



# Rockefeller Foundation Launches 'National Opportunity Zones Academy'

TN was correct in pegging Opportunity Zones as a vehicle to railroad Sustainable Development in underserved areas in cities and counties. Now, Rockefeller Foundation has jumped in with a major new program.

[Catherine Austin Fitts Interviews Patrick Wood On Technocracy and Opportunity Zones](#)

[Opportunity Zones: A Technocrat Deception To Plunder America](#)

[8,700 'Opportunity Zones' In U.S. Targeted For Smart City Infrastructure](#)

□ TN Editor

The Rockefeller Foundation and Smart Growth America (SGA) today announced the launch of the National Opportunity Zones Academy, which will help cities drive sustainable growth in Opportunity Zones by attracting socially responsible investment. Five cities have been selected

to participate in the Academy including Chicago, Greater Miami and the Beaches, Pittsburgh, Seattle, and Norfolk, VA.

The Foundation will award a \$400,000 grant to Smart Growth America (SGA) to fund the Academy. SGA's technical assistance team and its LOCUS program will work directly with each participating city to create place based, community-led approaches to developing sustainable growth and development strategies that help transform selected Opportunity Zones into economically-thriving and socially-inclusive, walkable neighborhoods. The announcement of the Academy follows the Foundation's launch of its [Community Capacity Building Initiative](#) which will benefit vulnerable communities through Opportunity Zones created in the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

"Communities have the potential to be completely transformed by the billions of dollars in capital created by the Opportunity Zone tax credit - but only if we make a deliberate effort to ensure investments benefit those the policy is intended to serve," said Dr. Rajiv J. Shah, President of The Rockefeller Foundation. "The Opportunity Zones Academy will prioritize mobilizing capital and helping cities meet the needs of those who live and work in Opportunity Zones."

The Opportunity Zones Academy will give member cities access to three core benefits. These include 1) bespoke technical assistance to increase local capacity to achieve equitable development in Opportunity Zones; 2) socially responsible investors through curated introductory events and online investment portals, and 3) sharing best practices through peer-to-peer learning amongst the five participating cities. Smart Growth America and its LOCUS coalition have deep experience working with and empowering communities to be more economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable, and will leverage that expertise to develop and facilitate this program.

"Today's news of five cities banding together illustrates the urgency of community leaders accessing the tools, resources and data they need to ensure equitable, sustainable and community-beneficial investment in their Opportunity Zones," said Calvin Gladney, President and CEO of Smart Growth America, a national non-profit dedicated to ensuring that

all Americans can share in the prosperity that comes from building livable, walkable and healthier places. “Through our LOCUS national coalition of triple-bottom line developers and investors, we will leverage our thought leadership on Opportunity Zones to co-create practical win-win solutions with this impressive roster of cities—examples that countless other community leaders, investors and elected officials can follow.”

### **About The Rockefeller Foundation**

The Rockefeller Foundation advances new frontiers of science, data, policy, and innovation to solve global challenges related to health, food, power, and economic mobility. As a science-driven philanthropy focused on building collaborative relationships with partners and grantees, The Rockefeller Foundation seeks to inspire and foster large-scale human impact that promotes the well-being of humanity throughout the world by identifying and accelerating breakthrough solutions, ideas and conversations. For more information, sign up for our newsletter at [rockefellerfoundation.org](http://rockefellerfoundation.org) and follow us on Twitter @RockefellerFdn.

### **About Smart Growth America and LOCUS**

Smart Growth America envisions a country where no matter where you live, or who you are, you can enjoy living in a place that is healthy, prosperous, and resilient. We empower communities through technical assistance, advocacy, and thought leadership to realize our vision of livable places, healthy people, and shared prosperity. LOCUS, a program of Smart Growth America, is a national coalition of real estate developers and investors who advocate for sustainable, equitable, walkable development in America’s metropolitan areas. LOCUS has been a leader in the Opportunity Zone space and produced the [National Opportunity Zones Ranking Report](#) that identifies which Opportunity Zones are positioned to bring positive social, environmental, and economic returns, by ranking all Opportunity Zones by their smart growth potential and current social equity. Second, the report includes policy recommendations for communities to ensure that development results in more walkable places that are healthy, prosperous, equitable and resilient. Learn more

at [www.smartgrowthamerica.org/program/locus/](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/program/locus/).

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