



Owner-Driven Preservation Strategy Playbook



LOCAL RENTAL OWNERS COLLABORATIVE (LROC)

Playbook: Recommended Steps to Stand Up an Owner-Driven Housing Preservation Strategy, Based on the LROC Pilot Program in South Los Angeles, California

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Steps For Launching an Owner-Driven Preservation Strategy



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Understand
the impact of
small-scale
landlords

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Select pilot
neighborhood

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Define program
principles and
goals

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Build
partnerships
and staffing
structure

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Conduct owner
outreach and
engagement

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Design flexible
owner-driven
services and
support

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UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT OF SMALL-SCALE LOCAL PROPERTY OWNERS

Understand the Impact of Small-Scale Property Owners

- Many small-scale local property owners, often referred to as “mom and pop” landlords, are not large corporations seeking high profits. Instead, they are moderate- to low-income community members who provide affordable housing within their own neighborhoods while building intergenerational wealth.
- Providing support to small-scale local owners can help to:
 - Reduce incentives to sell to speculative market-rate investors
 - Increase property investments and improve the overall quality of housing stock
 - Stabilize housing for lower-income families
 - Reduce owners’ time and management burden
 - Reduce personal and familial financial losses

KEY ACTION REQUIRED

Quantify the impact of small-scale ownership: Analyze property records, assessor data, and housing datasets to understand the share of unsubsidized affordable housing owned by small-scale landlords, and how it contributes to neighborhood stability and affordability.

The Impact of Small-Scale Local Property Owners



Before launching LROC, the implementation team analyzed local data to understand how much unsubsidized affordable housing is owned by small-scale landlords and the critical role these owners play in maintaining affordability and neighborhood stability.

76%

OF LOS ANGELES'S
UNSUBSIDIZED BELOW
MARKET UNITS ARE
OWNED BY SMALL
LANDLORDS

60%

OF SMALL-SCALE
OWNERS ACQUIRE
ASSETS FOR LONG-
TERM CASH FLOW
RATHER THAN SALE VALUE

20%

HIGHER AVERAGE
OPERATING EXPENSE
RATIO DUE TO SMALL
SCALE AND INFORMAL
MANAGEMENT

30%

OF OWNERS SPEND OVER
THREE HOURS PER
WEEK ON PROPERTY
MANAGEMENT

Source: California Housing Partnership, Buildium Property Owners' Prospective Report; Rental Housing Finance Survey

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SELECT PILOT NEIGHBORHOOD

Select Pilot Neighborhood

Target Neighborhood Characteristics

- High concentrations of small-scale, unsubsidized affordable housing with documented capital and maintenance needs
- Significant renter vulnerability, including high rent burden and displacement risk
- Presence of long-term, community-rooted owners committed to affordability and stability
- Strong local partners (nonprofits, CDCs, CDFIs) with trusted relationships to small property owners

The LROC program was launched in the South Los Angeles neighborhood of Los Angeles, California.

KEY ACTION REQUIRED

- Analyze local data to identify neighborhoods with high rent burden, aging housing stock, and concentrations of small landlords
- Select pilot areas strategically to balance need, geographic diversity, and likelihood of early program uptake

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DEFINE PROGRAM PRINCIPLES AND GOALS

Define Program Principles and Goals



Identify the target owner and property profile the program is designed to serve

The LROC program targeted community-rooted small owners who own 2–20-unit properties. These owners often held their properties for decades, sometimes through inheritance, and live in the same neighborhood or building as their rental units.



Conduct owner focus groups and interviews to assess operational challenges, values, and needs.

During the design phase, four focus groups were conducted with owners to better understand their values and challenges related to operating and maintaining their buildings, as well as their interest in receiving additional information and resources.



Define the primary problem to solve

Early program development was supported through multiple brainstorming sessions, helping to translate owner feedback into clear program goals, service offerings, and eligibility criteria.

Define Program Principles and Goals

Program Principles

- **Owner-Centered Design:** LROC was shaped by owner feedback and lived experience, recognizing owners' deep community ties and commitment to balancing resident stability with long-term sustainability.
- **Racial Equity & Anti-Displacement:** The program prioritized historically under-resourced BIPOC and women owners to preserve affordability, stabilize communities, and maintain community control.
- **Flexibility & Responsiveness:** Program components evolved annually based on owner input, implementation lessons, and changing conditions.
- **Community & Peer Learning:** LROC fostered a collective model that promoted peer learning and mutual support.

Program Goals

- **Preserve affordability:** Stabilize small, unsubsidized rental properties in South Los Angeles by strengthening owner financial and operational stability
- **Build owner capacity:** Equip owners with education, peer learning, and technical assistance to maintain properties and access capital
- **Deploy responsive capital:** Provide rental arrears assistance, grants, and loans to reduce foreclosure risk and support reinvestment
- **Test scalable tools:** Pilot and evaluate innovative preservation strategies, including shared contracting models
- **Support generational wealth:** Help owners retain and reinvest into their properties

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BUILD PARTNERSHIPS AND STAFFING STRUCTURE

Partnerships: Selecting Key Partners

Characteristics Required

- **Shared values and community alignment:** Partners should be committed to affordability preservation and displacement prevention, with strong community roots.
- **Complementary expertise:** Partners should contribute distinct strengths across policy, finance, construction, technology, property management, asset management, and community engagement.
- **Trusted relationships:** Partners must be credible with owners, tenants, funders, and public agencies.
- **Organizational capacity:** Partners should have sufficient staffing and operational stability to support multi-year implementation.

