

An Affinity Group of the Connecticut Housing Coalition

connecticut **EMERGING LEADERS** network annual **REPORT** **2016**



ELNMission

To shape the future of housing and community development in Connecticut by engaging, cultivating and learning from the next generation of leaders.

Letter from the ELN Chair

Marcus Smith

Scholar and internet enthusiast Clay Shirky once wrote, "we systematically overestimate the value of access to information and underestimate the value of access to each other." In a sense, this captures the importance of the Emerging Leaders Network.

For the past three years, ELN has organized over a dozen events, from fireside chats to volunteer days, each with the intention of sharing perspectives and connecting with other young professionals looking to expand their knowledge of housing and community development. We have met with folks from the foothills of Litchfield County to downtown Bridgeport. We have held panel discussions and walking tours and workshops. And each time, we have heard the same thing: now, perhaps more than ever, we need to stay connected. Now, more than ever, we need each other to accomplish this important work.

You will find a taste of what ELN has to offer in this annual report. And while we gear up for 2017, looking to tackle the topics that matter most to housing and community development professionals across the state, we will also be exploring new ways to connect—with each other and with our collective missions to help improve the lives of the people of Connecticut.



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ELN steering committee

Supportive Housing Brown Bag Lunch



In March, we launched our 2016 brown bag series. The speaker began the session by addressing many of the most fundamental issues surrounding supportive housing and how those issues influence housing production.

Additionally, attendees were provided with fundamental information regarding the mechanics of incorporating supportive housing as a component of a new development, what an ideal project looks like and how to procure and finance a project with supportive housing in Connecticut.

Following the presentation, attendees had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss other information and resources that they would like to have access to in order to complete their work.



Generations in Housing Workshop

In early spring, we held our yearly Generations in Housing workshop which explored where the housing industry has been and where it is heading. Panelists began the conversation with a thought provoking discussion on how to build affordable housing in Connecticut. They shared examples of innovative work and posed challenging questions around policy impacting housing in our state. The overall theme implored young professionals to consider their own engagement in how they can shape the housing industry.

Following the panel discussion was the signature “speed dating” session, a highlight of the Generations workshop where novice and experienced professionals had the opportunity to trade business cards and talk about their own experiences in shaping the future of affordable housing in our state.



Milestone Apartments Field Trip



In May, our first field trip of the year took us to Milestone Apartments, located in Bridgeport's East End. While exploring the mixed-use three-story development, with the building's family support staff as our guide. Attendees learned how services can be integrated into housing and engaged with a resident who expressed gratitude for all that safe, affordable housing had done for him.



After heading back to the apartment community room, and enjoying a variety of snacks and drinks, attendees heard from three housing leaders about the need for affordable housing in our state and the challenges Bridgeport faces in terms of housing and community development.

We concluded our trip hearing from two of our speakers who shared their personal stories; one related her housing journey and the other spoke of her professional path and how emerging leaders can prepare for advancement within the housing field.

Bike and Build Networking Event

At the beginning of June, ELN's steering committee met with the Connecticut to California Bike and Build team to network and learn more about the adventure they were about to embark on. Missions were shared, pizza eaten, and passions around affordable housing discussed. We ended the evening with a new insight and appreciation for the great work being done around the nation.

In order to join the team, individuals had to meet the following requirements: fundraising with a \$4500 goal, log 500 miles of cycling, buy gear that could fit into a 20 gallon bin, volunteer with an affordable housing organization and interview staff or those receiving housing services. On June 2nd, this team of about 35 individuals, ages 18-30, kicked off their cross country cycling journey by dipping their wheels into the Atlantic Ocean in New Haven, CT. Their journey led them through 15 states, ending in Half Moon Bay, California on August 15th. Along the way, they biked 4,071 miles and worked on many build sites.



Habitat for Humanity Build Day



In July, members had the opportunity to assist in building decent and affordable housing as volunteers on a Habitat for Humanity of Eastern Connecticut build site, in Norwich. While working hard to paint a foundation, and complete the finishing touches on a new back porch, members gained in depth knowledge about the great work happening to build single family housing for low- and moderate-income families in the eastern portion of the state.



