



Designing a Sustainability Fund

County of Alameda

Climate Corps 16-17

Finding The Right Funding Approach

Context at County of Alameda

- 20 agencies need help with upfront costs of sustainability projects to meet goals of *Alameda County Climate Action Plan for Government Services and Operations Through 2020*
- I researched what other local governments are doing internally to fund “greening” of their operations
- Other team members analyzed financial scenarios and interviewed a sample of Alameda County managers about sustainability project needs



Fall 2016 Presidio MBA project partners with County Administrator Muranishi



Energy efficient LED tube light upgrades in government buildings are common projects of green revolving funds

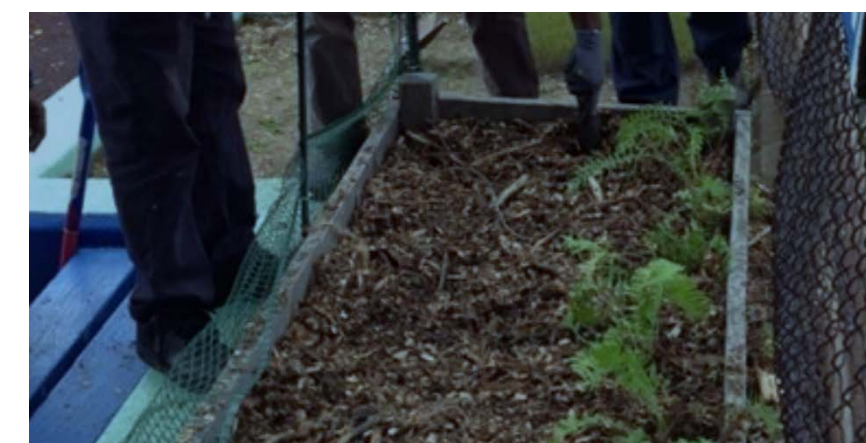
Key Funding Mechanisms Used by Local Governments

Green Revolving Funds

- Energy efficiency projects with return on investment (ROI)
- Borrowers pay back into the fund using energy cost savings
- Tried and true technologies: lighting and HVAC retrofits

Innovation Funds

- Novel, unproven pilot projects that use new partnerships, strategies, and technologies to improve government services
- Often award grants with no expectation of repayment
- Requires periodic replenishment from general funds



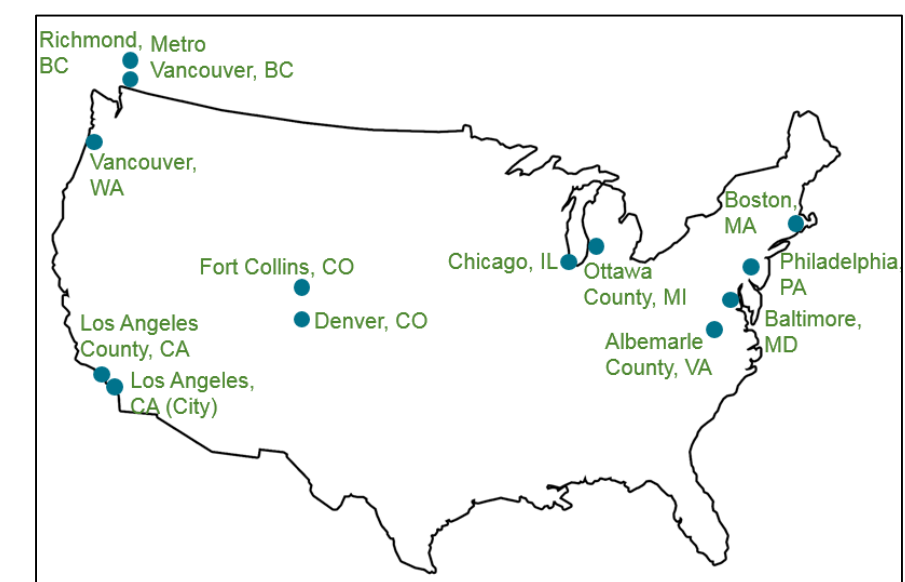
City-to-community plants reuse program in Philadelphia was funded through city's innovation fund

Pivotal Findings

- Robust staffing is crucial for fund success
- Loans are more attractive for projects that will result in predictable cost savings
- Two separate funds could meet spectrum of low-ROI and high-ROI projects:
 - Grant fund for low-ROI projects (paperless processes, mobile devices for reduced driving)
 - Loan fund for high-ROI projects (energy efficiency)

Personal Accomplishments

- Interviewed managers of 18 green revolving funds and 14 innovation funds
- Co-created three research reports and three presentations for County of Alameda executives
- Helped gain approval in December from County Administrator to design climate fund – my research made a compelling case
- Shared my research with state and national organizations interested in findings, because existing research is limited



Sampling of cities and counties that I interviewed about their innovation funds



Next Steps Toward Fund Implementation

1. Expand user research to ensure fund will be effective and utilized by departments:
 - Who has great project ideas, and what support do they need in addition to funding?
 - How many departments are willing and able to pay back a for projects with lower or less predictable ROI?
2. Gather broader sample of potential projects in energy, resources, transportation, and digitization from Alameda County employees and estimate projected costs and savings
3. Draft simple, purpose-focused fund guidelines and seek feedback from executives and potential applicants to make sure the requirements don't create barriers



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After several years as an educator for science museums, I came to Climate Corps to launch a new career in sustainability. I am passionate about governments leading climate change mitigation and am heading to Duke University this fall to pursue master's degrees in public policy and environmental management.

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