



PARTNERS FOR PLACES

2015 Annual Report

Overview

Over the past five years, the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities (TFN) and Urban Sustainability Directors' Network (USDN) have worked closely with a group of national funders and USDN members to develop, shape, and implement the Partners for Places (P4P) grant program. 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. P4P is housed at TFN, which has legal and fiduciary responsibility for its management, and is guided by a Selection Committee comprised of USDN members, foundation investors, and TFN's director of programs.

In 2015 Partners for Places celebrated the completion of seven rounds of grants for almost \$3,000,000 made possible with the generous support from six foundation investors—Bloomberg Philanthropies, The JPB Foundation, The Kendeda Fund, New York Community Trust, The Summit Foundation, and the Surdna Foundation. Local place-based foundations matched these grants, bringing the total invested in local sustainability projects to \$6,000,000. Grantee communities, as shown in the map below, can be found across the United States and in Canada.



Geographic Reach of Seven Rounds of Partners for Places Grants

This year Partners for Places also launched the Partners for Places Equity Pilot Initiative, with leadership support from The Kendeda Fund and The Kresge Foundation. The million-dollar, two-year Equity Pilot Initiative will provide a test bed for how to help cities build their capacity to address equity in sustainability. Already, through revisions to the Round 7 Partners for Places RFP, and additional changes to be incorporated in Round 8, the Partners for Places general program is more strongly encouraging sustainability projects to reduce disparities for the most marginalized in order to improve the well-being of all. What we learn from the Equity Pilot Initiative will shape future rounds of P4P grants.

2015 Progress in Achieving Impact Goals

By the end of 2015, Partners for Places was well on its way to meeting or exceeding its major impact goals.

Bringing Together Local Government Sustainability Leaders & Place-based Foundations

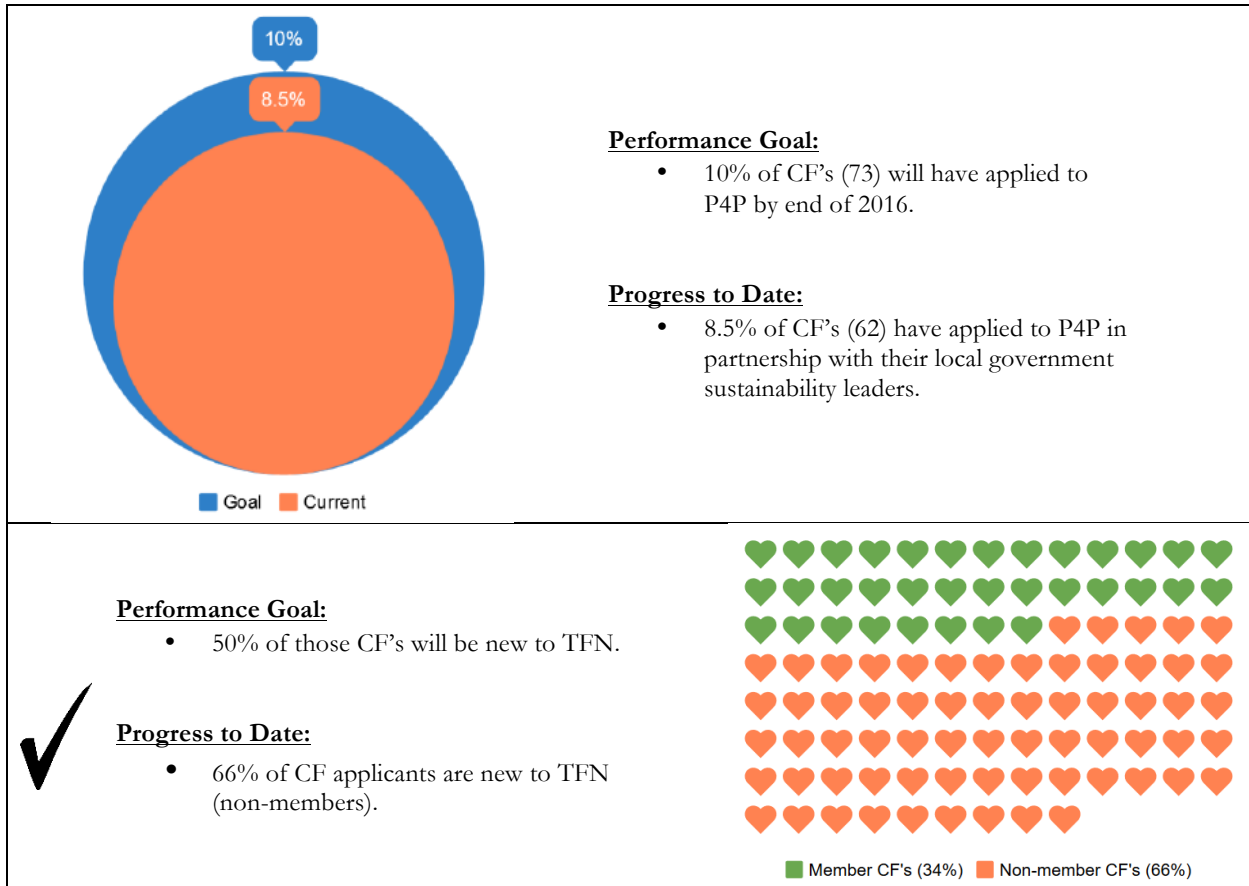
Creating vibrant communities is a group effort. Place-based foundations offer unique knowledge of their communities and the ability to provide seed money for important projects. Local government offers the power to move projects through planning and development. Working together results in sustainability programs that save money, improve the environment, increase efficiency, and promote the well-being of all residents. Partners for Places has helped 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.

