



a city for all of us

1986 - Present

CNE believes the future of
Chattanooga is rooted in the
vibrancy of all our
neighborhoods and the
prosperity of all our people.

For 37 years,

CNE has dedicated itself to transforming neglected neighborhoods in Chattanooga and ensuring the financial well-being of its residents. During this time, CNE has been at the forefront of strengthening the housing market by providing a range of affordable and income-restricted homes for homeowners and renters alike. Our comprehensive approach, which includes neighborhood investment, resident empowerment, and wealth-building initiatives, has made a positive impact on the target neighborhoods where we have worked.

To accomplish our objectives, CNE takes a holistic approach. We invest in the development of affordable and mixed-income housing on vacant or blighted lots. We empower residents within these neighborhoods to become leaders, advocating for their communities and driving positive changes. Through our homeownership programs, we facilitate wealth building by providing education, financial assistance for down payments, and affordable mortgage options. Additionally, we offer home improvement loans and services to prevent foreclosures and maintain stable homeownership. Our affordable rental options help families save money, while financial literacy is actively promoted through counseling, coaching, and our annual Money School event. Moreover, our small-dollar loans serve as an alternative to costly payday lenders, benefiting local families by reducing excessive fees.

As a convener, advocate, and innovator, CNE remains committed to paving the way for sustainable neighborhood development and accessible housing options. Our ongoing efforts aim to create vibrant communities where residents thrive and prosper. With a strong focus on neighborhood revitalization and equitable housing opportunities, we continue to make a positive and lasting impact on the lives of individuals and families in Chattanooga. This report tells the story of our impact.

Timeline

1986 - mid 1990s

- CNE is incorporated with the mission of making all Chattanooga housing decent, fit and affordable.
- Launched home improvement loan program.
- Established down payment and mortgage assistance program.
- Awarded Urban Land Institute Award for Excellence for Small Scale Residential Development for Orchard Village, CNE's first concentrated new construction project.
- Chartered as the first affiliate member of the NeighborWorks America network.
- Recognized by HUD for work in homeownership promotion and preservation and CNE's "extraordinary partnership" with the City of Chattanooga.
- Launched the CNE Homeownership Center.
- Published the FasTrack to Homeownership homebuyer education curriculum, which became a national standard in homeownership education.
- Approved as the first nonprofit FHA Direct Endorsement Lender in the nation by FHA.

- Scattered affordable housing projects in Hill City, North Chattanooga, Alton Park and Lincoln Park.
- Scattered site affordable housing projects in Alton Park, East Chattanooga and Eastdale, one of the first LIHTC projects in Tennessee.
- Built 58 new and rehabbed affordable housing units in Ft. Negley, CNE's first targeted neighborhood.

Late 1990s - 2000s

- Board expanded the mission from affordable housing to neighborhood revitalization.
- Reached \$10 million in loans made to small businesses by CNE's CDFI.
- Initiated the revitalization of Cowart Place, a mixed-income neighborhood revitalization project featuring 35 units of housing built by CNE, and over 100 units of housing built by private-sector partners on land controlled by CNE.
- Launched the Chattanooga Foreclosure Prevention Hotline.
- Continued revitalization efforts in the Jefferson Heights neighborhood with approximately 100 new units of rental and homeownership housing. Initiated energy efficiency in our projects and homebuilder training for higher design standards.
- Continued revitalization efforts in the MLK and Bushtown neighborhoods with 150 additional units in three years.

2010s

- Released updated RENTWISE! handbook about tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities in Chattanooga.
- Prevented over 1000 foreclosures through THDA's Hardest Hit Program
- Launched Money School, an annual free financial education day providing free classes and seminars to community members.
- Launched the Community Loan Center of Southeast TN, an employer-based small dollar loan program that combats the harm of traditional payday lending institutions.
- Purchased 51 vacant parcels in Ridgedale and Highland Park with the goal of restoring the housing fabric of the neighborhood, stimulating new private investment, and creating new affordable housing units.
- Built the Mai Bell Apartment building in Highland Park, our largest mixed-use project —43 below market rate units and 8 income-restricted affordable housing units.
- In Highland Park/Ridgedale built 28 new single-family homes, two six-plex prototypes housing 36 units to add density in keeping with the scale of the original neighborhood.
- Initiated the development of new "Missing Middle" small-scale housing prototypes, which has led to 132 units in six different building typologies with 82 additional units under development.

- Adopted the Healthy Neighborhood Investment framework outlined by czb LLC. Scored the condition of 40,000 Chattanooga homes.

