



2017 Annual Report

Partners for Places Overview and Investment Summary

[Partners for Places](#) is a matching grant program designed to improve 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. The program is housed at the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities (TFN), which has legal and fiduciary responsibility for its management.

Partners for Places grantmaking is guided by a Selection Committee comprised of Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) members, foundation investors, and TFN's director of programs. Over the past six years, TFN and the 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 grant program. During this time, Partners for Places has funded 90 proposals.

In 2017, Partners for Places celebrated the completion of thirteen rounds of grants that have provided over \$5.4 million US dollars to North American communities (Figure 1), so that they can advance their urban sustainability goals. To date, there have been eleven rounds of grants in the general grant program totaling over \$4.8 million, and two rounds of grants for the Equity Pilot Initiative, totaling nearly \$616,000. The 2017 general grant program round 11 also set aside a portion of the funding to support Green Stormwater Infrastructure projects, totaling \$127,500.

The total Partners for Places investment to date is \$5,425,887. This was made possible with the generous support from eleven foundation investors—Bloomberg Philanthropies, The JPB Foundation, The Kendeda Fund, The Kresge Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the New York Community Trust, The Summit Foundation, The Surdna Foundation, The Pisces Foundation, The Erb Family Foundation, and the Turner Foundation. Local place-based foundations matched these grants, bringing the total invested in local sustainability projects to over \$10.8 million. The Funders' Network and USDN thank the investors, local matching funders, and community partners. Without this support, Partners for Places would not be able to aid communities as they strive towards their sustainability goals.

