FOR HOMEOWNERS,

the benefits include the stability of more predictable housing costs, the ability to build savings, and improved financial security. Homeowners also realize an increased sense of agency and self-determination with the ability to paint walls and make decisions about their living space without a landlord's permission. Evaluations conducted through this initiative found that shared equity homeowners reported significant improvements in their overall sense of well-being, mental health, financial confidence, and physical health.

FOR COMMUNITIES,

the benefits include long-term affordability preservation that keeps neighborhoods accessible as markets change, protecting both long-time residents and the social fabric they represent.

FOR RURAL AREAS,

there is more security for residents of manufactured housing communities who would otherwise be at risk when their community comes up for sale, and the ability to reinvest in infrastructure that may have been unaddressed for years.

FOR CITIES AND SUBURBS

facing rapid change, the benefits include an anti-displacement tool that keeps existing residents in place while maintaining neighborhood-level stability, even as property values rise in the surrounding area.

These outcomes resonate across communities, bringing proven options to long-standing challenges. Shared equity housing is a practical solution grounded in fiscal responsibility, community investment, and the enduring value of homeownership.



Why NeighborWorks

NeighborWorks® America is uniquely positioned to advance shared equity housing at the national level. As a congressionally chartered nonpartisan nonprofit with a network of nearly 250 member organizations in every state, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and on Native lands, NeighborWorks has an extensive reach into communities across the country.

The Shared Equity Housing Initiative, launched in 2019 with dedicated congressional funding, was designed to do what NeighborWorks does best: meet organizations where they are, build capacity across a spectrum of readiness, and create a rising tide of knowledge and resources that lifts the entire field.

Five dedicated multi-year appropriations supported work from FY19 to FY26. The infrastructure now in place positions the NeighborWorks network to expand their work in shared equity

housing in ways that were not possible before this initiative began. The initiative contributed to an emerging field by providing capacity, tools, and the reach to grow.

THE INFRASTRUCTURE NOW IN PLACE
POSITIONS THE NEIGHBORWORKS
NETWORK TO EXPAND THEIR WORK
IN SHARED EQUITY HOUSING IN WAYS
THAT WERE NOT POSSIBLE BEFORE THIS
INITIATIVE BEGAN.



MAKING AN IMPACT

Building a Community Land Trust in Nebraska and a Path Others Can Follow

NeighborWorks Lincoln (NWL)

IMPACT AREAS:

Training (Primary), Capacity Building, Case Making

FUNDING:

FY20 Feasibility (\$25,000),
FY23 Planning (\$50,000)

OUTCOMES:

Built a local and state ecosystem of support for the first resident-led, citywide community land trust in Nebraska



For shared equity housing to move from concept to implementation, organizations need the practical skills to design programs. That requires hands-on learning, sustained support, and the ability to apply new knowledge in real time.

Homeownership was out of reach for many families in Lincoln, Nebraska. Home prices climbed past \$400,000, which presented an immovable barrier to homeownership for families earning below 80% of Area Median Income. At the same time, the city's 2020 Housing Action Plan projected a need for 30,000 new homes by 2035, including 5,000 affordable units. The math wasn't working, and the tools available to close the gap were limited.

For NeighborWorks Lincoln (NWL), a shared equity housing model offered a path forward by bridging the immediate affordability gap while ensuring that each subsidized home remained affordable to future buyers. The concept presented a sound solution, but it was almost entirely unknown in the region.

Local lenders and real estate agents weren't familiar with shared equity housing, and there was no policy framework that recognized ground-leased properties. The knowledge gap had to be bridged before conversations about implementing shared equity housing models could take place. Before a home could be placed into a community land trust, NWL needed to build the knowledge base from inside the

organization, across the community, and inside the state legislature.

From Concept to Competency

NWL's entry into the Shared Equity Housing Initiative began with a planning grant and a clear assessment of the organization's knowledge gaps. Through NeighborWorks® America's training and technical assistance resources, staff and leadership built working knowledge of community land trust structures, resale formulas, ground lease agreements, and the long-term stewardship responsibilities that make a CLT program sustainable.

NeighborWorks America connected NWL with Julie Brunner, a consultant with deep expertise in shared equity program development. She brought both knowledge and tools, including policy templates drawn from established programs, legal frameworks, governance models, and an institutional memory that takes years to build independently.

"When you're new, you're not thinking about 20 steps down the road," said Charlie Wesche, chief executive officer, NWL. "We had a lot of stuff that we could kind

of fall back on, and through Julie's expertise and experience, we knew we had solid reference material. It was just a matter of making it Lincoln-specific."

The capacity to customize rather than invent from scratch accelerated NWL's operational readiness and gave board members and staff the confidence to move forward on a model that might have stalled in the planning phase indefinitely without that scaffolding.

Building the Ecosystem: Education, Partnerships, and Prairie Roots

NWL faced the challenge of presenting a housing solution to a community that had never encountered the concept. Many community members were receptive, yet just as many were skeptical or operating on misconceptions about what resale restrictions meant for their ability to build wealth.

Shared Equity Housing Initiative funding supported NWL as it invested heavily in education at every level of the ecosystem. Lunch-and-Learn sessions brought together city officials, lenders, and real estate professionals, and community forums opened the conversation to prospective buyers and neighborhood residents. The organization worked to reframe shared equity as a third option between renting and traditional homeownership. The effort created a collective understanding that shared equity presented an opportunity instead of a restriction by allowing buyers to build



equity while keeping the home permanently affordable.

That community and stakeholder education created the conditions to launch Prairie Roots Community Land Trust. A \$50,000 strategic planning grant from the initiative funded a focused board retreat that aligned priorities, deepened shared equity knowledge across leadership, and produced a strategic plan with clear unit targets and governance goals.

Established as a subsidiary of NWL with its own tripartite board, including

homeowners, community development professionals, and crossover members from NWL's board, Prairie Roots was designed to leverage NWL's existing development capacity rather than build a parallel infrastructure from scratch. NWL builds homes and sells them to Prairie Roots, which holds the ground lease and stewards the portfolio. Instead of having to raise its own development capital or maintain a separate construction operation, Prairie Roots can focus on long-term stewardship, homeowner support, and portfolio management.

The result: Prairie Roots has grown to more than 40 permanently affordable homes in the three years since delivering its first home, with a goal of reaching 75 resale-restricted units by 2027.

"If Prairie Roots was on its own, trying to develop its own capital and its own financing and subsidy sources, we'd maybe have one or two homes at this point...now we have this longstanding organization that we're taking that capacity and using it to feed this land trust model."

