



## Request for Proposal

### Local Sustainability Matching Fund

#### Overview

The Fundations' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities (TFN) and the Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) joined together to launch a Local Sustainability Matching Fund (Matching Fund), now a project of the Fundations' Network, initiated with leadership support from the Kendeda Fund, New York Community Trust, Summit Foundation, and Surdna Foundation. A selection committee of foundations and urban sustainability directors guides the Matching Fund.

The purpose of the Matching Fund is to catalyze partnerships between local government (city or county) sustainability directors and local, place-based foundations to advance important community-based sustainability initiatives. The Matching Fund is intended both to support significant urban sustainability projects and to build bridges between public sector sustainability leaders and local foundations. The Fund will provide matching investments from national foundations on a competitive basis to build partnerships between sustainability directors and local place-based foundations to advance discrete sustainability initiatives that demonstrate broad-based community support and engagement.

To attract additional interest in urban sustainability projects beyond those funded through the Matching Fund, the Fundations' Network will create an "idea bank" providing summaries of project applications on its website.

#### Purpose

Urban sustainability directors and local foundations already work closely together in Baltimore, Chicago, Cleveland, Dubuque, Vancouver and other cities, but this is still the exception, rather than the rule. The Matching Fund aims to change this dynamic by providing matching fund incentives to begin to build these valuable working relationships and projects in local communities, while at the same time building the visibility and importance of this work in the local philanthropic community. The Fundations' Network and USDN believe that sustainability directors are natural allies for nonprofit leaders and community-based foundations. By combining forces they can become powerful allies to promote more sustainable, prosperous, and equitable places.

USDN will encourage its members and other sustainability directors from the U.S. or Canada to reach out to their local place-based foundations to develop project ideas and jointly apply for matching funds from this pool. Similarly, the Fundations' Network and investors in the Matching Fund will reach out to local place-based foundations to encourage them to develop relationships with local government sustainability directors.

Over the next three years, the Fundations' Network and USDN anticipate this initiative will result in dozens of partnership projects, strong and robust working relationships between local sustainability

directors and place-based funders, new sustainability practices and innovations in the community, and new sources of financial support for this work. In the first pilot year, the Matching Fund will have few requirements for the kind of sustainability project that local government sustainability directors and local place-based foundations craft together.

### **Information on the Local Sustainability Matching Fund**

**Dollars Available; Size of Awards; Term:** Partnership investments from the Matching Fund will be between \$25,000 and \$75,000, with a 1:1 match required by one or more local place-based foundations. We anticipate that the pool will support approximately 9-10 partnership projects in the first year for projects to be carried out over a twelve-month period, in most cases. The Fund will be scaled-up as additional national funds become available.

**Documenting the Matching Requirement:** The minimum match requirement is 1:1. Letter(s) of commitment or intent to commit shall be sufficient to make an application eligible for review. The actual cash match will be released from the Funders' Network once the applicant has the committed match in hand. Applicants are encouraged to bring additional resources to support a proposed project above the matching requirement and will receive additional points for doing so.

**Application Deadlines:** The Funders' Network and USDN will disburse partnership investments during two application rounds in 2012. Please see below for details on the application deadlines and timeline.

**Partnership Project Selection Process:** The Funders' Network and USDN have created a Selection Committee comprised of sustainability directors, investors in the matching pool (Kendeda Fund, New York Community Trust, Summit Foundation, and Surdna Foundation), and a TFN staff member, to oversee and guide development of RFPs, and make funding decisions for which partnership projects to support. A majority of the Selection Committee is sustainability directors. The Network and USDN will work with the Selection Committee to track the progress of the local partnership projects and share the lessons with all USDN members.

### **Project Eligibility**

**Eligible Partnership Projects:** In our pilot year, the Fund will leave it to the local sustainability director and local place-based foundation(s) to reach agreement on a discrete sustainability project that is important to the community, although the selection process will give extra points to projects that address one of seven sustainability priorities: Large Scale Behavior Change, Sustainability Indicators, Sustainability Marketing Campaigns, Creating New Funding Streams for Sustainability Initiatives, Alternative Financing for Building Energy Efficiency, Urban Agriculture, or Zero Waste.

**Eligible Applicants:** Partnerships between sustainability directors and local, place-based foundations. A sustainability director can include a USDN member from throughout North America (U.S. and Canada) or any person who leads a multi-department and community wide urban sustainability initiative from within local government ("sustainability director"). A local place-based foundation can include a community foundation, private foundation that focuses on a greater metropolitan area, or corporate foundation. At least fifty percent of partnership investments will go to projects involving members of USDN.

**Eligible Grant Recipients:** Local place-based foundation, local government foundation, or partner nonprofit organization.

## **Selection Criteria**

Criteria	Points Value (out of 100 points)
Potential of the partnership project to advance a key aspect of an officially adopted local sustainability, climate action, or energy efficiency and conservation plan	0 to 30
Existence of a collaborative process between a local government sustainability director and local place-based foundation(s) in developing the proposal	0 to 20
Extent to which the partnership project is thoughtful and pragmatic and can demonstrate impact	0 to 15
Involvement of a cross-section of the community working on the project	0 to 10
Whether the proposal represents a new relationship between a local government and a local place-based funder(s)	0 to 10
Whether the partnership project addresses one of seven sustainability priorities: Large Scale Behavior Change, Sustainability Indicators, Sustainability Marketing Campaigns, New Funding Streams for Sustainability Initiatives, Alternative Financing for Building Energy Efficiency, Urban Agriculture, or Zero Waste	0 to 5
Interest in developing a relationship beyond the grant term between a sustainability director and local place-based foundation	0 to 5
Potential to bring other funding to the project beyond the match	0 to 5

## **Application Timeline**

The Local Sustainability Matching Fund winter 2012 cycle is as follows.