KEY ACTION REQUIRED

- **Identify partners early:** Engage intermediaries, local nonprofits, and technical experts during program design.
- **Formalize roles and expectations:** Clearly define scope, responsibilities, and reporting requirements with partners.
- **Coordinate and collaborate:** Establish regular touchpoints, joint problem-solving, and aligned workflows for outreach, service delivery, data sharing, and communications.
- **Reassess and adapt:** Adjust partner roles and expertise as the program evolves and scales.

Build Partnerships

LROC Program Design

Chan Zuckerberg Initiative

Enterprise Community Partners

Finance/Fund Management

Evaluation

Contracts

Legal

Program Design

Coalition for Responsible Community Development (CRCD) and CRCD Partners

Marketing

Arrears and Repairs

Coordinated Services

Owner Services

Program Design

LROC Owners

Program Design & Feedback

Peer Learning & Leadership

Property Management

Resident Communication

Build Partnerships

LROC was made possible through a pioneering partnership among four core organizations and several implementation partners.

Core Partners

- **Chan Zuckerberg Initiative:** Provided \$5M in flexible funding and strategic guidance to pilot an equity-driven preservation model. CZI also offered operating grants to core partners.
- **Enterprise Community Partners:** Lead intermediary overseeing program design, fund management, partnerships, fundraising, and evaluation.
- **Coalition for Responsible Community Development (CRCD):** Local implementation partner delivering outreach, owner engagement, services, contractor coordination, and daily operations in South LA.
- **LROC Owners:** Core program partners who shaped offerings through ongoing feedback and lived experience.

Implementation Partners

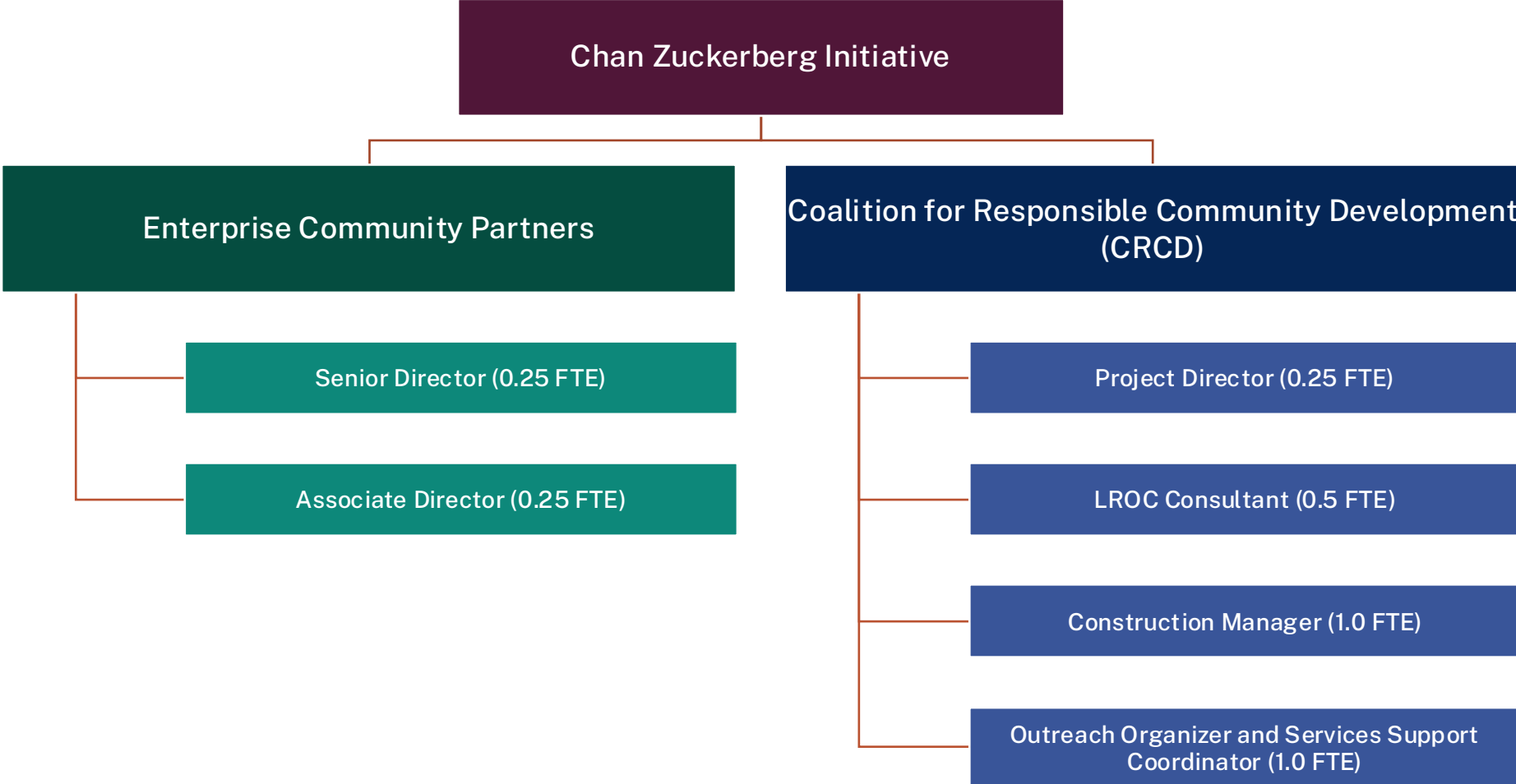
- **Avail:** Provided in-kind technology and staffing support through 2023, including applications, fund disbursement, and property management tools.
- **Forsyth Street Advisors & Evitarus:** Early design partners supporting program concept development and owner focus groups.
- **Occidental College:** Evaluation partner conducting market analysis in 2023.
- **Additional Funders:** Ballmer Group, Roy + Patricia Disney Family Foundation, Weingart Foundation, and The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation.

