



LINCOLN INSTITUTE
OF LAND POLICY

The Legacy Cities Community of Practice

2023–2024

[Legacycities.org](https://legacycities.org)



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Introduction



The **Legacy Cities Community of Practice** is an 18-month program that brings together interdisciplinary teams from four cities to gain deeper understanding of local land use issues and implement solutions through place-based projects in disinvested neighborhoods.

The program will focus on equity, greening, network building, data, and metrics, and it will provide participants with the opportunity to join a growing network of legacy city community and government leaders working to create an equitable revitalization.

Through a combination of virtual workshops and three in-person convenings, the teams will have access to:



Background



Legacy Cities Initiative

[The Legacy Cities Initiative](#) is a national network of community and government leaders working to create shared prosperity and bring attention to the common needs and collective importance of legacy cities.

The initiative promotes sustainable and equitable revitalization by convening stakeholders, facilitating the exchange of ideas and practices, and researching and advancing new policy approaches.

Check out our [Comparative Cities Map](#) to explore over 100 legacy cities across the United States.



Why Legacy Cities?

Legacy cities have been at the center of some of America's most historic achievements, and they possess a strong civic spirit and culture of innovation at a time when these qualities are most needed.

These cities offer growth potential not only for families, businesses, and communities seeking a stable future—but also for the country as a whole. However, their process is often hindered due to a lack of capacity or access to resources.

Change makers in legacy cities are tackling the **hardest challenges** we face today:

Stubborn
housing
shortages

Inadequate
transportation
infrastructure
and systems

Deep racial
disparities

Economic
inequities

The climate
crisis

Community of Practice

In 2021, the first Legacy Cities Community of Practice was launched to provide participating cities the opportunity to build on the research, resources, and network of the broader Legacy Cities Initiative through facilitated shared learning.

The 2021–2022 program included three teams from legacy cities that worked to offer their communities:



Akron,
Ohio



Small business
preservation and
entrepreneurship
support



Dearborn,
Michigan



Community
listening sessions
to understand the
residents' needs



Trenton,
New
Jersey



Conversion of
vacant properties
into community
gardens

Community of Practice Continued

How is this program unique?

This program convenes a group of legacy city leaders committed to equitable recovery, and its inclusion of both community and local government leaders stands out from traditional convenings that limit participation to one or the other.

Interdisciplinary

The Community of Practice prioritizes an interdisciplinary cohort because we believe that no single sector can realize transformative change alone.

Peer-supported

While guest experts will work with the cohort, we know that participants themselves bring incredible expertise to the community, and they will work together to help advance each city's project and exchange ideas.

Locally engaging

A project coordinator will offer direct support to each place-based project and complete a final report describing the development and implementation of the project at the end of the program.

Program Description: 2023-2024



Program Overview

Over the course of the program's 18 months, each participating city will either gain a deeper understanding of a local issue or implement a solution through a **place-based project**.

Each City Team will work with each of four Community of Practice Program Faculty and use their areas of expertise to help advance their projects.

Examples of project ideas include:

research to understand vacancy rates in a particular neighborhood
community organizing and/or events to engage residents in the policy issue
racial equity training for city staff, members of a neighborhood coalition, and other partners
enacting participatory budgeting
supporting small, minority-owned, or women-owned businesses
stabilizing residential neighborhoods
repurposing office, retail, or industrial facilities

Program Expectations

Each month there will be a combination of:

- **Workshops:** Lessons from faculty and visiting faculty on stabilizing and growing legacy cities
 - **Team check-ins:** One-on-one meetings with a mentor using their expertise to help further develop the team's project
 - **Team presentations:** Online events to discuss progress and next steps with all city and program teams
-
- Each team should expect to dedicate five hours each month to meetings, peer exchange, and mentorship, plus additional time spent working on the preparation and implementation of their project.
 - As the program evolves throughout the 18 months, meetings and interactions will decrease to allow more time and focus on the implementation of the projects.

Program Development

The program will be divided into four main phases:



Lesson Themes

The program will engage in conversations that focus on four main themes.

