

Citizens' Institute on Rural Design

Request for Proposals 2016-2017



Introduction

The Citizens' Institute on Rural Design™ (CIRD) connects communities to the resources they need to convert their own good ideas into reality. CIRD is a leadership initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) conducted in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Project for Public Spaces, Inc., along with the Orton Family Foundation Partnership.

Simply stated, rural design utilizes design strategies – improvements to a community's streets, buildings, public spaces, or landscapes - to address the specific environmental, social, and economic challenges facing rural areas. Rural design is a strategic tool that communities can use to revitalize their Main Streets, manage and direct growth, design community-supportive transportation systems, preserve natural and historic landscapes and buildings, protect working agricultural lands, celebrate and preserve artistic and cultural traditions, and develop contextually sensitive rural design guidelines.

CIRD's process for improving communities follows a holistic approach - assessing the synergistic roles of streets, sidewalks, buildings, public spaces, commercial districts, natural areas, historic and cultural resources, amenities, activities, security, management, and other factors in and around the site – all of which can contribute to the potential for a true “place.” Our process begins with discovering what the people in a community need and desire in their public spaces.

Developing locally-driven solutions to these challenges is critical to the long-term vitality of these communities, and rural design can play a powerful role in this process.

CIRD helps rural leaders and residents come together to find creative solutions for:

- Growing local businesses and creating local jobs;
- Managing changing demographics including: the aging of populations, the outmigration of younger people and the in-migration of international populations;
- Siting new growth or redeveloping older town centers effectively;
- Maximizing the role that arts and culture can play as an economic driver for local and regional economies; and
- Forming collaborative multi-sectoral partnerships that cross county lines and town boundaries as well as governmental agency jurisdictions, and that include trusted local institutions and public agencies.

CIRD was founded by NEA 24 years ago to help connect local leaders and residents of smaller communities in rural areas to the resources, evidence-based knowledge, and design expertise they need to make the best choices going forward. Since 1991, CIRD has convened more than 70 workshops in all regions of the country, empowering residents to leverage local assets today in order to build better places to live, work, and play in the future. Using design as a core strategy, rural communities can benefit from pursuing asset-based strategies that celebrate and enhance existing local resources.

Funding Opportunity

\$10,000 cash stipend for planning and hosting a two-and-a-half day community design workshop and follow up sessions. (\$10,000 match required).

In-kind technical assistance and services in support of the workshop, valued at \$35,000.

Eligibility

Rural U.S. communities and small towns with a population of 50,000 or less; Combined regional populations may be over 50,000.

Submission Deadline

11:00 pm EST

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Website – <http://www.rural-design.org>

Contact – cird@pps.org

Table of Contents

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITY	4
PROGRAM GOALS	4
TIMELINE	5
ELIGIBILITY	6
PROGRAM DETAILS	7
RURAL DESIGN WORKSHOPS	7
CAPACITY BUILDING	13
SELECTION CRITERIA.....	13
MERIT	14
EXCELLENCE.....	14
HOW TO APPLY	14
APPLICATION SUBMISSION	15
REQUIRED MATERIALS	16



Participants at the CIR D Workshop in Seguin, TX

November 2013

Summary of Opportunity

The CIRDP program offers rural communities the following:

- An opportunity to help your community organize and host an intensive, two-and-a-half day community workshop, supported through a \$10,000 cash stipend and in-kind technical assistance and design expertise valued at \$35,000;
- Informational conference calls and webinars on key design and planning topics for rural communities that are open and freely available to communities nationwide; and
- Web-based access to a wide range of rural design resources.

CIRDP will select as many as six communities to host CIRDP workshops between June 2016 and April 2017



Inside the Oregon County Food Producers and Artisan's Coop.
Alton, MO November 2014

PROGRAM GOALS

In addition to connecting communities to the resources they need, the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design™ seeks:

- To raise awareness about the role of rural design in enhancing the quality of life and economic vitality of rural communities and small towns and to spur the discovery of innovative design solutions;
- To empower citizens to play a role in guiding and determining the appropriate type and level of growth or development for their communities;
- To equip participants with tools and techniques to identify, value, protect, leverage, and enhance the unique aspects of their towns and landscapes;
- To strengthen the work and the partnerships of individuals and organizations who are already providing assistance to rural areas on design and community development issues, and to connect communities to local, regional, and national partners, including funders, who can help them implement their vision;
- To provide a forum for rural technical assistance providers to share their professional skills, learn new techniques that could aid them in their work with rural

communities, and exchange ideas and experiences with rural communities and other providers;

- To develop specific action steps and/or projects that help to achieve the community’s vision, and to identify potential sources of funding for implementation;
- To provide participants with access to best practice approaches to place-based design, heritage preservation, cultural tourism and development, arts-based civic engagement, land management, and main street revitalization; and
- To contribute to the creation of a community of rural design practice.