Staffing Structure Options

	Option 1: In-house Hire staff needed to stand up and manage coalition	Option 2: Hybrid model Outsource key coalition functions and execution to local partners	Option 3: Outsource Outsource all functions and project management to strategic partner
Resource required	Hire/allocate 3-5 full-time staff to stand up and manage all core functions of the pilot	Hire/allocate 1-3 full-time staff to stand up pilot and manage key partnerships	Hire/allocate 1 project manager to own strategic partnership, manage investment, track progress, and scale
Partnership structure(s)	Connect with local non-profits to engage owners	Connect with local non-profits to engage owners Leverage local non-profit(s) for day-to-day execution of select pilot functions	Connect with local non-profits to engage owners Invest with strategic partner who is responsible for project management and execution of all coalition functions
Pros	Ability to quickly scale without partner Ability to understand impact and apply learnings when scaling	Outsource key execution to partners while maintaining ownership over strategy and results	Lower cost overhead More ownership from partners
Cons	Higher personnel cost Lower engagement and investment from partners (less of a priority if you are not the one on the hook)	Requires very clear division of labor and responsibilities between partners	Scaling likely requires additional partners Less opportunity to standardize Less ability to codify and apply learnings across settings

Regardless of staffing structure you will need to leverage local partnerships to engage owners

LROC Staffing Structure

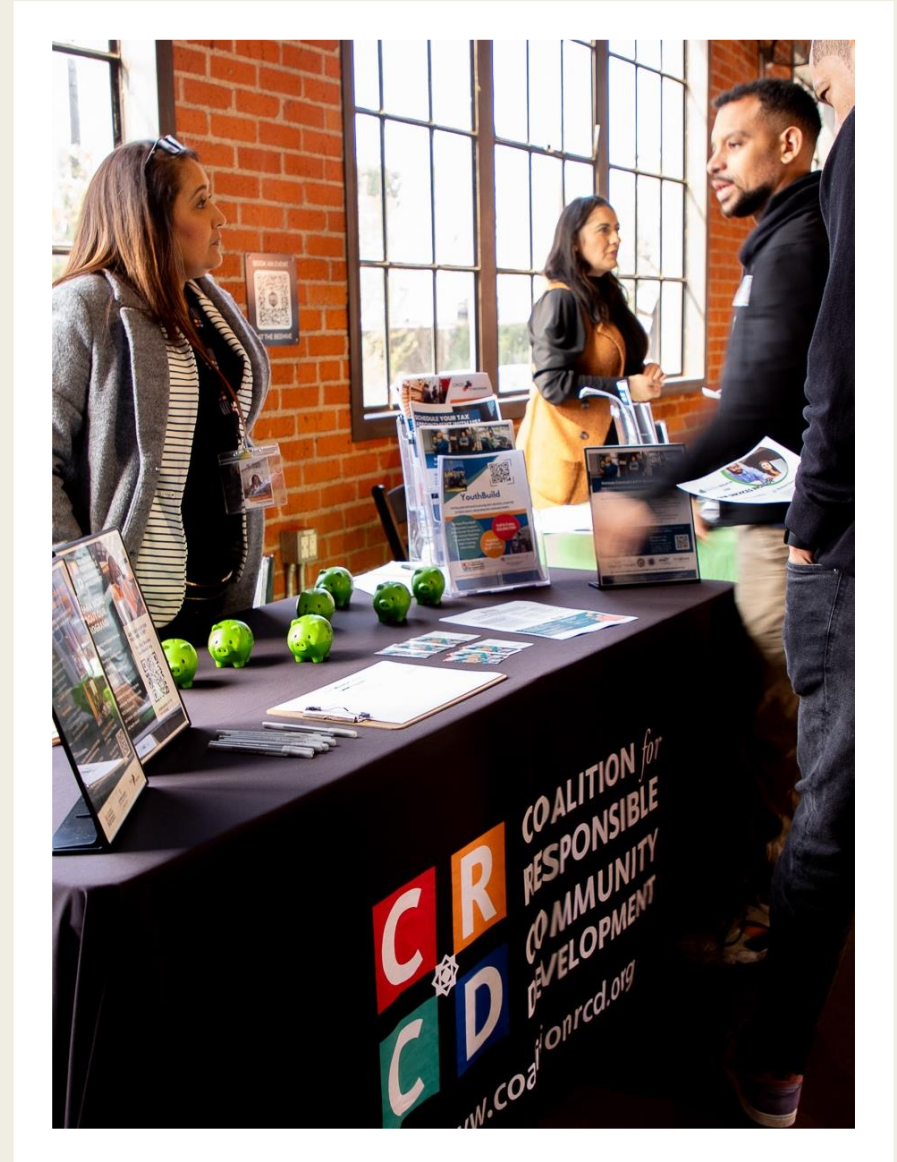


LROC Staffing Structure

LROC utilized a **hybrid model** and was supported by staff across CRCDD (1.75 FTE) and Enterprise (0.5 FTE), each providing distinct expertise.

- **Enterprise led program setup, design, partner procurement, subcontracting, compliance, and reporting.**
- **CRCDD managed local implementation, owner outreach, service delivery, and construction coordination.**

Staff capacity grew steadily, helping LROC become a fully operational program by 2022. In 2023, CRCDD further strengthened implementation by hiring a full-time Outreach Organizer and Service Support Coordinator, which was critical to building deeper and more consistent engagement with owners. The program was also supported by consultants who performed specialized tasks and technical gaps.



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CONDUCT OWNER OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Conduct Owner Outreach and Engagement

Plan for skepticism and trust-building

Assume hesitation toward nonprofit or government programs. Make outreach and trust building core program functions.

Define and differentiate the value proposition

Clearly distinguish the program by highlighting program offerings such as coordinated services and repair grants. Use simple, consistent messaging that supports both owners and tenants.

