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## **National League of Cities Launches First-Ever Equitable Economic Development Fellowship.**

PORTLAND, OREGON — The National League of Cities (NLC), PolicyLink and the Urban Land Institute (ULI) are convening today in Portland, Oregon to launch the first-ever Equitable Economic Development Fellowship. Six cities were chosen to participate in the inaugural year of the fellowship: Boston, Charlotte, Houston, Memphis, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis.

The Equitable Economic Development Fellowship is a two-year, \$1 million effort to help equity, transparency, sustainability and community engagement become driving forces in local economic development efforts. During the fellowship, which is generously funded by the Surdna Foundation and the Open Society Foundations, economic development leaders will convene for leadership development, technical assistance, and peer learning. Another class of six cities will be invited to participate in the second year of the program in 2017.

“Historically, many communities have not seen the benefits of local government economic development policies and programs. It isn’t difficult to find examples in cities and states around the country where local governments have particularly shortchanged people of color, immigrants and low-income neighborhoods,” said Jess Zimbabwe, director of the Daniel Rose Center for Public Leadership in Land Use at NLC and ULI. “Some cities are looking for a new path forward, developing creative strategies to jumpstart their economies and to more inclusively invest public dollars.”

While in Portland, each city team will identify a particular equity challenge in economic development to focus on during the course of the fellowship. The cities will receive support and technical assistance from NLC, PolicyLink and ULI, as well as their peer cities, to address the specific diversity and inclusion challenge. While in Portland, the city fellowship teams will also hear from Mayor Charlie Hales and leaders from the Portland Development Commission about the city’s strategies for moving the needle on equity and inclusion.

“It’s important for cities of all shapes and sizes to have economic policies that impact and benefit all of the members of our communities,” said Clarence E. Anthony, CEO and executive director of the National League of Cities (NLC). “This fellowship will bring together six different cities to tackle six different inclusion issues. We are excited to partner with these cities to address these challenges and create solutions that will help lead to a more equitable future.”

“Cities are recognizing that creating equitable and sustainable economic prosperity for all should be the goal of their activities across the board,” said Angela Glover Blackwell, PolicyLink president and CEO. “We are excited to be working with economic development leaders who are eager to integrate an equity approach into their efforts to grow strong local economies.”

“We’re excited about the launch of the new fellowship and its significance in helping us create more livable, vibrant, and economically successful cities,” said ULI Global Chief Executive Officer Patrick L. Phillips. “The involvement of community stakeholders in the economic development process is a

key part of creating places that are appealing to residents, visitors and investors.”

“At Surdna, we believe it’s essential that cities develop new approaches to economic development that ensures greater prosperity for all communities. The Equitable Economic Development Fellowship will advance new thinking and best practices that we anticipate will influence the broader field”, said Phil Henderson, president of the Surdna Foundation. “We are truly grateful to partner with the National League of Cities, Urban Land Institute and PolicyLink to launch this ambitious program that will transform economic development practices across the country.”

“All too often, government is challenged in its ability to deliver economic opportunity to the communities that need it most. We are excited about the potential of this fellowship to help bring new ideas and new leaders to the table, and to demonstrate that equity and inclusion can drive economic growth for the many, not just the few,” said Ken Zimmerman, director of US Programs at the Open Society Foundations.

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