Workshop Participants, Houston, MS February 2015



Music Performance, Alton MO November 2014

TIMELINE

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • RFP Issued | October 27, 2015 |
| • Application Assistance: | |
| ○ Application Preparation Webinar | November 10, 2015
(3-4pm EST) |
| ○ Q&A Call with CIRD Staff | December 10, 2015
(3-4pm EST) |
| • Applications Due | January 12, 2016 |
| • Finalists Notified | Late February 2016 |
| • Phone Interview with Finalists | Early March 2016 |
| • Host Communities Notified | Mid March 2016 |
| • Public Announcement | Late March 2016 |

Once your application has been received, you will be added to the CIRD email list. You will receive program news, updates on the selection process, and information about the conference calls, webinars, and other resources. You are free to unsubscribe at any time.

ELIGIBILITY

CIRD supports rural communities and small towns with a population of 50,000 or less. CIRD defines “community” broadly: not just the town center or area within the town boundary, but also the surrounding areas that depend on its goods and services and contribute to its economic base, including agricultural lands, scenic and natural landmarks and preserves, and areas used for recreation. Suburban communities, which are typically located within or adjacent to a metropolitan area, and where the primary land use is residential, are not eligible to apply. State-level entities may support an application, but cannot serve as the primary applicant. The following entities are eligible to serve as the lead applicants for CIRD workshops:

- Municipal, tribal, or county governments;
- Local nonprofit organizations, including but not limited to such entities as main street organizations, art centers, preservation groups, historical societies, or chambers of commerce;
- Regional planning organizations;
- University community design centers or university agricultural/extension offices located within 50 miles of the community.

Community buy-in and action are rarely successful without the support and active participation of community partners. We therefore give preference to those applications that are submitted on behalf of coalitions or partnerships that already exist within the community. We also strongly encourage applicants to begin building or to expand local partnerships during the application process. CIRD requires that applicants form a local planning committee comprised of key constituents with whom they will meet on a regular and ongoing basis throughout the workshop planning period.

Competitive CIRD applicants will be able to demonstrate:

- Capacity to carry out all of the logistical and practical preparations for running a two-and-a-half day workshop, including designating a local workshop coordinator who will serve as the primary, day-to-day liaison with CIRD staff;
- The ability to identify and engage a diverse and demographically representative group of community members as participants in the workshop and follow-up activities;
- The support of a local governing body, municipal agency, or other appointed or elected officials, including an expressed willingness of these individuals to serve as official partners and to actively participate in the workshop;
- The support of additional local and/or regional partner organizations and leaders to assist with workshop planning and implementation;
- A rural design challenge that can be meaningfully addressed in the format of a 2 to 3 day workshop;
- The intention and readiness to implement actions emerging from the workshops,

- participate in the evaluation of the workshop, and report on results; and
- Matching funds (\$10,000 cash and/or in-kind donations).

Program Details

RURAL DESIGN WORKSHOPS

CIRD design workshops bring together participants from one or several rural communities in one geographic region to address specific local or regional design issues. CIRD workshops focus on a real challenge or set of related challenges faced by the host community or communities. Those issues might include: downtown revitalization, growth management, transportation planning, trail and greenway development, historic preservation, preservation of working lands, or appropriate design standards. The workshop might address one specific site within a community, or a broader issue throughout the town or region.

Past CIRD workshops have focused on and resulted in:

- Main street revitalization
- Design of cultural trails
- Arts-based community development
- Economic development that builds the local community
- Land and agricultural conservation
- Transportation planning
- Design of age-friendly communities
- Connecting recreation trails to downtowns
- Place and community brand identity
- Fostering collaborative regional partnerships
- Creating new or improving existing community public spaces
- Enhancing a sense of place and community

Click [here](#) for information on workshops from 2013 and 2014.

