



**Ben Starrett**  
**Executive Director**  
**Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities**

**Ben Starrett** is the founding executive director of the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, created in late-1999 to expand funders' abilities to support organizations working to build more livable communities through smarter growth policies and practices. The Funders' Network provides member services, publishes on relevant topics and manages an active website—[www.fundersnetwork.org](http://www.fundersnetwork.org)—to provide foundations with information and tools on growth and development issues. The Network also implements projects to help strengthen philanthropy, expand philanthropic interest, and build the field of advocates for better decision making to create more livable communities. Ben came to the Funders' Network following a career in public service. After working for city government and the Florida Legislature, Ben joined the Florida Department of Community Affairs—Florida's state land planning agency—and served as its chief planning officer from 1989 to 1999. During this time he created the Eastward Ho! Initiative and Florida's Sustainable Communities Program, ran Florida's Affordable Housing Study Commission, served as the state energy policy director, and staffed or chaired seven gubernatorial blue ribbon panels on diverse topics such as urban growth patterns, economic development, hurricane preparedness and recovery, everglades restoration, and land use and transportation coordination. After leaving state government, Ben joined the Collins Center for Public Policy. While creating the Funders' Network at the Collins Center, he co-founded the Growth Partnership, an initiative designed to foster positive regional and neighborhood change in South Florida to relieve development pressures on the Everglades ecosystem. Ben joined the Funders' Network full time when it became an independent organization in July 2003. A magna cum laude graduate of Princeton University with a degree in politics and economics, Ben is a graduate of Leadership Florida Class XIX and is a Knight Fellow in Community Building. Active in numerous national and local organizations, he lives in Miami Beach, Florida, with his wife, Regina.