Equity

How can social equity be at the forefront of our revitalization efforts?

Greening

How can we address our cities' land use issues, such as economic development, climate, and brownfields?

Network Building

How can we engage with and extend substantive invitations to community members, civic and business leaders, and community foundations?

Data and Metrics

What are useful ways to measure our progress and growth? What are creative ways to visually communicate to our audience the developments of our project?

Program Goals

Throughout the course of the program, each City Team in the Community of Practice will have the opportunity for the following:

Develop a deeper understanding of addressing social and racial equity in their community

Identify green strategies that can help their city reverse patterns of environmental inequities

Recognize how to build and sustain relationships with power brokers

Advance their knowledge of using data to relay key messages to diverse audiences

Learn from national and faculty experts and forge lasting working relationships with similar legacy city leaders

Undertake a new approach to a long-running issue that addresses spatial inequalities

Program Support Team

Program Faculty will share their expertise with the participants as they seek to address tough challenges around equitable revitalization in their places.

- Bernadette Onyenaka, Principal, O+G Racial Equity Collaborative
- Carlos Delgado, Global Partnerships Manager, Clear Impact
- Charles Cross, Director of Landscape Architecture, Detroit Collaborative Design Center
- More program faculty to be announced

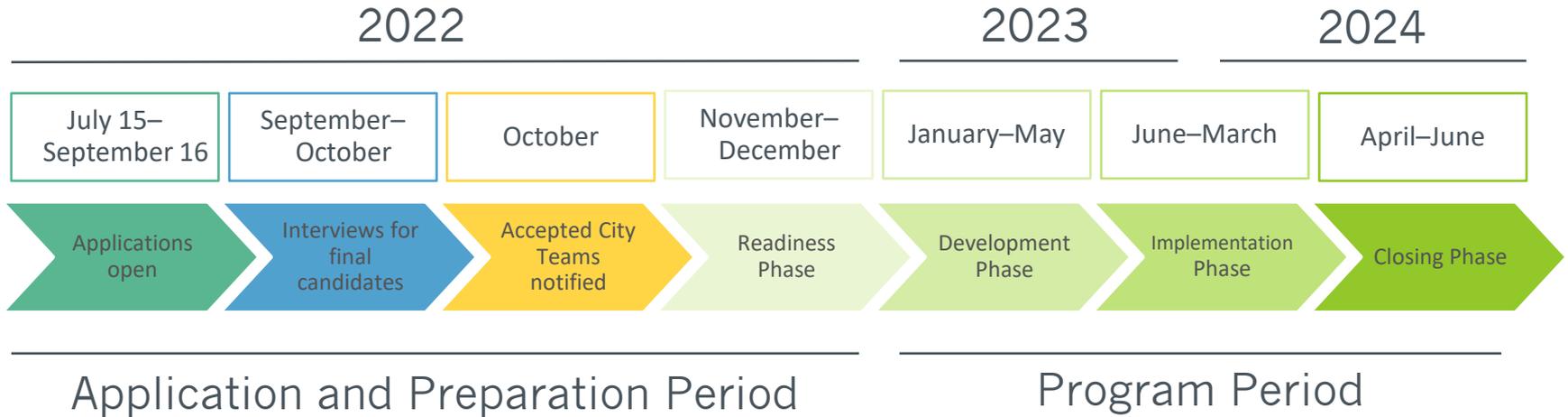
Program Staff will facilitate monthly meetings, recruit guest experts, research policy ideas, manage communications and the learning network, and generally support participating city teams and faculty.

- Libertad Figueroa, Policy Analyst, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
- Daniel Janzow, Research Assistant, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

Application Guidelines



Application Timeframe



How to Apply

We seek **legacy cities** that:

- have a population of at least 50,000;
- have sustained a decline of at least 20 percent from its peak historic population level; and
- have a poverty rate higher than the national average.

We also welcome applications from self-identified legacy cities that may not explicitly meet all these criteria.

We seek **City Teams** that include:

- a coalition of city staff and community and civic leaders that are poised to work together on a policy issue;
- leaders with the power to enact change within their cities; and
- leaders who are open-minded and interested to learn how other communities approach problems, and who are interested in sharing their experiences with peers from other cities.

