



Community Land Trusts 101

California
community
land trust
network

*Tues, January 20, 2026
12-1pm PT*

Presenters:



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Community Land Trusts 101

We will be exploring

What is a community land trust?

Why are communities turning to this model today?

How are CLTs organized, governed, and sustained?

Where do CLTs work and at what scale?

Who are key stakeholders to partner with?

What about resources?

What can I do?

Poll: What best describes you?

Community member, nonprofit staff, CLT staff/board/resident, funder, government, developer, other?

Why?

Our present is shaped by the past ... control over property ownership has been a tool used to oppress Black and Brown communities throughout the United States' history. Need strategies that **place people over profit** to begin reversing historical harms and building a more equitable future.

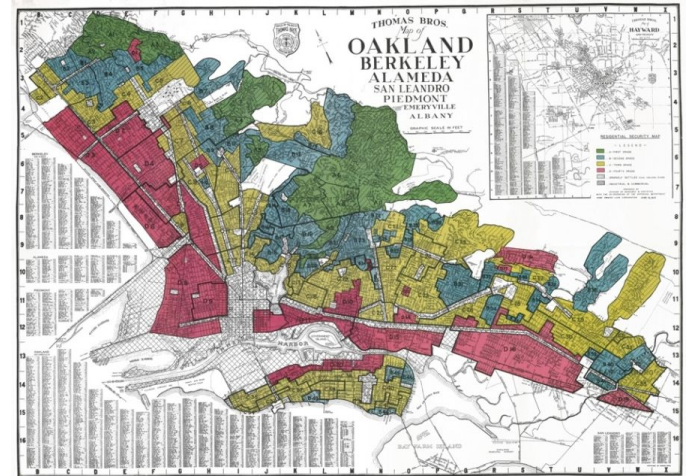


CA Tribal Lands

Source: <https://native-land.ca/>



Sharecropping



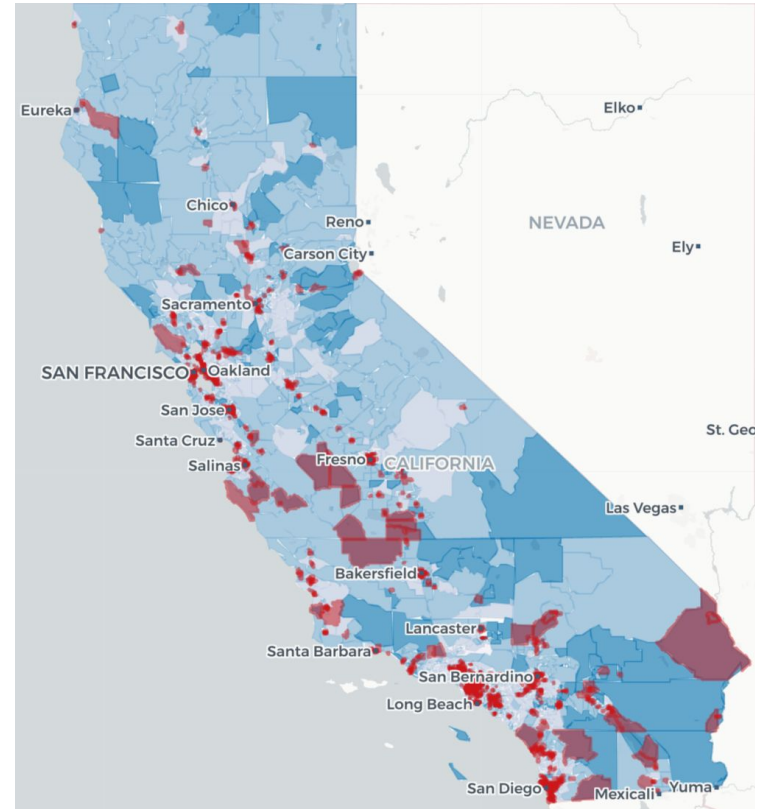
East Bay Redlining Map - 1930s

Why?

