

Van Temple
Executive Director,
Diamond State Community Land Trust
& National CLT Network Board

(In response to an email from Jeff Corey from the Northern Communities Land Trust in Duluth, MN inquiring about the experience of creating a statewide land trust.)

Diamond State CLT (Delaware) was created from the beginning to be a statewide organization with a method of operation that is essentially a partnership model. Although we do some of our own development we are finding great utility in partnering with the existing N-P affordable housing organizations. We now have MOUs with the top 6 non-profit affordable housing producers and MOUs with all the HUD-certified housing counseling agencies in the state. The housing producers make natural partners - they are now devoting a portion of their traditional affordable housing rehab and new construction homes to our statewide inventory of permanently affordable homes. We bring the additional funds to reach the shared-equity sale price (we call that the Permanent Affordability Investment). The housing counseling agencies introduce the folks coming through their program to the CLT option and then refer households who are income-qualified and interested to DSCLT for shared-equity homeownership training. Similarly we have contracts with all three counties, two cities and the state housing authority for participation in the Neighborhood Stabilization Program for adding CLT homes & homeowners. Our organization is a stand-alone non-profit CLT of the classic type in spite of our hybrid method of operation and wide service area.

We are working to create institutional relationships directly with the counties, cities and towns so that we are tied more tightly into their planning and funding functions. And we are positioned with a couple of for-profit developers for future business when the building boom resumes.

Our Board recently formed a special committee to meet with a few, selected sister non-profits to look at missions, goals, and explore possible synergies. We're in the midst of that now. I'm not sure that we've learned much that would be relevant, but would be glad to share.

From my years consulting in the traditional affordable housing arena (CDCs) and given the economy, uncertain real estate market, and the current national administration that is more concerned about balanced housing - I agree with Jeff - there are likely to be more opportunities for CLTs in the years ahead.