In 2015 Partners for Places fostered relationships not only through collaborative proposal development and project implementation, but also through follow up collaborations and partnerships between local government sustainability offices and place-based funders, many of which have continued after the grant ended. In fact, many partnership projects have gone ahead even when applicants have not received P4P grants, and many cities and foundations have begun conversations that have not applied for funding.

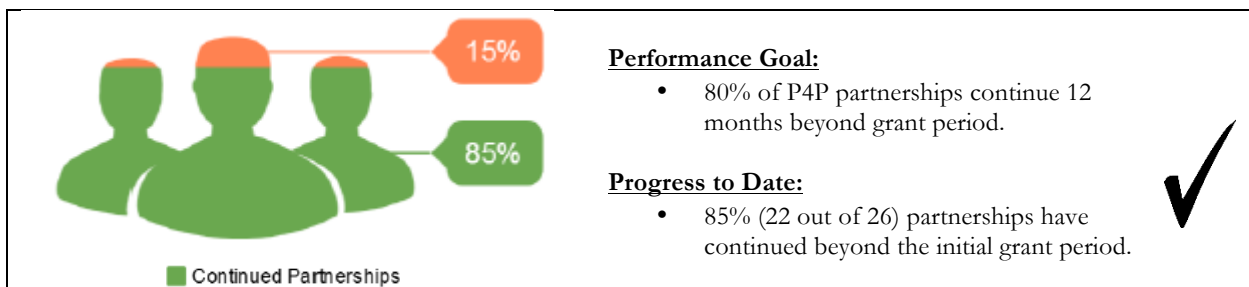
Partners for Places is open to all local government sustainability leaders, but has had a special focus on encouraging USDN members to form relationships with place-based foundations. As of the end of 2015, 45% of USDN’s 145 members have applied for Partners for Places funding. Many initiated their first conversations with place-based foundations because of Partners for Places.