Leverage peer and community credibility

Engage early participants to share testimonials that validate the program's integrity. Incorporate owner voices into outreach materials and events to help build credibility and reduce skepticism.

Use a relationship-based, multi-channel outreach approach

Prioritize direct engagement through one-on-one calls, personalized follow-ups while simultaneously using canvassing, referrals, social media, and similar methods to reinforce awareness and trust.

Track and adapt as needed

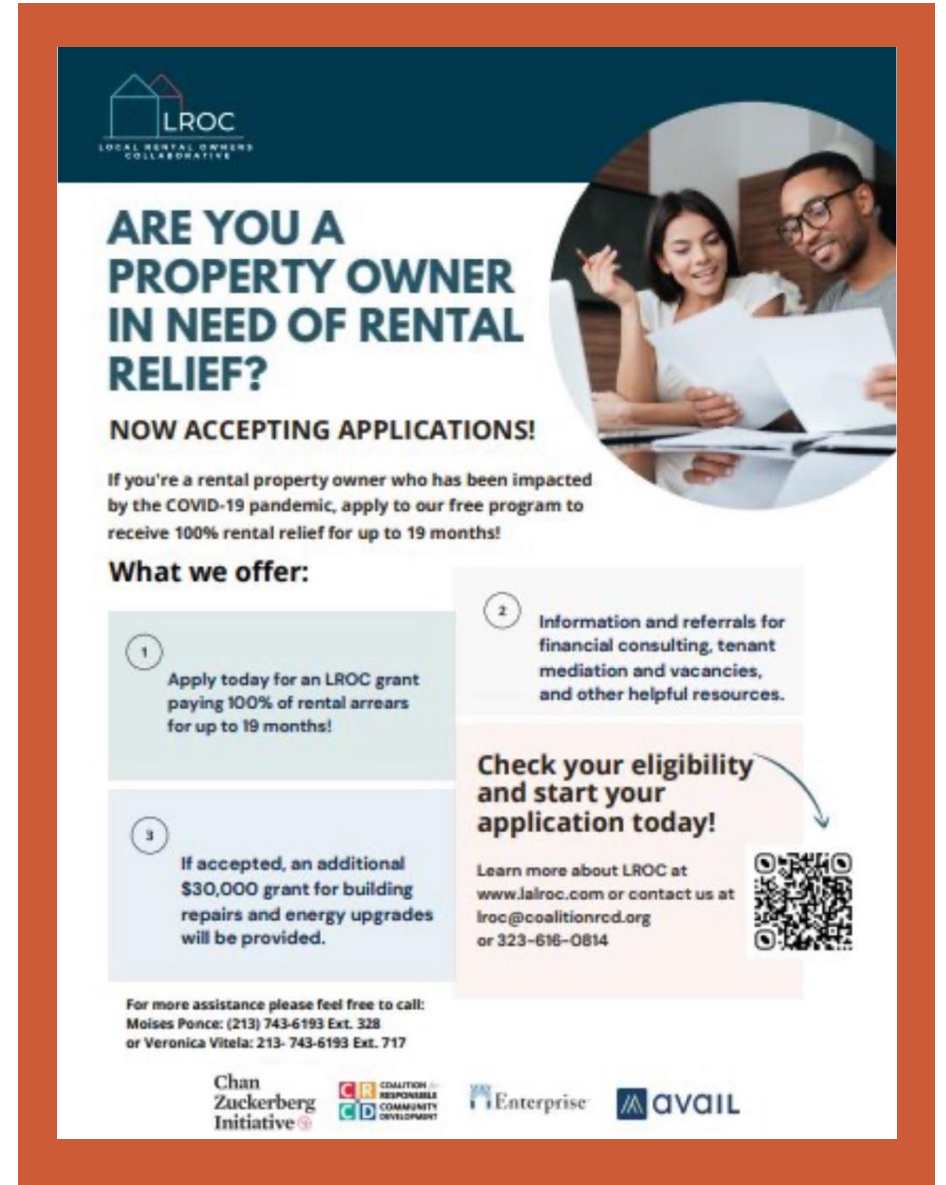
Monitor engagement, application rates, and referral sources to assess outreach effectiveness and refine strategies over time.

Outreach Methods

The LROC program received 150 applications, with 52 owners approved to participate.

While the team initially projected enrolling 200 owners, many were hesitant to join a program linked to nonprofits or public agencies that required sharing personal and property financial information. As a result, outreach focused on trust-building and relationship development. Although smaller than anticipated, the cohort allowed for more meaningful interaction and deeper engagement with participating owners.

Word of Mouth proved to be the most effective outreach strategy, with nearly 25 percent of applicants learning about the LROC program through referrals from peers. This organic, trust-based outreach outperformed other methods and underscored the importance of community networks.





The flyer features the LROC logo at the top left, which includes a house icon and the text 'LROC LOCAL RENTAL OWNERS COLLABORATIVE'. On the right side, there is a circular photograph of a man and a woman looking at documents together. The main headline reads 'ARE YOU A PROPERTY OWNER IN NEED OF RENTAL RELIEF?' in large, bold, blue letters. Below this, it says 'NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS!' and provides details about the program: 'If you're a rental property owner who has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, apply to our free program to receive 100% rental relief for up to 19 months!'. A section titled 'What we offer:' lists three benefits: 1. 'Apply today for an LROC grant paying 100% of rental arrears for up to 19 months!', 2. 'Information and referrals for financial consulting, tenant mediation and vacancies, and other helpful resources.', and 3. 'If accepted, an additional \$30,000 grant for building repairs and energy upgrades will be provided.' To the right of these points, there is a call to action: 'Check your eligibility and start your application today!' with a QR code and contact information: 'Learn more about LROC at www.lalroc.com or contact us at lroc@coalitionrcd.org or 323-616-0814'. At the bottom, there is contact information for assistance: 'For more assistance please feel free to call: Moises Ponce: (213) 743-6193 Ext. 328 or Veronica Vitela: 213- 743-6193 Ext. 717'. The footer contains logos for Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, Coalition for Responsible Community Development, Enterprise, and QVCIL.