CHARLIE WESCHE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, NEIGHBORWORKS LINCOLN

Solving the Policy Problem: Becoming the State's First Tax Educators

A subsidized home is only as affordable as

"If Prairie Roots was on its own, trying to develop its own capital and its own financing and subsidy sources, we'd maybe have one or two homes at this point...now we have this longstanding organization that we're taking that capacity and using it to feed this land trust model."

its total carrying cost. NWL could reduce the purchase price of a home through the community land trust, but if homeowners were then taxed as though they owned a market-rate property, the affordability NWL had worked to create would disappear when the first tax bill arrived.

Through Nebraska's property tax code, resale-restricted homes were assessed at full market value under standard tax rules, despite being sold at significantly below-market prices. Buyers of shared equity homes faced tax bills reflecting a value they could never realize through resale. If the tax burden could not be resolved, the entire model would be financially unworkable.

Because Prairie Roots was the first resident-led, citywide community land trust in the state, NWL was not simply requesting a policy fix; it was teaching state tax assessors what a community land trust is, how resale restrictions work, and why standard market-value assessment fundamentally misrepresents what a shared equity homeowner actually owns.

NWL and consultant Julie Brunner engaged directly with state legislators and tax officials to make that case, ultimately securing a critical amendment that exempted resale-restricted properties from traditional market-value assessments. The change was integrated into a broader state tax bill addressing income-restricted properties, which eased its path through the

legislature. Had it failed, the entire shared equity model in Nebraska would have been in jeopardy.

Instead, the result is a policy framework that did not exist before NWL built it, a framework that benefits not just Prairie Roots but every community land trust that follows in Nebraska.

Scale, Leadership, and a Statewide Ecosystem

In addition to creating a path for 40 families to achieve generational wealth and paving the way for many more, the results of NWL's investment in training and capacity building extend well beyond building homes. As a best practice in long-term stewardship, Prairie Roots sends homeowners annual letters updating them on their home's current resale value under the CLT formula, building transparency and reinforcing trust in the model over time. Partnerships with the Lincoln Housing Authority and for-profit developers have also extended the program's reach into higher-opportunity, higher-cost neighborhoods that traditional affordable housing development rarely penetrates.

Perhaps most significantly, NWL has become a resource for other organizations navigating the same path. Wesche presented at the 2026 NeighborWorks Training Institute in Chicago, sharing lessons from the early planning phase. Organizations in Omaha and across the NeighborWorks

network have sought NWL's guidance on governance structures, resale restrictions, and development models. The knowledge that NWL built with NeighborWorks America's support is now flowing outward into a broader shared equity ecosystem.

Looking Ahead

The initiative positioned NWL to receive a recent NeighborWorks America grant to join a cohort exploring New Markets Tax Credits and other innovative financing mechanisms for shared equity programs. The goal is for the organization to move from niche developer status to realizing between \$2 million and \$20 million in new capital for shared equity housing.

Training helped make that possible. Specific, practical, hands-on support allowed a motivated organization to move from concept to competency, navigate Nebraska's tax assessment policy as the state's first resident-led, citywide community land trust, educate a community, and build a subsidiary land trust now positioned to reach 75 homes and beyond.

"Everything that we've done has really started from the NeighborWorks America investment," said Wesche. "We've learned, we've established, we've grown, and now Prairie Roots on its own has multiple funders. It really stemmed from NeighborWorks America's commitment and their involvement in getting that shared equity initiative passed.



Initiative Overview: How We Designed for Impact

NeighborWorks® built the initiative around a rigorous assessment of where the shared equity housing field stood in 2019, key challenges and opportunities, and what kind of support would create the most durable growth.

What the Field Needed

The work began with a broad scan of the shared equity housing landscape. NeighborWorks found that organizations across the country were drawn to these models. Residents in rapidly changing neighborhoods were hungry for alternatives to disinvestment and displacement, and local governments and funders were searching for tools that could guarantee long-term affordability.

The field had plenty of interest, but it lacked infrastructure.

Before designing its response, NeighborWorks engaged with leaders in the shared equity field, identifying what national partners like Grounded Solutions Network and ROC USA already offered, so that the initiative's resources would be additive rather than duplicative. That scan shaped where NeighborWorks chose to invest: in its training infrastructure, national network of nearly 250 organizations, and the community-engagement orientation many of those organizations already brought to their work. These strengths complemented, rather than competed with, what already existed in the field.



Gaps the Initiative Was Designed to Close

KNOWLEDGE

Most practitioners and stakeholders, including policymakers, lenders, and real estate professionals, had limited familiarity with shared equity models and how they work in practice.

IMPLEMENTATION CAPACITY

Shared equity programs are complex. The legal structures, financing mechanisms, community engagement strategies, and stewardship responsibilities required to run them were beyond the reach of most interested organizations.

CAPITAL

Shared equity programs require significant upfront investment and on-going stewardship funding. There are no national financing programs dedicated to for-sale affordable homeownership. Without mission-aligned capital, viable programs stalled.

EVIDENCE

Few programs had systematically evaluated resident outcomes or community-level impact, which is the data most needed by residents, funders, and policymakers to build confidence in the model.

RURAL-SPECIFIC SUPPORT

Rural shared equity programs face a distinct set of challenges, including fewer resources, more constrained markets, and a greater reliance on preserving existing housing rather than developing new units.

A grant program alone could not close these gaps. They required a coordinated, multi-layered strategy that could build knowledge, strengthen organizations, align partners, and develop the financing tools needed to move from concept to permanent affordability.



MAKING AN IMPACT

How a Charlottesville Partnership Scaled Homeownership

Piedmont Housing Alliance (PHA) and Piedmont Community Land Trust (PCLT)

IMPACT AREA:

Capacity Building (Primary),
Capital Strategy

FUNDING:

FY22 Innovation Grant (\$50,000),
FY23 Production Grant (\$500,000),
FY24 Planning Grant (\$50,000)

OUTCOMES:

Built community trust through sustained neighborhood engagement and demonstrated a replicable developer-partnership model that keeps inclusionary zoning units permanently affordable.



For these models to succeed over time, organizations must build the internal systems, leadership alignment, and community relationships required to sustain them. That work is less visible than development, but it determines whether shared equity housing remains viable and responsive to community needs.

The Shared Equity Housing Initiative invested in building that long-term capacity, and Charlottesville, Virginia, shows what that investment can produce when an organization uses each grant to build a different piece of the foundation.

A growing university population, new investor-driven acquisitions, and rising land values have caused Charlottesville's housing market to tighten in recent years. For Piedmont Housing Alliance (PHA) and the Piedmont Community Land Trust (PCLT), the Shared Equity Housing Initiative allowed them to address that pressure by building the organizational capacity, partnerships, and financial agility to compete in a fast-moving market.

