



DIY Home Maintenance Program Has 450 Paid Members; Helps Keep Housing Stock in Shape

Interest rates are up, contractors are hard to find, and households in middle neighborhoods need help to repair, maintain and update their homes. For more than 50 years, the Home Repair Resource Center (HRRC) in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, has provided accessible and affordable DIY home maintenance and repair support to homeowners, filling a critical gap in the home maintenance ecosystem.



Among the most popular programs at HRRC is the Tool Lending Library. When the Tool Lending Library began, tools were rented on an individual basis. The program now operates through a membership platform where members - 450 of them so far - pay \$25 a year to get access to over 1,000 tools and other resources. Members simply log into the portal and reserve any tool for particular dates through the online catalogue. They then pick up the tool and return it when done. The tool library is in a dedicated space at the office, and everything is labeled and stowed in specific categories. The full workshop for classes is right next door to the library.

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HRRC Programs

- Home Buyer Education Programs
- Financial Education and Counseling

- Down Payment Assistance Program
- Foreclosure Prevention
- Tool Lending Library
- Project Repair Workshop
- Home How-To Women's Only Series
- Senior Repair Program (SRP)
- Financial Assistance Programs (FAP)
- Contractor Database
- Home Repair Technical Assistance



HRRC's DIY classes help homeowners to understand their homes and do their own repairs and updates confidently. The most popular classes are focused on electrical, plumbing, basic carpentry, ceramic tile, and flooring.

HRRC will take its show on the road to other communities; classes were recently delivered at a Farmers Market. At its headquarters, classes are held in a state-of-the-art classroom with workstations set up for all kinds of projects.

[READ THE CASE STUDY](#)



We've got a new look. Our [website](#) is now housed within NCST's - here you'll find tons of middle neighborhood news and resources.

Ohio Creates a New \$200 Million Tax Credit to Develop Owned Homes

The State of Ohio created a new tax credit to promote the development of homeownership properties in its June

2023 enacted budget bill. While similar in concept to the proposed federal **Neighborhood Homes Tax Credit (NHTC)**, there are multiple differences. Both promise to make an important contribution to housing affordability and community development.



Similar to what the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit does for rental housing development, the new Ohio tax credit will help raise capital to fund gaps between project development costs and, in this case, appraised value. This should encourage the development of new owner-occupant housing (and possibly the repair of existing housing, though that is not yet clear) in neighborhoods where appraisal gaps are a disincentive. Many middle neighborhoods fit this description.

The Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) has the lead role. The departments responsible for taxation and insurance also will be involved. OHFA may reserve up to \$50 million of credit in each of four fiscal years, plus unused amounts carried forward from prior years.

For more information: [Ohio Housing Finance Agency](#) and [Novogradac](#).

Essentially, neighborhoods create and form communities. Residents share the same experiences. They suffer or revel in the availability and quality of local housing, schools, jobs, businesses, health care, and human services. Neighborhoods create the background for people's life stories.

-Ronald E. Wilson, National Institute of Justice

Meet the Middle Neighborhoods Steering Committee

We have a powerhouse of practitioners, policymakers and researchers leading the

movement on the National Middle Neighborhoods Steering Committee. With a number of new members recently joining, we thought it would be a good time to introduce all of them. We'll start with four, and introduce more in future newsletters.



Lori Feild Schwarz, AICP (Chair) - Ms. Schwarz is Director of Neighborhood Services for the City of Plano, which includes the BEST Neighborhoods, Community Services and Property Standards Divisions. She also served the City of Galveston for 12 years in multiple roles, including Interim Director of Planning and Community Development. Schwarz is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) and a Texas Registered Code Enforcement Officer.



Nedra Sims Fears (Co-Chair, Middle Neighborhoods Community of Practice) - Ms. Fears is the Executive Director of the Greater Chatham Initiative. Ms. Fears is an economic development expert who specializes in strategic planning, financial modeling, community development financing, and program management. At GCI, Fears created a new Chatham Center Chicago, a branded commercial retail area that has an accompanying online directory of 200 merchants and service providers. Fears is a Harvard Loeb Fellow.



Kamla Lewis is the Senior Housing Development Project Manager at the Cuyahoga County Land Bank. Previously, Ms. Lewis was the Director of Neighborhood Revitalization for the City of Shaker Heights, a first ring suburb of Cleveland, Ohio, nationally known for its historic architecture and commitment to diversity. Her role encompassed a broad range of responsibilities, including



Rachel Meadows is the Director of Legislative Affairs for the Mayor of Philadelphia. Prior to this role, she was the Director of Policy and Legislation for former Councilwoman Cherelle Parker, who is currently the Mayor-Elect for the City of Philadelphia. While working for Councilwoman Parker, who was an early proponent and ongoing supporter of middle neighborhoods, Rachel was

developing creative ways to maintain the competitiveness of a community with a hundred-year-old housing stock. Ms. Lewis is a graduate of both Princeton and Cambridge Universities, with an academic background in political science and development economics.

responsible for advising the Councilwoman while developing and implementing policy initiatives, performing policy research, drafting legislation, and analyzing the annual budget proposal for the City of Philadelphia.



Supporting Seniors in Middle Neighborhoods

Tuesday, November 28, 12:00-1:30 PM Eastern [REGISTER HERE](#)

Senior residents are vital to middle neighborhoods. They often account for a large part of the high homeownership rates in middle neighborhoods, and bring leadership and stability to neighborhood life. The number of Americans ages 65 and older is projected to nearly double from 52 million in 2018 to 95 million by 2060, at which point the 65-and-older age group's share of the total population will rise from 16 percent to 23 percent. Many practitioners are building strategies to retain and support senior neighbors so they can continue to thrive in their middle neighborhoods.

