

What Makes a Great Leader?

*Reflections on the Resident Owned Community Leader Training
from NWMT's Assistant Director Kaia Peterson*

What makes a great leader? This is one of the questions posed to leaders from resident owned communities when they gathered in Great Falls last weekend. The twenty residents from across Montana were participating in a two-day training to give them new skills, and connections to other resident leaders. Here is what they said:



- Strong personality and charisma
- Ethical and moral character
- Lead by example
- It's not a position, it's a way of life
- Listen to hear, not to reply
- Good speaker
- Optimistic
- Ability to follow-through
- Patience
- Consistency

Mark Wilmarth of Vision West Consulting went on to ask more questions about leadership and the complexity of group dynamics as he facilitated a portion of the training with a focus on Leadership and Listening. Anyone who has been to a city council meeting or participated in a board meeting of any kind has likely experienced the challenges of working in a group. Leaders of resident owned communities manage these challenges every day as they navigate their neighborhood needs from barking dogs, to new sewer connections, to summer social gatherings.

As evidenced by the responses on leadership, these residents have a great handle on what makes a great leader. Now they return to the continuing work of being great leaders. We're looking forward to seeing the impacts these leaders have on their communities in the coming year, and supporting their efforts.

Special thanks to NeighborWorks America, NeighborWorks Great Falls and Carol Bronson, ROC USA and Gary Faucher, Cascade County Commissioner Jane Weber, and Mark Wilmarth of Vision West Consulting for their roles in making this training possible and successful.



The Housing Conference is less than two weeks away!



Statewide Housing Conference May 8-10, 2017 in Great Falls

If you're still wanting to sign up for the housing conference, it's not too late! The conference takes place May 8-10th in Great Falls. [If you're interested in attending click here to find out more details.](#) We have a packed agenda and we are anxiously awaiting our time to gather with folks in housing from across the state. Please note, the NWMT office will be closed during the conference to allow staff to attend!

A Look at Community Land Trusts

From guest writer Hermina Harold, Community Organizer for the North-Missoula CDC

After much deliberation by the Montana Legislature, a bill defining Community Land Trusts has finally passed, receiving the Governor's Signature on April 20th. House Bill 200 was sponsored by Representatives Dave Fern and Frank Garner.

So, what is a Community Land Trust? According to the freshly-printed Montana Law: "Community



land trust" means a nonprofit organization exempt from taxation under section 501(C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code that holds title to land beneath individually owned housing units for the purpose of preserving affordable housing."

CLTs already exist in Montana, and they work. CLTs provide opportunities for people to purchase homes at an affordable price by 1) subsidizing the homes just once, 2) keeping the cost of the land out of the price of the home by holding it in trust, and 3) entering into long term ground leases with homeowners that limit the amount of equity a homeowner can take out of the home at resale. These

homes act as an alternative to renting, and as a stepping stone to market-rate home ownership. A single infusion of subsidy in a CLT home benefits the initial home buyer and all subsequent buyers.

There are currently three nationally-certified CLTs operating in Montana:

The **North-Missoula Community Development Corporation** has operated a CLT for affordable housing and commercial space for 15 years. **The Northwest Montana CLT** in Kalispell has been operating since the recession. **Trust Montana** is relatively new, statewide, and is chartered to hold land for a variety of community uses including farming, housing, and commercial development.

Between Missoula and Kalispell, CLTs have provided over 150 families with the opportunity to own their homes. When CLT homeowners sell, they are required to sell to another low-moderate income household. Most CLT homeowners earn enough equity from their sale for a down payment on a market-rate home.

Now that CLTs are defined in Montana, those of us who work to provide affordable housing here, with very limited resources to do so, will have an easier time facilitating CLT development. When someone has a question about this unique model, we can point to Montana State Law to explain how it works. Our hope is that an increase in permanently affordable housing will result in an increasingly equitable Montana. Thank you to those who helped make HB200 law!

If you have any questions for Hermina or would like to talk with her, [you can click here to email her.](#)