Housing cost burden by CA ethnic group



Source: California Budget and Policy Center, 2018 American Community Survey



Displacement Risk Map.

Source: UC Berkeley Urban Displacement Project

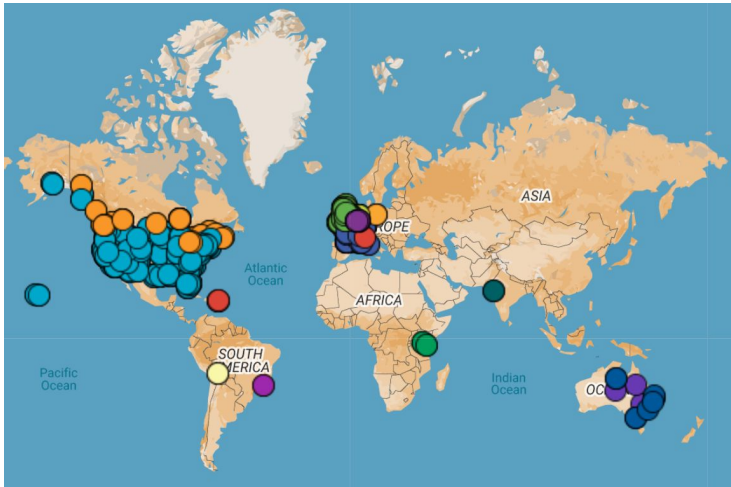
Why?

Community ownership and CLTs are strategies for sustaining and our low-income and BIPOC communities

- ✓ Resisting displacement by creating stable, affordable housing opportunities
- ✓ Establishing grassroots, democratic control over neighborhood decision-making
- ✓ Providing services and facilities that the market will not

What is a Community Land Trust? Origins

Building on cooperative ownership strategies from around the world



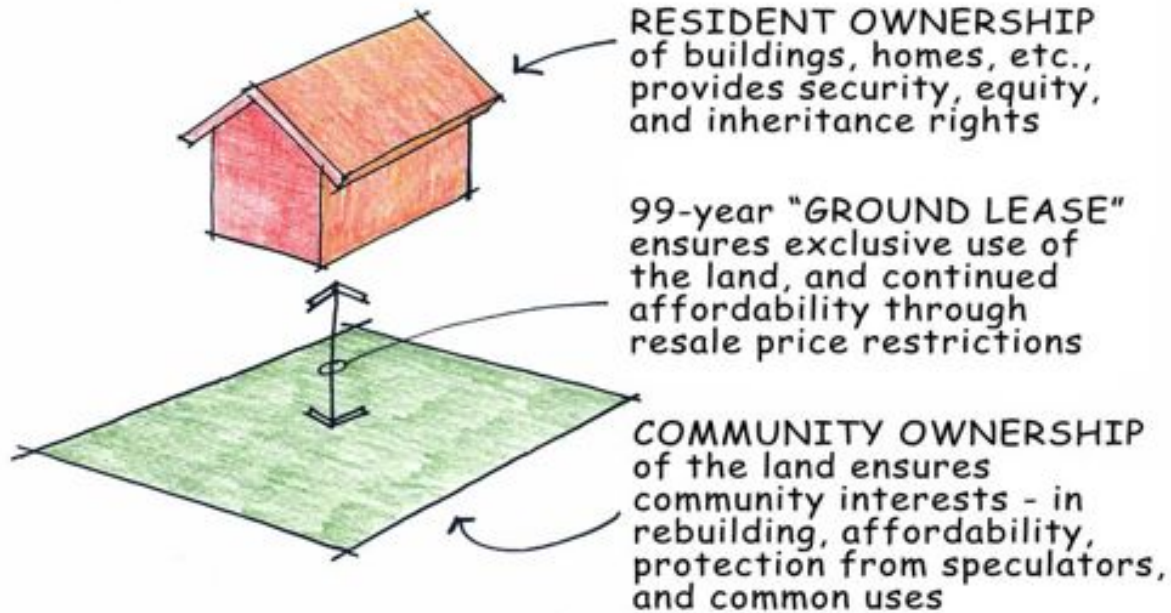
Global map of CLTs curated by the International Center for Community Land Trusts [\(link\)](#)



The New Communities Inc.
*5,735 acres



What is a Community Land Trust?



