



Trenton will get assistance from national group to integrate vacant property information in city systems

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TRENTON – The Center for Community Progress announced Thursday plans to provide technical assistance to Trenton to tackle the city's large number of vacant and abandoned properties.

Trenton was chosen in the second round of the Technical Assistance Scholarship Program offered by the center along with Detroit, Dallas, and Gary, Indiana.

In Trenton, the group will offer aid in setting up a better way to collect and share data about vacant properties across city departments.

"It will be making sure that the data flows and helping us use the data more strategically," said Monique King-Viehlend the director of Housing and Economic Development. "It will allow us to focus things like our code enforcement efforts and be a little more strategic."

The city applied for the program in partnership with Isles, Inc, a local nonprofit that conducted a block-by-block survey of the city to collect data on vacant properties and buildings in the summer of 2014.

"We are thrilled that our vacant property strategy and approach was recognized as innovative and noteworthy," said Mayor Eric Jackson in a statement. "And we look forward to working with the center on taking the necessary next steps toward integrating our vacant property data across city departments, prioritizing the inspections department and recommending how to target code enforcement efforts and other strategies."

Marty Johnson, CEO of Isles, said the assistance will help take the data to the next level and elevate the hard work the organization put into collecting the information.

"It will enable us to improve the city's overall response to the residents' concerns," Johnson said.

What is most valuable, he said, is the immediate access to a national network of best practices and technical assistance, rather than the city and Isles embarking on this endeavor independently.

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