

LAND Bank Team Application
(Land Acquisition for Neighborhood Development)

Overview

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 214,000 housing units are currently vacant in Cook County, many as a result of the foreclosure crisis. These properties have a devastating effect on neighbors, businesses and local governments: Vacant properties increase crime, reduce property values and erode quality of life. They also hinder economic development, weaken the tax base, which drives up taxes for other homeowners and businesses, and impose significant costs on already-struggling local governments. In Illinois, Cook County is the county hardest hit by foreclosure and vacant properties.

Following the lead and learning from the experience of more than 80 local governments in 23 states who have created land banks to combat foreclosure, the Cook County Board of Commissioners created the Cook County Land Bank Authority and South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association established the South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority to address the challenges of vacant and foreclosed properties. Land banks are a national best practice for reversing the downward cycle of neighborhood decline and decay, facilitating the transfer of vacant property and promoting economic development and neighborhood stabilization. They achieve this by acquiring and maintaining vacant properties, addressing impediments to their productive re-use, adopting intermediate uses and transferring them to new owners who put them back on the tax rolls.

Historically, these tasks have been spread across multiple offices and levels of government that struggle to integrate their operations. Because land banks are granted specific tools, hire staff with specialized skills and bring a distinct focus on transforming vacant properties into opportunities, they perform more effectively. They are better able to develop coordinated strategies, leverage resources, act quickly and seize opportunities than their multi-mission counterparts. Moreover, land banks take advantage of economies of scale and a higher degree of specialization to maintain, demolish, rehabilitate and dispose of vacant properties as a service to other units of local government, thereby saving resources.

Land banking is a flexible tool that can be shaped to meet the needs of each participating community. In stronger market areas, land banks can facilitate immediate housing development or redevelopment, or commercial or industrial growth by speeding the transfer of vacant property to new owners, collaborating with individuals and organizations to renovate viable properties and assembling larger sites for private redevelopment. In harder hit communities, land banks provide a degree of stability that plants the seeds for economic revitalization in the near- or mid-term. In the hardest hit communities, land banks implement strategies that stop the downward spiral that, if left unchecked, would leave them decimated for generations. In such communities, demolition of nuisance properties may be the best short-term strategy, eliminating properties that drag down property values and promote blight. When the most troubled buildings have been cleared, the land can be used for new safe play areas or expanded side- or backyards. Cleared land also provides opportunities for urban agriculture and community-based food system practitioners to secure the access to land that is so essential to nurturing local food systems. Targeted demolition has proven to be an essential part of neighborhood stabilization efforts and lays the foundation for revitalization.

Land banks must act quickly and at substantial scale given the severity of the vacant property problem and the fact that inaction is destructive for fragile communities. The LAND Bank Team submitting this proposal is comprised of members who have been collaborating for years to address these challenges. Both land banks have already engaged major banks and local municipalities that are ready to start transferring properties as soon as the infrastructure is in place. With sufficient funding, the Cook County and South Suburban land banks can begin their vitally important work and expand from there. They will build on the examples set by the Cuyahoga County/Cleveland, Ohio land bank, which quintupled its land acquisition activity in its second year, and the Genesee County land bank (Flint, Michigan), which has quadrupled its activity and now sometimes acquires more than 2,000 properties a year.

Serving a population that is four times greater than Cuyahoga's and ten times greater than Genesee's, the two land banks are the only entities in Illinois with the skills, tools and resources to take on the dual challenges of foreclosed and vacant properties at a meaningful scale. Though it will take time to build to full capacity, the land banks will be instrumental in acquiring thousands of properties, returning a significant percentage to productive use, stabilizing neighborhoods burdened by large numbers of empty lots and structures, and supporting economic development across Cook County.

Supporting the two land banks represents a long-term investment in the health and vitality of our neighborhoods, region and state. Both land banks will become self-sustaining but require start-up resources at a sufficient level to begin their work. Funding from the Attorney General's office will create the permanent land bank infrastructure to address these enormous challenges far into the future.