In this webinar, middle neighborhood practitioners will share their strategies for assisting senior residents with a variety of housing options:

- One of the longest-running and most successful **rehab-retrofit programs** in the nation
- Custom supports to seniors within a larger **high-quality, affordable rental** portfolio
- **New construction** of senior housing that also repurposes obsolete commercial buildings or sites
- Other supports such as **mortgage safety, property tax exemptions and estate planning** that help seniors maintain their current housing

There will be time for Q&A and discussion on assembling the right mix of strategies through program development and partnerships.

Panelists:

- **Delia Yarrow**, Director of Homeownership, Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services, Ithaca, NY
- **Tiffany Smith**, Associate Director of Southside Neighborhood Services & Operations, Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago, Chicago, IL
- **Chelsey Miller**, Director of Property Management, Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services, Ithaca, NY
- **Joshua Sankowski**, Director of Corporate Partnerships, Pathstone Corporation, Rochester, NY

Moderator:

Marcia Nedland, Organizer, Middle Neighborhoods Community of Practice

Other News + Resources

1. [How Olive Garden and IHOP Build Relationships Across Income Classes](#), Meredith Somers, MIT Management Sloan School, November 6, 2023.
2. [Middle-Class Black Homeownership In Atlanta Is On The Decline. Here's Why.](#), Brian Y. An, NewsOne, October 27, 2023.
3. [Why We Need to Design Community into Neighborhoods](#), Robert Steuteville, Public Square, Congress for New Urbanism, October 24, 2023.
4. [Jefferson and Puritas, a 'Middle Class, Blue-Collar' Slice of Cleveland](#), Kaylee Remington, Cleveland.com, October 19, 2023.
5. [What Happens When Wall Street Buys Most of the Homes on Your Block?](#), Ronda Kaysen and Ella Koeze, New York Times, September 16, 2023.

Community Engagement Chat



Our October Engagement Chat focused on ways to identify leaders and we decided: **we want to hear from you!**

One way to engage community is through online surveys so today we are putting it to the test: please take a moment to check out these ideas and add one of your own!

- Communicate clear goals to attract the right person
- Create activities that build trust
- Set a regular meeting time
- Connect face-to-face
- Help solve a problem: successful solutions build trust
- Connect with the community engagement department at local government offices
- Develop a marketing campaign that draws people in
- Offer childcare that builds in activities to draw families (creating costumes, holiday ornaments, homemade gifts, etc.)
- Surveys can be a great way to connect!

Please click on the survey button below and tell us one way you have found a leader that was innovative or surprising. We'll compile a list to share. **Survey open through November 30th.**

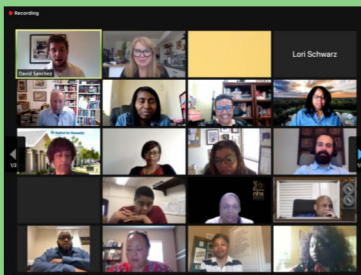
[Take the Survey!](#)

**Next Engagement Chat: Fixing Burnout...
how to take care of our volunteers**

When: Wednesday, January 17, 2024

Noon Eastern time

Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84101281968>



Recent Webinar Recordings

Supercharging Home Maintenance and Updates Through DIY Support in Middle Neighborhoods

[Watch Now](#)

Updating Middle Neighborhood Housing Stock for Energy Efficiency and Climate Resiliency

[Watch Now](#)

Unveiling and Addressing Property Tax Inequities

[Watch Now](#)

The Implications of Shrinking Cities for Middle Neighborhoods
[Watch Now](#)

Researching the New Investor Population in Your Middle Neighborhood
[Watch Now](#)

New Research Produces Peer Mapping Tool and Reveals Greatest Threats to Middle Neighborhoods
[Watch Now](#)

How Partnering with a CDFI Can Get More Loan Capital Into Your Middle Neighborhood
[Watch Now](#)

Find all recordings of the Middle Neighborhoods' webinar series
[HERE](#)

Webinars are co-sponsored by the [Middle Neighborhoods Community of Practice](#), the [National Community Stabilization Trust](#), and [NeighborWorks America](#).

CoP Action Items

Custom Webinars: We often get requests for custom webinars on middle neighborhoods, which we gladly deliver! Please let us know if you'd like one for your staff, board, network, or community.

CoP Listserv: Don't forget to use our listserv, MiddleNeighborhoodsCoP@googlegroups.com to share announcements, news articles, questions and the like. If you are in the CoP, you are already a member of the listserv. If you are not a CoP member, but would like to join the listserv, email [us](#).

Actions You Can Take to Grow and Support the CoP

1. Join and participate in the listserv, MiddleNeighborhoodsCoP@googlegroups.com. This is the most direct way for CoP members to interact with each other. Share your questions and successes.
2. Submit an article, news item, or resource idea for the newsletter to [Marcia](#).
3. Host a Middle Neighborhoods 101 webinar for people in your organization or community to help them learn about middle neighborhoods and launch a discussion on local opportunities. [We](#) will help you plan this and deliver the webinar with you.
4. Submit an idea for a webinar or case study topic to [Ann](#).
5. Convene with other CoP members in your region to discuss a particular issue, or to start creating a regional action agenda. [Marcia](#) can help you contact your peers and plan your convening.
6. We can also help you convene a group of CoP members by interest rather than geography. Past convenings have included city government representatives.
7. Represent middle neighborhoods in local policy discussions. [We'll](#) share some talking points.
8. Propose and conduct a session on middle neighborhoods for conferences and other convenings or groups you participate in. [We'll](#) help with the proposal, recruiting panelists, planning, etc.

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