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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Albany County Land Bank and Albany Community Land Trust Among Finalists in National Vacant Properties Scholarship Program**

*Scholarship assists communities seeking support to implement or expand innovative, bold reforms to combat large-scale vacancy and abandonment*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**January 9, 2017**

**Albany, New York** is among the five finalists in a competition to receive one of up to three technical assistance scholarships from the Center for Community Progress, a national nonprofit that helps communities revitalize vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties. The other finalists are Huntington, West Virginia; Las Vegas, Nevada; Memphis, Tennessee; and the Steel Rivers Council of Governments, Pennsylvania.

“The Albany County Land Bank is one of the fastest growing land banks in New York State,” said **Adam Zaranko, Executive Director of the Albany County Land Bank Corporation**. “As our real estate portfolio grows, so do the opportunities for innovative and collaborative approaches to revitalizing neighborhoods and strengthening our communities. This scholarship will provide much needed technical assistance in our ongoing efforts to curb the proliferation of blight and reverse the harm that it has caused to our most distressed neighborhoods. We are thrilled to be selected as a finalist and look forward to working with the Center for Community Progress and the Albany Community Land Trust to develop new strategies.”

As finalists, the five communities will receive no-cost site visits from national experts, as well as assessments of their current activities and systems to address vacant and abandoned properties. Assessments may evaluate some of the following systems, tools, or practices: parcel data systems and data management practices; code enforcement programs and strategies; land banks; tax enforcement and foreclosure laws and practices; and vacant land reuse strategies. Assessments will take place between January and March 2017.

“The Albany Community Land Trust has been working for more than 25 years to acquire and rehabilitate vacant buildings for affordable housing, one unit at a time,” said **Valerie Roberts, President of the Albany Community Land Trust**. “The opportunity to work with the Albany County Land Bank, the Center for Community Progress and Grounded Solutions Network, to assess our redevelopment strategies will move us closer to our dream of completing larger, more strategic and impactful projects.”



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From this pool of five, up to three of the finalists will be chosen as recipients of a full scholarship through the Technical Assistance Scholarship Program. The full scholarship consists of up to 400 hours of deeply subsidized technical assistance over the course of nine months in 2017 to help recipient communities break new ground in their efforts to address property vacancy and abandonment. These five finalists were chosen through a competitive application process. Proposed projects are reviewed on a range of criteria, including the potential for innovation from which other cities can learn, demonstrated leadership to implement reform, overall scale of vacancy challenges and need for outside assistance.

“The five finalist communities reflect a wide range of sizes, geographies, and challenges, but all have proven that they are firmly dedicated to strengthening their community stabilization and revitalization work,” said **Tamar Shapiro, President and CEO of the Center for Community Progress**. “We look forward to working more closely with each through the site visits and assessments.”

The Center for Community Progress first launched the Technical Assistance Scholarship Program in 2014 in response to a need to make it easier for communities to experiment and innovate in their efforts to tackle vacant properties, and to do so in a way that is affordable and supports both the scholarship recipients and the national field of practice. Grant funding from JPMorgan Chase supports the program.

More information about the Technical Assistance Scholarship Program is available on the Center for Community Progress website.

### About the Albany County Land Bank Corporation

The Albany County Land Bank was established in early 2014 by Albany County to facilitate the process of acquiring, improving and redistributing vacant and abandoned properties. The Land Bank is an organization committed to improving neighborhoods and has a responsibility to improve Land Bank properties for future use and return them to productive use. The Albany County Land Bank uses grant funding from New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, Albany County and the City of Albany to support property demolitions, acquisitions, stabilizations, lot improvements and renovation projects. To learn more about the Albany County Land Bank please visit: [www.albanycountylandbank.org](http://www.albanycountylandbank.org).

### About the Albany Community Land Trust

The Albany Community Land Trust (ACLT) is a community-based nonprofit organization committed to rebuilding neighborhood housing stock and creating high quality permanently affordable housing in the City of Albany. Since 1987, ACLT has renovated 67 properties with 91 units and is currently managing 45 units of affordable rental housing.





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About the Center for Community Progress

Founded in 2010, the Center for Community Progress is the only national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization solely dedicated to building a future in which entrenched, systemic vacancy and abandonment no longer exists in American communities. The mission of Community Progress is to ensure that communities have the vision, knowledge, and systems to transform vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties into assets supporting neighborhood vitality. As a national leader on solutions for vacancy and abandonment, Community Progress serves as the leading resource for local, state and federal policies and best practices that address the full cycle of property revitalization, from blight prevention, through the acquisition and maintenance of problem properties, to their productive reuse.

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