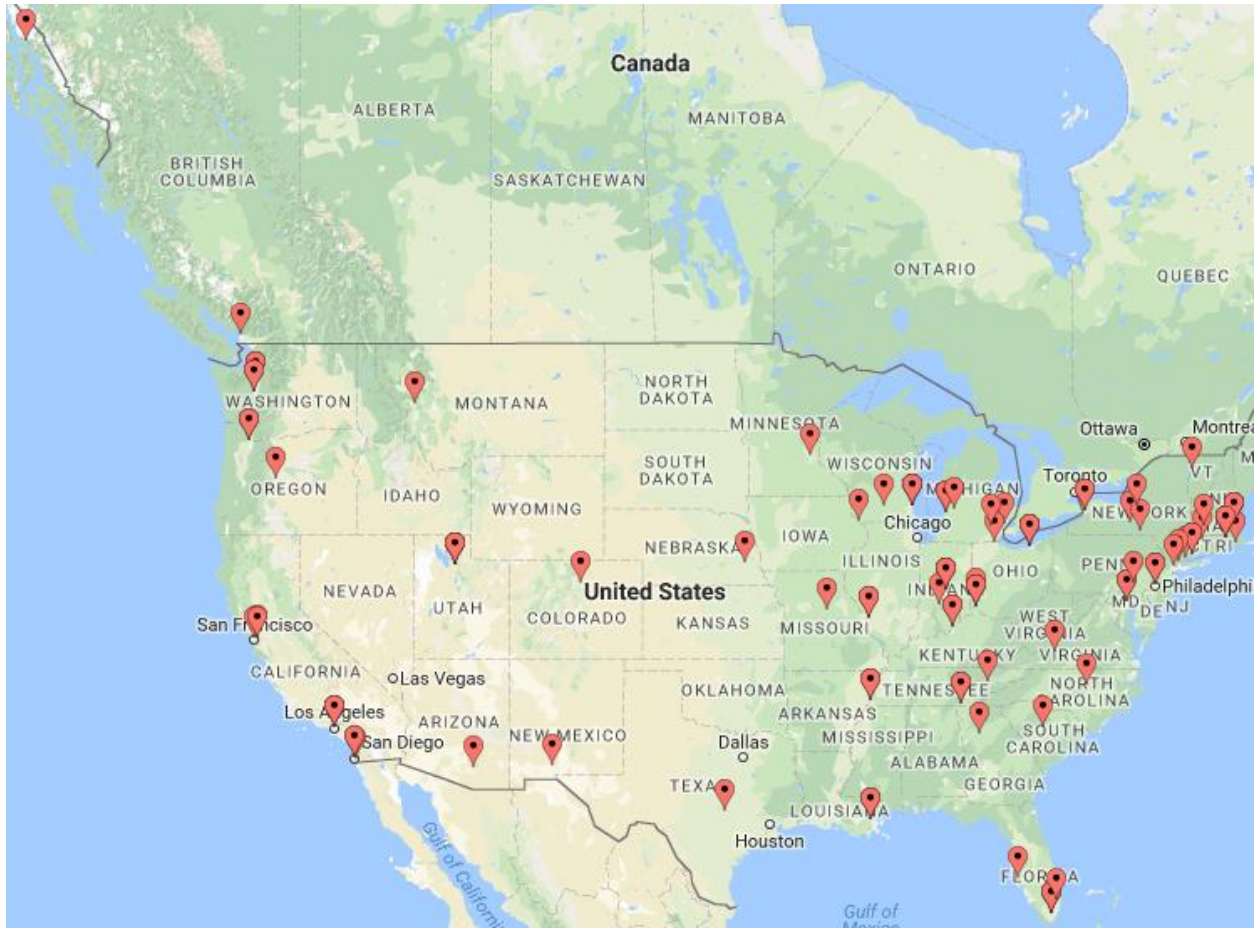


Figure 1. Geographic Reach of Partners for Places Grants (R1-11 and EPI R1-2)

Partners for Places 2017 Awards Summary: General and Pilot Rounds

In 2017, Partners for Places made fifteen awards in its two general grant rounds. In the spring 2017 funding round (10), seven awards were made (Table 1).

Table 1. 2017 General Partners for Places Program Awards, Round 10.

Spring 2017 Round 10 Grants			
Project Description	Amount	Lead City	Foundation Partners
To build stronger and deeper representation of underserved communities in climate and energy decisions by facilitating dialogues with diverse stakeholders on community-defined priorities; piloting a renewable energy and energy efficiency workforce development program; supporting regional coordination on climate and equity, and generating metrics to guide data collection and evaluate progress.	\$50,000	Boulder, CO	Philanthropiece Foundation
To support a sustainability education and youth leadership afterschool program in a distressed portion of the county that will teach high school students STEM skills, empowering them to become climate sustainability stewards and advocates to address their own neighborhood’s environmental challenges.	\$25,000	Broward County, FL	Community Foundation of Broward
To better connect low-and moderate-income residents more easily to all of the “green” programs offered by the city, such as	\$75,000	Chicago, IL	Chicago Community Trust

recycling, transportation, and energy efficiency, ensuring they can take advantage of the many tools and resources available to make their lifestyles more sustainable and help their household budgets go farther.			
To turn an under-used, 10-acre site in a low-income neighborhood into a multi-use agricultural park that will feature a farmers' market, urban farm, outdoor classroom, and green space.	\$100,000	Columbia, MO	Boone County Community Trust
To develop and implement scalable strategies for promoting healthier, more energy-efficient homes in two target neighborhoods through a pilot program, targeting children under 6 years old exposed to lead.	\$60,000	Newark, NJ	Victoria Foundation; Greater Newark LISC; United Way of Essex and Hudson Counties; Essex Equities; PSEG Foundation
To design and implement a comprehensive and inclusive outreach campaign that creates a unified vision for protecting and growing Syracuse's urban forest.	\$25,000	Syracuse, NY	The Gifford Foundation
To create an equitable and healthy food system that promotes healthy communities and people, supporting community members' research and giving them the tools and resources to implement resilient food system ideas and projects.	\$45,000	Tacoma, WA	The Russell Family Foundation

In the fall 2017 funding round (11), eight awards were made (Table 2).

Table 2. 2017 General Partners for Places Program Awards, Round 11.

