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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Partners for Places Funds Sustainability Projects in Five U.S. Communities

New round of matching grants will fund more than \$900,000 in projects focused on resilience and climate action

Five cities across the United States will receive more than \$920,000 dollars for sustainability efforts that focus largely on empowering and engaging low-income neighborhoods — supporting community-based approaches that address climate impacts, strengthen local economies and improve the well-being of all residents.

These sustainability efforts, spanning both coasts and taking place in cities both large and small, build partnerships between government sustainability offices and place-based foundations through the [Partners for Places](#) matching grant program.

Milwaukee, Wis., will transform playgrounds at two public schools in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, trading slabs of concrete and chain link fences for vibrant, nature-inspired landscapes with green infrastructure features. The project includes adding environmental education components like outdoor classrooms, learning stations, and planter beds, while also providing funding for a new sustainability project specialist for the public school system.

In **Evanston, Ill.**, Partners for Places funding will help the city remove barriers that prevent homeowners and tenants from accessing affordable housing that is energy efficient and climate resilient. The city, which hopes to move toward a net-zero affordable housing standard, will also create an advisory committee made up of local residents, developers, contractors, and architects with sustainability expertise to guide project implementation.

San Diego, Calif., which has adopted an ambitious climate action plan that calls for a 50 percent reduction of greenhouse emissions by 2035, will support efforts to empower leadership on climate solutions in low-income communities disproportionately affected by poverty, unemployment and environmental injustice. Partners for Places funding will also help support San Diego's climate and equity specialist, one of the first municipal roles of its kind among cities nationwide.

Residents of **Newark, N.J.**, will be able to take advantage of a job training and placement program that connects them to opportunities constructing, inspecting and maintaining green stormwater infrastructure

projects, part of a larger city-wide effort to help people find full-time positions and family-sustaining salaries, while also addressing flooding threats in the city's low income neighborhoods.

In **Cleveland, Ohio**, Partners for Places will help advance one of the cornerstones of the city's climate action goals: creating a community-wide transition plan to 100 percent clean and renewable electricity by 2050 that prioritizes resiliency, energy security, and green jobs for Clevelanders most in need.

“Transitioning to clean energy is especially important for a city like Cleveland, where half our children live in poverty and where low-income communities and communities of color spend a disproportionate amount of their income on energy-related costs,” said John Mitterholzer, senior program officer for the environment at The George Gund Foundation. “We believe that cities can become leaders in clean energy by advancing social and racial equity, creating jobs, and making our communities more resilient in the face of climate change.”

The funding is made possible through the Partners for Places matching grants program, which has helped foster dozens of new partnerships between local government sustainability leaders and place-based funders across the U.S. and Canada over the past eight years. The matching grant program brings national funder investors together with place-based funders to support local sustainability and climate action projects.

“These projects harness the power of partnership and collaboration,” said Diane Ives, fund advisor for The Kendeda Fund's People, Place and Planet program. “It's heartening to see so much innovation and passion as people across government, philanthropy and other sectors work together to make their communities more sustainable, resilient and equitable.”

Partners for Places, led by the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities in partnership with the Urban Sustainability Directors Network, will provide \$433,790 in funding to these five cities through the grant program. With contributions from local matching funders, a total of \$921,540 will be committed to fund sustainability projects in these selected cities.

The program is supported by seven investor foundations: The JPB Foundation, The Kendeda Fund, The Kresge Foundation, The New York Community Trust, Pisces Foundation, The Summit Foundation, and Surdna Foundation. This grant cycle includes \$185,000 awarded to two green stormwater infrastructure projects — in the cities of Milwaukee and Newark — designed to advance water-related sustainability goals.

To date, Partners for Places has awarded nearly \$7 million across North America in this successful matching grant program, leading to nearly \$14 million in investments.

Partners for Places will open a new round of funding for the general grant program on June 3, 2019. The Round 15 RFP will be due July 30, 2019.

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

- **Cleveland, Ohio** (\$50,000): To create a community-wide transition plan to 100 percent clean and renewable electricity that prioritizes resiliency, energy security, and green jobs for Clevelanders

most in need. **Matching funders:** The Cleveland Foundation (\$25,000); The George Gund Foundation (\$25,000); United Black Fund of Greater Cleveland (\$4,000).

- **Evanston, Ill.** (\$125,000): To identify and ultimately remove barriers to achieving affordable, resilient net-zero homes. **Matching funders:** The Chicago Community Trust (\$100,000); Evanston Community Foundation (\$25,000).
- **Milwaukee, Wis.** (75,000): To promote equity and sustainability in Milwaukee Public Schools with natural schoolyards and outdoor classrooms, green infrastructure, and a new sustainability project specialist. **Matching funder:** Fund for Lake Michigan (\$123,750).
- **Newark, N.J.** (\$110,000): To establish a training and jobs placement program for residents to access green stormwater infrastructure construction, inspection, and maintenance opportunities. **Matching funders:** CareerWorks: Greater Newark Workforce Funders Collaborative (\$85,000); Victoria Foundation (\$25,000).
- **San Diego, Calif.** (\$73,790): To build community voice and action among communities in Southeast San Diego in implementation of the City of San Diego's Climate Action Plan. **Matching funder:** The San Diego Foundation (\$75,000).

About Partners for Places Partners for Places

A joint project of the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities and the Urban Sustainability Directors Network, 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 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 for Smart Growth and Livable Communities \(TFN\)](http://fundersnetwork.org) 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 \(USDN\)](http://usdn.org) 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. Our 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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