CLT: Housing Models

RESIDENT CONTROL OF BUILDINGS

**SINGLE-FAMILY
HOME**



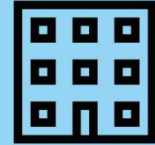
**LIMITED EQUITY
HOUSING COOPERATIVE
[LEHC]**



CONDOMINIUM



**MULTIFAMILY
RENTAL**



99 YEAR GROUND LEASE

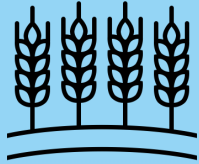
COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP OF LAND



CLTs: Non-Housing Models

Beyond Housing

**Urban
Agriculture**



**Small
Businesses**



**Open
Spaces**



**Community
Spaces**

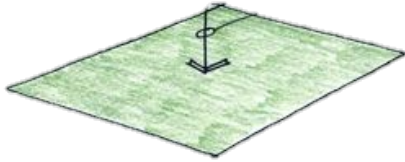


99 YEAR GROUND LEASE

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP OF LAND



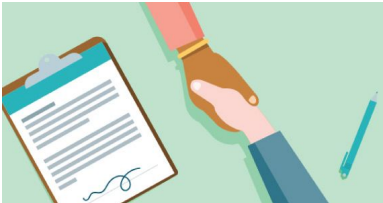
Split Ownership



CLT's retain ownership of land, enabling them to serve their communities across decades.

