

## **Six Key Benefits of Community Land Trusts**

**Prepared by the Board and Steering Committee of  
Western Queens Community Land Trust  
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### **1. Provide permanent, deep affordability for both commercial and residential tenants.**

CLTs can create permanent, deep affordability for both commercial and residential tenants by serving as a non-profit, community-controlled entity that can receive public land and/or buildings from the city (a role currently filled by developers). The CLT then works with nonprofit management companies to refurbish and run these properties. Between 2014-2019, NYC gave away over 200 parcels of public land for \$1 each; CLTs could have kept that land in the hands of the community. A city-run land bank, in conjunction with CLTs, would offer NYC an even more viable path to truly permanent affordable housing.

### **2. Prevent foreclosure from depriving people of their homes.**

CLTs are working with the city to reform the current tax lien sale system so that control of properties in tax arrears is reallocated from private investors back into a public-run system that is less predatory and more equitable. People in danger of foreclosure, as well as people actually being foreclosed on, would have the option of working with CLTs to keep their homes and convert them into permanently affordable properties. Foreclosed properties can be sold to CLTs and converted into permanently affordable rental units.

### **3. Help middle class families become homeowners.**

CLTs can help middle class families purchase homes by enabling them to qualify for State credits and exemptions, pending NY State Legislation. Bill A5081 would render CLT properties tax-exempt, and Bill A4341 would increase the already-existing subsidy for any home that qualifies as affordable housing (the subsidy has not increased since 1985.) A public banking system (currently in development) would provide CLTs with community-based financing without the profit motive found in private banks.

### **4. Ensure that public land remains a public good.**

CLTs are a way to ensure that public land remains public by offering the city an alternative to giving away public parcels to private developers. The CLT model allows local communities to own and control that land instead, allowing them to decide how to best serve their needs. The CLT's own internal structure provides a checks-and-balances system that keeps it accountable to the community in which it resides... permanently.

### **5. Serve as a community safety net.**

CLTs can help build communities that can weather crises such as the Covid pandemic, since they exist to serve the community instead of shareholders. Both residential and commercial tenants can rest easy knowing they are in much less danger of being evicted if they fall behind on rent during a crisis than they would with a private landlord.

### **6. Give communities a powerful voice.**

CLTs serve as a nexus and conduit for housing-related issues within a community. They provide an organized voice that can better represent and advocate for the community's needs in local land-use decisions, as well as serve as a source of information and community engagement. This gives communities much-needed political clout in an area that has traditionally offered them very little say in such matters.

**Have questions or want to get involved? Visit [WQCLT.org](http://WQCLT.org)!**