2020₊

- Responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by creating an online center of COVID resources. Administered a rental relief program to 142 families.
- Improved the curb appeal of 23 blocks through dumpster days, porch clean ups, build a planter and fix your-mailbox events.
- Initiated a community engagement campaign in the Oak Grove neighborhood focused on bringing residents together to improve their neighborhood. Results thus far include a 287% increase in 311 calls and the creation of the Oak Grove Plan.
- Created a policy platform to elevate affordable housing issues for candidates running for the mayor positions in the City and County.
- Created five new missing middle housing prototypes and 87 new units of affordable units in the Ridgedale and Highland Park neighborhoods.
- By 2024, CNE will have completed a total of 263 rental units and 28 single family homes along MLK and across the Oak Grove, Ridgedale and Highland Park neighborhoods.

Development Footprint



Development Footprint



Customer Impacts

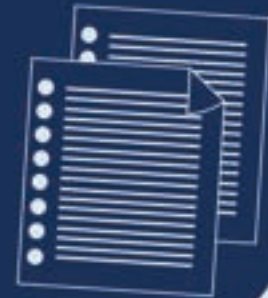
25,000+

25,000+
customers served
since inception



13,000+

13,000+ customers
counseled and
educated



6,000+

6,000+ homes created.
1,051 rental units built.
5,060 homeowners.



Financial Impacts



1/2
Billion

A half billion in
home equity
created for first-
time homebuyers

\$1m



\$1 million in
disposable income
put back into
renters' pockets

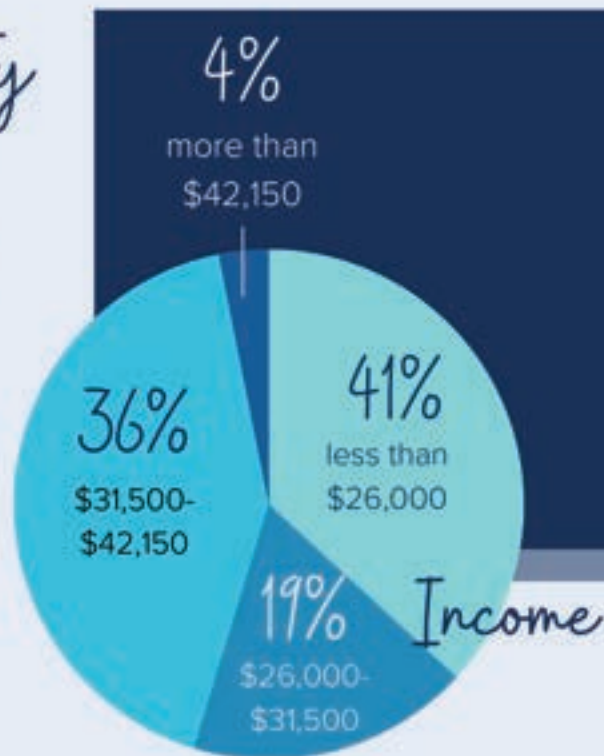
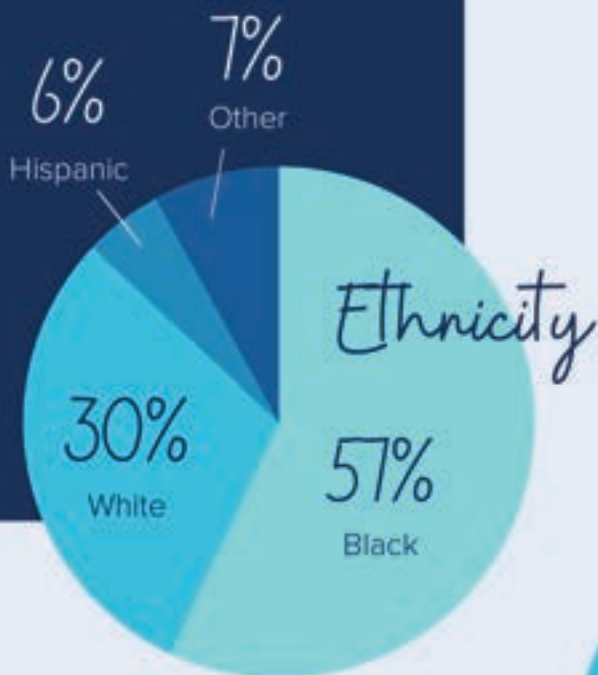
\$600M+



\$600+ million
in total
investments

Our Rental Community

Data reported from Appfolio Property Management Software as of September 2023.



Our Homeowners



53%

of CNE homebuyers
are African-American
bridging the racial
disparity in lending.

*Building
generational
wealth through
homeownership.*

Customer data
compiled from
1993 to date.



3,926

homes improved.

Stories of Impact

In 2019, after attending a neighborhood meeting where CNE community engagement staff highlighted our down payment assistance program, Councilwoman Raquetta Dotley came to CNE to find a way out of renting. Only the second person in her family to purchase a home, she was wary of the process. She mentioned being pleasantly surprised when CNE made navigating the process so easy. From homebuyer education to closing, she felt the support. She laughed saying, "It was so easy, I thought it was a trick. CNE said to me 'we know what you want, and we can help you get there.' I loved that."