A Partnership Built to Last

Prior to formalizing their partnership in 2018-2019, PCLT had existed as a board-only nonprofit with modest output, while PHA brought more than 40 years of homeownership experience, a deep network of community relationships, and the development infrastructure that a young land trust would take years to build on its own. The partnership combined those assets,

allowing PCLT to maintain its independent identity with funders and the community while drawing on PHA's financial and operational capacity to deliver at scale.

NeighborWorks® America's investment helped propel the partnership into practice.

"It was actually NeighborWorks funding that was the catalytic key investment that really allowed this partnership to flourish," said Sunshine Mathon, executive director, Piedmont Housing Alliance. "We were a little bit more of a hope and a dream at that time. So it was crucial."

Building Trust Before Building Homes

Shared equity housing works only if communities trust it, and that trust must be earned over time through direct relationships.

A Shared Equity Housing Initiative planning grant funded a community engagement coordinator embedded in one of Charlottesville's neighborhoods most affected by rising housing costs. The position represented a sustained investment in the



relationship-building that makes shared equity housing legible and desirable to the families it is designed to serve.

As a result, skepticism gave way to interest, and families who had been unclear on what a community land trust was began to understand the model. The pipeline of prospective buyers grew.

“The planning grant really changed the game for us in how we’re getting over that mistrust of the model,” said Mathon. “We’ve built the relationships, and we have way more trust in the community than we did two, three years ago. Now we need to match that with the financial capability to follow up on that trust.”

Innovation as Risk Capital: Proving a Policy Could Work

Charlottesville’s surrounding county had long required developers of larger residential projects to set aside a share of homes for below-market sale. The policy was designed to keep new development accessible to working families, but in practice, the requirement often failed to produce its intended result. Without a reliable nonprofit partner

positioned to purchase the designated units and resell them quickly to income-qualified buyers, developers frequently saw the units revert to market rate, and the policy’s affordability goals went unmet.

An Innovation grant from the Shared Equity Housing Initiative gave PHA and PCLT the flexible capital to take on the risk of piloting a different approach: partnering directly with a for-profit developer to purchase the set-aside units at the point of construction and place them

permanently into the land trust. The grant functioned as risk capital for an unproven strategy, and PHA’s established reputation, built over four decades, gave PCLT the credibility to bring a private developer to the table.

The pilot worked. By demonstrating that a strong, capitalized nonprofit partner could reliably absorb and resell set-aside units, PHA and PCLT showed that the county’s inclusionary zoning policy could function as designed by preserving affordability rather than reverting to market rate. The model has since informed how the partnership approaches developer relationships more broadly, including new partnerships in neighboring counties.

One byproduct of that same grant period was the development of a closing-cost assistance program, created to address a barrier the partnership identified among first-time buyers: even with an affordable purchase price, many buyers lacked the liquid savings to cover closing costs and down payments. The forgivable loan program, providing up to \$7,500 per buyer, has helped more households clear that final hurdle into homeownership.

Capacity That Created Agility

Investing in community trust and proving the developer-partnership model created the foundation, but scaling required the financial agility to act quickly. In Charlottesville’s fast-moving market, the window to acquire a property before it was sold to a market-rate buyer could close within days.

“The production grant was catalytic in allowing us to respond to an opportunity, whether it was an acquisition of land, new construction, or a home that came up for sale, we wanted to be able to get it before it got flipped.”

SUNSHINE MATHON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PIEDMONT HOUSING ALLIANCE

Traditional funding cycles — the grant applications, approval processes, and layered financing they required — moved too slowly to capture those opportunities.

THE GRANT BUILT THE FINANCIAL RESERVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE THAT MADE RAPID RESPONSE POSSIBLE.

Production grant funding from the Shared Equity Housing Initiative provided flexible, deployable capital that PHA and PCLT could draw on without waiting. “The production grant was catalytic in allowing us to respond to an opportunity, whether it was an acquisition of land, new construction, or a home that came up for sale,” said Mathon. “We wanted to be able to get it before it got flipped.”

The grant built the financial reserve and organizational infrastructure that made rapid response possible. That capacity to act quickly, consistently, and across different project types drove the portfolio’s growth from 12 to 55 permanently affordable homes.

The partnership also expanded its reach through PHA’s Financial Opportunity Center (FOC), which co-locates financial coaching, housing navigation, eviction prevention, and employment services. In a pilot project, rehabbed duplexes were offered first to residents engaged through the FOC and community partners, and four out of five homes were sold to neighborhood residents.

Looking Ahead

PHA and PCLT are now pursuing the next phase of growth through expanded developer partnerships, a private fundraising campaign targeting flexible unrestricted capital, and a pending national grant application aimed at amplifying the developer partnership model regionally and statewide. Partners including Greenwood Homes in Charlottesville and Atlantic Builders, connected through Habitat for

Humanity and local projects, are extending the shared equity portfolio into new geographies and building types, including new construction townhomes and middle-housing developments designed to improve economic viability at smaller scales.

The primary challenge ahead is capital rather than organizational. Rising construction costs have intensified the subsidy required to keep homes affordable for buyers at or below 80% of Area Median Income. “We have all the proofs of concept we need and we have the right ingredients in with the partnership and our relationships like NeighborWorks®. What we need now is more investment in capital, funding, and resources to scale up”, said Luis Oyola, director, Piedmont CLT.”

What PHA and PCLT have built, however, positions them to make the most of every dollar available. With clearer governance, deeper community relationships, a proven developer-partnership model, and a growing pipeline of buyers, the partnership that began as “a hope and a dream” is now a demonstrated model for how shared equity housing can take root, scale, and sustain itself in a community.



Designed to Meet Organizations Where They Are

The initiative recognized that shared equity housing capacity does not develop in a single step. Organizations move through stages, from awareness to exploration, from planning to implementation, and from implementation to innovation, requiring different levels of support at each stage.

NeighborWorks® designed the initiative to support that full progression, rather than funding only those organizations already positioned to produce units.

“Having multiyear funding from Congress presented a unique opportunity to spread these models throughout the network,” said Paul Singh, vice president, Community Initiatives, NeighborWorks America. “It provided flexibility to work over an extended timeframe with organizations that were newer to shared equity, as well as partner with those with more experience.”

The result was a deliberate “ladder of capacity,” incorporating a structured continuum of grants, technical assistance, and training calibrated to each organization’s needs.

Movement through this ladder can take time, and the initiative was designed with that reality in mind. Organizations typically need three to five years to move from an initial feasibility grant to a completed unit, which allows the time required for internal organizational change, cultivating local funders and partners, and for the development process itself once a model is chosen. NeighborWorks is unique among funders in its willingness to invest on that timescale, treating the early stages of exploration and relationship-building as legitimate, fundable work rather than overhead to be minimized.