While we worked, the site construction manager described the Habitat mission and told us about the family who would eventually be moving into the home. Every family who purchases a home through Habitat, at a zero percent interest mortgage, receives the keys to their house after completing many hours of sweat equity on their, or fellow Habitat families' homes, as well as attending financial literacy classes to ensure their understanding of what is required maintaining their mortgage payments and their property.

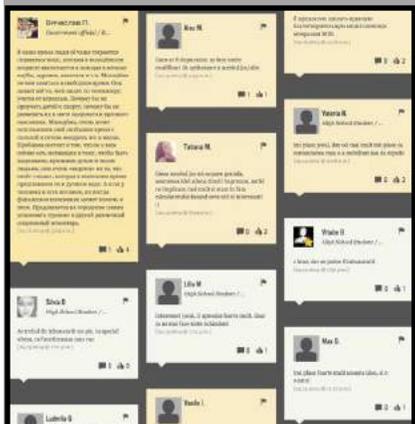
Historic Preservation Brown Bag Lunch

In late July, we hosted our second brown bag lunch with a focus on historic preservation. The presentation began with attendees learning the history behind building conservation, why so many people care about these projects and the historic tax credits that support their preservation. Additionally, they were taken through the steps by which properties are designated as historic and the application process required to receive historic tax credits, using examples from actual projects.

This generated a thoughtful discussion on how these credits have been used in the past, how they are currently helping to revitalize our communities and how they can best be used to fund affordable housing across the state of Connecticut. Befitting the topic, it was held at the Amos Bull House, one of four remaining 18th century buildings in the City of Hartford.

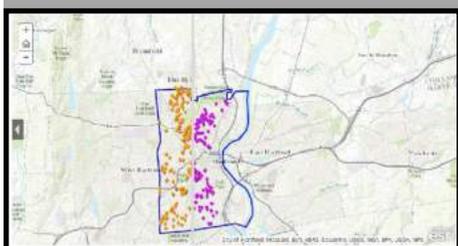


Housing Coalition Conference Workshop



It has been said that, of all the challenges we face today, the lack of affordable housing may be the hardest to fix with technology. But is that true? At the 2016 Connecticut Housing Coalition conference, the ELN hosted a workshop that introduced new techniques for identifying opportunities for investment, engaging with communities and measuring impact.

During the seventy-five minute workshop, attendees explored how games and interactive exercises can foster community participation; how to improve resident quality of life and build performance by tracking and reducing energy consumption; and how easily accessible data resources can help tell our stories to stakeholders.



The workshop highlighted how emerging leaders in housing and community development are in a unique position to bring these and other innovation solutions, to bridge gaps and change the way we interact with our communities.

Market Studies Brown Bag Lunch

In October, we concluded our annual brown bag series with a focus on market studies. The presentation began with attendees being taken through the steps of creating a formal market study that could be used for internal decision making purposes as well as shared with external funders and stakeholders.

The brown bag lunch session also featured information on the essential components of a market study and provided examples of market studies completed by nationally known firms. With an emphasis on the blending of the science behind the data and the art of defining a target area, attendees were provided with valuable information on how to critically analyze the assumptions behind the numbers and interpret the conclusions.



Energy Conservation Lab Field Trip



In November, ELN members had the opportunity to tour the Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) of New Haven's Energy Conservation Lab. During the tour, staff provided a comprehensive overview of their mission and described how the lab developed into a place of learning, inspiration, and information.

While in the lab, attendees were introduced to many green technology components, including cutting edge initiatives in sustainable products, energy efficiency, water conservation, building materials, indoor air quality and innovative design. During the discussion, attendees had the opportunity to learn and ask questions about the standards defining green building, funding availability and how this technology can be incorporated into affordable housing projects. At the end of the field trip, guests were given a parting gift of a lightbulb, as a way to highlight the lab's mission.

contactUS

Have ideas, questions or want to get involved? Want more information or to get on our mailing list? Please contact Jenna Ferguson at

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