Outreach Methods

Additional Outreach Methods:

- **Canvassing:** Postcards, door hangers, flyers, and in-person outreach in South Los Angeles.
- **Social Media:** Facebook outreach generated 50,000+ impressions.
- **Community Presentations:** Outreach to landlord and community organizations.
- **Public Partners:** Joint outreach with council district offices and inclusion in public newsletters.



ARE YOU A PROPERTY OWNER IN NEED OF RENTAL RELIEF?

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What we offer:


- 1 Apply today for an LROC grant paying 100% of rental arrears for up to 19 months!
- 2 Information and referrals for financial consulting, tenant mediation and vacancies, and other helpful resources.
- 3 If accepted, an additional \$30,000 grant for building repairs and energy upgrades will be provided.

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Chan Zuckerberg Initiative   Enterprise  

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**DESIGN FLEXIBLE
OWNER-DRIVEN SERVICES
& SUPPORT**

Design Flexible Owner-driven Services & Support

LROC developed and refined a comprehensive set of services organized under two strategic pillars: **Owner Services** and **Capital Support**.

Owner Services

This pillar aimed to build knowledge, confidence, and long-term stability for participating LROC members. Recognizing that many small rental property owners operate without access to the networks, legal support, or technical tools of institutional landlords, LROC created a suite of support services focused on capacity-building and community connection.

Capital Support

To complement owner services, LROC delivered flexible capital to help owners stabilize operations, preserve affordability, and avoid foreclosure or property loss. This included grant funding, direct relief, and loan products tailored to the realities of small property ownership.



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DESIGN FLEXIBLE OWNER-DRIVEN
SERVICES & SUPPORT

OWNER SERVICES

Peer Networking

Through convenings, meet-ups, and online groups like Facebook, owners built community and provided input that shaped program priorities each year.

GOAL

To build a strong, connected owner community by creating spaces for peer support, information sharing, and meaningful input on program design. Small-scale local owners often do not feel represented or mission-aligned with traditional apartment associations.

WHAT IS REQUIRED TO SET UP

- **Intentional relationship-building design:** Treat peer connection as a core program component with planned spaces for interaction and exchange.
- **Dedicated convenings:** Host periodic in-person or virtual convenings to strengthen relationships, reflect on progress, and co-plan future activities.
- **Owner-friendly platforms:** Use widely adopted tools (e.g., WhatsApp, Facebook) for real-time peer support and information sharing.
- **Feedback Methods:** Maintain ongoing engagement with owners and gather feedback through surveys and conversations to understand emerging needs and improve program offerings

PARTNERS REQUIRED AND ROLES

- **Small-Scale Local Property Owners:** Participating in peer networking opportunities while providing feedback through surveys, interviews, and other engagement channels
- **Dedicated Staff:** Assign staff to build and drive relationships among program members, facilitate in-person events and networking opportunities, and communicate member priorities to program staff

BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- **Varying levels of owner engagement:** Not all owners are equally comfortable participating in group settings or online forums.
- **Logistical and cost constraints:** In-person retreats require coordination, funding, scheduling, and sufficient participant availability that can limit frequency.
- **Balancing informality and oversight:** Programs must support organic peer exchange while ensuring accuracy, inclusivity, and alignment with program values.

IMPACT

- By 2025, 74% of owners reported feeling more connected to other landlords in their community

Best Practice: Intentionally build peer connections through a mix of in-person retreats and online platforms, enabling real-time support, relationship-building, and informed program planning.

Working Group

The working group is a subset of leaders within the larger membership who provide strategic guidance, inform program decisions, advise on services, and actively participate in initiatives.

GOAL

Establish a standing forum for key owners to discuss critical issues, shape program offerings, and build leadership capacity for future program management.

WHAT IS REQUIRED TO SET UP

- **Define Roles and Responsibilities:** Define and communicate working group roles to the general membership, providing regular updates and insights to foster transparency
- **Working Group Selection Process:** Select members of the working group through a voting process or appointment, ensuring accountability and giving the general owner group visibility into who is representing them
- **Structured Meeting Cadence:** Hold regular meetings, ideally monthly, with a mix of in-person and virtual options to maximize participation and engagement

PARTNERS REQUIRED AND ROLES

- **Committed Owners:** Select owners who are engaged, respected, have capacity and willingness to take on advisory roles
- **Dedicated Staff:** Assign staff to manage operations, track recommendations, and ensure follow-up on working group input

BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- **Working group availability and engagement:** Some working group members may have competing priorities, affecting consistency of participation
- **Balancing in-person vs. virtual:** Virtual meetings may increase attendance, but in-person gatherings foster richer conversations
- **Integration with broader program:** Recommendations from the working group must be effectively incorporated into program design and implementation to be meaningful

IMPACT

- Working Group members strengthened LROC offerings by guiding strategy, shaping programs, and modeling active peer leadership.

Best Practice: Create a leadership subset within the membership, selected through a transparent process and supported by a regular, structured meeting cadence. Clearly communicate which members are a part of the working group and ensure the working group provides updates to the broader membership.

Quarterly Webinar & Monthly Newsletter

Quarterly webinars covered property management, code enforcement, eviction protections, financial planning, and energy efficiency, with digital newsletters reinforcing content and sharing timely alerts, funding opportunities, and policy updates.

GOAL

Empower LROC owners with practical knowledge and timely resources to manage properties effectively, maintain assets, comply with housing compliance laws and access funding opportunities.

