

THE N&N
LAND JUSTICE
PROJECT

Focus Communities

INFORMATION & CURRICULUM
2024 - 2026



What is a Focus Community?

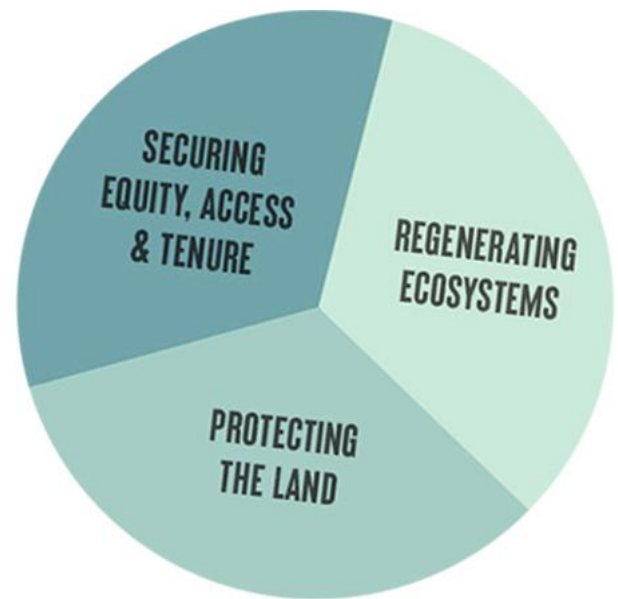
At the N&N Land Justice Project, we believe that religious land legacies can play a key role in racial and ecological healing.

Our Focus Community Program is a community of practice for religious landowners who want to create more bold, just, and creative plans for the lands they love. Starting with a 2-year cohort experience, this program builds power, connection, imagination, and practical know-how among communities while they build land justice into the heart of their property plans.

If your community is searching for future stewards of the lands you own, and you want practical ways to center racial and ecological healing in that pursuit, this program is for you! By the end of the 2-year experience, you will have built awareness of land justice in your community, and taken concrete, meaningful steps toward implementing a land justice property plan.

What is Land Justice?

Land Justice is the practice of centering ecological, social, and racial justice in decisions about how land is used, loved, and governed by people. It has three components: protecting the land from extraction; regenerating the health of land and ecosystems; and expanding land equity to those who have been most harmed by this economy – especially Black and Indigenous communities, and other people of color.



As a Focus Community, what will my community do?

In this two-year process of accompaniment and education, the land justice team in your community will:

- Study the history of land *injustice*, and *unlearn* what we assume to be just and normal about conventional private property transactions.
- Re-connect to the call of religious life, the charism of your community, and new possibilities for societal repair.
- Explore concrete models of land justice with diverse parameters, land types, financial realities, legal structures, and partnerships.
- Receive free, tailored support from our land justice team, as well as an extended network of vetted lawyers, real estate agents, facilitators, and land trust practitioners who specialize in land justice.
- Deepen and build with other religious communities who want to leave a culture-changing legacy of new, healing ways to relate with land and people.

How it works:

Each community selects a “Land Justice team” of 3-5 people who will support your community in identifying future stewards and/or land transitions that embody racial and ecological healing.

The team receives:

- A core curriculum for your land justice team to complete, including recordings, discussion questions, and additional resources (see excerpt below);
- Regular community calls for all Focus Communities to support cross-community learning and support (every 6 weeks);
- A four-day, in-person national gathering in May 2024;
- An on-site, multi-day land justice workshop for your entire community;
- Tailored support and accompaniment as you identify potential partners, build community buy-in, and utilize expert legal, real estate, financial and technical support from our extended network of faculty.



Why does a land justice property plan matter?

At a time of accelerating climate crisis and pervasive racial inequity, *land justice* calls us into a different way of relating with the Earth and each other. As a forward-thinking constituency of the Catholic Church — the largest private landowner in the world! — religious communities have the potential to inspire a national conversation and movement for land justice, changing how we think about property, land, and relationships in a culture-changing way. Thank you for considering joining us!