The LAND Bank Team seeks \$20 million to build this needed infrastructure and to support the critical first three-to-four years of operations as the land banks become self-sustaining. Under this proposal, the Cook County Land Bank Authority will receive \$15 million and the South Suburban Land Bank Development Authority, \$5 million. The Cook County Land Bank Authority will serve as the LAND Bank Team Leader and act as the fiscal agent.

1) Into which of the four eligible respondent categories listed on pages 2 and 3 do you fall? Please briefly describe your organization, or each organization on your team, including an explanation of your track record (including successes, challenges, lessons learned, and capacity building needs) related to primary outcomes proposed in Appendix A.

The LAND Bank Team submits this proposal under Eligibility Category (1), Teams. The Cook County Land Bank Authority and the South Suburban Land Bank Development Authority combined their applications to achieve strategic and geographic coordination and make efficient use of limited resources. All funding received under this RFQ/RFP will go exclusively to the two land banks. The two organizations are joined by a broad and diverse team that will bring critical in-kind resources to bear to ensure the land banks' success. Though the land banks are new entities, their sponsors and board members and the other team members have lengthy and extensive experience addressing residential, community and economic development needs and challenges. The LAND Bank Team consists of the following entities:

Cook County Land Bank Authority (CCLBA)

The CCLBA was created on January 16, 2013 by a unanimous vote of the Cook County Commissioners. The land bank ordinance was developed following the recommendations of two advisory groups that consulted over 100 stakeholders. As an independent quasi-governmental agency of Cook County, the CCLBA will be governed by a Board of Directors comprised of thirteen leaders in the fields of real estate development, marketing, banking, local government and community representatives.

South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority (SSLBDA)

The South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority (SSLBDA) was conceived of and shaped by the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA) and created in September 2012 through an intergovernmental agreement among three municipalities: Blue Island, Oak Forest and Park Forest. The three municipalities have been among the most innovative and effective in addressing these challenges in the region and have long histories of inter-jurisdictional collaboration. The SSLBDA is governed by a Board of Directors made up of seven leading professionals one from each of the three jurisdictions and the remainder from SSMMA, Applegate & Thorne-Thomsen, the Chicago Community Loan Fund (CCLF) and BRick Partners, LLC, who together have decades of experience developing and implementing land use, community and economic development programs. With the benefit of this support and expertise, the SSLBDA has adopted policies and procedures and interviewed candidates for Executive Director with the expectation of filling this position by March 1, 2013.

With the agreement of the local municipality, the SSLBDA can acquire land in all 42 communities in the southern suburbs. This enables the SSLBDA to target areas that have suffered from the economic downturn and are still experiencing a growing number of foreclosures. Many of the 42 municipalities hardest hit by the foreclosure crisis, have expressed a strong interest in becoming members.

Cook County Bureau of Economic Development (CCBED)

The Cook County Bureau of Economic Development (CCBED) was established to foster economic development and job growth within Cook County to promote sustainable community investment; business growth, attraction and retention; affordable housing; regional planning; and workforce development. Within the Bureau, the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) has a long track record of relevant experience, having administered approximately \$485 million in grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to rehabilitate 580 owner-occupied units, develop 2,535 rental units and provide down payment assistance to 300 first-time homebuyers in low- and moderate-income suburban communities. DPD also runs the County's "No Cash Bid" programs, whereby interested taxing districts can acquire tax delinquent properties, and processes tax incentive resolutions for properties that do not meet the threshold conditions

required by ordinance. Cook County's track record exemplifies its ability to act swiftly and efficiently in partnership with municipalities, developers, lenders, housing counseling agencies and realtors—the same stakeholders who will be critical to the land banks' success—to stabilize many County communities.

