



Creating A New Future for Cities: The US Initiative

CEOs for Cities is leading a five-year campaign to imagine a new kind of future for urban life in America. An ambitious and urgent movement to define a new American dream, we call this effort The US Initiative—an initiative to create cities that are of, by and for us. The US Initiative represents an urgent tipping point in the evolution of the American identity, moving from an excess of independence toward an optimistic culture of interdependence. Our unique network of civic leaders, influential partners and brave new thinkers acts as a map of critical touch points in the circulation system of dozens of cities. The project articulates a Declaration of Interdependence with values that define cities of tomorrow, today. We hold these values to be self-sustaining:

- Livability** We can enjoy beauty, nature and art every day.
- Community** We can engage in a robust public life.
- Connectivity** We can go where we need to go without owning a car.
- Opportunity** We can develop all of our talent and put all of our talent to work.
- Optimism** We can imagine a better future for everybody.

The US Initiative begins with a collaborative series of events designed to imagine, articulate and spawn Demonstration Projects that embody these values and put them into action through “quick start” strategies.

A key component of the US Initiative are five Challenge Events staged between October 2010 and May 2011. Each event tackles a single ambition with a national expert team, a local host committee and citizens working together over 2.5 days to produce big ideas for achieving the ambition and a series of quick wins to gain momentum and scale. Challenge Events bring innovators, practitioners and leaders together in five cities to advance the strategic work of each city and, in turn, create national demonstration models.

Other events include organizing forums called Brain Trusts, where CEOs for Cities co-convenes a group of approximately 50 cross-sector urban leaders in a city to engage in a robust, local discussion of one of the US Initiative ambitions. Brain Trusts challenge local stakeholders to address barriers, identify assets and determine the three most important actions the city must take toward achieving the ambition for their city.

We are living through a significant historical moment, during which fundamental models regarding how we live will be revised. Through these events, we will engage citizens, civic leaders, innovative thinkers and businesses across America in the most relevant conversations of our time.