Potential outcomes of the 2-year cohort:

Achieving land justice will look different depending on the needs and circumstances of each community. For example, within 2 years, you may find that your community:

- Has successfully transferred (or has begun the process of transferring) the deed of a property to a new group of regenerative stewards who are most marginalized by our extractive economy, racism, and our history of colonization;
- Passed a resolution at your chapter to prioritize future owners from these marginalized communities;
- Has begun the process of a cultural use easement with a local Indigenous tribe, allowing ongoing legal access for ceremony and other cultural practices;
- Is preparing a vote at your next assembly to give 60% of the income from a property sale to a BIPOC collective in search of land in your region;
- Or another creative option for moving toward land justice!

How to Apply

1. Assess: Is this for my community?

- We are engaging in property planning for the future and/or searching for future stewards of our land, beyond our community's presence, and we'd like to do that in alignment with our values of ecological, racial, and economic justice.
- We have a leadership team that is supportive of our participation.
- We have 3-5 people ready to be our "land justice team." (*See next item.*)

2. Find your team! Create a cross-community team of 3-5 applicants who are well-poised to support your community in this process. These can be members, associates/oblates/co-members, or staff who are ready to make the following commitments:
 - a. Joining group calls with the full cohort every 6 weeks.
 - b. Participating in supplemental assignments, webinars, and/or meetings – est. 3-5 hrs/month.
 - c. Organizing your community to host the N&N team to lead an in-person, 2-3 day, land justice workshop for your community.

Please note: We strongly recommend that your land justice team includes at least one member of elected leadership.

3. Have your team watch our [Introduction to Land Justice recording](#).
4. Fill out our application form, and send it to brennacussenanglada@gmail.com by December 1, 2023:

**DOWNLOAD THE
APPLICATION**



The Curriculum (excerpt)

*This is a glimpse of the first year of the Focus Community curriculum -
to give you a taste of how your experience will begin.*



Part I: Rooting Down (*Feb-May*)

Feb 1, 2:30-4:30 / 1:30-3:30 CT: LAUNCH!

Welcome, onboarding, overview of the year and grounding in intentions.

- *Short assignments begin, including watching two webinar recordings and discussing reflection prompts with your land justice team.*

Mar 19: The Water We Swim In

Together, we will discuss – and grieve – the extent to which colonization and racism form the foundation of our economy and our current climate crisis.

- Teams begin *“Healing Land, Healing Legacies,”* a series of guided modules that will help you explore the history of your land through lenses of colonization, racism, and healing.
- Each team receives an in-depth deed study and “land story” provided by [Intermill Consulting](#).

May Gathering! (4 days in Person: Dates/Location TBA!)

In learning community, we will reckon with the gravity of these times, teach and learn real skills, envision new possibilities, commit to the call of this work, and celebrate our community.

Part II: Preparing the Soil (*June-October*)

June 20: Movement-building in your community

How can we sustain one another in the hard work of community discernment and decision-making? Let's get creative in addressing the barriers to creating change in community.

- Assignments include a short assessment of allies, roadblocks, and opportunities for land justice in your community, and the next module of "*Healing Land, Healing Legacies*."

Aug 1: Praxis I

Together, we'll dig in even deeper to real case studies, legal possibilities, creative ideas... all while keeping in mind your charism, commitments, and values as you move forward!

- Assignments for both Praxis sessions include reading and watching an array of case studies, and concluding the last module of *Healing Land, Healing Legacies*.

Sept 23: Praxis II

Continued exploration of specific options and contexts, with speakers and group discussion.

Part III: Branching Out (*November-February*)

Oct 31: From Solidarity to Trust

How do we find and deepen with potential new stewards? Bring questions, fears, and hopes, as we study how to create transparent, healing, & solidarity-based relationships.

- Assignments include a tailor-made training, *Cultural Competency for Land Collaborations*, and accompanying assessment.

Dec 17: Moving forward

Reflect on the year's learnings and begin workshopping your goals for the year ahead. In small groups, we will listen each other into clarity about what is calling your community next.

- Teams begin to meet with land justice faculty for more tailored support on goals

Feb 4: Recommitment!

We will share our goals and get to work on another year together!