Fall 2017 Round 11 Grants			
Project Description	Amount	Lead City	Foundation Partners
To engage diverse stakeholders to co-create a community climate action plan (CAP) with innovative strategies that balance equity, efficiency and meaningful climate benefits.	\$50,000	Bend, OR	Oregon Community Foundation
To support equitable access to farmland for minority and women farmers and access to food for low-income residents through SNAP EBT, and a double bucks program.	\$25,000	Cary, NC	Triangle Community Foundation
To enhance the sustainability of Cincinnati's regional food system through strategic, collaborative activities to prevent, recover, and recycle food waste and educate the public on the issue.	\$115,000	Cincinnati, OH	The Greater Cincinnati Foundation
To develop an equity focused community-wide planning effort that will result in a comprehensive climate action and resilience plan for the City of Lancaster and an initial implementation project.	\$30,000	Lancaster, PA	Lancaster County Community Foundation
To continue to open vibrant school playgrounds to the public in underserved Los Angeles, empower low-income residents through enhanced community engagement, and advance local joint-use policies.	\$35,000	Los Angeles, CA	The Goldhirsh Foundation
To engage the community in making equity a priority in implementation of the City of New Orleans' Climate Action Strategy and to help the City meet the strategy's climate mitigation goals equitably.	\$45,000	New Orleans, LA	Greater New Orleans Foundation
To create a data-driven approach to identify Philadelphia populations disproportionately exposed to environmental stressors, and reduce disparities through community-centered decision-making.	\$25,000	Philadelphia, PA	Knight Foundation
To initiate inclusive engagement of low-income and	\$31,500	Salt Lake City,	The Community Foundation of Utah,

minority Salt Lake City residents in efforts to mitigate climate change impacts, improve community resiliency, and ensure social equity.		UT	The George S. & Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation, The Richard K. and Shirley S. Hemingway Foundation, Telemachus: Foundation to Empower the Poor & End War
--	--	-----------	--

In 2015, Partners for Places launched the first of a two-year [Equity Pilot Initiative](#). This pilot was made possible with support from The Kendeda Fund and The Kresge Foundation. Four cities (Baltimore, Knoxville, Las Cruces, and Providence) received \$211,000 in funding during year one of the Equity Pilot Initiative.

In 2017, seven cities were awarded Equity Pilot Initiative grants (Table 3). The cities of Berkeley, Charlotte, Cleveland, Dubuque, Minneapolis, Providence, and Washington, DC received \$405,000 in funding during the second year of the initiative. Partners for Places provided a range of support services in addition to grant dollars, including coaching from our equity consultant team, an in-person kickoff meeting, and a monthly learning cohort hosted by TFN and USDN.

Table 3. 2017 Equity Pilot Partners for Places Program Awards.

2017 Round 2 Equity Pilot Initiatives Awards			
Project Description	Amount	Lead City	Foundation Partners
To develop a “racial equity lens” tool that will include a set of questions that guide city policies and programs. The tool would be first used to incorporate racial equity into a community land-use planning process, and ultimately be applied to a broad range of programs and services.	\$30,000	Berkeley, CA	The San Francisco Foundation; The East Bay Community Foundation
To create an accessible “smart city” platform where residents and government can kick-start collaboration on meaningful projects in categories that include healthy communities, neighborhood transportation, technology training programs, and smart homes and neighborhoods.	\$75,000	Charlotte, NC	Knight Foundation; OrthoCarolina Foundation
To help improve outcomes in health, access to green jobs, and resiliency through equitable climate action planning and implementation, including workshops in 10 neighborhoods previously under-represented in sustainability efforts.	\$60,000	Cleveland, OH	George Gund Foundation; Cleveland Foundation
To ensure city departments and partners learn strategies and have the tools needed to put climate-vulnerable communities at the center of decision making and planning. The project will engage partners throughout the Washington Neighborhood to build non-profit capacity and social resiliency.	\$50,000	Dubuque, IA	Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque
To work with community members and organizations to implement a Green Zone pilot project that will address racial equity, improve health, and support economic development using environmentally conscious efforts in a community that faces the cumulative effects of environmental pollution and social, political and economic vulnerability.	\$75,000	Minneapolis, MN	McKnight Foundation
To incorporate racial equity as a core pillar of the city’s sustainability efforts, including additional training and tools that will support long-term goals specific to environmental and racial justice.	\$55,000	Providence, RI	Rhode Island Foundation
To establish an equity advisory group of community residents from the Watts Branch neighborhood in order to bring equity and	\$60,000	Washington, DC	The Prince Charitable Trusts; Morris and

social cohesion into planning and implementation of the District’s climate adaptation and mitigation initiatives through a community-driven process. The project will produce a replicable model for authentic community engagement to be used in future planning efforts.			Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation
--	--	--	------------------------------

In 2017, a Green Stormwater Infrastructure pilot was included in the Partners for Places Round 11 Request for Proposals (RFP). Subsequently, Partners for Places made awards to the cities of Grand Rapids, St. Louis, and Las Cruces for a total of \$127,000 (Table 4). These projects focused on improving green stormwater infrastructure to reduce negative climate effects on local neighborhoods. All three projects have strong community equity elements.