Not every organization that received a feasibility grant went on to launch a program, which was also by design. In several cases, an organization used its feasibility grant to determine that shared equity housing was not the right fit for its market at that time, or that they

THE RESULT WAS A DELIBERATE “LADDER OF CAPACITY,” INCORPORATING A STRUCTURED CONTINUUM OF GRANTS, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, AND TRAINING CALIBRATED TO EACH ORGANIZATION’S NEEDS.



Ladder of Capacity

FIELD BUILDING

Technical assistance partnerships, a national Consultant Development Program, and evaluation grants strengthened the broader infrastructure. Expanding the pool of expertise available to the field generated the evidence base needed to build broader investment.

EXPLORATION

Feasibility grants of \$25,000 helped organizations assess whether shared equity housing was right for their market and community before committing to implementation. Many organizations that later became strong shared equity practitioners started here.

PLANNING & LAUNCH

Planning grants of \$50,000 supported organizations ready to implement, providing deep technical assistance, model documentation, community engagement support, and peer partnerships with established practitioners.

SCALE & INNOVATION

Production grants of \$250,000-\$500,000 supported network organizations close financing gaps and produce new units, while Innovation grants of \$50,000 helped experienced organizations test new approaches. These investments lead to network organizations deepening and expanding their work, converting rentals to cooperatives, using New Markets Tax Credits for shared equity, preserving homeownership through CLT enrollment, and developing ground-lease models for multifamily development.



were best positioned to lend their capacity as a partner for an existing program. Reaching that conclusion early, before committing further resources, was itself considered a successful use of the grant.

Through this structure, early-stage organizations could engage without being left behind, and experienced organizations could push the boundaries of what shared equity housing looks like in practice. It also allowed the initiative to grow the field rather than just serving those already in it.

“We’re patient, thoughtful partners and thought partners with our organizations,” said Eileen Anderson, senior director, Northeast Region, NeighborWorks America. “We’re not looking for the quick win. What we’re looking for is to really change how our field is able to adapt and grow.”

That patience has paid off in practice. Some organizations that completed early feasibility work and chose not to move forward immediately returned years later, once their internal capacity or local conditions had changed, ready to pursue shared equity development directly. The space to step back, regroup, and re-engage on their own timeline, rather than losing access to support after a single funding cycle, has been part of what makes the model durable.

GRANTMAKING, TRAINING, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, PEER EXCHANGE, AND EVALUATION WERE INTEGRATED FROM THE START, EACH REINFORCING THE OTHERS, AND TOGETHER CREATING A SYSTEM OF SUPPORT THAT NO SINGLE INTERVENTION COULD REPLICATE.

A Layered Strategy

The most important structural decision NeighborWorks made was to build the initiative across divisions rather than within a single program office. Grantmaking, training, technical assistance, peer exchange, and evaluation were integrated from the start, each reinforcing the others, and together creating a system of support that no single intervention could replicate.

This cross-divisional design is what separates the Shared Equity Housing Initiative from a conventional grant program.

Grants Opened Doors. They allowed organizations to take the first step toward shared equity housing without absorbing all the risk themselves.

Training Built The Knowledge Base. NeighborWorks developed and delivered courses specifically focused on shared equity housing models. The curriculum was designed from the ground up for practitioners navigating CLTs, LECs, ROCs, and deed-restricted programs. More than 500 practitioners participated.

Technical Assistance Translated Knowledge Into Action. Every grantee had access to experienced shared equity consultants who provided direct support, in addition to what the grant itself provided. For organizations working through the complexity of a new program, this access was often the difference between stalling and succeeding.

Peer Exchange Distributed Expertise At Scale. Peer match grants paired emerging organizations with established ones, funding the staff time required for genuine knowledge transfer. These relationships accelerated decision-making in ways that formal consulting could not replicate because they connected organizations facing the same questions in similar markets.

“Having a peer-to-peer possibility, being a part of this cohort, meeting regularly and discussing these topics provided folks confidence,” said Leon Gray, senior relationship manager, Midwest Region, NeighborWorks America.

Evaluation Built The Evidence Base. Seven formal evaluations, conducted in partnership with NeighborWorks’ Success Measures social enterprise, documented resident outcomes across health, financial security, quality of life, and community connection. This rigorous, resident-centered, and publicly available evidence is now part of the case every shared equity practitioner makes to funders and policymakers.

Together, these elements created a field-building system. An organization that received a grant also received training and technical assistance. The completed training connected it to a peer network. The peer network exposed it to evaluation findings that sharpened its own program design. And the program it built became, in turn, a resource for the next wave of organizations entering the field.



OVER FIVE ROUNDS OF CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATIONS TOTALING \$12 MILLION, THE INITIATIVE'S REACH GREW NEARLY THREEFOLD, FROM ROUGHLY 30 NEIGHBORWORKS NETWORK ORGANIZATIONS AT LAUNCH TO A NETWORK NOW ACTIVE IN EVERY REGION OF THE COUNTRY.

Reach

Over five rounds of congressional appropriations totaling \$12 million, the initiative's reach grew nearly threefold, from roughly 30 NeighborWorks network organizations at launch to a network now active in every region of the country. Those organizations represent communities ranging from urban neighborhoods facing gentrification and displacement to suburban areas navigating rapid growth to rural communities with limited resources for affordable housing.

For the vast majority of these organizations, NeighborWorks' involvement was foundational, from a community land trust in Nebraska that did not exist five years ago to a resident ownership model in Montana now reshaping how an entire state finances permanently affordable housing.

These outcomes happened because NeighborWorks seeded exploration of the models and continued supporting organizations as they moved from implementation to scale.



MAKING AN IMPACT

The Right Capital Strategy Builds a Montana Resident Ownership Model

NeighborWorks Montana (NWMT)

IMPACT AREAS:

Capital Strategy (Primary),
Capacity Building

FUNDING:

FY20 Innovation Grant (\$50,000),
FY20 Planning Grant (\$50,000),
FY23 Production Grant (\$500,000),
FY24 Planning Grant (\$50,000)

OUTCOMES:

Leveraged capacity building and capital grants to test and scale a new model for housing preservation in Montana.



Organizations may have the knowledge, partners, and community support to move forward, but without financing structures that align with shared equity approaches, projects stall before they begin. Traditional lending frameworks are not designed for permanently affordable housing, and the capital required to make these models work is often more complex than conventional development.

Addressing that constraint was central to the Shared Equity Housing Initiative.