City of Chicago

The City of Chicago, the site of the largest number of vacant properties in the state, has vast experience addressing vacant property challenges, through numerous programs in the Department of Housing and Economic Development (DHED), the Department of Buildings, the Police and Fire Departments and others. One of the most relevant is the Micro-Market Recovery Program (MMRP), which helps to coordinate stabilization and revitalization activities across City departments, not-for-profit intermediaries and non-profit and for-profit capital sources to improve conditions, strengthen property values, and create environments supportive of private investment in targeted communities. The City will partner with the CCLBA in MMRP areas to extinguish eligible back taxes, clear title and secure private owners for priority parcels. DHED administers the same array of HUD grants as the County although at higher allocation levels. Working with its citywide and community partners in the MMRP areas, DHED expects to spell out the details of its working relationship with the CCLBA via an intergovernmental agreement.

South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA)

The South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA) is a council of governments (COG) with a 35-year track record of providing technical assistance and joint services to its 42 municipal members encompassing a population of more than 650,000 in Cook and Will counties. SSMMA has prioritized helping its members—municipalities with a mix of incomes that include some of the poorest in the Chicago metropolitan region—achieve community and economic sustainability by being the only COG in the region to articulate a redevelopment framework founded upon its housing, transportation, real estate, industry and workforce strengths. In recent years, SSMMA has been awarded \$24 million in federal and private grants to support sustainable transit-oriented development (TOD), establish the SSLBDA and perform brownfield assessments and clean-up. SSMMA is a lead partner in the Regional Home Ownership Preservation Initiative (RHOP) and will make sure that the land banks support its goals of strengthening suburban capacity to respond to the foreclosure crisis.

Suburban Governments throughout Cook County

More than 130 municipalities exist in Cook County so finding the right CCLBA target areas can be a challenge. CCBED has laid a foundation for the CCLBA by working through established housing collaboratives to identify strategic areas that need help. To date, CCBED has reached out to the West Cook Housing Collaborative, which has secured a \$2.9 million HUD grant to advance residential rehabilitation and development in TOD zones, and hopes to include other hard hit municipalities in west Cook like Cicero, Franklin Park and Willow Springs. CCBED has also engaged six CDBG entitlement towns in northwest Cook and the Northwest Housing Collaborative to identify opportunity areas there. In the north, Evanston has agreed to help the County expand affordable housing to Skokie and, possibly, areas further north. Both land banks will enter into formal agreements with participating municipalities.

Financial Institutions

Banks have partnered with SSMMA and the County to help ensure that bank-owned and other vacant properties are well-maintained and secured and to help stabilize real estate markets. Most of the largest national banks already have extensive experience collaborating with land banks in markets where they exist. Both land banks will partner with financial institutions as a source of properties to be donated and of developer and homebuyer financing. CCBED and SSLBDA will coordinate with Enterprise Community Partners and CCLF who have applied to the Attorney General for a loan fund that will help finance development in many of the same neighborhoods where the LAND Bank Team will operate.

Chicago Association of Realtors

The Chicago Association of Realtors is a trade association representing 11,500 members from all real estate specialties including commercial sales, development, property management, appraisal, auctions and residential sales. Realtors have partnered with local and county government to develop programs to help stabilize the local real estate market and ensure that those programs function effectively.

Developers

A broad range of for-profit and non-profit developers have collaborated closely with local and county government to develop programs to help stabilize the local real estate market and to ensure that those programs work effectively. Many were active in developing the CCLBA through membership on the Land Bank Advisory Committee (LBAC) and participation in the Urban Land Institute's Technical Assistance Panel (ULI

TAP). They include Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS), Chicago Metropolitan Housing Development Corporation, Mercy Housing and Hispanic Housing Development Corporation. Collectively, they have decades of experience in a wide range of residential markets and economic conditions.

Housing Counselors and Fair Housing Groups

CCLBA and SSLBDA will partner with housing counselors to assure there is a strong buyers market going forward and that everyone has a fair opportunity to purchase homes. The Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance, NHS and the West Cook Collaborative have lent their expertise by training other entities and prospective homebuyers in south and west Cook.

Technical Assistance Providers

The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC), the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT), Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (BPI) and the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (MMC) each have experience in housing and land use, economic development, policy analysis, program development and research and advocacy and will continue to provide technical assistance in these areas as part of this grant. The Woodstock Institute (WI) is a leading non-profit research and policy organization in the areas of fair lending, wealth creation and financial systems reform whose data will guide and inform the selection of target areas. Center for Community Progress (CCP) is the nation's premier land bank expert. CCP staff has participated in the development and implementation of all of the largest and most effective land banks in the country and will be instrumental in the formation of these two land banks.