Table 4. 2017 Green Stormwater Infrastructure Partners for Places Program Awards.

Green Stormwater Infrastructure Pilot (Granted with Round 11)			
Project Description	Amount	Lead City	Foundation Partners
To prepare and implement a plan to fund and install Green Infrastructure and Water Conservation in low income neighborhoods	\$51,250	Grand Rapids, MI	Wege Foundation
To build the Nevada Neighborhood Project that connects a green infrastructure corridor and builds community capital to combat extreme heat, drought, and provide overall support in a low/moderate income urban neighborhood.	\$25,000	Las Cruces, NM	Santa Fe Community Foundation
To employ teens and host neighborhood tree-planting events to help address stormwater management while also enhancing tree canopy, reducing heat island impact, and strengthening community relations.	\$51,250	St. Louis, MO	Bancshares Foundation, St. Louis Community Foundation, and William A. Kerr Foundation

2017 Progress on Partners for Places Fund Impact Goals

Partners for Places tracks immediately identifiable quantitative fund data against a set of impact metrics. The measures that we look for include: 1) the number of USDN members applying for grants; 2) how many of the foundations proposing partnership projects with local government sustainability leaders are new to Partners for Places; 3) how many of those are community foundations that are new to Partners for Places; 4) and how many of those foundations are new to TFN (non-members).

1. USDN Member Applications. 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. To that end, regular outreach is conducted each month, so USDN members are prepared to take advantage of upcoming RFPs. At the end of 2017 (R1-11), 63 of USDN core members have applied for Partners for Places funding over the life of the grant program. Many initiated their first conversations with place-based foundations because of this program.

- **Annual Progress:** 63 unique local sustainability offices out of 141 core members have applied for a grant since inception of the program.

2. Number of Foundations New to Partners for Places. Partners for Places aims to expand the involvement of new foundations.

- In 2017 (R10-11), **31** of the foundations applying to Partners for Places were new applicants to the program.
- **67%** of foundation applicants in 2017 were new to Partners for Places.

3. Number of Community Foundations New to Partners for Places. Partners for Places aims to expand the involvement of an ever-increasing number of local community foundations.

- In 2017 (R10-11), **12** of the foundations applying to Partners for Places were community foundations that were new to applying for Partners for Places funding.

4. Number of Foundations New to TFN. Partners for Places aims to expand the involvement of foundations new to TFN (non-members) as local matching funders.

- In 2017 (R10-11), **11** of the foundations applying for Partners for Places funding were new to TFN.

A Look Ahead

As we enter the new year, the Partners for Places Selection Committee and staff will finalize our first ever strategic plan that will set out a renewed vision and mission, an expanded program focus, and a broader set of goals that seek to double the program's impact over the next five years through partnerships resulting in equitable and sustainable communities. As we operationalize the new plan, the program remains flexible, adaptive, and responsive to the changing priorities and needs of local government sustainability leaders and funders, while simultaneously providing a catalyst for both sectors to build new or stronger relationships with one another. In the current political landscape, local initiatives, commitment, and actions are more important than ever if we are to create a healthier and more sustainable world.

We will continue to stay responsive and attuned to methods that can advance and scale sustainability and climate action in equitable ways. We will be developing a new evaluation framework and therefore updating our annual reports as we operationalize the new plan. We will continue to spread the word about the work that our grantees are doing. Results of many Partners for Places projects involving USDN cities will continue to be shared with peer cities on webinars, through the USDN website, and in annual meeting workshops. Descriptions of all funded projects are shared at the Partners for Partners website [here](#). Projects are also posted publically by USDN [here](#).