Montana is not a state most people associate with a housing crisis. But in 2024, the National Association of Realtors named it the least affordable state in the country, reflecting a reality that low- and moderate-income Montanans have been living with for years. Home prices have climbed well beyond what most working families can afford. Rental vacancy rates hover near zero in cities like Missoula. And the older apartment buildings and manufactured housing that have long provided stable, lower-cost options are increasingly targeted by investors betting on appreciation rather than affordability.

As an affordable housing leader and innovator for more than 25 years, NeighborWorks Montana (NWMT) has developed expertise in resident-owned manufactured housing communities as a Certified Technical Assistance Provider (CTAP) in the ROC USA Network. Its track record gave the organization deep knowledge of cooperative

governance, resident engagement, and the long-term stewardship that makes community ownership work.

The challenge was capital. Shared equity housing, particularly the hybrid CLT-cooperative model NWMT was developing for multifamily properties, required financing structures that traditional lenders were not designed to provide.

The Shared Equity Housing Initiative helped close that gap by providing the specific investments that made each stage possible:

- flexible pre-development capital to build the legal and financial frameworks;
- subordinate debt that filled the gap left by conventional lenders;
- and technical assistance connections that gave NWMT access to the expertise needed to move their plans forward



Building on What Worked: From ROCs to Multifamily Cooperatives

NWMT came into the Shared Equity Housing Initiative with a strong foundation. Through its statewide partnership with community land trusts and its long-standing ROC program, NWMT had developed the systems, partnerships, and organizational expertise to help manufactured housing residents purchase and govern their communities. That program had produced a statewide network of resident-owned communities and a deep understanding of the governance and maintenance that cooperative ownership requires in practice.

The initiative allowed NWMT to leverage that existing capacity and extend it into new territory: multifamily apartment

buildings, where generational ownership transitions were creating acquisition opportunities before investors moved in. The model NWMT developed, Home for Good, combines community land trust ownership of the land with cooperative resident ownership of the buildings. It preserves affordability permanently through the CLT structure while giving residents direct ownership stakes and democratic control over their homes.

Translating a proven manufactured housing model into multifamily cooperative ownership required new legal frameworks, new financing structures, and new partnerships with community land trusts equipped to provide long-term stewardship.

“The NeighborWorks America money gave us some runway to build these systems and

do the exploration and pay our staff to do all that research and outreach,” said Kaia Peterson, executive director, NWMT. “Without that kind of very flexible capital for innovation and planning and scale, we wouldn’t have been able to do that work.”

Proving the Model

NWMT’s first multifamily cooperative conversion, the Wolf Avenue project, created a replicable system that every subsequent project could build on. SEH funding covered the pre-development costs that conventional lenders wouldn’t finance because the deal had not yet proven it could close.

“We couldn’t have established this model without that support because we needed that first-in capital to prove the first one,” said Peterson. “And that’s what it did. We used that money to do the pre-development, to work with an attorney, to build the partnerships, and then ultimately to finance the first deal. And that then showed us we could do it. And then we could do the next one and the next one.”

They built on the Wolf Avenue project’s success with the River Rocks Cooperative, a 14-unit property in Missoula. The development brought together a layered capital stack that included subordinate debt from NWMT, supported in part by SEH funding that allowed NWMT to function as a gap lender, filling the 35% of the capital stack that conventional financing cannot fund. The capital stack also included a primary loan from a local credit union, public investment through the Missoula Housing Trust Fund, and additional grant funding for environmental assessment and planning.

The Gibbon Avenue Cooperative then followed the first two, leveraging more than \$3 million from state financing, local housing funds, philanthropic investments, and community-based funding.

The Capital Breakthrough: Montana’s Board of Investments

As individual projects closed, NWMT recognized that the long-term sustainability of the model depended on a dedicated capital

“We couldn’t have established this model without that support because we needed that first-in capital to prove the first one...and that then showed us we could do it. And then we could do the next one and the next one.”

KAIA PETERSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NEIGHBORWORKS MONTANA

product that could support resident-owned communities at scale.

A final planning grant from the Shared Equity Housing Initiative helped fund the transition from pilot to program. Working with the Montana Board of Investments, a state agency that administers financing for economic development projects, the grant supported loan programs for Montana governments and administers financing for affordable housing development, the grant supported NWMT in helping to design and advocate for a new financing program specifically structured for resident-owned communities and multifamily cooperatives. The negotiation required persuading a state financing body to adjust its standard underwriting criteria by moving combined loan-to-value ratios from 75% to over 100% and debt coverage ratios from 1.25 to 1.05 to reflect the realities of permanently affordable housing rather than market-rate investment.

The result is a program with an initial \$9 million pool that will grow by about \$2 million annually in dedicated capital for resident ownership across Montana.

NWMT's ability to drive that policy outcome was a direct product of the track record, technical credibility, and demonstrated model that gave state officials the confidence to create something new.

How the Model Works in Practice

The operational structure NWMT has developed distributes responsibility in ways that reflect each partner's strengths. NWMT serves as lender and technical supporter, providing the financing expertise, pre-development capital, and deal-structuring capacity that most community organizations cannot build internally. A statewide network of approximately seven community land trusts provides local stewardship, resident engagement, and ongoing governance support. Residents lead property management and cooperative operations, supported as needed but fundamentally in charge of their own communities.

"The community land trust stewardship model was really a fantastic fit," said

Peterson. "They're well connected in their communities, well established, and have the capacity to do this work."

Resident engagement is built into the acquisition process from the beginning. NWMT targets at least 60% resident participation before a deal closes, ensuring genuine community investment in the outcome rather than passive acceptance of a transaction made on their behalf.

The network has also provided peer knowledge and direct referrals that accelerate learning and prevent the costly mistakes that come from working in isolation.

NeighborWorks® America's network gave NWMT direct access to practitioners who had already navigated the legal, financial, and governance challenges it was encountering for the first time.

"I want the person who knows all the people and knows the industry and can help me have shortcuts — not spinning my wheels, not making the same mistakes," said Peterson. "I get that within the NeighborWorks network and the direct referral resource within this program."

Looking Ahead

NWMT is now projecting acquisitions of 25 units in FY26 and 50 in FY27. The growth was made possible by the capital

infrastructure, partner network, and replicable model built over the past several years.

The challenges ahead include rising property prices driven by investors who can absorb losses that an affordability-focused model cannot, and the continued scarcity of the flexible, subordinate capital that makes up roughly 35% of the ideal financing stack.

The SEH initiative, however, positions NWMT to compete for properties and close deals at a pace and scale that would have been unimaginable before the model existed.

"Shared equity really preserves that housing stock and that opportunity long term," said Peterson, "and has all of these other benefits that you can't get in other housing types."

