



Sustainability Projects in 6 Communities Get a Boost with New Funding from Partners for Places

More than one million dollars will fund environmental efforts across the U.S.

Coral Gables, Fla. — Six communities across the U.S. will receive more than a million dollars to fund sustainability efforts that will help them better withstand the impact of climate change, prepare for natural disasters and engage local voices in planning and decision-making.

These sustainability efforts will take place in communities both large and small, from a project to create resiliency hubs that would serve the residents of New Bedford, Mass., in the wake of hazardous weather, to a plan to create a greener, more pedestrian-friendly thoroughfare in a bustling and culturally diverse neighborhood in Denver, Colo.

The funding is made possible through the [Partners for Places](#) matching grant program, which pairs local governments with philanthropy to support sustainability projects that promote a healthy environment, a strong economy, and well-being for all residents.

Two of the projects build on important earlier efforts funded by the Partners for Places matching grant program: an ambitious project in Portland, Ore., to ensure that efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create a community-led energy plan directly benefit low-income residents, and efforts in Hartford, Conn., to address flooding and stormwater challenges while ensuring those efforts act as a catalyst for improved social equity, public health, and economic development.

Both cities are prior recipients of Partners for Places grants, and reflect one of the matching grant program's priorities: projects that empower and engage low-income neighborhoods — communities that are disproportionately affected by climate change and extreme weather.

"Whether it's preparing for natural disasters or trying to predict the fallout from other environmental hazards, communities are on the front lines of climate change," said Darryl Young, director of Sustainable Cities at the Summit Foundation. "More and more, city mayors and other local leaders are stepping up, speaking out, and showing that they are going to act proactively to ensure their communities not only survive but thrive in this changing world."

In Bend, Ore., Partners for Places will renew funding for ongoing efforts to create a climate action plan, including efforts to educate the community about the risks posed by climate change and identify actions that can transition Bend to a low-carbon future. Meanwhile, the grant program will support efforts in the city and county of Sarasota, Fla., to help local non-profits become more energy efficient — helping Sarasota achieve its sustainability goals while allowing local environmental and human-service organizations to reduce costs and focus their limited resources on their core missions.

Partners for Places, led by the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities in partnership with the Urban Sustainability Directors Network, will provide \$507,459 in funding to these six cities through its general grant program, which will be matched by local funders. That means a total of \$1,014,918 will be leveraged to fund sustainability projects in these selected cities. The general grant program is supported by seven investor foundations: [The JPB Foundation](#), [The Kendeda Fund](#), [The Kresge Foundation](#), [The New York Community Trust](#), the [Pisces Foundation](#), [The Summit Foundation](#), and [Surdna Foundation](#). This grant cycle includes \$139,959 awarded to two green stormwater infrastructure projects — in the cities of Denver and Hartford — designed to advance water-related sustainability goals, made possible by the support of the JPB Foundation, Kresge Foundation and the Pisces Foundation.

“These projects demonstrate how innovation, partnership and investment at the local level can truly drive change,” said Dr. Jalonne L. White-Newsome, a senior program officer with The Kresge Foundation’s Environment Program and who oversees the foundation’s Climate Resilience and Equitable Water Systems (CREWS) initiative. “They will improve water management, climate resilience, water quality and help create communities that are healthier, safer and more desirable places to live.”

The latest Partners for Places grant recipients and their matching funders are:

Bend, Ore. (\$42,500): To continue the city’s ongoing work to create a community climate action plan, convening diverse voices in the community – such as businesses, civic equity leaders, local youth and neighborhood residents – to collaborate with government agencies, environmental groups and subject-matter experts to identify strategies and build support for the plan. (Matching funder: The Oregon Community Foundation Donor Advised Funds.)

Denver, Colo. (\$74,959): To strengthen the impact of a green infrastructure along a major thoroughfare in the Little Saigon business district that improves stormwater management and air quality while providing a safer, more enjoyable experience for residents walking or using public transit – especially those who can’t drive because of age, income, or a disability. (Matching funder: Colorado Health Foundation.)

Hartford, Conn. (\$65,000): To support green infrastructure efforts that will improve localized flooding and stormwater management and create a more resilient city, including developing design specifications and scaling a program that encourages residents to redirect water from gutter downspouts to help alleviate sewer overflows, basement flooding, high water bills and other issues. (Matching funder: Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.)

New Bedford, Mass. (\$25,000): To create a resilience hub and community alert system pilot project, working with environmental/social justice partner organizations to identify locations within the City’s Gomes Neighborhood and the Near North End Neighborhood to build on existing community ties, create new relationships with underserved communities, and bolster community resilience. (Matching funder: Island Foundation.)

Portland, Ore. (\$150,000): To implement a community energy plan in the Cully neighborhood through community-led investments that address both environmental needs as well as economic and social disparities, ensuring efforts directly benefit low-income residents. (Matching funder: Meyer Memorial Trust.)

Sarasota, Fla. (\$150,000): To empower and encourage local non-profits to improve energy efficiency, allowing them to focus limited resources on their core missions while furthering both the city and county of

Sarasota's sustainability goals. (Matching funders: Gulf Coast Community Foundation and the Charles and Margery Barancik Foundation.)

To date, Partners for Places has awarded more than \$7 million across North America in this successful matching grant program, leading to over \$14 million in investments. Partners for Places will open a new round of funding for the general grant program in early summer. The Round 14 RFP will be released on December 5, 2018, and proposals will be due on January 31, 2019.

About Partners for Places

A joint project of the [Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities](#) and the [Urban Sustainability Network](#), Partners for Places is a successful matching grant program that helps U.S. and Canadian communities become more equitable and sustainable. We do this by building partnerships and implementing urban sustainability projects with local government leaders, place-based foundations and national foundations. National funders invest in local projects developed through these partnerships to promote a healthy environment, a strong economy and well-being for all residents. Through these investments, Partners for Places fosters long-term relationships that make our communities more prosperous, livable and vibrant. For more information on Partners for Places, visit fundersnetwork.org/partners-for-places.

About the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities

The Funders' Network is a mission-driven network of grantmakers across North America, working to inspire, strengthen and expand funding and philanthropic leadership that yield environmentally sustainable, socially equitable, and economically prosperous regions and communities.

About The Urban Sustainability Directors Network

The Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) is a peer-to-peer network of local government professionals from cities across the United States and Canada dedicated to creating a healthier environment, economic prosperity, and increased social equity. This dynamic network enables sustainability directors and staff to share best practices and accelerate the application of good ideas across North America.

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