



Community Land Trusts

While communities in the United States have demonstrated strong leadership and experience in community land trusts local organizations in Canada are beginning to experiment with the model. A community land trust assembles ownership over a series of properties or land tracts. The land is held in perpetuity for future community interest.

Community land trusts serve two purposes. One involves a model of assisted home-ownership so low-income families and individuals have increased access to sustainable housing in urban settings. The second purpose is to protect and steward fragile ecosystems in non-urban areas.



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Community land trusts are a growing cluster area where organizations have a long history in other sector areas, including environmental advocacy and community economic renewal. Organizational structures include an early-stage CED organization and a number of non-profit organizations.

For urban land trusts, land is purchased by an organization, sometimes in partnership with a municipality, the federal government, and corporate partners. Renovations to exteriors contribute to downtown revitalization efforts.

Viable business plans ensure operating and monitoring costs are met for protected lands and successful transitions to home ownership.

**CEDTAP support ranges from :
\$17,000 - \$20,000**

CEDTAP offers a variety of technical services to organizations at different phases of development. The types of technical service accessed in this cluster include feasibility studies, support on legal aspects for organizational constitution and financial planning.



“...we have sorted out our vision, goals, priorities, and mapped out the steps to get there. With CEDTAP assistance, we now have solid commitment for funds to carry out our work.”
Sherry Cox, Board Member and Founder, The SEED Society, Christina Lake, B.C., September, 1999

Case Studies:

Central Edmonton Community Land Trust, Edmonton Alberta

Founded in 1998, the CECLT is a non-profit organization that is completely run by volunteers. Working in the inner-city neighbourhoods of Edmonton, the group uses a land trust model to purchase land, renovate and construct houses, and then offer, on a 5-year rent-to-own basis, housing units for low-income families and individuals.

To date, 22 housing units have been purchased and renovated, with assistance from the city, federal government, and corporate partners.

Turtle Island Earth Stewards, Salmon Arm, British Columbia

While Turtle Island Earth Stewards (TIES) is a newly incorporated non-profit organization, it has a 25 year history in the land-trust sector in British Columbia (where there are presently 40 land trusts in operation). The organization engages the community through *community advisory committees* for each of the projects it undertakes and through *memberships* and a *community board of trustees*.

In discussion for three years, TIES was eager to explore a viable land trust model. It has found it difficult to secure core operating funds as well as the funds necessary to place and administer lands in trust for this and future generations. Ongoing administration costs include the annual monitoring of lands in trust to ensure they are protected. In addition land trusts need to create an endowment fund for legal action to protect their lands, if this proves necessary.

Other Community Partners:

1997-2000:

The Social, Ecological & Economic Development Society, British Columbia

2001-2003:

The Greater Victoria Housing Trust, British Columbia
West Broadway Development Corporation, Prairies

The CEDTAP Contribution

CEDTAP is helping the organization move through its consolidation phase, where a transition process will be selected to convert rent-to-own to full home-ownership for the residents.

The land trust will research all the legal aspects and will also develop a business plan.

CEDTAP is supporting detailed research on a viable land trust model.

TIES will develop the model through comparative research on North America and the UK as well as analyze similar entrepreneurial non-profit models. Once an organizational structure is chosen, the research will be disseminated at an upcoming national land-trust conference, as well as through community networks.

The model is expected to be financially viable by assisting clients on a *fee for service* basis to better steward, restore, enhance or provide long-term protection of land and forests.



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