PARTNERS FOR PLACES

2019 Annual Report

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Fund by Numbers.

Inspire Interest
- 36% of local funders providing the match in 2019 awards are new to the fund
- 36% of local governments receiving 2019 grants are new to the fund

Build Relationships
- 52% of 2019 proposals exhibit relationships fostered by Partners for Places outreach efforts
- 76% of 2019 proposals address a shared priority identified by utilizing fund resources or events

Align Priorities
- 25% of all awards exhibit goal alignment around field-advancing network priorities
- 80% of all awards center on planning processes to engage the community around local goals

Coordinate Collaboration
- 60% of all Partners for Places partnerships continue beyond the grant period
- 39% of 2019 proposals received Partners for Places technical assistance

Continuous Improvement
- 81% of all awards exhibit operational commitment to engaging disenfranchised communities
- 84% of all awards are led by USDN members and their local foundations

Additionally, 47% of awards support climate mitigation or adaptation; 57% support equity-specific work, and 11% of awards are advancing green stormwater infrastructure work. Additional performance data is in Table 3.

Fund Overview. 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 (TFN), which has legal and fiduciary responsibility for its management. Since 2012, 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 122 proposals in 77 communities (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Partners for Places Grantee Distribution.

Governance Committee Members. Partners for Places is guided by a Governance Committee charged with executing the fund's 2018-2023 strategy. Current members are geographically distributed in Figure 2. Committee members are:

1. Leah Bamberger, Sustainability Director; Providence, RI
2. Dana Bourland, JPB Foundation; New York City, NY
3. Lee Hayes Byron, Sustainability Director; Sarasota County, FL
4. Vicki Elkin, Fund for Lake Michigan; Milwaukee, WI
5. Jill Fuglister, Meyer Memorial Trust; Portland, OR
6. Arturo Garcia-Costas, New York Community Trust; New York City, NY
7. Diane Ives, Kendeda Fund; Washington, D.C. – *co-chair*
8. Kumar Jensen, Sustainability Director; Evanston, IL
9. Nils Moe, USDN; Berkeley, CA – *co-chair*
10. Sheena Solomon, Gifford Foundation; Syracuse, NY
11. Kellie Terry, Surdna Foundation; New York City, NY
12. Ann Fowler Wallace, TFN; Boston, MA

Figure 2. Governance Committee Distribution.

Selection Committee Members. Partners for Places awards are determined by a Selection Committee (Figure 3) comprised of local practitioners, foundation investors, and TFN's director of programs. Committee members are:

1. Emma-Louise Anderson, national funder from the Seed Fund; San Francisco, CA
2. Lee Hayes Byron, Sustainability Director; Sarasota County, FL
3. Laurel Creech, Sustainability Director; Nashville, TN
4. Larry Falkin, Sustainability Director; Cincinnati, OH
5. Dan Guilbeault, Sustainability Coordinator; Washington, D.C.
6. Diane Ives, Kendeda Fund; Washington, D.C.
7. Chase Jones, Energy Conservation Coordinator; Missoula, MT
8. Shubhada Kambli, Sustainability Coordinator; Hartford, CT
9. Julie Rosenbach, Sustainability Director; South Portland, ME
10. Ann Fowler Wallace, TFN; Boston, MA
11. Darryl Young, Summit Foundation; Washington, D.C.

Figure 3. Selection Committee Distribution.

Investments to Date. In 2019, Partners for Places celebrated the completion of seventeen rounds of grants that have provided $7.1 million US dollars to North American communities, so that they can advance their urban sustainability goals. With the local match, total investment to date is $15.5 million. There have been:

- Fifteen rounds of grants in the general program totaling $6.5 million; and
- Two rounds of grants for the Equity Pilot Initiative, totaling $616,000.