When discussing her new status of homeowner, she shared her hopes of building a true family home - a central place for her family to share for generations to come..."a place to visit, a place to rest, to start over and to feel safe, feel loved. More than just a home, a legacy for my family."

Looking down the road, she's excited about the equity she'll be building and the opportunities that could be afforded. She mentioned maybe sending a family member to college or purchasing the lot next door. She shared, "To me, homeownership is more than a house, it's about creating and maintaining relationships...growing your family's opportunities and leaving a legacy."



Raquetta Dotley
Homeowner

*"More than just a home, a
legacy for my family."*



Anthony Kendrick
CNE Tenant

*"This has been a beautiful
experience for me."*

Stories of Impact

When Anthony came to CNE, he was fresh out of rehab and transitioning from a halfway house. He was scared to be back in the real world, just looking for a safe and affordable place to live.

Speaking to him, he said "CNE did a lot to help me. I had looked at other places trying to find somewhere, and CNE was the first place willing to work with me, knowing my situation. If it hadn't been for CNE accepting me, I wouldn't have had any place else to go. And I know most other places would've caused me to step backwards into my old lifestyle.

Furthermore, Anthony spoke about the impact having a stable place to live has had on his life. He talked about the person he's

become...someone reliable and happy to be living. He shared, "Without the steady place to live, I wouldn't be this person sitting here now. Living here has given me a sense of responsibility, structure and independence. Looking at all of this, it's such a blessing. If I was still where I was before, I wouldn't be alive today."

When asked about the place he calls home, Anthony said "I have good neighbors. When I need them, they are there, and the people around me, we actually try to help each other. This has been a beautiful experience for me."

Stories of Impact

Radio personality, Chee Chee Brown, has been a long-time supporter of CNE. Back in the 90s, she worked at Memorial Hospital, and it was through a partnership program between CNE and Memorial that Chee Chee was able to buy her first home, making her the first from a family of seven children to become a homeowner. Recalling the experience, she shared, "I was born and raised in the projects and determined to get myself out of that environment. I wanted to ensure my children's stability and make sure we had a roof over our heads."

Chee Chee spoke about how years after becoming a homeowner, her sister passed and she had to take in her nieces. She said it was at that time, she returned to CNE for a home improvement loan. She said after qualifying, she used the funds to add rooms to her home to accommodate them. In her words, "I'm forever grateful for CNE providing me the opportunity."

When asked about the impact homeownership has had on her life, she said, "the equity I gained was life changing." She shared that building equity made her kids feel stable enough to go to college, and gave her the means to pay for it. She was also able to clear many of her own debts and improve her credit. She spoke about how homeownership helped her build confidence. Confidence that inspired her children, who are all now homeowners themselves. Chee Chee said, "There's nothing like having a home that's just yours. If you set your mind to wanting better, you can do better."



Chee Chee Brown
Homeowner

"There's nothing like having a home that's just yours."

Stories of Impact



Wendy Hodge
CNE Tenant

*"CNE chose me,
and it's a miracle."*

When Wendy found CNE, she was running out of time to find a place to live and was worried she'd be left homeless. After many rejections, she didn't have high hopes, but soon after she toured with CNE, she was told she qualified. In her words, "CNE chose me, and it's a miracle."

Shedding light on her living situation, Wendy shared that she appreciates where she lives now because she's able to walk to so many places. Not owning a car, she says having a stable place to live that's so centralized has helped her increase her own opportunities. "I have a strong sense of stability now. Not having to worry about moving around so much, I can shift my focus to moving forward in life."

When asked about what "moving forward" looks like, Wendy spoke about getting a job close to home, one she could walk to, just something to keep her busy, and she also spoke about her son. For the longest time, Wendy's relationship with her son was strained due to her housing instability. He was frustrated over poor living conditions and a lack of safety, and refused to visit until she found better. Nowadays, conditions are much improved and concerns about safety are less, so she can have her son come visit often. Wendy's feeling very positive about the road ahead, and only laments not finding CNE sooner. She shared, "CNE has given me freedom from things that used to hold me back."

Stories of Impact

Years ago, former school board member, George Ricks, came to CNE for down payment assistance to purchase his first home. At the time, CNE was doing a partnership promotion with CCHDO, and it was through that partnership that he found the resources he needed to make his homeownership dream a reality.

Since that time, George has been a steadfast believer in CNE. He talked about how he and his wife made that house into a home. Made it into something that took on roots and became a central piece to their family narrative. He spoke about continuously using CNE's services to keep his family around him. Flexing his equity to purchase additional homes on the same block to keep family members close and sweet traditions like weekly dinners and daily porch sits alive.

