



**Request for Proposals
Partners for Places
Round 8
Information webinar – 12/11/2015
Proposals due – 1/29/2016**

Overview

Partners for Places is a successful matching grant program that improves U.S. and Canadian communities by building partnerships between local government sustainability leaders and place-based 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 urban areas more prosperous, livable, and vibrant.

In the first three years, Partners for Places has funded 46 proposals. For more information on the awardees, please visit <http://www.fundersnetwork.org/partnersforplaces>.

To attract additional interest in urban sustainability projects beyond those funded through Partners for Places, the Funders' Network has created an "idea bank" providing summaries of project applications, please visit <http://www.fundersnetwork.org/participate/green-building/idea-bank>.

Purpose

Creating vibrant communities is a group effort. Place-based foundations offer unique knowledge of their communities and the ability to provide seed money for important projects. Local government offers the power to move projects through planning and development. Working together results in sustainability programs that save money, improve the environment, increase efficiency, and promote the well-being of all residents.

Urban sustainability directors and local foundations work closely together in Baltimore, Cleveland, Dubuque, St. Louis, Vancouver and other cities, but this is still the exception, rather than the rule. Partners for Places aims to change this dynamic by providing matching grants to build these valuable working relationships and projects in local communities, while at the same time increasing the visibility and importance of this work in the local philanthropic community. Partners for Places is a partnership of the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities and the Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN). The Funders' Network and USDN believe that sustainability directors are natural allies for community-based foundations. By combining forces they can become powerful allies to promote more prosperous, livable, and vibrant places.

USDN encourages its members and other sustainability directors from the United States and Canada to reach out to their local, place-based foundations to develop project ideas and jointly apply for matching funds from this pool. Similarly, the Funders' Network and investors in Partners for Places reach out to local, place-based foundations to encourage them to develop relationships with local government sustainability directors.

Over the next several years, the Funders' Network and USDN anticipate this initiative will result in dozens more partnership projects, strong and robust working relationships between local sustainability directors and

place-based funders, new sustainability practices and innovations in the community, and new sources of financial support for this work.

True sustainability cannot be achieved if any one sector of society bears the burden of growth and development. Through this program, Partners for Places also hopes to encourage a strong emphasis on projects that benefit and engage people of color, people with low incomes, and residents of immigrant and refugee communities in sustainability work in neighborhoods and city-wide.

The social equity dimension of sustainability seeks a fair distribution of burdens and benefits of actions among current and future stakeholders, access to resources in a way that is not reliant on position or group, and ways for all stakeholders to be included in the process of shaping the strategies and policies that are adopted.

Information on Partners for Places

Dollars Available; Size of Awards; Term: Grants will be between \$25,000 and \$75,000, with a 1:1 match required by one or more local, place-based foundations. We anticipate that the grant pool will support 8-12 projects in Round 8 for projects to be carried out primarily over a twelve-month period.

The Selection Committee will consider proposals for two-year project support, with an award range of \$50,000-\$150,000. An application requesting two years of project support would require a two-year match commitment up front from local funders. In addition, the committee will consider proposals for renewal support for projects funded in earlier rounds. Two-year or renewal proposals will need to demonstrate how the award would bring appreciable further benefits beyond a one-year award.

Documenting the Matching Requirement: At the time that the application is submitted, the Selection Committee needs to know that a sustainability director and a funder partner(s) have worked together to develop the proposal and that the funder is intending to support this project financially, subject to board review and approval. A letter(s) of commitment or intent to commit shall be sufficient to make an application eligible for review. However, in order for the Funders' Network to release the matching grant, we will need to receive the grant letter or grant agreement from the local partnering funder(s) showing proof of the match within three months of the award date.

Application Deadlines: The Funders' Network and USDN will approve matching grant investments during two application rounds in 2016. Please see below for details on the application deadlines and timeline.

Selection Process: A selection committee of foundation officers and local government urban sustainability directors awards the matching grants for sustainability projects, and the Funders' Network administers the grant program. The selection committee also oversees the development of program guidelines and evaluation of the program.

Project Eligibility

Eligible Partnership Projects:

Successful proposals are for projects that the local government sustainability office and local, place-based funder(s) consider important to the community. The project must advance a key aspect of at least one of the following:

- A community-focused sustainability, climate action, or comprehensive plan provision that specifically addresses sustainability
- Any plan endorsed by the mayor or city manager that states the goal of balancing economic development, environmental quality, and equity

- An area identified for performance improvement or implementation for Certified STAR Communities

While the selection committee will consider a wide range of projects for support, there are key attributes that the committee looks for when reviewing the proposals, which are detailed in the selection criteria table below. Please note that Partners for Places will not support existing local government staff, major capital projects, or endowments.