2019 Investment Summary. In 2019, Partners for Places made 11 awards in its two general grant rounds for a total investment of $806,290. Of this amount, $297,500 supports Green Stormwater Infrastructure projects and $508,790 supports general awards. In the spring 2019 funding round 14, five awards were made, shown in Table 1. Six awards were made in the fall 2019 funding round 15, shown in Table 2.

Table 1. 2019 Round 14 Partners for Places Program Awards.

Spring 2019 Round 14 Grants			
Project Description	**Amount**	**Lead City**	**Foundation Partners**
To create a community transition plan to 100 percent clean and renewable electricity that prioritizes resiliency, energy security, and green jobs for Clevelanders most in need	$50,000	Cleveland, OH	The Cleveland Foundation ($25,000); The George Gund Foundation ($25,000); United Black Fund of Greater Cleveland ($4,000)
To identify and ultimately remove barriers to achieving affordable, resilient net-zero homes	$125,000	Evanston, IL	The Chicago Community Trust ($100,000); Evanston Community Foundation ($25,000)
To promote equity and sustainability in Milwaukee Public Schools with natural schoolyards and outdoor classrooms, green infrastructure, and a new sustainability project specialist	$75,000	Milwaukee, WI	Fund for Lake Michigan ($123,750)
To establish a training and jobs placement program for residents to access green stormwater infrastructure construction, inspection, and maintenance opportunities	$110,000	Newark, NJ	CareerWorks: Greater Newark Workforce Funders Collaborative ($85,000); Victoria Foundation ($25,000)
To build community voice and action in Southeast San Diego and implement the City of San Diego's Climate Action Plan	$73,790	San Diego, CA	The San Diego Foundation ($75,000)

Table 2. 2019 Round 15 Partners for Places Program Awards.

Fall 2019 Round 15 Grants			
Project Description	**Amount**	**Lead City**	**Foundation Partners**
To create the nation's largest and Atlanta's first publicly owned food forest to deliver environmental, economic, and social justice outcomes for the community	$35,000	Atlanta, GA	Turner Foundation ($35,000)
To ensure vulnerable multi-family affordable housing, which is home to some of Boston's most socially and economically underserved residents, is ready to withstand climate shocks	$50,000	Boston, MA	Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Boston ($50,000)
To build an equitable and sustainable Bridgeport Waterfront and support a community-based vision to address climate impacts, strengthen local economies, and improve resident well-being	$72,500	Bridgeport, CT	Jeniam Foundation ($32,500); Long Island Sound Funders Collaborative ($40,000)
To address intersectional housing issues by empowering and equipping limited income homeowners to address lead hazards, energy inefficacy, and other home repair needs	$100,000	Detroit, MI	The Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation ($100,000)
To transform an abandoned roadway, in an underserved community, into a community greenspace with green infrastructure connecting to parkland and the river	$40,000	New Haven, CT	The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven ($30,000); The Watershed Fund ($10,000)
To develop a comprehensive citywide urban agriculture plan that will guide the coordinated efforts of city, non-profit, and resident stakeholders to better protect, maintain, and expand community gardens, farms, and orchards	$75,000	Philadelphia, PA	William Penn Foundation ($150,000)

These awards are made possible with the generous support of seven investor foundations. The general grant program is supported by: The JPB Foundation, The Kendeda Fund, The New York Community Trust, The Summit Foundation, and The Surdna Foundation. Funding for Green Stormwater Infrastructure projects is provided by The JPB Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, The Pisces Foundation, and The Summit Foundation. Local place-based foundations matched these 2019 grants, bringing the total investment in local sustainability projects to $1,741,540. TFN and USDN thank the investors, local matching funders, and community partners. This support allows Partners for Places to continue to aid communities as they strive for sustainability goals.

Performance Summary. Table 3 shows the fund's progress against performance goals. Targets are set at a 2% increase based on previous years' progress, and advanced by prioritizing actions from the fund's work plan. Targets for metrics that assess 2020 incoming proposals and awards only are aspirational. Incoming proposals and new awards are evaluated honestly against each metric, and each year varies widely based on applicant pool.

