

Lessons Learned

From a Site Visit with our Sister CLTs in
Lawrence, KS, and Springfield, MO

June 2025

Sizes and Ages

197 Houses



Lawrence,
b. 1993

47 Houses



Springfield,
b. 2011

25 Houses



Columbia,
b. 2017

Independence and Cooperation



The Springfield and Lawrence CLTs have always operated inside larger organizations that offer healthcare services, homeless shelters, financial counseling, etc.



The Columbia CLT, though created by the City, has aspired to be an “independent operation.”

Is Becoming Independent and Financially Self-Sustaining Feasible?

“Even mature CLTs with sizable portfolios typically depend on external funding to cover part of their stewardship costs, using some combination of charitable contributions and public funds.”

--2024 Report of the Lincoln Institute of Land Management

Springfield and Lawrence Have Employed Full-Time Executive Directors

Media
Updates

Donor
relations

Grants
and
Contracts

Sales and
marketing

Conflict
resolution



Coordination
with partner
agencies

Homebuyer
Education and
Support

Financial
Statements
Schmoozing!

When is a CLT Large Enough to Hire an Independent Staff?

- Lawrence (197 units) is well staffed.
- Springfield (47 units) is trying to hire a full-time director, but faces funding uncertainties.
- A CLT with 50-75 units probably *needs* a full-time director, but can't pay one from internal revenues.
- To be staffed up and truly self-sustaining, a CLT might need a portfolio of 150-200 houses.

--Sightline Institute, 2021 report

Are Rentals the Road to Sustainability?

- 37% of CLTs own rental property. 63% do not.
--Lincoln Institute of Land Management, 2024 report
- Lawrence's 112 rentals earn enough to support the salary of the staff, most of whom spend their time managing the rentals.
- Springfield reports no earnings from its 28 rentals. The cost of outside maintenance and management contractors drains away the profit.
- It appears that rentals can pay only if the CLT is large enough to hire a staff to manage them.

Major Lessons: Paths Forward for CCLT

Focus on rehabs and small-footprint new builds.

Springfield and Lawrence have recognized that the new builds above 1000 square feet are becoming cost prohibitive.



Build strong partnerships with agencies like CMCA, Job Point, Arise Dwellings, and Love Columbia. These ties can give us some of the advantages Springfield and Lawrence get from being part of large umbrella organizations.