Lessons Learned

It is impossible in a relatively brief document to capture even a small fraction of the specific lessons learned from the collective experiences of such a large and diverse team—though the land banks will draw on these innumerable lessons every single day.

The single biggest lesson learned, which is reflected in both the process that resulted in the creation of the two land banks and in the team that will help implement this proposal, is that the foreclosure and vacant property crises have created extraordinarily deep and complicated problems that can only be addressed through the well-coordinated efforts of a wide range of actors. This Team includes partners from organizations and individuals with the knowledge and expertise to frame problems and define solutions in actionable ways, the capacity and resources to implement them and a proven track record. The Team is comprised of seasoned professionals that represent an interdisciplinary and inter-jurisdictional approach essential to stabilization and redevelopment activities in hardest hit communities.

2) Describe how the team already works together (or intends to work more closely using these resources) description of current and proposed roles and responsibilities, capacity building philosophy and relationship between team leader and partners.

Past Teamwork

The creation of the CCLBA and SSLBDA brought together a wide range of stakeholders to assess the region's foreclosure crisis. Two advisory groups, LBAC and the ULI TAP, convened multi-disciplinary teams to advise the County on whether and how land banking could serve as a tool to address the large and growing supply of vacant properties, stabilize neighborhoods and support economic development.

All LAND Bank Team members (see Letters of Support in Appendix B) were deeply involved in these land bank activities, building on years of similar collaboration. Through these public planning processes, they partnered over the last two years on the CCLBA and SSLBDA, shaping their missions and scopes, defining powers and identifying land bank priorities. Many have worked together in various combinations over the last four years to address foreclosure and vacant building challenges in other policy arenas.

Present Working Relationships

The CCLBA will act as the lead applicant and fiscal agent for the LAND Bank Team. In this capacity, CCLBA will be responsible for facilitating clear and frequent communications among Team members to ensure the coordinated execution of tasks consistent with a single county-wide vision and the plans of local communities. CCLBA will direct and carry out all land bank activities under its direct jurisdiction and make certain that all major objectives are accomplished within established timeframes.

Ten of the CCLBA's Board of Directors were formally approved by the Cook County Board on February 8, 2013 (Appendix C). The CCLBA Board will immediately begin a nationwide search for an executive director using a

recruiter to ensure the most qualified candidate is selected. The CCLBA will be supported by staff from CCBED/DPD until its own staff has been hired. Even then, CCBED/DPD staff will continue working closely with CCLBA staff to ensure that their programs are integrated with and able to easily access existing County programs and offices.

Proposed Partnerships

The most important collaboration will be between the LAND Bank Team and local governments that lack the resources and, in some cases, the authority to deal with their development challenges. The land banks can handle the day-to-day challenges of maintaining and securing properties, extinguishing unpaid property taxes, clearing title and navigating the cumbersome process for transferring government-owned land to private owners. Since all land bank activities must be in the service of locally-developed plans and priorities, the land banks will execute memoranda of understanding with each participating municipality which will establish the ground rules for the working relationship between a specific land bank and that municipality, clearly defining roles and responsibilities and identifying local priorities for land bank action.

Other Team members will play critical roles. Banks in partnership with the land banks will establish policies and procedures for the efficient and fair transfer of vacant properties from banks to either CCLBA or SSLBDA. Realtors and developers will help to ensure that the land banks operate in ways that support the efforts of for-profit and non-profit developers and real estate professionals, in part by helping to develop procedures for property transfer that operate as much as possible like the private market. Realtors will participate in the marketing of land bank properties.

Cook County agencies will ensure that a wide range of County programs and services are well-coordinated with land bank activities. Through the CCBED, the County will bring its considerable legal, financial and development expertise to ensure the success of this venture for the benefit of communities that lack them. DPD's programs will be essential to the land banks' acquisition and disposition of properties and will need to be well coordinated with land bank operations.

