

# Clean, Safe Neighborhoods

St. Louis has a deteriorating housing stock and high vacancy rates in some neighborhoods due to discriminatory policies like [redlining](#), as well as decades of disinvestment. This primarily impacts Black St. Louisans who make up 75% of the population in census tracts where 20% or more of the housing stock is vacant. Living in neighborhoods with [unsafe housing](#) and [high vacancy rates](#) has negative effects on both physical and mental health and is a contributing factor to persistent racial and socioeconomic health disparities.

[Code enforcement](#) can help enhance the quality of life in cities and towns by enforcing ordinances that address a range of health and safety issues. When done effectively, code enforcement can help preserve and strengthen communities, keeping them vibrant. But code enforcement in St. Louis faces significant staffing and resource constraints and an outdated enforcement system that penalizes residents who face losing their homes.

## Code Enforcement Reimagined



Adapted from [hesterstreet.org](https://hesterstreet.org)

Recognizing these complex challenges were too large for one entity or sector to fix on their own, the [St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative](#) (VC) brought together a diverse group of stakeholders to develop an 18-month workplan to address vacancy and ensure neighborhoods are safe and livable. Through this planning process, VC worked with residents, nonprofits, city agencies, legal experts, and community leaders, among others, to increase collaboration and transparency. Together, they have created a [roadmap](#) to design a more [responsive code enforcement system](#) that will keep more people in their homes while improving neighborhoods.