Across Montana, residents are now collectively owning and governing the places they live and making decisions about maintenance, improvements, and long-term affordability that were once made for them by landlords and investors. The capital strategy helped make it possible and created a model that other communities, facing the same pressures and the same gaps in traditional financing, can now follow.



Outcomes: What We Built and What It Produced

Across the four pillars — case making, training, capacity building, and capital strategy — the Shared Equity Housing Initiative expanded a field with the knowledge, organizational infrastructure, financing tools, and reach to deliver permanently affordable homeownership at scale.

The numbers tell an important story

600⁺

Practitioners completed professional development training



115

Grants and service awards

Network organizations doubled their shared equity portfolios



102

NeighborWorks® network organizations engaged with the Shared Equity Housing Initiative since 2019

1,213

New shared equity homes produced by grantees over 6 years

\$135 MILLION

Leveraged in additional capital by grantees

7

Evaluations provided network organizations insights on resident outcomes across health, financial security, quality of life, and community connection



Building a Movement

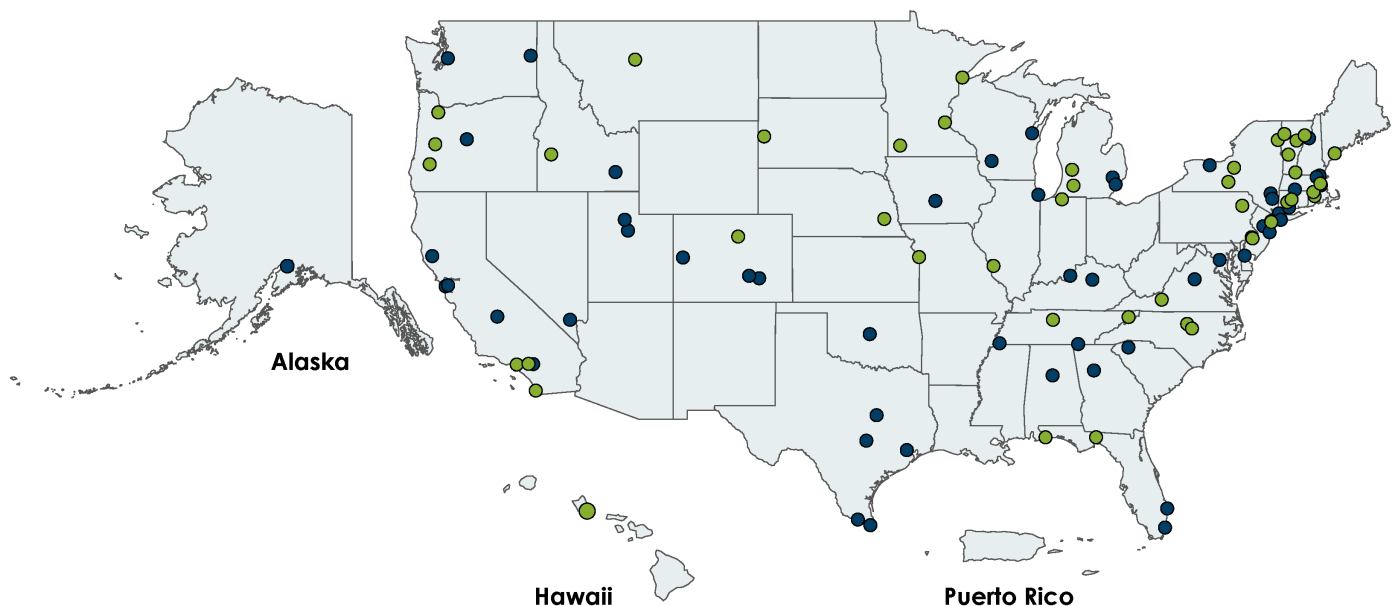
That impact doesn't stop at the edge of NeighborWorks' direct investment. In Kansas City, Kansas, NeighborWorks relationship manager Leon Gray has watched the ripple effects of one organization's work extend well beyond the initiative's funding.

"Because of the work that the local organization has done here, there are other folks in the community that are interested, and there are probably two or three other shared equity models that

have been started just based on what Build WyCo has done," said Gray. "We've had a lot of local folks interested, regionally as well. So it's organically spread — not that we're funding any of it, but the model and the technical assistance that this program has provided are something that has really benefited the organizations."

At the end of that arc, in every case, is a family with a home they could not otherwise have had, and a stake in their community that will outlast them.

● Initiative Engagement ● Shared Equity Portfolio





MAKING AN IMPACT

Vermont's Forty-Year Proof That Permanent Affordability Works

Champlain Housing Trust (CHT)

IMPACT AREAS:

Cross-cutting impact: case making, training, capacity building, capital strateg

FUNDING:

FY20 Innovation (\$50,000), FY22 Production Grant (\$500,000, FY23 Peer Match & Planning Grants (\$60,000), FY24 Innovation Grant (\$50,000), TA Partnership Grant (multiple years)

OUTCOMES:

Expanded the scale at which a field leader could build locally, while continuing to share expertise to support shared equity growth across the country.



Shared equity housing cannot launch and succeed through any single intervention.

It requires awareness to build support, training to develop expertise, organizational capacity to sustain the work, and capital to bring projects to life. When any one of these elements is missing, progress slows. When they are aligned, shared equity housing becomes possible and lasting.

The most significant outcomes of the Shared Equity Housing Initiative emerged where these elements came together.

Some organizations are pursuing plans for what shared equity housing can become. Champlain Housing Trust (CHT) demonstrates what it looks like when it has been sustained for more than four decades.

CHT's origins trace back to 1980s Burlington, Vermont, where a coalition of residents, advocates, and city officials came together to protect working-class neighborhoods from the displacement and gentrification that were already reshaping the city. The solution they built was radically simple: if you permanently remove land from the speculative market, you permanently protect the housing on it. Every home developed or managed by CHT would remain permanently affordable.

That founding conviction, backed by consistent support from Burlington city government and Vermont state programs, gave CHT the political and financial foundation

to grow. A 2006 merger with a multifamily rental developer expanded its reach beyond Burlington into a multi-county service area and brought it into the NeighborWorks® network. Today, CHT operates one of the largest community land trusts in the country, with a portfolio of more than 700 permanently affordable homes and a model that practitioners across the nation regularly seek out to understand and replicate.

"CHT always had strong partners in state and local government throughout our history, and this support from government comes up all the time in talking to new groups about the importance of building relationships," said Michael Monte, CEO, CHT.

The organization had already proved that the concept of shared equity housing was possible. Through the Shared Equity Housing Initiative, it produced acceleration through new home production at a



scale CHT had not attempted since 2008, updated stewardship systems built for a portfolio that had grown well beyond its original infrastructure, and innovations in access and lending that are expanding who shared equity homeownership can serve.

