

### Collective Impacts: USDN's Four Grant Funds for Members Exceeds \$2.4 Million in 2015, Supporting 52 Projects

#### USDN is aligning and leveraging grant funds that support member projects (USDN Innovation Fund, Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance Innovation Fund, Partners for Places, and USDN Peer Learning Exchange).

What began with a \$100,000 collaboration fund in 2009 has evolved into four funds, supported by national and local funders:

- The Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance (CNCA) is a new collaboration of international cities committed to achieving ambitious long-term carbon reduction goals that operates a CNCA Innovation Fund to help cities innovate.
- The USDN Innovation Fund supports collaborations of four or more member communities to develop innovations that address city-identified problems or opportunities in sustainability or scale-up proven innovations.
- The Partners for Places Fund, operated by The Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, supports collaborations between a city and a local funder to build stronger relationships across sectors and support adoption of innovations in urban sustainability.
- The USDN Peer Learning Exchange Fund supports learning exchanges between two or more member communities to accelerate the spread of innovative practices.

In 2015, the funds granted a total of \$2,459,468 in support of 52 different projects:

Fund Name	2015 Amount Granted	Number of Projects Supported
USDN Innovation Fund	\$716,090	18
CNCA Innovation Fund	\$702,500	8
Partners for Places	\$999,186	17
USDN Peer Learning Exchange	\$41,692	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,459,468</b>	<b>52</b>

Between 2009 and the end of 2015, these four funds have re-granted just under \$6.8 million for dozens of network-driven innovation development, scaling, and adoption projects. Essentially these are high-leverage, small-grant funds, with project size averaging less than \$80,000.

The experience of these funds has demonstrated that USDN member communities:

- Prioritize innovations that local governments find most important and within their control, and seek the discovery of practical, on-the-ground methods for implementation.
- Mobilize to engage local funders, collaboratively manage projects, and rely on partner expertise to innovate and grow the field of urban sustainability.
- Align to influence the direction and accelerate the pace of urban sustainability innovation undertaken by partners from all sectors.

These successes strengthen the position of local governments to take innovation development to a new level of impact. This continuing evolution requires a continually greater coordination among funds, as well as ongoing funding to allow for innovations to emerge, develop, and mature into true urban sustainability best practices.

USDN begins 2016 with a greater degree of coordination between funds, allowing USDN to better support multi-year and phased projects. The goal is that lessons from all USDN-supported activities inform each fund's direction and allow local governments to continue to advance the field of urban sustainability as a strong collective voice.