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| Places fellowship five-year strategic plan  *Submitted by Dion Cartwright*  *TFN, Director of Equitable Initiatives & Leadership Development* |  |

**PLACES Introduction and Overview**

PLACES (Professionals Learning About Community Equity and Smart Growth) is a program of the Funders’ Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities. The mission of the Funders’ Network is to inspire, strengthen and expand funding and philanthropic leadership that yield environmentally sustainable, socially equitable and economically prosperous regions and communities. Founded in 1999, the vision of the Funders' Network is to be the leading resource in philanthropy for interdisciplinary and transformative thinking and action that gives all people the opportunity to live in more environmentally sustainable, socially equitable and economically prosperous regions and communities.

The Network strives to:

* Improve philanthropic understanding about connections between growth and development issues and environmental, economic, and social outcomes;
* Motivate greater individual and collective philanthropic leadership on these issues;
* Encourage more funders to make investments to advance innovative solutions; and
* Strengthen relationships, connections, and networks among funders.

A primary strategy of the Network is to cultivate emerging funder interest and new opportunities for funder engagement and leadership that yield a persistent focus on equity and inclusiveness (people) and a deep understanding of the attributes of sustainable, equitable, and prosperous regions and communities (place). The PLACES program is a key strategy for achieving this goal.

Through PLACES, the Network builds the skills and knowledge of a diverse cohort of professionals in philanthropy to better understand issues of race, equity and inclusiveness, which are then translated into their grantmaking practices. Further, the PLACES program helps the Network become more inclusive by connecting the Network to people who share its perspectives and experiences with race, equity and inclusiveness. Finally, the PLACES graduates develop tools and practices for advancing grant making with an equity focus; these tools will be leveraged and distributed throughout the field of philanthropy.

The first class of seven PLACES fellows graduated in 2009. An eighth class of 16 fellows graduated in December, 2017. Since 2009, the Network has graduated 111 Fellows through the program. Fellows come from a variety of institutions and hold positions as varied as president, director, program officer, and program associate. The majority of fellows are mid-level professionals at their philanthropic organizations and show promising potential to make a lasting impact in their institutions and in the field. All fellows go through a competitive application process and are selected based on a variety of factors, especially a commitment to learning about equity in the context of place-based grantmaking and a willingness to invest in their professional and personal growth. TFN strives to have representation from grantmakers of various sizes and classifications.

**PLACES Mission**:

Build the skills and knowledge of a diverse network of professionals in philanthropy to better understand issues of race, equity and inclusiveness, to model the behavior and translate it into grantmaking practices.

**STRATEGIC PLAN - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

PLACES is a program of the Funders’ Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities. The mission of the Funders’ Network is to inspire, strengthen and expand funding and philanthropic leadership that yield environmentally sustainable, socially equitable and economically prosperous regions and communities.

**PLACES VISION**

Our vision is that the Funders’ Network will be the leading resource in philanthropy for interdisciplinary and transformative thinking and action that gives all people the opportunity to live in more environmentally sustainable, socially equitable and economically prosperous regions and communities.

**PLACES EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES**

**PLACES STRATEGIC GOALS**

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| **Strengthen Leaders & Personal Development** | **Increase Program Capacity** | **Share Impact & Influence Change** | **Alumni Engagement & Collaboration** | **Integration, Network Building & Collaboration** |
| * Build a learning community to increase the skills and knowledge around people and place, smart growth and equity in the field of philanthropy. | * Grow the core operating support of PLACES and leverage our investment in alumni to increase learning opportunities, build partnerships and support alumni engagement efforts. | * Build the PLACES narrative to show impact and tell the story. | * Cultivate the broader alumni network to influence philanthropic practices, promote collaboration across programs and foster more equitable outcomes. | * Increase Shared Learning and Support Integration within TFN and Other Philanthropy Serving Organizations |

**Five-Year Strategic Goals – Overview**

1. **Build a learning community to increase the skills and knowledge around people and place, smart growth, and equity in the field of philanthropy** 
   * Since 2009, TFN has graduated 111 PLACES fellows. We expect to graduate a minimum of 13 fellows per year over the next five years.
2. **Grow the core operating support of PLACES to increase learning opportunities, build partnerships and support alumni engagement efforts.**
   * To run the PLACES Fellowship, TFN invests on average $250k annually. Over the past ten years, a core set of longstanding partners have provided multi-year funding to support the program. We hope to grow the number of core investors and leverage our investment in alumni.
3. **Build the PLACES narrative to show impact and tell the story**
   * Over the life of the PLACES Fellowship, there have been many impact stories that have gone unheard. Capturing those stories of both individual, organizational and sector impact will help to catapult the program and potentially build long-term support.
4. **Cultivate the broader alumni network to influence philanthropic practices, promote collaboration across programs and foster more equitable outcomes.** 
   * There are 111 alumni of the PLACES Fellowship looking for ways to extend their learning, network with like-minded professionals and engage in additional opportunities focused on equity. There are over twenty fellowship programs with an equity, philanthropy or environment focus. There is a desire to create or identify opportunities for collaboration and shared learning across programs.
5. **Increase Shared Learning and Support Integration within TFN and Other Philanthropy Serving Organizations**
   * TFN will leverage its investment in PLACES alumni and their organizations by engaging alumni in multiple aspects, including, but not limited to, working groups, programmatic committees, conference planning, advisory board and TFN board service. We’d also like to build our network by partnering and engaging with other networks and affinity groups focused on equity, while building a go-to leadership pipeline of professionals.

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**Governance: PLACES Advisory Board**

The PLACES Fellowship Program is guided by an advisory board of national and place-based funders used to engage in the TFN Network as part of its ongoing commitment to incorporate issues of equity, fairness, opportunity and access in the fellowship program. The advisory board plays a vital role by serving as a guiding body for program development to remain focused on issues of race, class and opportunity in the context of growth and development. Additionally, board members contribute their perspectives and expertise related to implementation of PLACES goals and strategies. The advisory board has three subcommittees that focus on key aspects of the program. The visioning committee which focuses on strategic direction, partnership development, and alignment and integration with TFN programming and working groups. The selection committee which focuses on applicant outreach, recruitment and cohort selection. The engagement committee which focuses on creating extended opportunities for continued learning and networking for PLACES alumni and responsible for helping to engage alumni in various programs of TFN, including working groups.

**Commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:**

PLACES’ touches on every aspect of TFN’s Inclusiveness Framework. The fellowship works to build grant maker capacity and help the philanthropic sector address interrelated issues of community and economic development, environmental sustainability, and regional planning using an explicit lens of social, economic, and racial equity.

**Key Operating Principles:**

1. **Investing in professionals in the field of Philanthropy** to increase equitable practices within the field, within grantmaking practices and investments in low income communities and communities of color.
2. **Connecting Funders to PLACES**: Continue creating and implementing strong programming that models equitable practices in philanthropy.
3. **Aligning PLACES with TFN**: Ensure PLACES aligns with the principles and goals of TFN and strengthens the program as a national resource for equitable learning and advancing equity.
4. **Producing Strong Leaders**: Strengthen the capacity of PLACES to better serve TFN members, PLACES alumni and the field of philanthropy.

**PLACES STAFFING**

* **Dion Cartwright, Director of Equitable Initiatives & Leadership Development**
* **Marci Ovadia, Senior Associate, Equity & Communications**