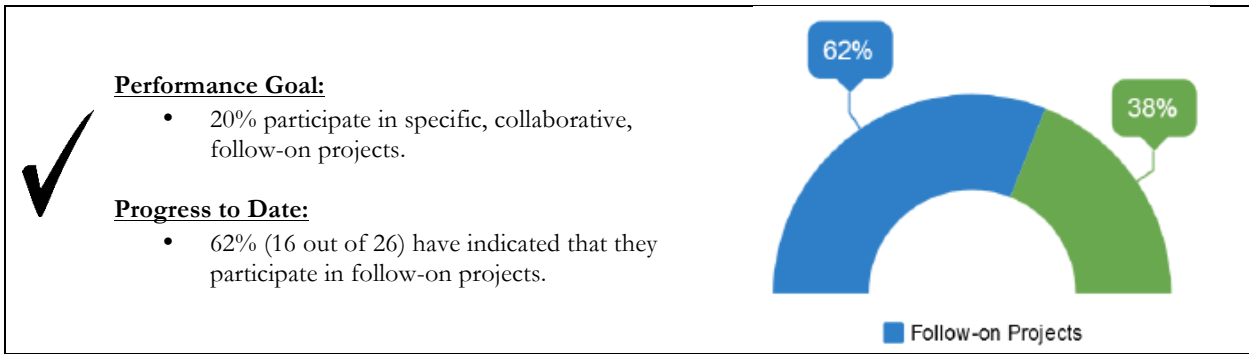
<p>Performance Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% of USDN members will have applied for P4P funding by end of 2016. (USDN membership baseline is 138. Today it is 145.) <p>Progress to Date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 45% of USDN members have applied for a P4P grant since inception of the program. This represents 63 unique LG offices. 24% of USDN members have received at least one P4P grant, 44 of the 52 grants awarded, with 9 USDN members awarded two grants. 	<p>A pie chart with two segments. The left segment is orange and labeled '45%' with a callout box. The right segment is blue and labeled '55%' with a callout box. A legend below the chart shows an orange square next to the text 'USDN Applicants'.</p>
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Partners for Places also set a goal to involve 10% of community foundations in partnerships with local government sustainability leaders. As of the end of 2015, 8.5% have applied to Partners for Places with local government partners. More than half of these community foundations have not been TFN members.



Partners for Places wants the partnerships it supports to extend beyond the grant. The purpose of the grant is to provide time to explore and build long-term relationships. The signs are good for achieving this goal too. Of projects completed to date, 85% are continuing beyond the grant period.

