



## **Four US Cities Unite To Launch New Economic Development Initiative.**

*New York City, Indianapolis, Portland, OR and San Jose are collaborating to develop programs to create jobs that strengthen local “innovation economies” by increasing access to economic opportunities and ensuring economic gains benefit all city residents and communities. The collaboration is an initiative of the Urban Manufacturing Alliance and staffed by the Pratt Center for Community Development in Brooklyn, NY and PolicyLink in Oakland, CA.*

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*Brooklyn, NY -- The Equitable Innovation Economies (EIE) Initiative, launched this month by the Pratt Center for Community Development in Brooklyn, NY and PolicyLink in Oakland, CA under the auspices of the Urban Manufacturing Alliance, will help cities collaboratively design and implement new programs to create jobs and increase economic opportunity within their innovation and manufacturing sectors for underserved communities. This initiative is generously supported by the Surdna and Ford Foundations.*

Cities across the US are increasingly focusing their economic development efforts on “creative economies” to steer economic growth. Innovation economy assets such as universities, technology companies, and designers have become key ingredients for new businesses and high quality jobs. Simultaneously, many cities are confronting the loss of middle class jobs, especially in manufacturing and the trades, and a widening income disparity that is hampering overall economic growth at both the national and local levels.

The three-year EIE Initiative will address these challenges by leveraging growth in the high tech and creative economies to stimulate inclusive economic opportunity that benefits low-income and underserved residents. The multi-city collaboration will move away from previous “smokestack chasing” development strategies, in which cities compete directly with each other for businesses. Instead, the collaboration will develop a model in which cities share research and program development and develop a common vision for equity in the innovation economy.

“At the federal and local levels, there’s been increasing attention and investment in the innovation economy,” describes Adam Friedman, Executive Director of Pratt Center. “But mayors and city managers are also seeking to address increasing inequality within their cities. Growth in the innovation economy, with its focus on technology, entrepreneurship, and productivity, presents an opportunity to create good jobs for residents who have not previously benefited if we can expand access to the innovation economy engine.”

In the first year of this initiative, New York City, Indianapolis, Portland, OR, and San Jose have been selected to participate in a pilot working group that will, through a series of working sessions, strengthen a segment of their innovation economy by intensifying opportunity for residents from low income and disenfranchised groups. Pratt Center and PolicyLink will facilitate this group by providing technical assistance and overall support. “These cities are already national leaders, and now they are developing specific new tools and strategies with which to build a more inclusive and equitable local economy,” said Victor Rubin, Vice President for Research at PolicyLink.

In October, the working group held its first convening in conjunction with the UMA's 3<sup>rd</sup> national conference in Philadelphia. Participants included government and business leaders, workforce development agencies, community finance organizations and universities from each city. The convening included discussions of each city's focus project and economic development objectives, as well as working sessions to define innovation and equity within this context.

"Our focus on jobs and opportunity for communities of color and women encompasses Portland's key industries, from software and green technology to athletic and outdoor gear and advanced manufacturing. Sharing best practices with other cities will move Portland much closer to our goals for a diverse workforce and shared prosperity," said Patrick Quinton, Executive Director, Portland Development Commission.

"It is critical that we harness the creativity and innovative spirit of New Yorkers to increase economic opportunity for people across all five boroughs in a way that responds to the individual needs of communities," said New York City Economic Development Corporation President Kyle Kimball. "We look forward to working with the Pratt Center, PolicyLink and the other participating cities to pioneer new ways to spur and measure equitable economic development."

"Indianapolis will be participating in the EIE as we work to revive legacy industrial properties capable of hosting and attracting significant employers. We are fully committed to this collaboration as we believe it will be an important opportunity to learn from and contribute to a critical body of work impacting the lives of families throughout urban communities in the United States," said Bill Taft, Vice President, Local Initiatives Support Corporation and Executive Director of the Indianapolis LISC office.

"We've long recognized the value of the quality jobs provided by San Jose's network of advanced manufacturers, who are a tremendous source of innovation for local companies seeking to create new products. Through this initiative, we'll have a unique opportunity to deepen our work to foster economic opportunities for all segments of our diverse population," said Nanci Klein, Deputy Director of Economic Development, City of San Jose.

Throughout the year, the EIE Pilot Cities will be refining their equity indicators and designing program strategies, both individually and as a group. Outcomes and findings from this working group will be shared with a broader group of cities, and will inform UMA's national policy agenda. In the next two years, the initiative will continue to provide implementation support and expand this model to more cities.

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#### **About Pratt Center and contact info:**

The Pratt Center for Community Development works for a more just, equitable, and sustainable city for all New Yorkers by empowering communities to plan for and realize their futures. As part of Pratt Institute, Pratt Center leverages professional skills – especially planning, architecture, design and public policy – to support community-based organizations in their efforts to improve neighborhood quality of life, attack the causes of poverty and inequality, and advance sustainable development.

Pratt Center has developed particular expertise at both the direct service and policy levels in analyzing the needs and identifying opportunities for business and job growth in the new industrial sector. Pratt Center has worked with more than 2,100 local businesses employing 93,000 people, helped create New York City's 16 Industrial Business Zones, leveraged more than \$20 million in

energy efficiency improvements for manufacturers in New York City, and won recognition in both the public and private sectors for the value of our green manufacturing strategies. Pratt Center currently manages the Made in NYC local branding campaign, which helps connect more than 1,300 local manufacturers to designers, developers and consumers and is a founding member of the Urban Manufacturing Alliance.

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#### **About PolicyLink and contact info:**

PolicyLink is a national research and action institute advancing economic and social equity by Lifting Up What Works.

Founded in 1999, PolicyLink connects the work of people on the ground to the creation of sustainable communities of opportunity. Such communities offer access to quality jobs, affordable housing, good schools, transportation, and the benefits of healthy food and physical activity. Our work is grounded in the conviction that equity – just and fair inclusion – must drive all policy decisions.

Since 2011, PolicyLink has been making the economic case for equity. As America quickly becomes a majority people-of-color nation, our economic fate hinges on ensuring that communities of color can contribute as workers, entrepreneurs, innovators, consumers, and leaders. PolicyLink is working with local and national partners to catalyze a new conversation about equity as an economic driver and advance policies and strategies to build an equitable economy: one in which everyone can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.

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#### **About UMA and contact info:**

Formed in 2011, the Urban Manufacturing Alliance (UMA) is a national collaborative of non-profit, for-profit and governmental stakeholders across major US cities, working together to grow manufacturing businesses, create living wage jobs and catalyze sustainable localized economies.

UMA supporters provide funding and resources for UMA Regional Initiatives, development of Toolkits, communication programs and platforms, and advocacy and policy efforts.

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