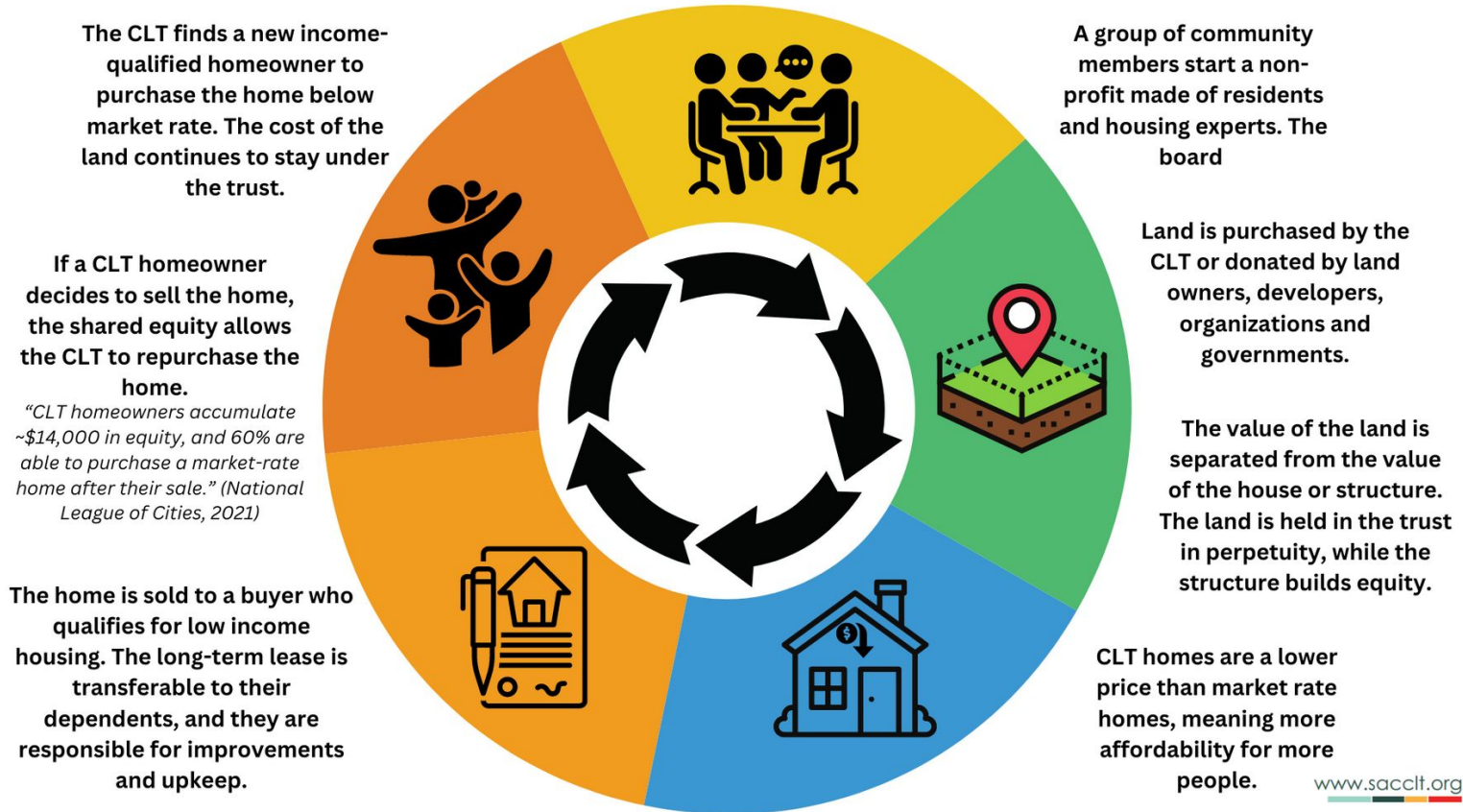


The “improvements” (aka whatever is on the land – often housing) is owned separately.



A “ground lease” lays out the mutual responsibilities of the CLT and the owner of the improvements, legally ensuring that both will upkeep their commitment to permanent affordability for low-income people

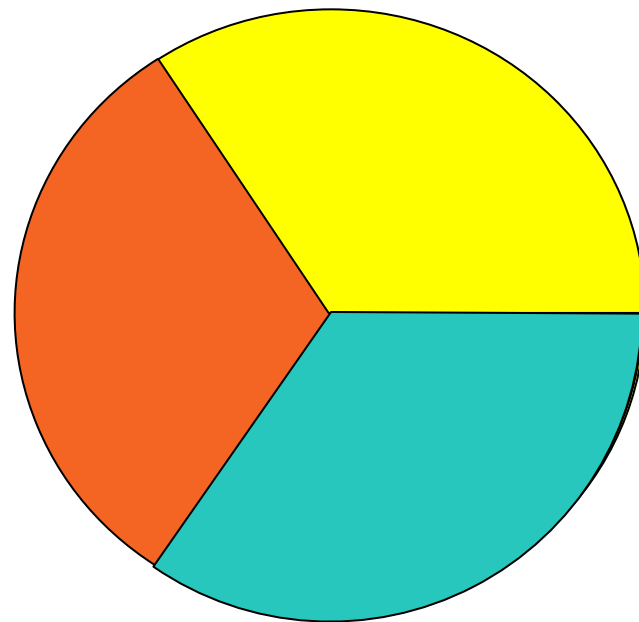
How CLTs Work



How? – Community Control

Residents and community members guide their CLTs through membership structures and 3 part boards:

- CLT Residents
- Community members
- Public (community of interest) representing the public interest and/or bringing community development expertise



Many CLTs have 1/3 of each category, but there are many variations, and startup CLTs often don't have residents for some period.