Non-profit agencies like BPI, CNT, MPC, ULI and WI will provide technical assistance to the land banks as they develop policies and procedures and as they execute them. CCP will provide expert advice to the land bank boards and staff in developing the systems so essential to their successful operation. Team members bring a rich history of collaborating with each other in current and prior positions—experience that will serve the Team well as it launches this land bank initiative. For example, strong bonds already exist via Cook County's CDBG, NSP and HOME programs with SSMMA, Park Forest, Blue Island, developers in west Cook and the Northwest Housing Partnership. Through these relationships, partners have helped stabilize neighborhoods, upgrade infrastructure, and deliver residential and economic development improvements to low- and moderate-income populations. Similar affiliations exist with the potential target communities of Berwyn, Calumet City, Cicero, Dolton, Harvey, Maywood, Palatine, Schaumburg and Skokie, all of which have been identified by WI as having significant numbers of foreclosures.

SSMMA will deploy the resources at its disposal such as its GIS Suburban Atlas and \$6 million development loan fund to help the SSLBDA resolve issues associated with strategic acquisitions and finance redevelopment of key parcels. Expert board members of and technical assistance providers to the SSLBDA such as BPI, CCLF and BRick Partners, LLC, have independent working relationships with city, county and suburban counterparts that will reinforce the partnership. These bonds are further strengthened by collaborations between current County staff and current and proposed Team members that occurred as part of previous positions held by key County staff.

Capacity Building Philosophy

A primary goal of the land banks and a primary use of the requested funding is to build the capacity to return vacant property to productive use far more efficiently than local governments can today and at much greater scale. The land banks provide a framework for collaboration among the diverse team members previously described. By creating policies and procedures for the acquisition, maintenance and disposition of property, with well-defined roles for all parties and clearly-articulated goals and priorities, the land banks will develop the economies of scale needed to address this regional problem. And by taking property that currently has little or no market value and engaging in activities that release the underlying value (like clearing title and addressing back taxes), the land banks will generate revenue that will support expanded capacity. Both the Cuyahoga County and Genesee County land banks substantially increased their capacity in their first several years. This ability to expand to address the scale of the challenge by creating a platform for collaboration among a wide range of partners and developing a highly specialized set of skills is at the core of the land bank approach. This proposal is about building long-term capacity—creating permanent infrastructure for addressing vacant

properties throughout the County—long after the last dollar in funding from the Attorney Generals' settlement is spent.

3) What is proposed service or strategy and the outputs identified to achieve the primary outcomes listed in Appendix A. Is there a minimum or maximum number proposed? Why?

Proposed Services

In order to achieve the goals of redevelopment, stabilization and stimulating residential, commercial and industrial development, the CCLBA and SSLBDA, like other effective land banks around the country, will offer three key services: acquiring properties, managing them and returning them to productive use.

Acquisition

Initially, property acquisition will primarily involve transfers of vacant properties from local governments and banks to the land banks. Property acquisition will also involve tax foreclosure, transfers from other private owners and open market purchases. The CCLBA will establish target areas as part of developing their programs and SSLBDA will begin implementing its existing development strategy in order to acquire and assemble adjoining parcels to create larger, more marketable properties and help promote economic development.

Management

Land bank properties will be secured, maintained and prepared for return to productive use. Vacant and abandoned properties will be made more marketable by performing pre-development tasks such as extinguishing qualifying delinquent taxes, clearing titles, remediating environmental problems and demolishing dangerous buildings. As a result, properties that now have little or no market value—and no appeal to potential owners—will become much more desirable. By maintaining and securing properties as they await transfer, harmful effects on surrounding communities will be reduced.

Sale or Transfer

Once these tasks are complete, the land banks will transfer title to responsible new owners. As agencies of municipal or County government with independent boards, they will be able to operate more flexibly and nimbly than government entities limited by existing government practices, creating an easier, more transparent process for potential buyers—a process that would function much more like the private market. The land banks will hold properties for only a portion of the development process, which would reduce risk and costs for investors and facilitate redevelopment that might otherwise be infeasible. Along with private sector interests, non-profits and neighboring owners can be among the end users of land bank property if they have a plan for the property and the resources to take care of it.