How to Apply

How do I form a City Team?

We believe that coalitions of city staff and community and civic leaders are needed to drive positive change in legacy cities. As such, we suggest that each city identify a team that includes four senior-level decision makers.

Each team should include:

1. At least one leader from a **nonprofit community-based organization**
2. At least one person from **within city government** (likely someone from the mayor's office or a head of a department such as planning, economic development, housing, or community development)

Other team members *could* include:

- a leader from the county or another governmental entity;
- a leader from a local or regional community foundation or CDFI; or
- a leader of a local institution such as a hospital or university.

How to Apply

How do I select an appropriate project?

We seek projects that address the Lincoln Institute's Reduced Poverty and Spatial Inequality goal through a land issue-related, place-based project.

Through this goal, we aim to increase access to the resources and opportunities that communities and people need to thrive, especially for those who have been historically denied access.

The Legacy Cities Initiative has addressed this goal through proven [strategies](#) that strengthen and grow legacy cities and serve as a broad base for future projects

**Note: The Readiness Phase of the project is meant to provide additional support on developing a strong framework for a team's project idea.*

Application Questions

The following questions, available through the [online application](#), are meant to provide an understanding of the community you wish to serve and the project you want to develop.

A. Contact Information

1. Full Name (first, last)
2. Pronoun(s)
3. Email
4. Preferred phone number
5. Address (city, state)
6. Job title
7. Organization

B. Tell us about your project

1. What neighborhood in your community will be the focus of your project and why? Please provide a brief statement explaining your selection.
2. While projects will ultimately be selected after discussion with resident leaders, you likely already have some idea of what the neighborhood needs. What idea(s) do you want to address throughout the 18-month program?

C. City Teams Formation

1. We believe it is important when creating change that members of communities under focus lead the conversation. We encourage City Teams to comprise a coalition of city staff and community and civic leaders who are poised to work together on a policy issue, along with leaders who are powerful enough to make things happen within their cities, but able to focus on this project for a few hours a month.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

Application Questions Continued

D. Additional Information

1. By completing this application, I agree to be available for Readiness Phase of the program, November 2023–January 2024 and the 18-month program duration, January 2023–June 2024. Please review the program and application guide for details of the program phases.
2. COVID permitting, there will be three in-person convenings in different cities, to be determined, throughout the program. Are you able/comfortable to travel or do you prefer to log on virtually to the events?
3. We understand that some cities may have limited resources but the most to gain by participating in our program. Do you have reliable access to the internet for our virtual workshops, check-ins, meetings, and presentations or do you need accommodations?
4. Do you need any additional support that may benefit your team in the development of your project and the neighborhood you are serving?
 - Graphic design and visual representation;
 - GIS analysis and mapping;
 - Writing skills;
 - Facilitation skills;
 - Project design, planning, and management skills;
 - Event planning skills;
 - Second language skills;
 - Social media and community outreach skills; and
 - Experience working with diverse community members.

Application Questions Continued

D. Additional Information

5. Would you need any special accommodations throughout the program? Please describe.

6. How did you hear about the Legacy Cities Community of Practice?

Legacy Cities website

Legacy Cities newsletter

Lincoln Institute of Land Policy website

Social media

Former Community of Practice member

Friend or Colleague

7. The Legacy Cities Initiative at the Lincoln Institute offers other programs and resources to provide legacy cities with tools and information that addresses common issues that legacy cities face. Would you be interested in receiving this information when it becomes available?

Contact

- If you have any questions or need help completing the application, please contact Libertad Figuereo, Policy Analyst and Program Lead for the Community of Practice, at, lfiguereo@lincolninst.edu.
- If you want to learn more about other projects, publications, or resources that are useful to your community, visit legacycities.org or [sign up for our Legacy Cities mailing list](#).

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An aerial night photograph of a city, showing a dense grid of streets and buildings illuminated by lights. The sky is dark with some light clouds. The city lights create a warm, golden glow against the dark background.

Finding Answers in Land



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