



Request for Proposals
Partners for Places General Grants Program
Round 12
Information webinar – December 12, 2017 at 2:00 pm ET
Proposals due – 1/29/2018

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 past six years, Partners for Places has funded 90 proposals. For more information on the awardees, please visit our website [here](#).

To share the range of projects considered by Partners for Places and encourage funder interest in urban sustainability projects more broadly, the Funders' Network has created an "idea bank" providing summaries of all project applications, please visit our [website](#).

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, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, 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 grant 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 12, supporting projects that will 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 requires 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 need to demonstrate how an additional award will bring appreciable further benefits beyond the first 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. It should be clear 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 approve matching grant investments during two application rounds each year. Round 12 applications are due January 29, 2018.

Application Timeline

The Partners for Places Round 11 cycle is as follows:

December 4, 2017	Release RFP
December 12, 2017	Information webinar for interested applicants
January 29, 2018 (by 11:59 p.m., any time zone)	Proposals Due
May 2, 2018	Awards Announced

The information call will be held on December 12, 2017 at 2:00 ET. You may register for the call [here](#).

Selection Process: A selection committee of foundation officers and local government urban sustainability

directors scores and 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, strategic planning efforts, and program evaluations.

Project Eligibility

Eligible Partnership Projects:

Successful proposals are for projects that local government sustainability leaders and local, place-based funder(s) consider important to advancing sustainability goals in their communities. The project must either, 1) advance a key aspect of one of the plans listed below, 2) support creation of one of the plans listed below, or 3) address an area identified for performance improvement or implementation for Certified STAR Communities.

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

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 partner network, or any person who leads a multi-department and community-wide urban sustainability initiative from within a city (municipality) or a county government 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 Frequently Asked Questions [here](#) 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 may receive funding post-award.

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 one-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.

Criteria	Points Value (max per criteria)
1 Degree to which the partnership project advances a key aspect of one of the following	25

	plans, supports creation of one of the following plans, or addresses an area identified for performance improvement or implementation for Certified STAR Communities. Please click here for guidance if the project is for creating a plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A community-focused sustainability, climate action, adaptation/resilience, or comprehensive plan provision that specifically addresses sustainability ● A multi-issue plan endorsed by the mayor or city manager that explicitly states and pursues the goal of integrating and/or balancing economic development, environmental quality, and equity 	
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 developing and implementing the project	25
3	Extent to which the partnership project is thoughtful about strategy, activities, outcomes and how to assess and demonstrate impact	20
4	Extent of community engagement of priority audiences/stakeholders in project development and implementation, including people of color, people with low-incomes, and/or residents from immigrant or refugee communities. See guidance on successful community engagement here .	10
5	Extent to which the project design reduces disparities for the most marginalized while improving well-being for all.	10
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

Proposal Requirements

A complete proposal should include four components: (1) Proposal Form - a Word file (no longer than 10 pages in total), (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. Please use the proposal form for more detailed description of the various requirements:

1. Proposal Form (no longer than 10 pages including cover sheet)

Cover Sheet:

- 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)

Proposal Narrative. ***Use the Proposal Form and address each area below in order.***

- A. Project background and overview of goals, strategies, and activities
- B. URL link to or PDF attachment for the 1) officially adopted local sustainability, climate action, adaptation/resilience, 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. Leave this section blank if the proposal is to create a plan.
- C. Key staff/implementation partners and stakeholders
 - D. Detailed work plan that describes project activities, deliverables, and timeline
 - E. Information on how the project addresses key selection criteria. Remember to address each of the key areas listed in order in the Proposal Form and referenced above in the criteria table. Points will be awarded based on the extent to which your proposal explains and addresses the criteria.
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 costs.
 - c. 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 and 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.

If you have questions about criteria, you may contact Ashley Quintana at ashley@fundersnetwork.org, or Ann Wallace at ann@fundersnetwork.org or 617-524-9239.

Submit your proposal electronically using the Proposal Form to Ashley Quintana at ashley@fundersnetwork.org by January 29, 2018. The proposal form needs to be submitted as a Word document.

Investors in Partners for Places

Partners for Places general grant program is made possible by generous support from the JPB Foundation, Kendeda Fund, New York Community Trust, Summit Foundation, and the 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

A Planning Committee serves as USDN's governing body, with responsibility to advance the strategic direction of the network. Members are fortunate to be supported by a managing director and staff who provide high-level leadership and day-to-day management. In 2017, USDN began implementing a member-adopted long term strategic plan, which marks a notable shift from measuring success based on member participation to measuring success by impacts in member communities. The Strategic Plan establishes these four goals:

1. Maintain and Evolve the Peer Exchange
2. Incentivize Innovation of High-Impact Sustainability Practices to Create Impact
3. Accelerate Adoption of High-Impact Sustainability Practices to Create Impact
4. Enhance Organizational Effectiveness

USDN formed the following two committees to help guide the member priorities and metrics conversations:

- **The High Impact Practices (HIP) Committee:** Formed to develop a process through which USDN can help to accelerate the adoption and implementation of high impact practices (HIPs) among a diverse range of member communities and support the piloting of this approach.
- **The Common Metrics Committee:** Formed to develop a process by which USDN members will report on common sustainability metrics, to (1) improve peer learning through USDN; and (2) enhance their ability to prioritize, measure, and communicate impact at the local and network-wide level.

USDN members work together in Collective Action Groups on select sustainability topics, such as how cities are preparing for a changing climate, district and neighborhood scale sustainability, GHG analysis and reporting, sustainability indicators, sustainable behavior, and fostering equity programming in all city operations.