WORKSHOP FORMAT



CIRD Interactive workshop sessions, University of Nebraska at Lincoln



March 2015

CIRD workshops typically span two-and-a-half days, with the exact schedule and agenda determined by the host community in consultation with the CIRD program staff. The format for each workshop will be tailored to meet the goals of the host community and to ensure the full participation of community leaders and local citizens.

It is critical that workshops include a diverse and committed group of community participants at all events, with a core group attending all sessions and additional opportunities for the broader public to participate and contribute ideas.

Workshops often begin or end with a half-day public event, with two days of intensive educational and working sessions facilitated by a Resource Team comprised of national and local rural design professionals.

Potential workshop session formats include:

- Panel discussions and presentations by a Resource Team of design professionals;
- Interactive community design activities;
- Breakout discussions and brainstorming sessions;
- Applied strategy sessions for a core group of community members and leaders;
- Field trips and site visits; and
- Public presentations of ideas, designs, and solutions.

Workshop Planning and Development

If you are selected to host and produce a CIRD workshop, CIRD staff will work closely with you to shape the workshop format and agenda, identify Resource Team members, develop community outreach strategies, and develop the session content and set the schedule. We will initiate this process through a pre-workshop site visit and will walk you through the Coordinator's Manual, a step-by-step guide to all aspects of the workshop planning process.

Please review the [Coordinator's Manual](#) before submitting your application in order to make sure that you fully understand the CIRD workshop process and the time commitment required on the part of the workshop coordinator and local partners. Workshop hosts also are responsible for all of the logistical details, such as securing workshop location(s), food, marketing, and outreach to engage a full range of participants and to build broad community support.

Applicants must designate a local coordinator who will act as the main point of contact for the workshop locally and for communication with CIRD staff. The local coordinator agrees to work with local partners and individuals cited in the application on all aspects of the workshop planning process, preparing for the workshop itself, and post-workshop technical assistance.

Workshop Resource Team

CIRD workshops include participation by a Resource Team comprised of four national, regional, and/or local design and community development professionals, whose expertise matches the specific design issues or challenges cited by the host community. We will work with each host community to identify the most appropriate Resource Team members for their workshop, drawing upon local and regional design leaders whenever possible in combination with national subject matter specialists.



Workshop Speakers, Lancaster County, NE



March 2015

CIRD maintains a network of nationally recognized professionals in architecture, landscape architecture, community and regional planning, historic preservation, arts and culture, placemaking, rural design, and other fields who may be selected to participate in the workshop. CIRD will cover the travel costs and an honorarium for up to four Resource Team members per workshop. Host communities are welcome to suggest Resource Team members and may propose additional nationally recognized presenters or invite a well-known “keynote” speaker. The host community may invite additional speakers beyond four Resource Team members, but will do so at their own expense. All presenters funded from the CIRD stipend need to be pre-approved by NEA.

Workshop Funding and Matching Funds

A \$10,000 cash stipend will be made to each local host organization to support coordination of the workshop and to support post workshop activities. If your organization is selected, the funds will be provided through a fee-for-service contract with Project for Public Spaces, Inc. Host communities are required to secure matching funds. **All stipend-funded activities, including the submission of a final report to CIRD and any post-workshop implementation funded by this program, must be completed by May 31, 2017.**



Resource Team Members and NEA Staff, Houston MS February 2015

As this cash stipend will not cover all of the workshop expenses, we require host communities to obtain additional matching funds and/or resources of \$10,000, which may take the form of funds raised or donated by local organizations, including in-kind contributions of goods, services, facility rental, and staff time.

Up to \$15,000 of the total workshop budget (including stipend funds and the community matching funds) may be allocated to cover:

- Outreach and publicity for the workshop, including website and traditional media;
- Planning and producing the public engagement event;
- Recording and sharing stories and results from workshops, including photography or videography;
- Facility rental;
- Printing of workshop materials and other relevant documents;
- Speaker fees, travel costs and accommodations for local or regional design specialists;
- Rental of A/V equipment;
- All other materials needed for workshops (easels, flip charts, name tags, pens);
- Insurance as required by local statutes or the rental facility; Transportation or special arrangements for field trips or tours; Breakfast, luncheon, dinner, and refreshments for participants and Resource Team members during the workshop; and

- Labor and any associated costs with preparing for, organizing, and implementing the workshop, including:
 - Community outreach and engagement
 - Workshop facilitation
 - Documentation of the workshop
 - Carrying out all aspects of workshop logistics
 - Workshop content development
 - Recruiting workshop participants
 - Writing post workshop summaries and reports
 - Maintaining and reporting on expenditures

