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UNLEASHING LOCAL PHILANTHROPY TO SUPPORT LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY

Innovative Matching Fund Awards \$250,000 to Five Communities, Creates New Partnerships Across North America

Coral Gables, Fla. — How do you unlock the power of local philanthropy to build sustainable communities? An innovative program of local and national funders and city sustainability officials may have found the answer. The Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities and its partner, the Urban Sustainability Directors Network, announced the first round of projects designed to connect innovative city sustainability projects with local philanthropies.

Projects ranging from urban agriculture to collaborative capacity-building were recently funded by the newly-launched Local Sustainability Matching Fund, a project of the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities. A total of \$250,000 was awarded to five communities. The communities and projects are:

- **Appleton, Wis.:** \$60,000 to fund the first season of Riverview Gardens, a former 70-acre private golf course being transformed into a community-based urban farm, park, and job-training program that will engage the community in sustainable practices. www.riverviewgardens.org.
- **Chattanooga, Tenn.:** \$65,000 to integrate a mobile market system/pilot of delivering fresh and locally-grown produce to low-income families.
- **Cincinnati:** \$35,000 to create a regional sustainability funders' network, build the capacity of Green Umbrella, the regional sustainability alliance, and complete energy audits and retrofits. <http://greenumbrella.org>.
- **Miami-Dade County, Fla.:** \$65,000 to catalyze community-led, community-funded initiatives with an urban agriculture and health focus that support GreenPrint, Miami-Dade County's design for a sustainable future. <http://www.miamidade.gov/greenprint/>.
- **Salt Lake City:** \$25,000 to fund Clean Air Neighborhoods, a neighborhood-based social marketing campaign to help individuals negotiate barriers to alternative transportation.

The Local Sustainability Matching Fund is a collaborative effort of the Funders' Network, the Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN), Kendeda Fund, New York Community Trust, Summit Foundation, and Surdna Foundation. The Fund is designed to catalyze partnerships between local governments and local, place-based foundations and to advance community-based sustainability initiatives.

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Ben Starrett, executive director for the Funders' Network, has praise for the funders and USDN, who evaluated proposals as a team along with Funders' Network staff. "The Local Sustainability Matching Fund is a great example of philanthropy reaching out to learn and work in partnership with each other and practitioners in the field. The funders involved are committed to advancing sustainability and local collaboration. The Fund spurs action to move those principles forward, both on the ground and within our own work."

The Fund was the brainchild of Patricia Jenny, program director for the New York Community Trust's Community Development & Environment Program. After attending a USDN presentation hosted by the Surdna Foundation, she realized there was an opportunity to raise a pool of matching funds to support collaboration between local, place-based foundations and sustainability directors.

"It's relatively rare to have community foundations work with cities on sustainability agendas," Jenny says. "However, sustainability initiatives have the most traction at the local level—it's where things are getting done. Providing matching funds will help accelerate sustainability projects and create new partnerships between community foundations and city governments. It's exciting work."

In addition to the New York Community Trust, the Kendeda Fund, Summit Foundation, and Surdna Foundation quickly signed on. Darryl Young, director of the Summit Foundation's Sustainable Cities Program, says the first round of funding has been an overwhelming success. "It's clear. Sustainability is happening at a community scale. These are large-scale sustainability projects with genuine human impact. We're excited to see what the grants will yield."

The Fund will open a second round of funding later this summer. To attract additional interest in urban sustainability projects beyond those funded, it will also house an Idea Bank on the Funders' Network website, which will provide summaries of project applications. "One thing all of the projects told us," Jenny says, "is that sustainability is becoming cemented into the work of cities and is making a real difference in the community and in the lives of residents."

For more information on the Local Sustainability Matching Fund, please visit the Funders' Network website at <http://www.fundersnetwork.org/participate/green-building/local-sustainability-matching-fund>. Funders interested in becoming a part of the Local Sustainability Matching Fund should contact Ann Wallace at the Funders' Network.

[About the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities](#) *The Funders' Network exists to inspire, strengthen and expand funding and philanthropic leadership that yield environmentally sustainable, socially equitable, and economically prosperous regions and communities. 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.*

[About The Urban Sustainability Directors Network](#) *The Urban Sustainability Directors Network is a three-year-old North American peer-to-peer network of 100 plus municipal sustainability directors who support each other in advancing the practice of urban sustainability.*

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