

## Innovation Fund Experimentations

### The USDN Innovation Fund values experimentation and is testing a new investment model through the 2015 Quick Funds Grant Program.

Each year, the USDN Innovation Fund earmarks some funds to experiment with new investment ideas to best meet member needs. One of the 2015 experiments that the Innovation Fund Steering Committee offered was Quick Funds: small grants for projects that are structured to have a 6-month timeframe and require fewer member collaborators.

Through this competitive Request for Proposals, the Fund awarded \$49,560 to three projects. The grants will focus on a scenario-based climate preparedness pilot in Seattle, engaging the private sector in community greenhouse gas reductions through a standardized Request for Information document and outreach toolkit, and a multi-city charrette program to engage New England communities in resiliency planning.

**Climate Preparedness Engagement Pilot:** The City of Seattle's Office of Sustainability and Environment is developing a scenario-based climate preparedness pilot project to be tested in two South Seattle neighborhoods in fall 2015. This asset-focused approach will identify opportunities to implement community-driven solutions and leverage City resources more strategically. Seattle, Portland OR, and Baltimore are participating on the project.

#### Goals:

- Support bottom-up approaches that make use of social networks and support autonomous adaptation based on the lived experience of low-income communities and communities of color.
- Enhance social learning and sound governance.
- Empower advocates in these communities as resilience champions.
- Reveal specific actions and strategies for inclusion in the Seattle Climate Preparedness Plan.
- Act as a pilot for similar efforts in other communities in Seattle, as well as in cities engagement in adaption planning.

**GHG Reduction RFI and Outreach Toolkit:** The City of Berkeley CA is closing the gap to reaching their greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals. They are developing a Request for Information (RFI) and RFI outreach toolkit for community GHG reduction strategies. The RFI asks for ideas to develop a tool and a supporting outreach strategy that will help cities directly engage a broader set of stakeholders, technical assistance providers, and innovators in identifying additional actionable GHG reduction strategies. Palo Alto, Santa Monica, and Aspen are participating on the project.

Deliverables: This project will create a customizable RFI template that will include:

- Boilerplate language that can be tailored by cities to accommodate local needs (e.g., sector or project preferences, local regulatory requirements).
- A standardized methodology for cities to gather quantitative estimates on the potential volume of reductions and the cost/benefit of proposed strategies.
- Emphasis on identifying co-benefits of proposed strategies.
- A proposed list of national/international entities to receive the RFI (e.g., research labs such as Lawrence Berkeley and Sandia National Labs; academic institutions such as UC Berkeley, Stanford, and MIT; and large engineering and consulting firms).
- Guidance for cities to identify the list of relevant local vendors and distribution channels to send the RFI to (e.g., local solar companies and energy service providers, utilities, etc.).

**Resiliency Planning Charrette:** The New England Municipal Sustainability Network (NEMSN) is creating Design and Resiliency Teams (DARTs) to help New England communities identify strategic and paradigm shifting resiliency opportunities and to catalyze action. DARTs will use an intense three-day charrette to involve the community and provide strategic recommendations. Northampton, Boston, and Burlington are participating on the project.

#### Goals:

- Provide participatory and strategic recommendations to participating communities. Spark community resiliency conversations, a sense of hope, and measurable.
- Provide collaborative and resiliency learning experience for DART members. Provide training on effective strategic planning model that can be adopted in member communities.
- Build NEMSN and USDN collaboration.
- Develop an interest in the network as a group that accomplishes tasks in addition to existing networking and training efforts.
- Encourage wider-scale adoption, throughout New England and among partner NGOS, of strategic planning efforts that provide intense community efforts to solve resiliency problems and engage and inspire the community.