

40 Years of LISC CT

#CountDownto40

In honor of LISC Connecticut's 40th year anniversary, a series of capacity building stories will be shared -- featuring prominent partners, funders, and community members.



Adam St. Development: *"Even though it has been a huge learning curve, I'm really grateful for this experience. One of my successes is getting us to closing for our Adam St. Phase I Project." - Tichina*

Featuring: Tichina Pemberton-Mann *Real Estate Development Project Manager, NEST*

Please introduce yourself.

My name is Tichina Pemberton-Mann. I am the Real Estate Development Project Manager for NEST in Waterbury. I have been working with NEST since July of 2022 and I earned a Master of Public Health from the University of Bridgeport in 2022.

What was your professional journey like?

While getting my Master's, I was really interested in emergency health management and the housing crisis. Getting married and then having to go on the journey of becoming a first-time homebuyer during the middle of the pandemic – when housing prices skyrocketed – we became part of the community of people who were experiencing a housing crisis. We couldn't afford the inflated rents in areas close to our jobs and in areas of our choice, we couldn't afford to buy. That's when I said this is where I need to be – I need to be with people who are going through similar experiences. I knew what this process was like and I wanted to be able to serve this community and help in any way I can. I then reached out to a few different agencies and consultants in the area. Jen Svelnys, owner and cofounder of the Housing Development Team, LLC, took my call and I was able to talk to her about the affordable housing crisis here in CT. She then reached out to Kevin Taylor and advocated on my behalf that he take me under his wing. I've been at NEST since.

What was your experience with LISC CT's Housing and Community Development Leadership Institute (HCDLI)?



HCDLI helped me with focusing in on the parts of affordable housing that I like the most – advocacy and development. I have been able to connect with people from all walks of life and now have them in my arsenal for when I need extra help and support.

In my career, I've learned that just because it's slow doesn't mean it's not making an impact. The effect that the development process has on the surrounding community is just as crucial as the building of the structures.

How has NEST's partnership with LISC impacted your work and goals?

It has allowed me to branch off to reach some of my other professional goals such as becoming a proficient public speaker, increasing my project management skills and becoming a resource for my community and people who are seeking the knowledge that I sought when I was introduced to the HCDLI. The information received was invaluable and now I'm a resource that other cohort members can use in the future.

History

Housing and Community Development Leadership Institute (HCDLI)

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The Housing and Community Development Leadership Institute (HCDLI) is a free professional development program that is designed to encourage a pipeline – including women and Black, Hispanic, Indigenous, and other Persons of Color (BHIPOC) – into the affordable housing and community development sector.

A study conducted by NeighborWorks America in 2021 highlighted the challenges in the recruitment and retention of qualified candidates in the space. Among these challenges are:

- the need for higher-level technical and leadership skills in the affordable housing and community economic development world;
- lack of inclusivity and representation for BHIPOC individuals, especially in levels of senior leadership;
- lack of visibility for career opportunities for young professionals; and
- the need to equip and sustain new leaders with institutional knowledge.

Funded by the Connecticut Department of Housing and the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, the HCDLI administers engaging and relevant curriculum to address these myriads of challenges and prepare individuals for staff and/or board roles at housing and community economic development organizations. Through virtual and in-person workshops, online training certificates, networking and career panels, and paid hands-on learning opportunities, participants are able to build their expertise in the sector more broadly and connect with seasoned professionals.

Courses offered focus on affordable housing, housing development, asset and property management, grant writing and administration, neighborhood planning, and more.