Eligible Applicants:

The proposal must be submitted by a team of at least two partners who are: (1) the sustainability director of a city (municipality) or a county and (2) the local, place-based foundation(s). The proposal may be emailed by either partner. A sustainability director may include a USDN core or associate member, a member of a USDN-affiliated regional network, or any person who leads a multi-department and community-wide urban sustainability initiative from within a city (municipality) or a county government (“sustainability director”) in the United States or Canada. A local, place-based foundation may include a community foundation or a private or corporate foundation that focuses on a greater metropolitan area. The local match may not be provided by a national investor in the Partners for Places fund. Each city, or county, may only submit one application per Partners for Places investment cycle.

At least fifty percent of Partners for Places investments will go to projects involving members of USDN. Please consult the FAQ at http://www.fundersnetwork.org/files/misc/Partners_for_Places_FAQ for further clarification regarding eligibility.

Eligible Grant Recipients:

Local, place-based foundation, a public charity (501c3) created by a city or county government to accept grants, or a partnering nonprofit organization.

Selection Criteria

During the Partners for Places selection process, proposals are evaluated by the selection committee and awarded points. Please note that there is often less than a 1 point difference between a project that is awarded a matching grant and one that is not. For this reason, we suggest reviewing the scoring criteria closely, when preparing your proposal, in order to maximize your potential score. New to Round 8 is scoring criteria number 5. This has been added to provide points for projects that reduce disparities for marginalized members of the community.

Criteria	Points Value (max per criteria)
1 Degree to which the partnership project advances a key aspect of one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community-focused sustainability, climate action, or comprehensive plan provision that specifically addresses sustainability • A plan endorsed by the mayor or city manager that states the goal of balancing economic development, environmental quality, and equity • An area identified for performance improvement or implementation for Certified STAR Communities 	25
2 Extent to which there is a collaborative process between a city or county sustainability director and local place-based foundation(s) in developing the proposal—including the role of each in implementing the project and how the project fits into the local funder’s grant strategy	25
3 Extent to which the partnership project is thoughtful and pragmatic and can	15

	demonstrate impact	
4	Involvement of a cross-section of the community working on the project, including people of color, people with low-incomes, and/or residents from immigrant or refugee communities	10
5	Extent to which the project design reduces disparities for the most marginalized while improving well-being for all.	5
6	Whether: 1) the proposal represents a new relationship between a city or county sustainability director and a local place-based funder(s) or 2) demonstrates that it is resulting in a measurably stronger and sustained existing relationship	10
7	Extent to which the partnership project addresses one of seven sustainability priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Climate Change Preparation a Factor for Every Government Decision • Pursuing deep GHG emissions reductions • Integrating Climate Change Preparation and GHG Emissions Reductions • Incorporating Sustainability and/or Climate Action Into Economic Development Initiatives • Adopting Community-wide Sustainability Performance Metrics • Mobilizing Resident and Business Action to Advance Sustainability and/or Climate Action • Undertaking Comprehensive Neighborhood Sustainable Development 	10

Application Timeline

The Partners for Places Round 7 cycle is as follows:

December 7, 2015	Release RFP
December 11, 2015	Information webinar for interested applicants
January 29, 2016 (by 11:59pm, any time zone)	Proposals Due
May 6, 2016	Awards Announced

The information call will be held **2pm Eastern**. You may register for the call on the Funders' Network website: <http://www.fundersnetwork.org/events/registration/partners-for-places-registration-dec-2015>

Proposal Requirements

A complete proposal should include four components: (1) Proposal including the Cover Page (2 pages) and the Proposal Narrative (no longer than 9 pages) as a Word file, (2) a project budget that highlights projected income and expenses, (3) grant recipient's IRS Form 990, and (4) evidence of match or intention to provide match. We recommend using our proposal form visiting http://www.fundersnetwork.org/files/misc/Partners_for_Places_Proposal_Form for more detailed description of the various requirements:

1. **Proposal** (no longer than 9 pages including cover sheet)

Cover Sheet: (2 pages)

- A. Name of applicants, including partnering Local Government Sustainability Director and Local, Place-based Foundation(s)
- B. Primary Contact Person and Contact Information
- C. Proposed grant recipient (local foundation, 501c3 created by city or county government, or partner nonprofit)
- D. Amount requested from Partners for Places
- E. Amount and sources of local match

- F. Total project budget
- G. Project Title
- H. Purpose of project (25 words or less):
- I. Brief description of project goals, strategy, and key activities (250 words or less):

Proposal Narrative (no longer than 7 pages). **Address each area below in order.**