Proposed Outcomes and Timeline

The LBAC and the ULI TAP drew on extensive expertise to develop several models specifying possible outcomes for the first several years of operations. The extent to which the land banks will be able to meet these goals will depend on the funding that is made available to put the land bank structure in place and deliver services. If the land banks receive the full amount requested, we anticipate the following outcomes in the first three years:

First Six Months:

- CCLBA: Hire an Executive Director and expert staff;
- CCLBA: Develop policies, procedures and programs;
- CCLBA: Creation of a database management system for strategic acquisitions and dispositions;
- CCLBA: Through CCT grant funds, establish pilot program to assist municipalities clearing and transferring title.

Second Six Months:

- CCLBA: 275-325 properties donated, 145-155 properties acquired, 70-80 properties demolished;
- SSLBDA: Acquisition of 60 properties, demolition of ten properties, and the construction or rehabilitation of six to twelve housing units in transit zones.

Year Two:

- CCLBA: 550-650 properties donated, 175-225 properties acquired, 130-150 properties demolished.
- SSLBDA: 200 properties donated*, 84 properties acquired, ten properties demolished, six to twelve housing units built.

Year Three:

- CCLBA: 550-650 properties donated, 225-275 properties acquired, 130-150 properties demolished.
- SSLBDA: 200 properties donated*, 117 properties acquired, ten properties demolished, six to twelve housing units built/rehabilitated, and 14-22 acres redeveloped.

(*Donations and associated bank financial contributions not yet in SSLBDA budget)

4) Describe the challenges faced in your targeted area, clarifying a) proposed geographic boundaries of technical assistance and b) relevant data informing (and still needed) for the proposed strategy (i.e. related to foreclosures, vacant/abandoned property, mortgage loan delinquencies, local assets guiding development priorities and/or demand for your technical assistance.

Geographic Scope/Target Areas

The CCLBA has been enacted to operate county-wide as a tool to help municipalities with local stabilization and redevelopment efforts. Vacant property challenges and redevelopment needs are widespread in the current economic climate; but, resources to respond to these challenges are not. Consequently, the land banks' resources must be thoughtfully targeted to maximize effectiveness.

For the most recent year for which foreclosure filings are available (2012), Chicago reported 18,407 foreclosure filings followed by the South Cook at 6,584, West Cook with 5,423 and Northwest Cook with 5,398. In Chicago, the nine communities that comprise the City's MMRP represent agreed-upon priorities from which LAND Bank Target Areas can be drawn. Three of the nine MMRP communities: Belmont-Cragin, Chicago Lawn and Humboldt Park appear on the WI's list of community areas with a high number of foreclosures.

South suburban targets are a foregone conclusion given that (1) the Southland has the highest number of foreclosures of any subarea in the metropolitan region except Chicago; and (2) the SSLBDA represents an opportunity to pursue a shared agenda of returning abandoned properties to productive use. SSLBDA's initial focus will be to redevelop foreclosed homes in areas which are rich with economic opportunity, with a primary focus on the half-mile transit zones surrounding existing public transportation and/or commuter rail lines. Priority will be given to acquiring parcels within the target area that also have the potential to provide workforce housing within six to nine months of acquisition. Acquisition of ancillary parcels that will provide commercial and industrial opportunities to the region will also be a priority. Finally, the CCLBA will hold similar discussions with COGs and not for profits in west and northwest Cook during its start-up year and will use municipal and census tract data to identify initial targets.

The Challenges of Foreclosed and Vacant Properties

The challenges now confronting Cook County are formidable: according to the U.S. Census, nearly ten percent of the housing units in the County are vacant; more than 85,000 foreclosure cases are pending in the Circuit Court of Cook County and home foreclosure activity in the Chicago area jumped 28 percent in the first half of 2012 from the prior six months (Crain's Real Estate Daily, July 26, 2012 citing a report from RealtyTrac). With one foreclosure filing for every 55 housing units in the metro area, the number of vacant properties is likely to continue to increase.