WHAT IS REQUIRED TO SET UP

- **Dedicated facilitation and coordination:** Assign staff to plan quarterly sessions, coordinate guest speakers, and manage logistics, follow-up, and documentation.
- **Owner-informed content planning:** Use owner surveys, technical assistance requests, and policy changes to inform webinar topics.
- **Consistent communications infrastructure:** Maintain an email list, registration system, and simple digital tools to distribute newsletters and webinar reminders.
- **Feedback method:** Collect participant feedback and track actions taken to refine content and inform future program components.

PARTNERS REQUIRED AND ROLES

- **Small-Scale Local Property Owners:** Participating in webinars and staying informed through newsletters.
- **Guest Speakers:** Delivering engaging and relevant content during webinars.
- **Dedicated Staff:** Organizing webinars and publish newsletters.

BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- **Owner time constraints:** Owners have busy schedules and competing priorities which may lead to lower attendance webinars
- **Rapidly changing policy environment:** Keeping content accurate and up to date requires continuous monitoring of local and state regulations
- **Technology access and comfort:** Owners have different levels of digital access and familiarity which may limit participation

IMPACT

- **84% of owners** said webinars and newsletters were “very helpful” or “somewhat helpful” in managing their properties.
- **3 in 4 owners** said they took a concrete action because of a webinar or newsletter (e.g., applied for a rebate, checked compliance status).

Best Practice: Provide owners with at least two weeks’ notice for scheduled webinars to boost attendance. Encourage participants to engage openly during virtual sessions, assign a team member to monitor the chat for questions and feedback, and maintain a centralized archive of all resources shared, newsletters, and webinar recordings that owners can access for future reference.

Physical Needs Assessments (PNAs)

Assessments conducted by qualified inspectors to help owners understand and plan for deferred maintenance, code compliance, and long-term capital investments.

GOAL

To identify critical repairs and support owners in improving the safety of their properties.

WHAT IS REQUIRED TO SET UP

- **Integration with program services:** Pair PNA results with educational sessions (e.g., webinars) to help owners understand reports and prioritize repairs. Use PNA findings to guide funded repair projects, shared contracting, or other support initiatives.
- **Data collection and analysis:** Track findings across properties to identify trends, inform program planning, and prioritize resource allocation.
- **Owner communication:** Clear communication is needed when scheduling the PNAs. After PNAs are completed, present findings clearly and constructively to owners, emphasizing safety, compliance, and long-term property value.

PARTNERS REQUIRED AND ROLES

- **Qualified professionals:** Engage trained professionals to conduct the PNAs
- **Dedicated Staff:** Conducting inspections, analyzing data, and following up with owners requires dedicated staff time and coordination with owners and the PNA inspectors.

BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- **High volume of needs vs. available funding:** The total repair need far exceeded available resources, limiting the number of property repairs that could be addressed. PNAs revealed well over \$10M in repairs across 41 owners and 57 buildings.

Best Practice: Leverage qualified consultants or in-house expertise to support owners in understanding and responding to PNA findings.

IMPACT

PNA Findings	% LROC Properties
Unsafe Electrical Wiring	86%
Need Main Electric Panel Replacement	75%
Need Electric Sub-Panel	70%
Roof Repair	53%
Sub-floor Repair	39%
Foundation Repair	37%

Financial & Legal Coaching

One-on-one support in financial management, legal services, and business planning, including legal entity formation (e.g., LLCs and trusts), succession planning, and generational wealth transfer.

GOAL

To expand owners' access to trusted financial and legal expertise that supports sustainable property stewardship and asset protection.

WHAT IS REQUIRED TO SET UP

- **Needs assessment:** Identify owners' financial and legal support needs through surveys, focus groups, and property assessments.
- **Dedicated office hours:** Offer scheduled office hours or consultations for one-on-one financial planning.
- **Group education options:** When individual legal representation is not feasible, provide webinars or workshops to cover general legal topics.
- **Continuous outreach and feedback:** Track satisfaction, uptake, and emerging needs to adjust services over time.

PARTNERS REQUIRED AND ROLES

- **Qualified Financial and Legal Consultants:** Financial planners or legal partners who can provide personalized guidance while aligning with program values.
- **Dedicated Staff:** To schedule the office hours and group education as needed

BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- **Finding aligned legal partners:** Many pro bono or mission-driven attorneys only focus on tenant rights, while other providers may not share program values.
- **Liability limitations:** Attorneys may be unwilling to advise a group due to risk, limiting shared legal resources.

IMPACT

- Fifteen owners utilized the financial and legal coaching services, with 92% reporting that the support was very helpful.

Best Practice: Combine one-on-one guidance, group webinars, and short targeted resources to address diverse owner needs and boost engagement. When participation was lower the program pivoted to develop short, targeted videos on key financial topics and provide professional photography for unit turnover, helping owners enhance marketing efforts and improve financial outcomes.

Entity Planning

Partnered with a strategic planning consultant to engage owners in a focused planning process to envision the organization's future after establishment and evaluate pathways to independence.

GOAL

To expand the organization's reach and strengthen collective power to advance shared priorities and long-term sustainability.

WHAT IS REQUIRED TO SET UP

- **Engage experienced consultants:** Select a consultant with expertise in mission-driven organizations and stakeholder engagement to guide design and implementation.
- **Assess owner priorities and commitment:** Conduct surveys and interviews to identify member needs, interests, and willingness to participate in governance.
- **Facilitate consensus and decision-making:** Provide opportunities for members to review findings, ask questions, and vote on the proposed options (e.g., forming a 501c3 nonprofit).
- **Support capacity building:** Offer technical assistance in strategic planning, fundraising, communications, leadership and governance to help owners lead and sustain the new entity.

BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- **Building consensus:** Owners struggled to prioritize collective needs over individual business concerns. Owner continuity from meeting to meeting was challenging to maintain through multiple meetings across consultants.
- **Limited leadership and fundraising capacity:** While owners were interested in forming a new entity, some were hesitant to take on leadership or fundraising roles, requiring external consultant support for capacity building in strategic planning, communications, and fundraising.

PARTNERS REQUIRED AND ROLES

- **Consultants with nonprofit and organizational expertise:** Consultants to facilitate assessment of priorities, survey members, design entity structure, provide recommendations on budget, staffing, and governance. (e.g., The Future Organization)
- **Owners:** Provide input on member priorities, participate in consensus-building, vote on structure, and support capacity-building initiatives.
- **Dedicated Staff:** To coordinate meetings and ensure continuity across conversations.

IMPACT

- Through a collaborative planning process, LROC owners identified priorities, voted to establish LROC as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and are now actively working to launch the organization.

Best Practice: Engage consultants with deep community knowledge to provide expert facilitation and technical support, guiding members from individual interests to collective priorities while fostering sustainable structures, capacity-building, and membership growth. To the extent possible, a single consultant who can cover all bases is preferred to support for continuity and trust building.



6 DESIGN FLEXIBLE OWNER-DRIVEN
SERVICES & SUPPORT

CAPITAL SUPPORT

Owner Agreements

Capital Support was one of the most valued program pillars, with many owners joining and staying engaged because of these resources. It helped reduce foreclosure risk, prevent costly emergency repairs, and improve property quality for tenants. LROC owners signed owner agreement before receiving capital support to reduce the risk of displacing existing tenants. This was especially important given the timing of LROC's launch during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under the LROC agreement, owners committed to:

- ❑ **Eviction protections:** Owners agreed not to initiate new eviction proceedings and to dismiss or halt any in-progress evictions once the owner was accepted into the program. Payments would only be disbursed after proof that eviction proceedings had been stopped.
- ❑ **Rent limits:** Owners agreed not to raise rents beyond CPI allowances for 12 months from the date of the Agreement. For rent-controlled units, allowable increases defaulted to ordinance limits.
- ❑ **Lease renewals:** Owners agreed to renew all tenant leases for units unless just cause could be demonstrated for non-renewal.

Rental Arrears Grants

Direct support to owners to cover missed tenant rent payments during times of crisis (e.g., COVID-19).

GOAL

Prevent displacement by alleviating owner financial strain and supporting tenant housing stability.

WHAT IS REQUIRED TO SET UP

- **Needs assessment:** Identify owners experiencing rental income loss and quantify arrears to determine eligibility and funding priorities.
- **Flexible funding source:** Secure dedicated financial resources that can be distributed quickly to owners during crises or periods of high financial stress.
- **Eligibility and application process:** Establish eligibility criteria and an efficient application system to minimize payment delays and administrative burden.
- **Direct fund disbursement mechanism:** Select a method to ensure timely delivery of funds to owners
- **Ongoing monitoring and reporting:** Track outcomes to measure impact, such as property retention, mortgage catch-up, and eviction prevention.
- **Simplified eligibility requirements:** No tenant verification or owner financial contribution required, streamlining access to funds for owners

PARTNERS REQUIRED AND ROLES

- **Dedicated Staff:** Responsible for approving applications and managing fund disbursements.
- **Partner Organizations:** Able to provide direct-to-consumer payments.

BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- **Funding limitations:** Resources may be insufficient to meet the full scale of arrears, especially during widespread crises.

IMPACT

- Over **\$750,000 distributed** in arrears aid
- **50% of LROC owners** reported that LROC helped them keep their properties, and 35% reported that LROC prevented their properties from going into foreclosure
- **Stabilized 69** unsubsidized rental properties
- Prevented the eviction of **143 renter households**

Best Practice: Crises can arise unexpectedly, so it is essential to be responsive to owner feedback and ensure that emergency financial assistance is both sufficient and easily accessible.

Repair Grants

Targeted funding for urgent health and safety repairs, particularly those related to habitability, accessibility, or code compliance.

GOAL

Enhance tenant habitability while reducing the financial burden on owners to make necessary repairs.

WHAT IS REQUIRED TO SET UP

- **Direct fund disbursement mechanism:** Select a method to ensure prompt delivery of funds to owners
- **Flexible program design:** Allow grant amounts and payment structures to adapt to owner financial capacity (e.g., smaller tranches for owners unable to front full costs).
- **Data collection and evaluation:** Track repairs completed, property stabilization, energy savings, and tenant satisfaction to measure program impact and guide future planning.

PARTNERS REQUIRED AND ROLES

- **Dedicated Staff:** Responsible for approving applications and managing fund disbursements.
- **Partner Organizations:** Able to provide direct-to-consumer payments.

BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- **Trust and enrollment challenges:** Owners required reassurance that participation would not be reported to code enforcement.
- **Need for vetted vendors:** Owners' request for a "trusted vendor list" highlighted the importance of providing access to pre-screened, licensed, and bonded contractors.
- **Difficulty assessing operating expenses:** Volatile costs and limited owner recordkeeping made it challenging to measure financial impact, requiring explicit data collection plans upfront.

IMPACT

- Over **\$1.2 million** in repair grants were disbursed.
- **66 properties** funded for critical repairs.
- **97% of owners** rated the repair grant as "very helpful" or "somewhat helpful."
- **83% of owners** reported the repairs improved tenant satisfaction and retention.

Best Practice: Design repair grant programs with flexible disbursement options based on owner capacity, using owner feedback to allow extra time for permitting and necessary corrections. Cluster properties in small groups (no more than five at a time) and complete upgrades, including final inspections, before moving on to the next group. Avoid starting all properties simultaneously, as errors on one property can be repeated across others if not identified early.

