

For Immediate Release

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Community Foundations Unite to Address Local Impacts of Climate Change

NEW YORK (Sept. 13, 2023) A nationwide coalition of more than 40 community foundations has launched the Community Foundation Climate Collaborative, a coordinated effort aimed at helping local communities secure funding and more effectively respond to climate change.

The Collaborative will leverage community foundations' deep frontline knowledge of local issues and long-standing relationships with nonprofit organizations to help direct the unprecedented infusion of federal, state, and private funding dedicated to climate projects across the country. Further, the Collaborative will focus on:

- Promoting coordinated learning, research, and analysis on climate-related challenges and opportunities.
- Enabling innovation, creative problem solving, and replication of best practices.
- Supporting strategic partnerships and resource mobilization efforts focused on large climate funders and federal agencies.
- Facilitating joint action and advocacy including federal lobbying.

The effort will prioritize offering guidance and support to marginalized communities, which often bear the brunt of climate-related impacts but lack adequate resources and expertise to consistently secure governmental and philanthropic funding.

“When viewed from a global perspective, addressing climate change can be daunting,” said Amy Freitag, president of The New York Community Trust. “Yet we know through our work that actions taken on the local level can have a multiplying effect that can lead to systemic change. That’s the potential we are looking to harness through the Climate Collaborative.”

The idea for the Collaborative was conceived by Boston-based consultant James Davitt Rooney and initially supported by leading executives of four metro community foundations representing different regions of the country – The New York Community Trust, The Pittsburgh Foundation, The Denver Foundation, and Marin Community Foundation, which serves California's Bay Area.

After developing the Collaborative's framework, the four foundations promoted the concept to community foundations nationwide, resulting in more than 25 additional community foundations joining the Collaborative to date.

"In Colorado, and across the country, we witness the negative impacts of climate change almost daily," said Javier Alberto Soto, president and CEO of The Denver Foundation. "I look forward to seeing what the collective strength of community foundations can accomplish when we come together to take action. There are many ways we can address this issue, but we must do it together."

John Podesta, the senior advisor to President Joe Biden for clean energy innovation and implementation recently spoke with foundation leaders on a conference call to discuss how community foundations can be essential strategic partners to help channel federal funding from the Inflation Reduction Act to worthy local projects.

"We face a moment in time when there is unprecedented federal funding available to address climate change," said Rhea Suh, president and CEO of Marin Community Foundation. "Combine this with the White House's eagerness to forge partnerships with community foundations, and the opportunity to establish a meaningful national infrastructure has never been greater. This Collaborative will leverage the funding to help those most affected by climate change."

The Collaborative, which will be managed by the Community Foundation Opportunity Network (CFON), an organization that focuses on fostering collective action among community foundations to amplify impact and share resources and knowledge. CFON will continue to recruit additional community foundations and is in the process of identifying priorities and building relationships with other funders and organizations focused on climate issues.

"Community foundations have hard-earned expertise in emergency response to disasters caused by climate change," said Lisa Schroeder, president and CEO of The Pittsburgh Foundation. "And while each foundation's experience with climate crises is unique to their locations, they can be powerful advocates for a nationwide response when they act collectively on an issue that involves an endless variety of needs and circumstances."

For more information visit www.cfon.org/cfcc