Up to \$5,000 of the total workshop budget (including stipend funds and the community matching funds) should be set aside to be used for post-workshop follow up steps and activities. In order to capitalize upon the energy and momentum generated by the workshop, it is essential to follow up with attendees, Resource Team members and the broader community with a set of next steps and actions. Some follow-up steps may be clear from the workshop (see below); others may require conversations with your project team and stakeholders. Depending upon the situation, post-workshop follow up steps might include:

- Disseminating the results of the workshop to a wide audience through social media, local newspapers, website, etc.;
- Conducting follow up public meetings;
- Holding meetings with elected officials to share the workshop outcomes;
- Identifying and inviting speakers to provide additional information on specific design issues. This could take the form of a lecture or a discussion forum or a follow up workshop;
- Thoroughly evaluating and prioritizing implementation actions identified during the workshop;
- Forming action teams or identifying partners to lead specific initiatives; and
- Planning post-workshop programs or activities to further goals or opportunities identified during the workshop.

You should include ideas for how you will address these follow up tasks in your response to the RFP.

The full match does not have to be secured at the time of application. Identifying proposed sources of matching funds is acceptable.

Local participants are responsible for their own workshop expenses (lodging and transportation). Registration for participants is typically free of charge, however, a nominal fee (\$10-\$20) for luncheon may be charged as a way of ensuring attendance of participants and the provision of sufficient food and beverages. In addition to the \$10,000 cash stipend,

CIRD will provide a comprehensive package of technical assistance services to support the workshops, valued at approximately \$35,000. This includes:

- Honoraria and travel and lodging expenses for up to four regional or national Resource Team members;
- Development and production of workshop content and instructional materials;
- One-on-one assistance and site visits by CIRD staff to support planning the workshop logistics and content;
- Conference calls and webinars on relevant rural design topics;
- Workshop facilitation;
- A write up of next steps and key summary of the workshop event;
- Opportunities to connect with a broad network of rural practitioners and resources.

Documentation and Workshop Summary

Documenting and evaluating each workshop is critical to the CIRD program. Host communities are required to collect evaluations from workshop participants; submit a final report to CIRD that includes documentation of the workshop proceedings, a summary of workshop content and outcomes, as well as the project budget and expenditures; and conduct an evaluation of the workshop itself. Documentation efforts such as recording the workshops through audio, video, or photography during the event; capturing results and outcomes from the workshops in written or multimedia format; gathering participant feedback; and draft implementation plans are strongly encouraged. Workshop hosts will be invited to contribute periodically to a dedicated section of the CIRD website and to help establish a national peer network related to rural design.



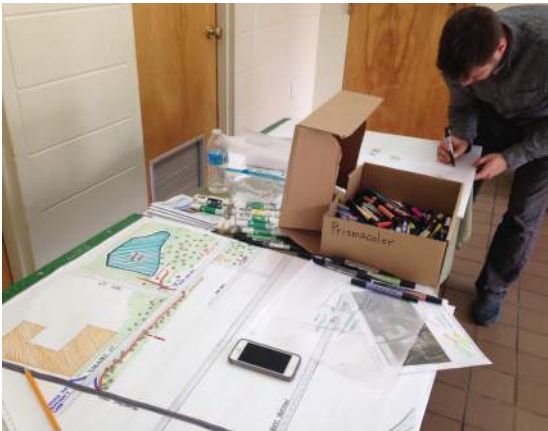
Concept Plan drawing for Franklin NH

CAPACITY BUILDING

CIRD supports host communities before and after their workshops via online resources, informational conference calls, and webinars. These resources are also freely available to the public.

Conference Call and Webinar Series

CommunityMatters® and the Orton Family Foundation host quarterly conference calls and webinars that cover issues relevant to rural design and rural development. The calls will be useful to communities that want to undertake rural design and community engagement activities on their own.



Plan Drawing, Tanglefoot Trail, Houston MS



Workshop Participants, Franklin, NH

Follow-up Assistance

CIRD staff will continue to serve as a resource for the workshop hosts through June 30, 2017. CIRD staff will also be available to answer questions and continue to build networking connections among CIRD host communities, other interested rural communities, and design practitioners.

Click [here](#) for "Frequently Asked Questions" relevant to all CIRD applicants and host communities.

Selection Criteria

As many as six CIRD host communities will be selected through a competitive review process following the National Endowment for the Arts' panel review procedures. A panel of national professionals in rural design and planning will evaluate CIRD applications based on the following criteria:

MERIT

Merit reflects the relevance of the identified design issues to the local community and to other rural communities nationwide, the community's readiness to tackle the design challenge at this time, shared consensus on what the challenge is and goals for the outcomes, a commitment to engaging and reaching out to a diverse audience, and the potential for follow up post-workshop activities to further develop outcomes and opportunities.

- **Clear Project Concept and Relevance to the Community (20%):** Presents clear and achievable goals for the workshop, which will result in creating meaningful change in the community. The proposed design concerns are relevant to community values, goals, priorities, assets, and needs.
- **Community Need and Timeliness (10%):** States a clearly defined need for design assistance in that the host community lacks the resources or expertise to undertake this work on their own. Presents a unique opportunity that needs to be capitalized upon or a challenge that needs to be addressed within the next two years.
- **Commitment to Participation (10%):** Demonstrates desire to encourage broad-based engagement of and participation in the workshop by people of diverse ethnicity, cultural backgrounds, age, gender, and income reflecting the community's population.
- **Capacity for Implementation (10%):** Has considered preliminary plans for conducting follow up activities, taking action based on workshop results, and sharing workshop results broadly with the community; Has the capacity to implement recommendations and plans that evolve at the workshop.
- **Broad Applicability (10%):** Demonstrates relevance of project, design issues, and potential results to other rural communities nationwide.
- **Realistic Budget (10%):** Includes a well-considered budget with adequate matching funds (cash and/or in-kind) to support the workshop.

EXCELLENCE

Excellence is a reflection of the quality of the partners and capacity of the applicant team to plan and host the workshops:

- **Applicant Experience (20%):** Demonstrates experience and capacity of lead applicant and partner organizations to coordinate a workshop, conduct effective outreach and communication, and engage their community.

- **Partner Commitments (10%):** Illustrates strong and specific commitments from partnering organizations to actively participate in the workshop and follow-up activities. Committed partners must include:
 - Government entity, including elected officials and staff members
 - One or more other local partners, such as local design organizations, arts and cultural organizations, businesses, colleges or universities, community action groups and/ or regional planning or governmental bodies, chambers of commerce, and agricultural extension offices

How to Apply

The process of developing a successful application is not something that can be done in isolation or in a hurry: it takes early outreach, partnership and coalition building, and the collaborative effort of a committed community team. That may include meetings with partners, site visits, and public presentations or discussions at a town meeting in order to craft an application that really speaks to and about your community and to get buy in to the process and support for the outcomes from your local leaders. Our hope is that the 11 week application preparation period will give you the time and opportunity to forge valuable partnerships and identify the most critical design issues facing your community which will comprise the focus for your workshop.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applications to host a 2016/17 workshop must be submitted online via the CIRDC website: <http://rural-design.org/application-form>

All applications must be received **no later than Tuesday, January 12, 2016 at 11:00pm EST**. Please do not wait until the last moment to submit your application. It may take up to several minutes for your application to upload depending upon the volume of simultaneous submissions and the speed of your Internet connection. **Hard copy or emailed applications will not be accepted.**

You must complete the [Electronic Application](#) and attach all required documents before you submit your application. Please upload only your completed proposal with all required and optional attachments. Incomplete applications will not be accepted and additional materials cannot be added to your application after the deadline.

Remember to register for our [two pre-application assistance](#) webinars on November 10th and December 10th. Questions should be submitted in advance when you register for the webinar.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

1. Project Narrative (Online Application Form)
2. Preliminary Budget (Attachment)
3. 3-5 Letters of Support (Attachments)
4. Select Supplemental Materials (Attachments)
 - Map or aerial photographs of town and immediate geographic region and project location (if identified)
 - Video or multimedia clips about the community or project background
 - News articles, stories, or reports providing background and context

Click [here](#) for detailed instructions, page limits, and acceptable file formats for all required application materials.

REQUIRED READING

Applicants must review the [CIRD Coordinator's Manual](#), which outlines the workshop process and the responsibilities of the local coordinator and planning committee, as a pre-requisite for being considered for funding under this program.



CIRD Staff, Houston, MS

February 2015