When asked what he likes most about CNE, he shared that he likes how the organization seeks to give opportunity to those who often struggle to find it. He said he's proud of the work the organization does to better the community and to uplift people. But most of all, he said "I appreciate what CNE did for me and my family. Homeownership does create generational wealth, but for me it's the emotional legacy. I was able to build my family around me in the neighborhood I love, and that means so much."



**George Ricks
Homeowner**

I was able to build my family around me in the neighborhood I love."

Stories of Impact



Doris Espey
CNE Tenant

*I chose this place. I'm here,
and I'm not going anywhere.*

Doris started her journey with CNE as a winner of our rental lottery. Her daughter had spotted one of our properties under construction, and convinced her to put her name in. When she learned she was a winner, Doris recalled, "When I got drawn in the lottery, I felt a strong sense of ownership over the place, being the first to move in. That was really something for me."

When we discussed the impact a stable place to live has had, Doris spoke mostly about peace of mind. She shared, "I feel a strong sense of stability and safety. Feeling secure where I live helps me sleep well at night. I don't have to be worried about what's happening around me as much. Means a lot.

When asked about where she lives, Doris had many nice things to share about CNE's efforts to keep the property up. She spoke about her sense of pride in living there. She shared, "I've enjoyed watching over the building and seeing the community grow. I chose this place. I'm here, and I'm not going anywhere."

And finally, when asked about her overall experience with CNE, she said, "My CNE experience has been really really good from the start to now. Maintenance is always on top of things. They do a really good job. We appreciate that they pay attention."

Stories of Impact

More than 20 years ago, Councilman Darrin Ledford came to CNE to buy a house when he learned from his realtor about the work the organization was doing to revitalize the Jefferson Heights neighborhood. Speaking about that time, he said "We jumped in the car. She drove me out to see one of the houses that CNE built, sharing with me their mission to revive the neighborhood. We weren't at the house for ten minutes before I said, 'I want this house. I have to have it. I must be a part of this wonderful work.'"

Sharing more about his purchase experience, Darrin talked about the ease of working with CNE, and how the process the organization follows to make sure buyers are educated was

very important to him. He said "they educated me on the process of home purchase and ownership, and they also taught me about building equity and the financial opportunities I could have available to me later."

Darrin went on to mention how it was his purchase in Jefferson Heights that gave him the equity to later buy another home that became his family base and grow his local business, ImageWorks Printing. When asked if his experience with CNE impacted his own career of public service, he said, "CNE definitely influenced me. I saw what it was like working with people who wanted to truly help others. Being able to take that knowledge and share it. It's an experience that shaped how I want to serve. CNE won't find a bigger cheerleader than me."



Darrin Ledford
Homeowner

*"CNE won't find a bigger
cheerleader than me."*

Stories of Impact



Alicia Benson
CNE Tenant

"I used to not trust people, but having a safe and secure place to live, I've grown out of that."

Alicia discovered CNE when she saw an ad while visiting a friend at a local retirement home. At the time, she was homeless. She'd tried to get into a facility for seniors but didn't meet the criteria.

Once she expressed interest in one of CNE's properties, they allowed her to take a tour. She shared, "I wanted a quiet, safe place to live, and that's what I found. When I went on the tour, they told me if I liked it, it was mine, and so it was."

Alicia mentioned the thing she appreciates most about where she lives is the support system she now has around her. In past living situations, Alicia was hesitant to build

relationships, untrusting, and afraid to venture out. Now, she says she has a strong sense of stability and safety around her. Her neighbors check in on her and she on them. They care about one another; she feels they're all very close. As a result, she says she's felt more confident to build relationships and get out more, and with a stable place to live, she's been able to keep a job, which helps her create even more independence.

Since she's a longtime renter, we asked Alicia what she likes or values about CNE's property management, and she shared, "I like that CNE will always work with you. Whether it's past due rent or a maintenance issue, they always listen and help you to get it fixed or figure something out in a timely manner."

Leadership



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President & CEO



DARLA BLAND
CFO



CAROLYN BURKE
Homeownership
Center Director



ROBERT PRICHARD
VP of Assets & Property
Management



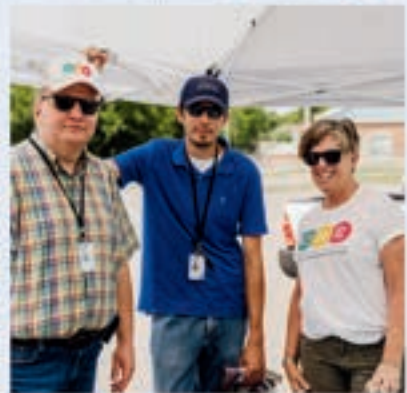
JUSTIN TIRSUN
VP of N.I.C.E.



CHELSEA SMITH
Communications & Special
Projects Director

















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CHATTANOOGA
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