Navigating the Jargon

Community Land Trust

*Affordable Housing as a Primary
(though not exclusive) Focus*

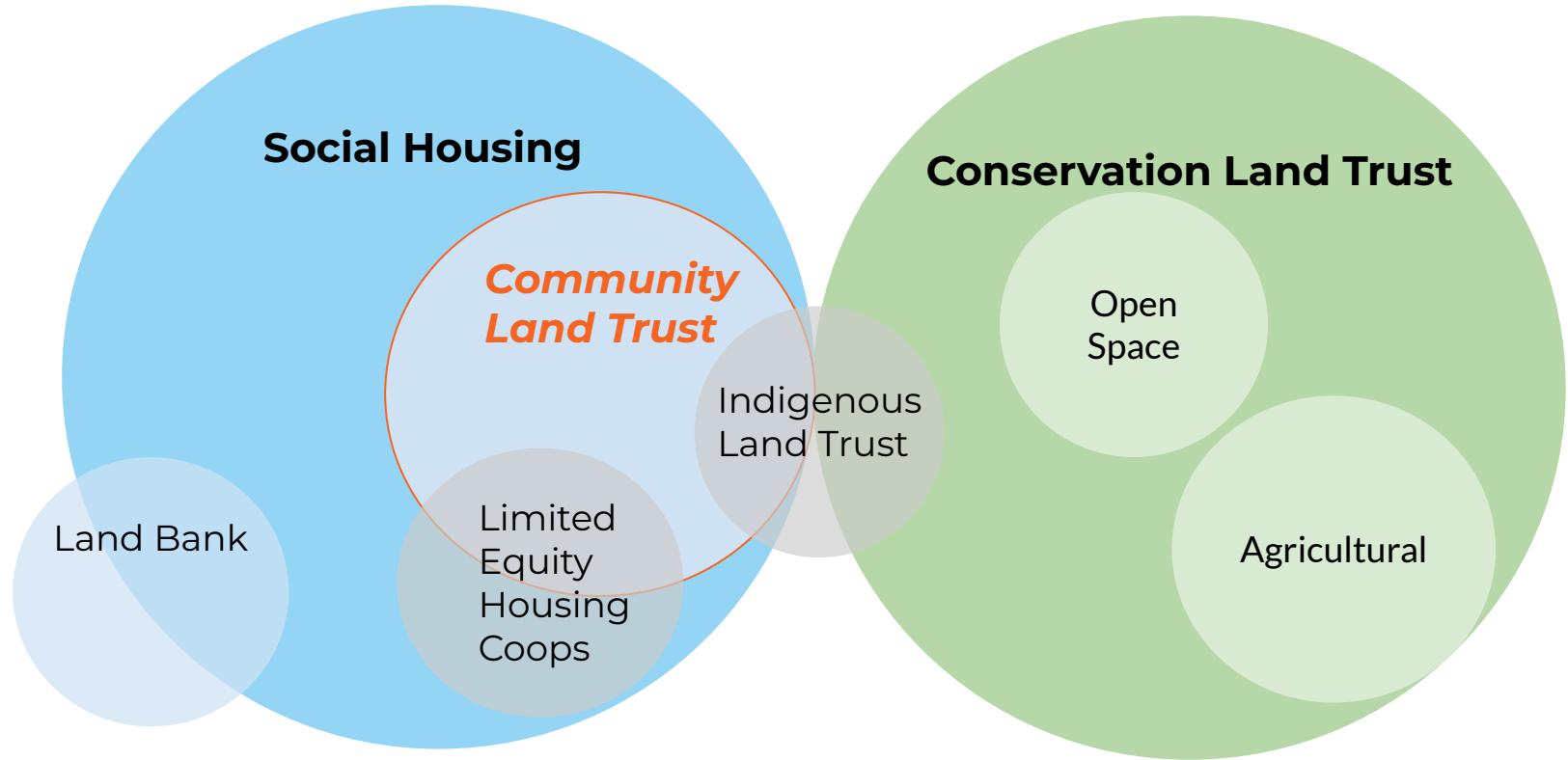
Conservation Land Trust

*Not about Affordable Housing; ag
and open space = primary focus*

Navigating the Jargon



Navigating the Jargon



Poll: What stage are you at in
exploring/developing a CLT?

vaguely curious, actively forming a CLT, already affiliated or partnering with an
existing CLT

CLTs in California



How? – Community Control + CLT Governance

No One Way to Do It!

