



The Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities: Doing More With The Money We Have

Saving Money Through Smarter Investments

The Partnership for Sustainable Communities, a collaboration between the U.S. Department of Transportation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, is fundamentally about getting more for every tax-payer dollar. When cities, towns and suburbs plan their future transportation, housing, water and sewer infrastructure and public services strategically, they save money and so does the federal government. The Partnership is built to copy past success:

- Envision Utah received \$1 million of its \$8 million budget from two of the three Partnership agencies (the Environmental Protection Agency and the Federal Highway Administration). Once implemented, the plans developed by Envision Utah will save Utah and the Salt Lake City region \$4.5 billion in infrastructure, much of it usually paid for by the federal government.
- The Region Five Development Commission in central Minnesota includes five rural counties and a series of small towns looking to save money and create jobs. The region is struggling with population shifts, family farms disappearing, pressure on natural resources and economic distress. Working across local agencies and jurisdictions, the communities are developing a strategic plan for housing and employment, business retention and attraction, and conservation of natural resources through eco-tourism. This effort will save money across the jurisdictions and leverage each step for future economic growth.

Cutting Red Tape

Ensuring responsible use of federal funding is a core responsibility of federal agencies. However, when communities work with many federal programs at once, inconsistencies and contradictions arise. The Partnership for Sustainable Communities is focused on removing these federal barriers to smarter local action, allowing the local economy to act faster.

The Partnership removes barriers to smarter local action:

- Changed policy to allow HUD multifamily housing construction on brownfields.
- Examined each of the four separate agencies funding water infrastructure to reconcile the different programs' requirements.
- Documented the 13 different local planning processes required by HUD, DOT, and EPA's programs and are working to reconcile, eliminate duplication and streamline these processes.
- Identified conflicting requirements in HUD and DOT spending rules (HUD requires local hiring while DOT forbids it) that make it difficult for towns and communities to leverage federal investments, and better coordinate investments from different agencies (i.e. coordinating timing of water and road infrastructure projects so that roads are only dug up once).

Partnership Background and Grants

The Partnership for Sustainable Communities was formed in October 2010. This effort helps communities use proven cost-saving practices, coordinate federal investments in infrastructure, facilities, and services, and meet multiple community objectives with every dollar spent.

- 45 U.S. regions containing 80 million Americans in rural, suburban and urban communities are already benefiting from this program.
- Another 29 regions are slated for support in the next round of grants through their "preferred status" of local leadership and excellence, only if funds are available.

Rebuilding the economy and creating jobs are the most pressing issues facing the nation's communities. The grant programs included in the Partnership for Sustainable Communities provide direct support for job creation and leverage significant private sector investment.

Communities Recognize the Opportunity to Make Smarter Investments

Agencies received applications totaling far more in funding requests than they had available to give out.

- For TIGER II grants, DOT received nearly 1,000 applications for more than \$19 billion from all 50 states, U.S. territories and the District of Columbia.
- HUD received almost 1,000 applications totaling more than \$1.7 billion for the \$140 million available for Regional Planning Grants and Community Challenge Grants.

Overall, 84% of Americans want the federal government to coordinate activities and funding between agencies more effectively. The Partnership for Sustainable Communities is one of the best examples of this principle in action.

The Partnership for Sustainable Communities is an investment in more efficient and effective government. It helps communities break down barriers in existing federal housing, transportation and infrastructure programs while providing an incentive for improving regional collaboration among public, private and non-profit stakeholders. Projects supported by these grants are the product of local leadership driven by the vision and values of local residents, save households and their municipalities money and help to build a 21st century economy.