Production at Scale: 46 Homes, \$22 Million Leveraged

Northwest Vermont's housing market is not unaffordable because of rapid speculative development but because people genuinely want to live there. Strong demand and limited supply have pushed vacancy rates down and prices up in ways that make market-rate solutions insufficient on their own. Subsidized development is both essential and expensive.

A \$500,000 production grant from the Shared Equity Housing Initiative gave

CHT the catalytic capital to move forward on two major shared equity homeownership developments: Butternut Grove in Winooski and Bay Ridge Condominiums in Shelburne. Together, these projects delivered 46 permanently affordable homes, which were all quickly reserved and sold, demonstrating that demand for shared equity homeownership in the region is real and sustained.

In a financing landscape where most funds come with heavy restrictions and specific allowable uses, the NeighborWorks investment helped cover gap costs and bridge financing timelines. That flexibility allowed CHT to leverage the grant into more than \$22 million in total development funding across the two projects.

"The funding is amazing," said Monte. "It allowed us to build 46 new homes and

keep them permanently affordable. By bringing the price down at initial sale, those funds remain with the home and so they'll be there for future buyers."

The production also represented something meaningful internally. CHT had not built new homeownership units at this scale since 2008. The initiative provided expansion momentum.

"This opportunity to build at scale was really a boost and enabled us to do more," said Monte.

Stewardship: The Work That Happens After the Sale

Building permanently affordable homes is the beginning of the commitment. CHT's model has always recognized that long-term affordability depends on what happens to homeowners and properties in the years and decades after purchase, and that sustaining a portfolio of more than 700 homes requires systems.

A stewardship grant from the initiative allowed CHT to modernize those systems in ways the organization's growth had outpaced. The work began with a visual survey of the entire single-family portfolio, assessing property conditions, identifying maintenance gaps, and guiding targeted outreach to homeowners who might need support before small problems became large ones.

From there, CHT developed a comprehensive stewardship manual and a suite of online tutorials and video resources explaining resale processes, homeowner responsibilities, and how to navigate the shared equity model over time. The goal was to make it easier for homeowners to understand their ownership and responsibilities and how CHT can help.

The results included more homeowners arriving at resale ready and informed. Reselling homes at affordable prices to the next generation of buyers became smoother and faster.

"We're now selling 30 or 35 homes a year, recycling homes every year," said Julie Curtin, director of homeownership, CHT.

"The funding is amazing, it allowed us to build 46 new homes and keep them permanently affordable. By bringing the price down at initial sale, those funds remain with the home and so they'll be there for future buyers."

MICHAEL MONTE, CEO, CHAMPLAIN HOUSING TRUST

“Making sure that the next property owner has a better home to come to and ensures a better experience for everyone at the resale.”

CHT also maintains a reserve fund for major repairs when homeowners cannot cover the costs themselves, yet the backstop has been rarely needed, reflecting the effectiveness of proactive stewardship rather than reactive intervention.

Expanding Who Shared Equity Can Serve

A portfolio of 700 homes and a decades-long track record also create the organizational credibility and relationship infrastructure to innovate by identifying gaps in who shared equity housing is reaching and building new tools to close them.

Two recent innovations reflect that capacity.

The first addresses a barrier that CHT identified through direct community feedback: Muslim households in the region wanted to pursue shared equity homeownership but could not access conventional

mortgages that conflict with Islamic principles around interest. CHT worked with a local credit union and the Islamic Society of Vermont to develop a Sharia-compliant mortgage product. The process required regulatory review and deep community trust. The product has recently launched, with early underwriting activity underway.

The second addresses closing costs. Even when shared equity homes are priced affordably, the upfront costs of purchase can put homeownership out of reach, particularly for households who have had fewer opportunities to accumulate savings. CHT introduced a \$25,000 forgivable loan program to cover those costs, funded through a combination of credit union partnership and philanthropic investment. The program has meaningfully increased access to homeownership, and the benefits that come with it, for people from historically disadvantaged groups. Future iterations will extend the focus to renters and public housing residents, building longer, supported pathways into homeownership from further back in the housing journey.

A Model for the Field

CHT’s scale and history give it a particular role as a resource in the shared equity housing ecosystem.

The organization’s legal documents and ground lease frameworks, refined over decades of use, have become de facto national templates, sought out by new shared equity programs across the country building their own systems.

“Our legal documents are the basis for a lot of community of practitioners just by virtue of having developed the tools early on and used them repeatedly to work out the kinks,” said Monte.

That knowledge-sharing role is an expression of CHT’s mission, which was supported through TA Partnership grants from the initiative. If permanently affordable homeownership is going to become a real option at scale across the country, the organizations building new programs need access to the hard-won learning that CHT represents.

The limiting factor for many organizations, however, is not model readiness. It is resources.

“If there was funding for a shared equity program to scale in the United States, we would be just like, let’s go! We’re ready,” said Monte.

CHT and its partners are already working toward that future with plans to expand shared equity homeownership development statewide through partnerships with local Habitat for Humanity affiliates and NeighborWorks organizations, building a pipeline of homes in communities across Vermont that have the demand but not yet the supply.

The Shared Equity Housing Initiative contributed the production funding that brought 46 more families into permanent homeownership, the stewardship investment that strengthened the systems sustaining almost 700 more, and the signal to lenders, state agencies, and philanthropic partners that shared equity housing at scale is a practice proven for over 40 years and ready to grow.



Looking Ahead: Positioned for What's Next

Funded as a catalyst, the Shared Equity Housing Initiative helped elevate shared equity models across the NeighborWorks® network, deepening the field and significantly extending its reach and impact.

When this initiative launched in 2019, shared equity housing was understood by a relatively small community of practitioners and advocates. Many NeighborWorks organizations were curious about these models but lacked the knowledge, tools, or partners to pursue them. Financing structures were not aligned with shared equity needs. Technical expertise was concentrated in a handful of established organizations. The field, while promising, was still emerging.

The Shared Equity Housing Initiative succeeded in galvanizing the NeighborWorks network.

In Lincoln, Nebraska, a new community land trust now stewards more than 40 permanently affordable homes, meaning 40 families have the stability of homeownership not only for themselves but also for the children and grandchildren who will inherit that same opportunity. In Charlottesville, a partnership that grew its portfolio from 12 homes to 55 has kept dozens of families in neighborhoods they might otherwise have been priced out of, with the security of a fixed, predictable housing cost instead of a lease that can be raised or ended at a landlord's discretion. In Montana, a resident ownership model has turned renters at the mercy of absentee owners into homeowners with a direct vote in their own community's future, supported by a new state financing program that could provide \$9 million in dedicated capital that will grow by about \$2 million annually. And in Vermont, one of the largest community land trusts in the country added 46 more families to permanent homeownership this year alone, even after four decades of work, because the need in their community still outpaces what they've built.

