

2024 Shared Equity Homeownership Series - Key Takeaways

The San Antonio Area Chapter of the Asset Funders Network (SAA AFN) is a regional chapter of grantmakers who advance equitable wealth building and economic mobility. With a shared commitment to improving the financial wellbeing of people in our region, San Antonio Area AFN members collaborate within the nonprofit, public, and private sectors to share knowledge, put that knowledge to work through innovative practices and collaborative initiatives, and work to leverage and increase collective systemic investments in asset building.



In May and October 2024, SAA AFN convened **21 community partner organizations** working on economic mobility in our region to discuss emerging forms of shared equity homeownership like community land trusts and how we build the capacity of our ecosystem to support these new ownership opportunities. Here are **capacity building opportunities** for funders identified in these discussions.

1 Individual Capacity Building

Though one of the goals of these events was to identify opportunities at varying levels to build capacity, there was a shared understanding of **inherent overlap in both strategies and resulting benefits**. *"There are interconnected benefits to households and communities. Some of the challenges we're seeing here, where investors are buying up a lot of properties, and households can't afford housing, they're all interconnected."*

- 1. Help diverse emerging housing providers like developers grow their capacity through funding, connections, knowledge.**
 - SEED ACADEMY San Antonio lifted up as a model for investment.
 - *"I now know who to pick up the phone and text."*
- 2. Invest in systems that enable to community to capture their own input.**
 - The Open Table: Community members serve as leaders and paid employees in mapping community networks and collecting and analyzing data.
- 3. Support for frontline housing and financial counselors - key participants in our safety net - to develop diverse skills, including training on trauma-informed coaching.**

2 Organizational Capacity Building

Creative, flexible funding was a cornerstone topic in the discussion of building organizational capacity. *"It's never been a shortage of ideas. It's a shortage of relationship, a shortage of partnership, and a shortage of funding [...]. And I think the more that the funders are standing alongside and having conversation with the grantees beyond just 'Did you apply for this funding opportunity?' [...] It's 'What are you trying to do that you've already identified would be a game changer in the community. Let's figure out how we can craft the funding around that.'"*

- 1. Think expansively about investment opportunities.**

One example provided was a loan guarantee from a foundation, which opened the doors to millions in bank investments.
- 2. Lower barriers to funding through streamlined grant applications and reports.**

"Every obstacle is more capacity that that nonprofit doesn't have and more administration that ultimately dilutes the effectiveness of that program."
- 3. Strategic acquisition of land by anchor institutions** that may later be affordably sold to community-based organizations.
- 4. Grow organizations' backbone capacity** through investment in functions like bookkeeping and evaluation.
- 5. Grow organizations' governance capacity** through encouraging participation in initiatives like LISC's Effective Board series.

3 System-Level Capacity Building

Participants were clear that **time and ongoing commitment** are keys to systems-level work. *"This is work that requires patience. We all need to continue to advocate for the space and time and the relationship building that's necessary for the work to be successful."*

1. Invest in the relational work of building connections across organizations.

With pending changes in multiple levels of government, speakers emphasized now is the time to build the power of actors other than COSA to lead on housing as a priority. Speakers mentioned that strategic decision-making is currently concentrated within the City.

2. Engage with leaders running for elected office regarding their positions on affordable housing and community development.

Speakers also mentioned equipping community members to advocate through 'nuts and bolts' training in areas like preparing and submitting public comments.

3. Do narrative change work and public education.

Support efforts to help community members understand and see themselves in these new opportunities through sharing specific examples and points of entry.

4. Grow the capacity of our funding system to invest in a coordinated way.

"If you're good at providing a loan guarantee, don't try to do hands-on technical assistance. If you're good at reimbursing people for expenses like HUD is, do that. [...] If you're the City or a foundation and you can upfront that money from a bond, then do that, do the 'upfronting' so that you pay immediately and then HUD comes in 18 months later. And it doesn't seem like we've quite figured out who ought to be doing what and how we align our funding opportunities."

4 Opportunities for Collective Action

While all strategies referenced in this document align with AFN's 'Connect, Inform, Build, Influence' framework, the following opportunities are particularly timely:

- Invest in relational work and greater coordination through standing up **ongoing roundtable convenings**. These might include a mix of segmented (for example, a CBO group and a funder group) and blended gatherings.
- Build knowledge and connections for stakeholders closely involved with shared equity homeownership through **one-time convenings**. Groups engaged could include CBOs, funders, municipal employees, real estate agents, title officers, appraisers.
- Support **narrative change work** happening in the broader community.
- **Advocate for affordable homeownership** through engaging candidates for elected office in their positions on the topic.

Reflective Questions:

- **Do any of the opportunities for collective action stand out to you as something(s) we are particularly well- positioned to act on at this point?**
- **Are there other insights in this report that spark ideas for you around the role of philanthropy in this space?**
- **What other questions do you have, or what additional information do we need at this point?**

Participating Organizations

Build Healthy Places Network
 Cl:Now
 City of San Antonio- Chief Housing Officer*
 City of San Antonio- NHSD*
 City of San Antonio- Office of the Mayor
 Clearinghouse CDFI
 Culturingua*
 East SA
 Esperanza Peace and Justice Center*
 Family Service Association*
 Grounded Solutions Network*

Grow America*
 HUD
 JUST Financial
 LISC San Antonio*
 Mexican American Unity Council*
 Mission Affordable*
 National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders
 San Antonio for Growth on the Eastside
 San Antonio Housing Trust*
 The Impact Guild*
 Velocity TX
 Workforce Solutions Alamo

*Panelist.

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