

Partners for Places

PORTLAND, OREGON A Climate Action Plan for All Portland Residents

In 1993, Portland, Oregon, became the first city in the nation to publish a Climate Action Plan. Now, thanks to the Partners for Places grant program, the city's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability is partnering with the Bullitt Foundation to advance social equity through a revision of the plan.

The Tools for Climate Equity project is producing a set of climate-planning tools and products, and a process that makes Portland's effort more inclusive and establishes a model approach for other cities across North America. While the last Climate Action Plan process took a more traditional outreach to low-income and communities of color, the current strategy utilized a much more deliberate and sustained approach by developing relationships in diverse communities to better inform how to engage and strengthen multicultural communities in Portland and Multnomah County.

The project engages the city's diverse population to ensure that the Climate Action Plan is focused on the well-being of all residents. For example, the city worked with Hacienda Community Development Corporation to identify priorities in the redevelopment of the Villa de Clara Vista multifamily property. In collaboration with a local non-profit, the city held focus groups with community residents—many from Latino, Somali, and other indigenous immigrant populations.

Tenants expressed their views about the indoor and outdoor built environment, transportation, community environmental quality, and tenant engagement. Involving community organizations

and residents has helped planners connect ideas and priorities in a holistic way.

Because of the support from Partners for Places, "we have a set of working relationships that we didn't have before," said Michael Armstrong, sustainability manager for Portland. "Influencing the Climate Action Plan is important, but it's something that plays out over time. People are staying at the table having conversations with us now, and we are building relationships between environmental organizations and communities of color. And these communities are now realizing their value as stakeholders."

"Portland produced a Climate Action Plan that purposefully engages disadvantaged communities. We've now created a template for cities around the country...and now these cities can start to follow it."

— Neelima Shah
Bullitt Foundation program officer

Portland's Climate Action Plan has informed similar work in other cities and served as a reference point for many local climate-protection efforts in North America and abroad. Already, representatives from more than a dozen other cities have traveled to Portland to learn about their program. Building social equity into Portland's 2013 Climate Action Plan is influencing not only a wide range of local activities, but also the approach to equity taken by cities across the nation.

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. Through these investments, Partners for Places fosters long-term relationships that make our urban areas more prosperous, livable, and vibrant. Our partners for this project include the **Bullitt Foundation** and the **Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability**. For more information, please visit fundersnetwork.org.