SOURCE: Owner interviews and surveys

Shared Contracting

The Physical Needs Assessments (PNAs) identified critical repairs needed across the LROC properties. Based on the results on the PNAs, LROC tested a pioneering effort to reduce the cost and complexity of property upgrades through a shared contracting structure, enabling bundled electrical improvements across multiple buildings.

GOAL

Test new preservation tools, including the shared contracting model, to determine replicable, scalable approaches that benefit both owners and tenants.

WHAT IS REQUIRED TO SET UP

- **Central project management:** Engage a trusted intermediary with experience managing large-scale construction projects to serve as the single point of contact for owners, contractors, and public entities.
- **Bundling and procurement:** Group multiple small properties into a single procurement package, issue an RFP, and select qualified contractors capable of handling the collective work.
- **Owner engagement and communication:** Provide detailed project timelines, proactive updates, and guidance on tenant relocation or temporary disruptions.
- **Flexible scope and contingency planning:** Allow adjustments to accommodate tenant needs, unforeseen repairs, or permitting challenges.
- **Data tracking and evaluation:** Monitor project costs, completion status, cost savings, and property improvements to assess impact and inform future replication.

PARTNERS REQUIRED AND ROLES

- **Qualified general contractor:** To execute the repairs and work directly with any sub contractors as well as inspectors
- **Dedicated staff:** To coordinate the repairs with the general contractor and communicate with owners

BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- **Flexible scope and tenant coordination required:** Interior electrical work triggered tenant relocation and city oversight, increasing costs and timelines.
- **Change orders and limited contingency funding:** Unforeseen repairs and permit delays exceeded the project's contingency, requiring additional resources.
- **Owner communication:** Effective tenant communication and detailed project timelines were critical for participation and satisfaction.
- **Coordination:** Aligning contractors, multiple owners, utilities, and inspections requires sustained project management and communication.

IMPACT

- **88%** said the shared contracting model “saved them significant time.”
- **82%** would participate in a similar model again

Best Practice: Allow extra time for permitting and necessary corrections. Cluster properties in small groups (no more than five at a time) and complete upgrades, including final inspections, before moving on to the next group. Avoid starting all properties simultaneously, as errors on one property can be repeated across others if not identified early.

Loan Fund

The loan fund, launched in late 2025, is designed to provide longer-term, low-interest loans to owners needing financing beyond what grants could cover, including for minor rehabilitation or refinancing needs, at more affordable rates than personal credit cards or other private financial tools.

GOAL

Reduce the financial burden on owners for rehabilitation repairs, helping them avoid high-interest personal loans or credit card debt.

WHAT IS REQUIRED TO SET UP

- **Flexible, low-interest financing structure:** Design loans specifically for small-scale property owners, targeting rehabilitation, compliance upgrades, and capital needs identified through property needs assessments.
- **Partnership with an experienced lender:** Administer loans through a community loan fund or intermediary with expertise in small business lending.
- **Simplified application and technical assistance:** Offer user-friendly forms, webinars, and couple with one-on-one technical assistance to help owners navigate underwriting, documentation, and repayment.

PARTNERS REQUIRED AND ROLES

- **Dedicated Staff:** Manage loan underwriting and approvals, monitor repayments, and support applicants by answering questions and providing financial education.
- **Partner Organizations:** A partner organization with dedicated staff to operate a micro loan fund (e.g., CRCD)

BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- **Owner financial literacy and readiness:** Many small-scale owners lack formal financial statements. Additionally, some owners may need support to understand loan products, repayment obligations, and financial planning.
- **Program adoption challenges:** Even when owners are open to participating in the loan fund program, owners may hesitate to take on debt without understanding benefits or having sufficient confidence in the process.

Best Practice: Gather owner feedback on loan products and terms before release. Ensure required documentation is achievable for owners and that staff working directly with owners are responsive to questions and provide hands-on support with application completion.

CONCLUSION

Building an Owner-centered Preservation Model

When creating a similar program to LROC, consider the following:

- **Build trust first:** Invest in credibility with small, community-rooted owners. Provide clear, transparent, and responsive communication.
- **Leverage peer learning:** Create spaces for owners to share experiences alongside technical assistance.
- **Offer responsive capital:** Combine grants, shared services, and flexible financing to meet owners' needs.
- **Design for flexibility:** Use adaptive program structures that evolve with changing conditions and owner feedback.
- **Center owner voices:** Include small owners in policy discussions to advance equitable, anti-displacement solutions.



Policy & Program Recommendations

Addressing Deferred Maintenance

- **Property needs assessments:** Provide small owners with property assessments to identify deferred maintenance and link them to resources (grants, low-cost repairs).
- **Financing for improvements:** Offer low-cost financing for life-safety and system upgrades; pair with short-term rent stabilization or eviction-prevention agreements.

Improve Property Operations

- **Dedicated or preferred vendors:** Contract directly with vendors and offer services at reduced cost for qualifying small owners.
- **Streamlined tenant placement:** Establish clear, efficient processes to match tenants with small properties, improving placement speed and communication. Small-scale landlords are generally open to all tenant types.

Application Design

- **Simple applications:** Streamline programs applications into short, tech-enabled applications and pair with 1:1 support for small owners much like is available for other small business types.

Incentives

- **Certification & incentives:** Develop a streamlined certification for mission-driven small owners to access incentives (e.g., energy rebates, tax exemptions).
- **Provide Funding:** Preferential funding or other incentives or sale to local owners and/or mission-aligned organizations.

This playbook was developed in collaboration with the Enterprise Community Partners Solutions team and the Coalition for Responsible Community Development (CRCRD).

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