Achieving Urban Sustainability through Collaboration

Five projects advance to the final round of the 2015 USDN Innovation Fund General RFP.

The USDN Innovation Fund provides grants for USDN members to collaborate, develop new ways to solve a problem, or take advantage of an opportunity in urban sustainability. **These innovations typically result in a new policy, practice, tool, program, performance standard, or organizational model.** Each year, the Innovation Fund runs a General RFP process to allow members to collaboratively develop new or phased innovations.

This year, the Steering Committee invited 6 strong field-building innovations to develop full proposals. The proposals focus on how to address equity in energy efficiency programming, testing planning processes for climate preparedness that engage the community in an equitable way, working with Investor Owned Utilities, innovative financing for sustainability projects, and biodiversity.

Proposal	Summary Statement	Cities Involved
Duke Energy Convening	This project will host a convening with municipalities and the electric utility Duke Energy to begin a collaborative and mutually beneficial conversation around data accessibility and standardization across Duke Energy's service territories. During the convening, municipalities will define specific data needs and success measures from those gaining access to data. Through this convening, municipalities will collaborate with Duke to define how to access this type of data.	Charlotte, Cincinnati, Cary, Bloomington, Asheville, Mecklenburg County, Winston-Salem, Chapel Hill
Energy Efficiency and Equity	By using energy efficiency as a pilot topic area, this project will train sustainability directors to convene and lead discussions with local (and non-traditional) partners to better integrate equity into municipal sustainability programs. The project deliverables will establish a common strategy and communications framework for embedding equity into energy programs, by creating tools that can be used to convene, strategize, and forge direct connections between SSDN members and their local equity and energy partners.	Knoxville, Atlanta, Charlotte, Fayetteville, Sarasota County, Memphis, Huntsville, Durham
Financing Scan	The financing scan will help sustainability directors by informing them on various financing mechanisms and by providing a process for assessment and application directly for their sustainability initiatives. A step-by-step business planning format will enable sustainability departments to have clear insights into funding needs (project-by-project) to create reliable funding streams.	Palo Alto, Avondale, Berkeley, Oakland, Ann Arbor, Phoenix, Vancouver
Climate Toolkit	This project will develop a climate training toolkit for local governments to train their own staff on opportunities to support progress on climate adaptation and resilience, building on examples of existing related training content. This toolkit will include training content (e.g., framing of issues and opportunities, custom exercises) for a minimum of three common types of city departments or 'sectors' of work that multiple departments might engage in and benefit from simultaneous training on.	Baltimore, Seattle, Toronto, Fort Lauderdale, Vancouver, Knoxville, Plano, Denver, Austin, Oakland
Equity Planning Model	This project will develop and pilot test approaches for bringing community development planning techniques to climate preparedness planning through multi-stakeholder processes designed to advance equity and achieve multiple community benefits, including those that address causes of social vulnerability. It will design a planning model to be tested in whole or part in different cities, evaluate which planning elements and tactics were most effective, and produce case studies which detail techniques used and lessons learned which will be distributed across the USDN network through webinars, the annual meeting, and the website.	Seattle, Toronto, Denver, Baltimore, Cleveland, Portland OR
Biodiversity Framework	This project will support a critical first step toward creating an Urban Biodiversity Inventory Framework and methodology that USDN members can use to guide their efforts to conserve and restore biodiversity. Partners on the grant will contract with an individual or organization to develop this framework, which will include: (1) identifying what information and data types are most important to collect; (2) describing how the data should be collected and organized; and (3) guiding how the data collected should be used to target priority biodiversity opportunities and needs in a given urban community.	St. Louis, Portland OR, San Francisco,