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New Bedford one of eight cities nationwide selected for Partners for Places Matching Grant

A collaborative effort to increase food security in New Bedford is the recipient of a \$39,000 matching grant from Partners for Places—a project of the Funders’ Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities. New Bedford is one of just eight communities across the country to receive a grant in the latest round of awards.

Spearheaded by a partnership between the Island Foundation and the City of New Bedford Office of Planning, Housing, and Community Development, with additional funding support from the Upstream Foundation and the Rainy Day Fund and fiscal sponsorship from YMCA SouthCoast, the partnership will help expand the work of three partner organizations: Mass In Motion New Bedford, the Southeastern Massachusetts Food Security Network, and the Marion Institute’s Grow Education program.

With the funds awarded, Mass in Motion New Bedford will expand its outreach efforts to let community members know that they can now use their SNAP (food stamps) benefits at all three New Bedford farmers’ markets: Brooklawn Park, Custom House Square, and Clasky Common. Meanwhile, the Grow Education program will increase community outreach and events for the six new school-based community gardens it is helping to create this year at New Bedford public schools. Finally, the Southeastern Massachusetts Food Security Network will expand its role to serve as an information and resource hub for New Bedford community gardens, a role that has been requested by many Network members and community garden advocates. The project will link and cross-promote these efforts to help ensure that community residents of all income levels can access fresh local produce through farmers’ markets and community gardens.

“We’ve taken a number of steps in recent years to move our city toward greater sustainability and resiliency, particularly in the energy sector” said New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell.

“Likewise, through Mass in Motion and our Health Department, we’ve launched a robust effort across a number of fronts to improve health outcomes for all New Bedford residents, a major

component of which is to increase access to fresh, healthy food. The project funded by Partners for Places works on both the sustainability and public health fronts to improve outcomes for local food producers and consumers, as well as for our schools and neighborhoods. I'm grateful to the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities for supporting this collaborative effort."

"The Island Foundation has long supported community food security and our local food system through our grantmaking," said Denise Porché, Executive Director of the Island Foundation.

"The Partners for Places program offered a way to leverage our funding, and that of our partners the Upstream Foundation and the Rainy Day Fund, to increase access to healthy foods, support local farm businesses, and involve children and families in school-based community gardens. We are pleased to have the opportunity to collaborate more closely with the City of New Bedford and our other partners on this project."

"We are looking forward to working with our community partners to ensure that New Bedford residents of all income levels can access fresh, local produce through farmers' markets and community gardens," said Stephanie Reusch, Coordinator of the Southeastern Massachusetts Food Security Network. "By enhancing engagement within our community gardens and revitalizing the farmers' markets, we hope to increase food security throughout the city of New Bedford."

The eight communities were awarded a total of \$520,250 by the [Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities](#) and its partner, the [Urban Sustainability Directors Network](#). Partners for Places helps communities connect local government and philanthropy to invest in sustainability projects that promote a healthy environment, a strong economy, and well-being for all residents.

Six investor funders make up Partners for Places: [Bloomberg Philanthropies](#), [The JPB Foundation](#), The Kendeda Fund, [The New York Community Trust](#), [Summit Foundation](#), and [Surdna Foundation](#).

The Round Six Partners for Places grants are:

- **Blacksburg, Va., \$83,750** to launch an energy retrofit program in homes of lower-income older adults in Blacksburg and the New River Valley in order to extend their independence and expand adoption of energy efficiency practices. (Partner: The Community Foundation of the New River Valley)
- **Chula Vista, Calif., \$67,500** to help move the community to the next level of water management and resiliency through water reuse opportunities in the face of persistent and long-term drought facing the region and state. (Partner: The San Diego Foundation)
- **Cincinnati, Ohio, \$105,000** to enhance and strengthen Cincinnati's regional food system through civic engagement, new policies, and creation of a Cincy Food Fund and food

fellowships. (Partners: The Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr./U.S. Bank Foundation; Interact for Health)

- **Madison, Wis., \$25,000** to utilize the arts and community organizing to empower residents of diverse neighborhoods to identify and pursue neighborhood sustainability goals. (Partner: CUNA Mutual Foundation)
- **New Bedford, Mass., \$39,000** to increase food security in New Bedford and advance the Sustaining New Bedford Plan goals by promoting use of the SNAP benefits program at city farmers' markets and enhancing engagement with community gardens. (Partners: Island Foundation; Rainy Day Fund/Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts; The Upstream Foundation)
- **Seattle, Wash., \$75,000** to create opportunities for all residents, especially people of color, immigrants, refugees, low-income, and those with limited-English proficiency, to fully participate in and benefit from Seattle's environmental progress. (Partners: Bullitt Foundation; The Seattle Foundation; The Russell Family Foundation; Loom Foundation; Social Venture Partners Seattle)
- **Stamford, Conn., \$75,000** to activate the Stamford 2030 District, a resilient, high-performance building district in downtown Stamford with goals to dramatically reduce demand for energy and water resources and increase resiliency by 2030. (Partner: Emily Hall Tremain Foundation)
- **Vancouver, B.C., \$50,000** to support Vancouver's Upcycle Design Project, which seeks to catalyze the shift to integrated materials recovery and reuse, and green economy jobs in Vancouver's design, construction, and demolition sectors. (Partner: Vancouver Foundation)

Partners for Places – a project of the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities 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 communities more prosperous, livable and vibrant.

Partners for Places is a collaborative effort of the Funders' Network and the Urban Sustainability Directors Network. For more information on Partners for Places, please visit the Funders' Network website at <http://www.fundersnetwork.org/participate/green-building/partners-for-places/>. Funders interested in becoming a part of Partners for Places should contact [Ann Wallace](#) at the Funders' Network.