The challenge of foreclosed and vacant property also extends to commercial and industrial properties. In southern Cook County, SSMMA and CNT have identified 1,200 acres of vacant and underutilized industrial property within three miles of Canadian National's (CN) Gateway Terminal in Harvey. In West Cook, CNT has indicated that comparable industrial acreage exists with concentrations in the communities of Bedford Park, Cicero, Franklin Park, and McCook.

Vacant property, improved or unimproved, contributes measurably to neighborhood decline, driving up crime, driving down property values and eroding quality of life. A Federal Reserve Bank study of Cleveland, Ohio estimated that foreclosed, vacant and delinquent properties lower the values of neighboring properties within 500 feet by 9.4 percent.

Some communities—particularly in the south suburbs—have been hard hit by both residential foreclosures and industrial abandonment. Their economies have spiraled downward as tax collections shrink and the burden on remaining residents and businesses grows. Even communities with lower foreclosure and abandonment rates have struggled to address these trends. Most local governments have limited capacity and resources to deal with many aspects of this mounting challenge: adequately maintaining properties until new owners can be found, delivering clear title, erasing unpaid property taxes or navigating the often cumbersome processes for

transferring public land to private owners. The following table presents WI's recent foreclosure data by subarea within Cook County:

Subareas within Cook County		
	Number of Completed Foreclosures (2012)	Number of Foreclosure Filings (2012)
North Suburbs	1,037	2,155
Northwest Suburbs	3,049	5,398
West Suburbs	2,772	5,423
Southwest Suburbs	1,756	3,797
South Suburbs	2,951	6,584
Chicago	9,632	18,407
Cook County Total	21,197	41,764

Tax liens, faulty title, municipal and other regulatory liens and property ownership restrictions, as well as the difficulty of assembling multiple vacant properties as part of an overall revitalization plan, often deter private sector entities from redeveloping many abandoned properties. The land banks can serve as conduits for clearing these barriers to future development.

5) Describe readiness to proceed, including resources you have secured, or intend to secure, and proposed implementation timeline, explain where the resources available through this RFP are uniquely needed.

Both land banks will begin work by April 2013 with existing funding, though their scope will be greatly enhanced by increased funding. Both land banks can begin to evaluate and receive properties in their first year through transfers and donations from local governments, servicers and banks. Using previously secured funds from HUD and building upon past studies, the SSLBDA, together with SSMMA, has already begun to research parcels within the target areas. Once additional funding is secured, the SSLBDA can begin the process of acquiring properties, maintaining them, facilitating intermediate uses and returning them to the tax rolls.

The Illinois Attorney General's \$20 million LAND Bank award will leverage an additional \$13 million in private and other public funds. Based on the experience of other land banks around the country and conversations with local financial institutions, the CCLBA and SSLBDA expect to receive cash contributions to help defray expenses when banks transfer properties to them. The CCLBA has already received a \$149,000 grant from The Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust to help underwrite start-up costs, a pilot program to assist municipalities in clearing and transferring title on properties they already own, and to retain the services of CCP. The land banks will also pursue funding from area foundations and the new foreclosure filing fee administered by the Illinois Housing Development Authority, which specifically called out counties as recipients. In the long run the land banks, like others around the country, will be self-sustaining through a combination of revenue generated from the sale of land bank-owned property, rental and service fees, and other proven land bank revenue sources that the Board will pursue.

In Ohio, \$75 million in Settlement Funds were allocated to all 88 counties on a formula that looked at population, foreclosures and vacancies. Thirteen organized land banks were the designated fund recipients for their county; county government received the funds where land banks did not exist. The Attorney General for the State of Illinois has been at the forefront of the national effort to redress the fraudulent practices that characterized the foreclosure crisis. The LAND Bank Team urges the Office of the Attorney General to provide the lead public and private sector investment in Illinois' first two land banks so they can help communities recover.