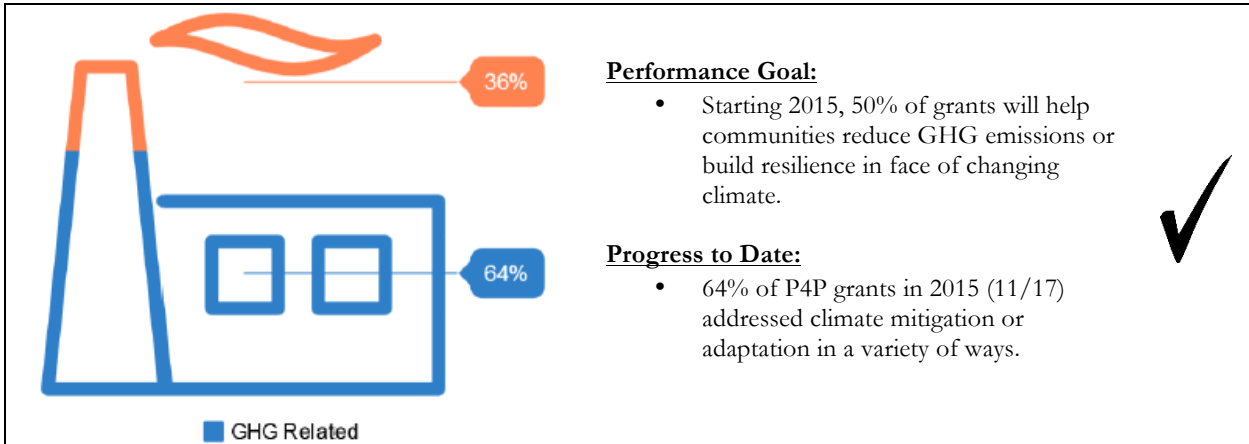


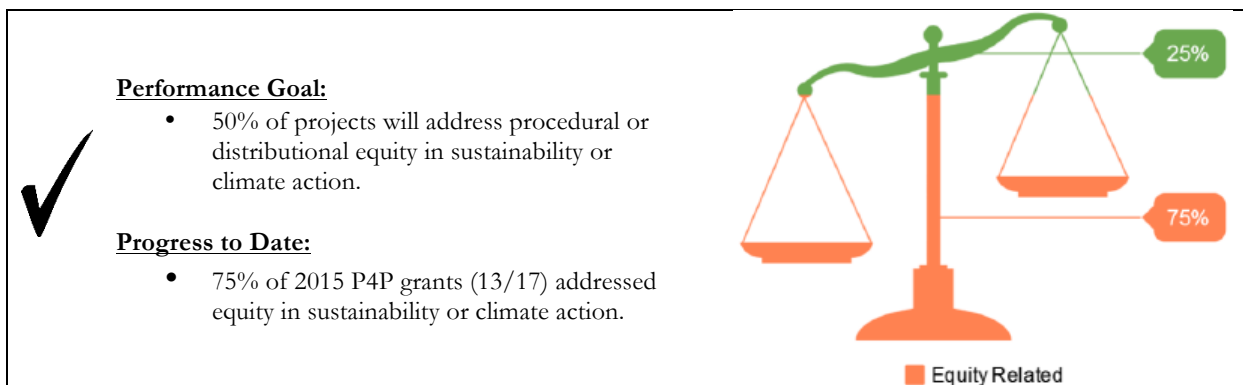


Advancing Sustainability, Climate Action and Equity

The other primary goal of Partners for Places is to support projects that help to advance local sustainability or climate action plans. P4P also encourages local projects to address equity as part of sustainability. The majority of grants to date have addressed climate mitigation or adaptation. A majority of the grants also targeted and engaged low-income communities and neighborhoods of color.

All of the Round 1 through 4 grantees achieved most of their proposed outcomes and advanced their community’s sustainability, energy efficiency, or climate plans. Grants resulted in tangible outcomes – clean energy purchase contracts in Baltimore, urban farms and community gardens in Bridgeport, Providence, Salt Lake City, and Sarasota, new electric vehicle charging stations and trained technicians in Juneau, neighborhood-focused funds supporting community climate actions or local food projects in Cleveland and Indianapolis, and transit and mobility enhancements in Los Angeles and San Diego. Most of the completed projects have been shared with other cities. So far 10 percent of these projects are being replicated or considered for replication in other communities. Descriptions of all proposed and funded projects are shared at the Partners for Places Idea Bank (<http://www.fundersnetwork.org/participate/green-building/idea-bank>).





Scaling Proven Sustainability Practices

Since its creation, one of the goals for Partners for Places has been to identify sustainability practices supported through USDN and of deep concern to USDN members and help to take them to scale. Embedding equity in sustainability and climate action is a practice ripe for replication and in high demand. Cities have learned enough to standardize processes and tools for initiating and developing in city government a capacity to learn and act on equity related sustainability goals/activities, to go beyond the talk in a way that can be tested, assessed, and then, perhaps, broadly deployed.

Partners for Places already had played a role in the development of this practice. In 2012 a Partners for Places grant to a partnership of the City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability and the Bullitt Foundation produced a Portland Climate Action Plan that purposefully engaged disadvantaged communities. In 2013, USDN provided a Peer Learning Exchange grant to 9 communities to travel to Portland to learn how Portland integrated equity into its climate action plan.

More USDN members wanted access to this kind of professional development. In 2015, USDN launched an integrated process for building the capacity of USDN members to address equity in sustainability and climate action. This work included 1) a five-part professional development series, including webinars, videos, and worksheets ([click here to view](#)); 2) an October 2015 workshop; and 3) plans for a learning group to help cities refine equity projects planned at the workshop.

Around the same time, Partners for Places began to design a two-year Partners for Places Equity Pilot Initiative with three components: 1) financial and technical support to a cohort of cities and place-based foundation partners that are committed to equity action to build local capacity to address equity in sustainability and climate action plans; 2) intentional learning from the pilot; and 3) consideration for an expanded effort to transfer this capacity to many more cities.

Partners for Places and USDN joined forces on these efforts to promote capacity to pursue equity in sustainability. They hired the same project manager, Julia Parzen, and technical consultants, Julie Nelson and Glenn Harris. Partners for Places used the USDN Equity Professional Development Series and workshop to provide pre-RFP capacity building. The Equity Pilot RFP was opened to all 24 USDN members that participated in the USDN Equity Workshop. Now Partners for Places is working with USDN to plan a learning group for not only Equity Pilot Initiative grantees, but also other USDN members that are applying an equity lens to sustainability initiatives. The partnership allowed Partners for Places to attract well-prepared applicants for the RFP and to have a ready

dissemination mechanism for lessons learned. It provided USDN with a means to help its members implement equity projects developed through the professional development series and learn together about what works.