<p align="center">Table 3. Partners for Places Performance Metrics 2019 Assessment.</p>

Goal	Metric Target Statement	2018 Baseline	2019 Progress	2020 Target
1. Continuous Improvement	a) % of Partners for Places awards that exhibit operational commitment to partnerships that engage traditionally disenfranchised communities	80%	81%	83%
	b) % of Partners for Places awards led by USDN members and their local foundations	83%	84%	50%*
2. Inspire Interest	a) % of new local funders providing the match in Partners for Places **proposals**	68%	32%	34%**
	b) % of new local funders providing the match in Partners for Places **awards**	17%	36%	38%**
	d) % of new local governments **applying** for implementation and planning grants	68%	55%	57%**
	e) % of new local governments being **awarded** implementation and planning grants	50%	36%	38%**
3. Build Relationships	a) % of proposals that exhibit relationships fostered by Partners for Places outreach efforts	33%	52%	54%**
	b) % of proposals that address a shared priority identified by utilizing fund resources or events	34%	76%	78%**
4. Align Priorities	a) % of awards exhibiting obvious goal alignment and strong topical knowledge around shared field-advancing network priorities	23%	25%	27%
	b) % of awards center on planning processes to engage the community around local goals	79%	80%	82%
	c) % of awards with clear potential for field-building impact that can be broadly shared	77%	80%	82%
5. Coordinate Collaboration	a) % of Partners for Places partnerships that continue beyond the grant period	59%	60%	62%
	b) % of Partners for Places grantees who base proposals on previous work	23%	31%	33%
	c) % of proposals that received Partners for Places technical assistance	11%	39%	41%**
	d) % of awards supporting climate mitigation or adaptation	47%	47%	49%
	e) % of awards supporting equity-specific work	56%	57%	59%
	f) % of awards allocated to advancing green stormwater infrastructure work	7%	11%	13%

* Partners for Places holds a fixed annual target for USDN member participation.
** These are annual metrics that assess that year's incoming proposals and awards. The remaining metrics assess the cumulative grant portfolio.

Partners for Places leadership understands that accomplishing goals is not a smooth trajectory. Striving for scaling advancement of broad sustainability goals means assuming the risk of variables beyond any one organization's control. Data is assessed to understand baselines and set informed performance targets.

Targets are set above data baselines and re-set annually. This process allows strengths and weaknesses to clearly emerge. It also provides a way to understand the impact of emerging influencers that are unknown at the time targets are set. Goals that are not advancing at the desired rate become a programming focus and are supported with increased staff attention and outreach.

Progress toward the fund's targets also show how Request for Proposal (RFP) language, point scales, and grantee reporting should be adjusted. The language and scoring criteria emphasized in each RFP should clearly signal to proposers how projects should be designed to support fund focus areas. The key to achieving desired impact is to keep two views present in everything the fund does. One view is trained on longer term horizon goals, and one view is trained on the immediate next steps needed to hit current target statements.

2020 Forecast. Partners for Places is deep into the implementation of its 2018-2023 strategic plan. Based on 2019 progress toward goals, the "Inspire Interest" goal area will be prioritized in 2020:
- Focus on encouraging new local matching funders and new local governments to apply to the fund
- Focus on awarding grants to local governments who have not yet received an award from this fund

In addition to improving outreach to those who have not yet participated in Partners for Places and grantmaking to these entities, the following activities will occur:
- The Governance Committee meets face-to-face in February to vote on consultant recommendations around equity programming
- The fund will implement programming in 2020 designed to build capacity to scale sustainability practices in equitable ways
  - Small awards for pre-proposal planning and technical assistance (TA) will be offered prior to the Round 17 RFP launch
- The Selection Committee announces Round 16 awards in May and Round 17 awards in November
- Partners for Places impacts will continue to be tracked, summarized, and shared in meetings, on webinars, and through the posting of lessons from each completed grant on the USDN website, accessible here