January 3	Release RFP
January 24	Information call for interested applicants
March 5	Partnership Project Proposals Due
May 4	Partnership Project Grants Announced

The information call will be on January 24, 2012 at 2:00-3:00 p.m. Eastern. You may register for the call on the Funders' Network website: [www.fundersnetwork.org](http://www.fundersnetwork.org).

## **Application Requirements**

A complete proposal should include four components: 1) application cover page as a Word file, 2) proposal narrative (no longer than 7 pages) as a Word file, 3) a project budget that highlights projected income and expenses and IRS Form 990, and 4) evidence of match. See below for more detailed description of the various requirements:

1. Proposal Cover Sheet:
  - a. Name of applicants, including partnering Sustainability Director and Local, Place-based Foundation(s)
  - b. Primary Contact Person and Contact Information
  - c. Proposed grant recipient (local foundation, local government foundation, or partner nonprofit)
  - d. Amount requested from Local Sustainability Matching Fund
  - e. Amount and sources of local match
  - f. Total project budget

- g. Purpose of grant (25 words or less):
  - h. Brief description of project goals, strategy, and key activities (250 words or less):
2. Proposal Narrative that includes (no longer than 7 pages):
- a. Background rationale for project
  - b. Project goals/purpose
  - c. Detailed work plan that describes project activities, deliverables, and timeline
  - d. Intended outcomes and impacts
  - e. Plans for evaluating success and tracking/demonstrating impact
  - f. Key staff or implementation partners
  - g. Link to officially adopted local sustainability, climate action, or energy efficiency and conservation plan (or PDF attachment)
  - h. Information on how the project addresses key selection criteria:
    - i. How the project advances a key aspect of the officially adopted local sustainability, climate action, or energy efficiency and conservation plan
    - ii. Description of collaborative process between local government sustainability director and local foundation in developing the proposal
    - iii. Evidence of thoughtful and pragmatic work plan with means to demonstrate impact
    - iv. Whether and how a cross-section of the community was involved in developing the proposal
    - v. Whether the proposal represents a new relationship between a local government and a local, place-based funder
    - vi. Whether and how the partnership project addresses one of the following seven sustainability priorities: Large Scale Behavior Change, Sustainability Indicators, Sustainability Marketing Campaigns, New Funding Streams for Sustainability Initiatives, Alternative Financing for Building Energy Efficiency, Urban Agriculture, or Zero Waste.)
    - vii. Ways in which the project could result in a relationship between application partners beyond the grant term
    - viii. Whether project partners bring other funding to the project beyond the matching requirement.
3. Project Budget and Financial Information. Please attach a project budget that includes:
- a. Line item details of project expenses, including personnel and other direct costs
  - b. Projected sources of revenue, including additional funds that partners will bring to project
  - c. IRS Form 990 as a separate attachment
4. Matching Fund Commitment Letter or Letter of Intent: Please attach evidence that the 1:1 match is in hand or in process from local, place-based funder partner

For further information on the Local Sustainability Matching Fund, contact Ann Wallace at [ann@fundersnetwork.org](mailto:ann@fundersnetwork.org) or 617-524-9239.

Please submit your proposal electronically to Jennifer Cummings at [jennifer@fundersnetwork.org](mailto:jennifer@fundersnetwork.org) by March 5, 2012. The proposal cover sheet and narrative need to be submitted as Word documents.

## **Addendum**

### **About TFN**

For the past 11 years, the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities has worked with foundations, nonprofit organizations, and other partners to address the environmental, social, and economic problems created by sprawling patterns of development and urban disinvestment. The Network believes that the suite of tools available to funders—investing, grantmaking, collaborating, convening, facilitating, and more—uniquely position philanthropy to play a leadership role in advancing smarter growth policies and practices that improve decision making about growth and development issues, leading to more equitable and sustainable communities for all. From its inception, the Network has been committed to advancing not only triple-bottom-line returns for people, place, and prosperity, but also strategies that recognize the interconnected nature of the issues that grantmakers care about and outcomes they hope to achieve.

### **About USDN**

The Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) is a three-year-old North American peer-to-peer network of 100 plus municipal sustainability directors who support each other in advancing the practice of urban sustainability. They share a common desire to make sustainable development the established paradigm for cities and counties across North America. USDN members have not only a strong interest, but also a potentially strong influence in accelerating the development and ensuring the effectiveness of the urban sustainability field. Members together represent almost 50 million Americans and Canadians.

In 2010, USDN members focused on building relationships and peer exchange. In 2011, members pursued a variety of collaborations to address sustainability leadership challenges and crafted strategies for field development. In 2012, USDN members will continue core efforts to deepen cross community learning (every other activity depends upon a strong peer network), build together multistate networks of sustainability directors as a way to grow peer networking opportunities and collaborative action, and ramp up innovation activities. USDN's Innovation strategy is to collaborate across member jurisdictions on the identification, development and distribution of key urban sustainability innovations for products, policies and/or projects, including best practice scanning, case studies of proven solutions, support for priority innovation development among groups of members through an innovation funding pool, and piloting of approaches to accelerate replication of key innovations.