- Membership org vs non-membership org
- Incubated by a nonprofit
- Transitions towards resident governance
- Incubated by public agencies



Examples

Non-membership org: South Tower CLT

Membership org: TRUST South LA

Nonprofit incubation: Long Beach CLT

Transitional board: Sacramento CLT

Incubated by public agencies: Bakersfield CLT

How? – Stewardship

Stewardship = Support Services + Monitoring and Enforcement

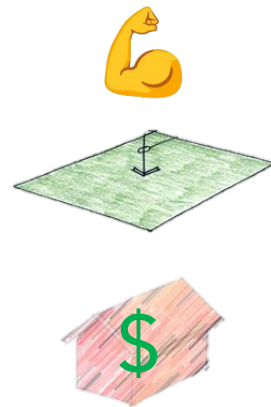
- ✓ Financial counseling
- ✓ Foreclosure prevention
- ✓ Community organizing
- ✓ Resource pooling
- ✓ Occupancy requirements
- ✓ Rent and resale restrictions
- ✓ Property maintenance
- ✓ Ability to intervene in emergencies

Goal: the long term stability, affordability, and financial wellbeing of both buildings and their residents

What about Resources?

Eventually, every CLT needs

- Operating funds to support staff and administration
- Land to build or grow on
- Financing to acquire, build and/or rehab the land & improvements



What about Resources?

CLTs have found a number of different sources

- **Government:** state, city, and county housing programs, public land dispositions
- **Philanthropy:** through donations and gift in kind
- **Low cost financing** from banks and nonprofit lenders; bargain sales
- **Program revenue** through service delivery (e.g. from offering housing counseling services)
- **Operating revenues** (e.g. from rental properties, membership fees, developer fees)
- **Other:** Crowdsourcing capital campaigns; property donations

Where?

Depending on their goals and opportunities, CLTs can work at various scales from a slice of a neighborhood to a whole region.

Dudley Neighborhood Initiative CLT properties in the Dudley Square neighborhood



Our Communities

While most community land trusts are concentrated in a single neighborhood, Elevation CLT has the flexibility to serve any community in Colorado where families are at risk of displacement.

Who?

There isn't one way to start or grow a CLT

Any combination of these populations of interest can and do partner to launch and sustain CLTs

- ✓ Tenants and neighborhood activists
- ✓ Community based organizations
- ✓ City or regional government
- ✓ Existing CLTs
- ✓ Nonprofit affordable housing developers



CLT-CDC Partnership in LA



Tenant-CLT Partnership in Pinole



County-CLT Partnership in Sonoma

Considerations for Starting or Growing a CLT

STAFFING - **No One Way to Do It!**

- Volunteers and board do the work
- Hire a community organizer to start
- Borrow staff capacity from an existing CLT, CDC, or other nonprofit



Examples

Volunteer Led: Mt. Tam CLT, CommonSpace,
Liberty CLT

Organizer Led: Eden CLT, Chinatown CLT

Shared Staffing: PAHALI, LA CLT Coalition

Roadmap for Starting or Growing a CLT



Source: Grounded Solutions

California Community land trust network

- 50 CLTs in 25 counties
- 1,650+ units of housing
- Over 3,500 residents
- 75% BIPOC residents



Programs:

Policy & Advocacy

Curriculum

Community Building

Technical Assistance (TA)



Resource Library



Programs Support CLTs at various stages

- **Incorporation:** Legal TA, letters of support to city council
- **Acquisitions:** Real Estate & Business Planning TA
- **Regional and Statewide Policy Advocacy with CLT members:** e.g., Jan 2025 LA wildfire legislation, Community Anti-Displacement & Preservation Program (CAPP)
- **Toolkit and Guide publications:** asset management, partnerships toolkit, collaborations with local government resources + **joint research with partners**
- **Convenings, Working Groups & Committees:** highlight local CLTs and partnerships, skill building, workshops & resource sharing

Stay connected!

- Sign up for monthly newsletter



Qs: info@cacltnetwork.org

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Questions?

Feedback survey

Thank you!

Contact info@cacltnetwork.org