- A. Background rationale for project (Why this project? How did it come about?)
- B. Project goals/purpose
- C. Detailed work plan that describes project activities, deliverables, and timeline
- D. Intended outcomes and impacts, including, if applicable, how the project could lead to more equitable outcomes benefitting all members of the community.
- E. If you are proposing a two-year project, describe how a two-year grant will significantly improve the proposed outcomes over a one-year grant.
- F. Plans for evaluating success and tracking/demonstrating impact
- G. Key staff or implementation partners
- H. URL link to or PDF attachment for the 1) officially adopted local sustainability, climate action, or comprehensive plan provision that explicitly addresses sustainability, or 2) plan endorsed by the mayor or city manager that states the goal of balancing economic development, environmental quality, and equity, or 3) the Certified STAR Communities' plan.
- I. Information on how the project addresses key selection criteria. Remember to address each of the key areas listed below in order. Points will be awarded based on the extent to which your proposal explains the following related to the Selection Criteria:
 1. Degree to which the partnership project advances a key aspect of one of the following:
 - A community-focused sustainability, climate action, or comprehensive plan provision that specifically addresses sustainability
 - Any plan endorsed by the mayor or city manager that states the goal of balancing economic development, environmental quality, and equity
 - An area identified for performance improvement or implementation for Certified STAR Communities
 2. Extent to which there is a collaborative process between a city or county sustainability director and local place-based foundation(s) in developing the proposal—including the role of each in implementing the project and how the project fits into the local funder's grant strategy.
 3. Extent to which the partnership project is thoughtful, pragmatic, and demonstrates impact
 4. Involvement of a cross-section of the community working on the project, such as people of color, people with low-incomes, and/or residents from immigrant or refugee communities
 5. Extent to which the project design reduces disparities for the most marginalized while improving well-being for all.
 6. Whether 1) the proposal represents a new relationship between a city or county sustainability director and a local place-based funder(s), or 2) is resulting in a measurably stronger and sustained existing relationship
 7. Extent to which the partnership project addresses one or more of the seven sustainability priorities highlighted in the selection criteria table above.

2. **Project Budget and Financial Information.** Attach a project budget that includes:
 - a. Projected sources of revenue, including additional funds that partners will bring to the project
 - b. Line item details of project expenses, including personnel and other direct costsIf you are proposing a two-year project, you must provide a separate budget for each year.
3. **IRS Form 990 (or Canadian annual information return)**
4. **Matching Fund Commitment Letter or Letter of Intent:** Provide evidence of a 1:1 match by including either (1) a grant letter or grant agreement from the local, place-based funder(s) or (2) a letter from the funder(s) showing a strong intention to approve the matching grant should your proposal be approved for funding from Partners for Places. If you are proposing a two-year project, you must provide a commitment for both years of the project. The local match may not be provided by a national investor in the Partners for Places fund.

Please read the Frequently Asked Questions posted on the Network's website at http://www.fundersnetwork.org/files/misc/Partners_for_Places_FAQ. If you still have questions about criteria, you may contact Ann Wallace at ann@fundersnetwork.org or 617-524-9239.

Submit your proposal electronically using the Proposal Form to Adrian Martinez at adrian@fundersnetwork.org by January 29, 2016. The proposal cover sheet and narrative need to be submitted as a Word document.

Investors in Partners for Places

Partners for Places is made possible by generous support from Bloomberg Philanthropies, the JPB Foundation, Kendeda Fund, New York Community Trust, Summit Foundation, and Surdna Foundation.

About TFN

Since 1999, the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities (TFN) has worked with foundations, nonprofit organizations, and other partners to address the environmental, social, and economic problems created by sprawling patterns of development and urban disinvestment. The Network believes that the suite of tools available to funders—investing, grantmaking, collaborating, convening, facilitating, and more—uniquely position philanthropy to play a leadership role in advancing smarter growth policies and practices that improve decision making about growth and development issues, leading to more prosperous, livable, and vibrant communities for all. From its inception, the Network has been committed to advancing not only triple-bottom-line returns for people, place, and prosperity, but also strategies that recognize the interconnected nature of the issues that grantmakers care about and outcomes they hope to achieve.

About USDN

The Urban Sustainability Directors Network is a peer-to-peer network of 140 sustainability directors from municipalities across North America who share best practices and foster innovative solutions to common problems. Cities are leading in the creation of policies and programs that enhance sustainability. USDN supports members in promoting successful ideas, policies and programs that make communities more livable.

USDN accomplishes this by focusing on three core objectives:

- Offering members peer-to-peer networking opportunities, enabling lessons learned in one city to be adapted and applied in others
- Accelerating innovation in urban sustainability through an Innovation Fund
- Supporting regional networks designed to expand the number of sustainability directors served by networks and/or to address specific issues

USDN members work together in user groups on dozens of sustainability topics, such as how cities are preparing for a changing climate, how to use indicators to drive change and inform decision making, how cities can develop sustainable food systems from production to distribution to waste, the best recipe(s) of programs and policies for cities to achieve ambitious community energy goals, and how cities can achieve higher waste diversion rates through changes to existing strategies and technologies.