In Closing

Partners for Places has continually evolved based upon results and feedback from funders and cities so that it stays on top of changing needs and conditions. When cities asked for an alternative to the requirement to have a sustainability plan, Partners for Places provided two alternatives. When they asked for two-year grants, Partners for Places provided this option. When equity became a more recognized part of sustainability work, Partners for Places raised the bar on expectations for addressing equity, which it has continued to do each cycle for the past three cycles. Partners for Places will continue to work hard in 2016 to stay responsive and attuned to ways it can best advance sustainability and climate action.

Attachment. 2015 Partners for Places Grants

Project Description	Amount	Lead City	Grant Foundation Partner
To launch an energy retrofit program in homes of lower-income older adults in Blacksburg and the New River Valley in order to extend their independence and expand adoption of energy efficiency practices.	\$83,750	Blacksburg, VA	The Community Foundation of the New River Valley
To help move the community to the next level of water management and resiliency through water reuse opportunities in the face of persistent and long-term drought facing the region and state.	\$67,500	Chula Vista, CA	The San Diego Foundation
To enhance and strengthen Cincinnati's regional food system through civic engagement, new policies, and creation of a Cincy Food Fund and food fellowships	\$105,000	Cincinnati, OH	The Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr./U.S. Bank Foundation; Interact for Health
To utilize the arts and community organizing to empower residents of diverse neighborhoods to identify and pursue neighborhood sustainability goals.	\$25,000	Madison, WI	CUNA Mutual Foundation Madison Community Foundation Zendesk Neighbor Foundation Summit Credit Union National Guardian Life Insurance David S. Bourne Foundation American Family Insurance Company
To increase food security in New Bedford and advance the Sustaining New Bedford Plan goals by promoting use of the SNAP benefits program at city farmers' markets and enhancing engagement with community gardens.	\$39,000	New Bedford, MA	Island Foundation; Rainy Day Fund/Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts; The Upstream Foundation
To create opportunities for all residents, especially people of color, immigrants, refugees, low-income, and those with limited-English proficiency, to fully participate in and benefit from Seattle's environmental progress.	\$75,000	Seattle, WA	Bullitt Foundation; The Seattle Foundation; The Russell Family Foundation; Loom Foundation; Social Venture Partners Seattle
To activate the Stamford 2030 District, a resilient, high-performance building district in downtown Stamford with goals to dramatically reduce demand for energy and water resources and increase resiliency by 2030.	\$75,000	Stamford, CT	Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation
To support Vancouver's Upcycle Design Project, which seeks to catalyze the shift to integrated materials recovery and reuse, and green economy jobs in Vancouver's design, construction, and demolition sectors.	\$50,000	Vancouver, B.C.	Vancouver Foundation
To launch the Austin 2030 District, a voluntary initiative to	\$100,000	Austin, TX	The Meadows Foundation

reduce energy and water consumption and carbon emissions from Austin buildings.			
To increase and enhance resiliency in neighborhoods most vulnerable to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change.	\$75,000	Baltimore, MD	Baltimore Community Foundation; Town Creek Foundation
Towards establishing and enhancing programs which assist vulnerable populations and create an outreach coordinator position to help meet Bloomington's new residential energy reduction goal.	\$34,936	Bloomington, IN	Community Foundation of Bloomington; Monroe County Duke Energy Foundation
To mitigate and adapt to climate change by engaging residents in improving tree canopy, transportation mode shift, and entrepreneurship, delivering tangible outcomes for neighborhood resilience and equity.	\$35,000	Cleveland, OH	Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland
To support early action projects in the creation of three vibrant urban village centers in Indianapolis by enhancing Livability, Opportunity, Vitality, and Education.	\$50,000	Indianapolis, IN	JP Morgan Chase Foundation
Will go towards implementing a neighborhood-scale greening plan in a socioeconomically and environmentally-deprived neighborhood; this project will assess the impact of the natural environment on human health.	\$75,000	Louisville, KY	Owsley Brown Family Foundation
To prepare the community to thrive amid increasing summer wildfire smoke and heat by helping Missoulians to be physically, mentally, and economically healthy and resilient.	\$45,000	Missoula, MT	Missoula Community Foundation
To create a GIS tool that collects environmental, social, and health outcome data to better inform the City and developers on how, where, and when to incorporate "green".	\$39,000	New Orleans, LA	Greater New Orleans Foundation
Will help develop a Complete Streets plan for Northampton, with an emphasis on equity and prioritization of projects based on socioeconomic status of residents and connectivity.	\$25,000	Northampton, MA	Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts