

Citizens' Institute on Rural Design

Citizens' Institute on Rural Design™ Issues Request for Proposals for Rural Communities Facing Design Challenges

*Partnership of federal agencies and national organizations offers workshop
funding, technical assistance, and additional resources*

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Program Contacts:

Cynthia Nikitin
CIRD Program Director
Project for Public Spaces
212-620-5660 ext. 328
cird@pps.org

John Barstow
Director of Communications
Orton Family Foundation
802-388-6336
jbarstow@orton.org
chorose@orton.org

Washington, DC—, The Citizens' Institute on Rural Design™ (CIRD) has issued a request for proposals to rural communities facing design challenges - such as Main Street revitalization, how to manage and direct growth, design community-supportive transportation systems, preserve natural and historic landscapes and buildings, protect working agricultural lands, and provide adequate and affordable housing - who are interested in hosting a local workshop in 2014-2015.

Successful applicants will receive a \$7,000 stipend and in-kind professional design expertise and technical assistance valued at \$35,000. The Request for Proposals is posted on the CIRD website: <http://rural-design.org/request-for-proposals>.

The deadline for submitting a proposal is Tuesday May 6, 2014 at 9:00 pm EST

CIRD works to help rural communities with populations of 50,000 or fewer enhance their quality of life and economic vitality through facilitated design workshops. CIRD brings local leaders, non-profits, and community organizations together with experts in planning, design, preservation and placemaking – all in an effort to help communities address pressing design challenges and to put design tools into the hands of the people who can create local change. CIRD does this by offering an opportunity for four rural communities to host local design workshops, and by offering free public webinars, conference calls, and a resource-rich website to practitioners and community leaders across the country.

Since the program's inception in 1991, CIRD has convened 70 workshops in all regions of the country with results that range from strengthened local economies, enhanced rural character, the leveraging of cultural assets, and design of new housing and transportation systems.



Each community selected to participate in the Institute will receive \$7,000 to support planning and hosting a two and a half day workshop. Communities are required to provide \$7,000 in matching funds (cash or in-kind services). CIRD will work with community leaders to assemble teams of specialists most qualified to address the community's identified design challenges. The workshops will be augmented with conference calls and capacity-building webinar presentations led by professionals who will discuss a range of rural design topics. All calls are also offered free to the general public through CommunityMatters®, a program of the Orton Family Foundation.

The CIRD website is a portal to resources on many aspects of rural design gathered from diverse organizations across the country including information on past CIRD workshops. It is a place for citizens and practitioners alike to get information about improving their own communities. Read more about last year's workshops here:

<http://rural-design.org/blog/year-2013-cird>

Find the RFP and application guidelines at: <http://rural-design.org/apply>. Selected communities will be announced in June 2014, and workshops will be held during the fall of 2014 and first quarter of 2015.

CIRD will offer two pre-application assistance conference calls to answer questions and guide interested applicants in assembling their proposals. The first of these calls is scheduled for Tuesday, April 2, and the second call will take place on Thursday, April 24. Both calls will begin at 3:00 pm EST and last approximately one hour. Participation in each call is free but registration is required. To register visit: <http://rural-design.org/application-assistance>

The Citizens' Institute on Rural Design™ is a National Endowment for the Arts leadership initiative in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Project for Public Spaces, Inc., along with the Orton Family Foundation and the CommunityMatters® Partnership.

About the National Endowment for the Arts

The National Endowment for the Arts, established by Congress in 1965, is an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$4 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. Join the discussion on how art works. Visit the NEA at arts.gov.

About the U.S. Department of Agriculture - Rural Development

USDA Rural Development administers and manages housing, business and community infrastructure programs through a national network of state and local offices. Rural Development has an active portfolio of more than \$176 billion in loans and loan guarantees. These programs are designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America. Visit the USDA at rurdev.usda.gov.

About Project for Public Spaces, Inc.

Project for Public Spaces (PPS) is a nonprofit planning, design, and educational organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build stronger communities. Founded in 1975, PPS has completed projects in over 2,500 communities and all 50 US states. PPS has become an internationally recognized center for resources, tools, and inspiration about Placemaking. Visit PPS at pps.org.



About the Orton Family Foundation

The Orton Family Foundation seeks to empower people to shape the future of their communities by improving local decision-making, creating a shared sense of belonging, and ultimately strengthening the social, cultural, and economic vibrancy of each place. The Foundation's Heart & Soul approach supports citizens in steering their towns' future by discovering the characteristics and attributes valued most by residents and, then, by placing those shared values at the center of future decisions. Visit the Orton Family Foundation at orton.org.

About CommunityMatters®

CommunityMatters is a program of the Orton Family Foundation that equips cities and towns to strengthen their places and inspire change. Together, the CommunityMatters partnership, conference calls and other projects fuel a growing network of leaders, thinkers and doers in a variety of disciplines. The CommunityMatters partnership is driven by seven national organizations with the common goal of building strong communities through the improvement of local civic infrastructure. The partners are: Deliberative Democracy Consortium, Grassroots Grantmakers, National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation, New America Foundation, Orton Family Foundation, Project for Public Spaces, and Strong Towns. Visit the CommunityMatters at communitymatters.org.