Instead of isolated wins, these are the connected products of a coordinated field-building strategy that met organizations where they were and supported them across the full arc from exploration to scale.

Today, more than 100 NeighborWorks organizations have explored, adopted or partnered to enhance shared equity housing models. New community land trusts have been established in communities that had none. Resident-owned communities have been preserved and strengthened. Families in cities, suburbs, and rural areas are building wealth through homeownership that would not have been accessible to them before. The organizations, systems, financing tools, and practitioner expertise developed through this initiative are not going away. They represent a permanent addition to the field.



LEARNING FROM AN ORGANIZATION THAT HAD ALREADY NAVIGATED THE SAME CHALLENGES, IN A SIMILAR MARKET, WITH SIMILAR CONSTRAINTS, ACCELERATED DECISION-MAKING IN WAYS THAT CONSULTANT ADVICE ALONE COULD NOT REPLICATE.



What We Learned

Lessons learned since 2019 with grantees, partners, and participants across the network now guide what comes next:

Meet organizations where they are and give them room to grow.

The initiative's "ladder of capacity" approach, offering feasibility, planning, production, and innovation support calibrated to organizational readiness, was consistently identified as one of its most effective design elements. Organizations that began with early-stage feasibility grants launched programs, and programs that launched with planning grants expanded. The flexibility to engage at the right level of readiness was what enabled the field to grow.

For policymakers and funders, multi-stage, flexible funding structures that support the full lifecycle of shared equity development produce more durable outcomes than one-time production grants alone.

Peer learning is technical assistance.

Organizations consistently cited peer exchange, through both structured cohort learning and direct peer-match partnerships, as among the most valuable supports they received. Learning from an organization that had already navigated the same challenges, in a similar market, with similar constraints, accelerated decision-making in ways that consultant advice alone could not replicate.

This finding has implications for how the field structures support going forward. Peer networks are a core mechanism for distributing widespread expertise.

Capital strategy is the constraint that determines whether everything else scales.

Financing presents a barrier to organizations, even when they have the knowledge, partners, and community support to implement shared equity housing. Shared equity models often don't fit neatly within traditional lending frameworks, and the capital required to make them work is frequently more complex than conventional development.

This initiative made meaningful progress in demonstrating what is possible with flexible, layered financing. But the financing gap remains the single largest constraint on growth. Expanding the capital tools available to shared equity practitioners, including mission-aligned lending products, public funding mechanisms, and philanthropic first-loss capital, is the highest-leverage investment available to the field right now.

Shared equity framing resonates across communities when it is local and specific.

Shared equity housing builds support when it is presented in concrete, localized terms. A community land trust that keeps homes in Charlottesville affordable for teachers and first responders is a solution to a problem that community members recognize, rather than an abstract idea. A resident-owned community in rural Montana is tangible. It is not a housing theory; it is the reason that a family's home is secure.

The initiative demonstrated that shared equity housing resonates across geographies and political contexts when its advocates speak in terms of local conditions, specific households, and concrete outcomes.

The Work Continues

The four pillars of the Shared Equity Housing Initiative, case making, training, capacity building, and capital strategy, provide a roadmap for how continued investment by NeighborWorks® and other partners can shape the future of homeownership and housing affordability.



CASE MAKING remains essential as shared equity housing continues to expand into new markets and engage new audiences. Continued investment in research, policy documentation, and field communication ensures that decision-makers at every level understand the value of permanent affordability and can act on it.



TRAINING can be expanded to reach more practitioners, more deeply, including through the development of certification pathways that create a durable professional infrastructure for shared equity practice. More shared equity housing content is also being integrated into existing housing counseling and development training, increasing field-wide exposure to these growing models and building a broader, more diverse pipeline of practitioners equipped to do this work.



CAPACITY BUILDING will remain the connective tissue between knowledge and execution. As more organizations move from exploration to implementation, the demand for organizational development support, leadership training, and peer exchange will only increase.



CAPITAL STRATEGIES represent the clearest opportunity for transformative impact. Every dollar invested in flexible, mission-aligned capital for shared equity housing is a dollar that will continue to produce affordable homes and pathways to homeownership for decades to come.

Building on the success of the initiative, NeighborWorks will continue to use its national platform to disseminate the models, connect practitioners to resources, and support the shared equity field as it grows. This is especially critical as the need for permanently affordable homeownership is greater now than it was when this initiative began.



THIS INITIATIVE DELIVERED CAPACITY. MORE THAN 100 ORGANIZATIONS IN THE NEIGHBORWORKS NETWORK – OR 40% – HAVE LEARNED ABOUT SHARED EQUITY HOUSING, DEVELOPED THE SYSTEMS TO SUSTAIN IT, OR ENGAGED AS A PARTNER TO GROW IT.



The Enduring Impact

This initiative delivered capacity. More than 100 organizations in the NeighborWorks network – or 40% – have learned about shared equity housing, developed the systems to sustain it, or engaged as a partner to grow it. As of Q1 2026, 46 network organizations are reporting 5,546 units across 28 states, with a projected pipeline of over 1,600 units to be developed through 2028.

The initiative delivered infrastructure through training curricula, financing tools, evaluation frameworks, peer networks, and a consultant development program that will continue producing expertise long after the grant period ends.

It delivered proof that shared equity housing works, that residents benefit, that communities are strengthened, and that the investment required to permanently preserve affordability is far less than the cost of subsidizing it over and over again.

And the initiative delivered reach. It served households in cities, suburbs, and rural communities across every model type from a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances. Communities in states from Vermont to Montana, from North Carolina to New York, and from Colorado to Tennessee will continue to benefit from the Shared Equity Housing Initiative's enduring impact.

The shared equity housing field is stronger, more capable, and more widely distributed than it was when this initiative launched. But this is just the beginning. The organizations that have built

THE QUESTION OF WHETHER SHARED EQUITY HOUSING WORKS HAS BEEN ANSWERED WITH A RESOUNDING YES. NEIGHBORWORKS IS COMMITTED TO CONTINUING TO MAKE THE CASE, BUILD CAPACITY, OFFER TRAINING, AND STRATEGIZE ON ACCESS TO CAPITAL TO HELP MEET THE DEMAND.

shared equity programs through this work will continue to develop homes, steward communities, and serve families for decades to come.

The question of whether shared equity housing works has been answered with a resounding yes. NeighborWorks is committed to continuing to make the case, build capacity, offer training, and strategize on access to capital to help meet the demand.

The returns, for families and communities across the country, will compound for generations.



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