

Request for Proposals 2013

Citizens' Institute on Rural Design



Submission Deadline

5:00 pm EST
March 5, 2013

Eligibility

Rural U.S. communities or towns in non-metropolitan areas with a population of 50,000 or fewer

Funding Opportunity

\$7,000 stipend toward hosting a two-and-a-half day community design workshop. (\$7,000 match suggested)

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

Website

www.rural-design.org

Contact

info@rural-design.org



Introduction

Residents in America's small towns and rural communities care deeply about the future of their towns and value their uniqueness, strong sense of community, and special places. However, they increasingly face urgent challenges: How can they add jobs and support local businesses? How do they create a positive future for their kids? How can they honor and protect local character and history? How do they use limited financial, human, and natural resources wisely?

Developing locally-driven solutions to these challenges is critical to the long-term vitality of these communities, and the arts and design can play a powerful role in this process. Across the country, community leaders and residents are coming together to tackle these challenges and to find creative strategies that address:

- How to build strong economies and grow jobs;
- Where to locate new growth or redevelop older areas;
- How to design efficient transportation systems;
- How to protect the community's historic and culturally significant resources.

Rural design is an important tool for communities to build upon existing assets and improve the way a community looks, its quality of life, and its economic viability. Design strategies can help to address downtown revitalization, growth management, transportation planning, historic preservation, preserving working agricultural lands, or developing appropriate design standards. However, few rural communities have access to design assistance or the expertise to tackle these challenges on their own.



The Citizens' Institute on Rural Design (CIRD) provides communities access to the resources they need to convert their own good ideas into reality. CIRD offers annual competitive funding to as many as four small towns or rural communities to host a two-and-a-half day community design workshop. With support from a wide range of design, planning, and creative placemaking professionals, the

workshops bring together local leaders from non-profits, community organizations, and government to develop actionable solutions to pressing

community design challenges. The community receives additional support through webinars, conference calls, and web-based resources.

Since 1991, CIRD has convened more than 60 workshops in all regions of the country, empowering residents to leverage local assets for the future in order to build better places to live, work, and play. CIRD is a leadership initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts conducted in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Project for Public Spaces, Inc., along with the Orton Family Foundation and CommunityMatters® Partnership.

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Summary of Opportunity

The CIRD program offers rural communities the following:

- An annual competitive opportunity to host an intensive, two-and-a-half day community workshop, supported through a \$7,000 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 will be open and freely available to communities nationwide.
- Web-based access to a wide range of rural design resources.

CIRD will select as many as four communities to host CIRD workshops in the Summer and Fall of 2013.

TIMELINE

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • RFP Issued | January 10, 2013 |
| • Application Assistance: | |
| o Initial Information Call | January 23, 2013, 3:30PM |
| o Application Preparation Webinar | February 7, 2013, 3:00PM |
| o Q&A Call with CIRD Staff | February 28, 2013, 3:30PM |
| • Applications Due | March 5, 2013 |
| • Finalists Notified | April 19, 2013 |
| • Phone Interview with Finalists | April 26, 2013 |
| • Host Communities Notified | May 2013 |
| • Public Announcement | May 2013 |

Please visit the CIRD website, www.rural-design.org, for additional details about the timeline, conference calls, and webinars. Once your application is 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.

ELIGIBILITY

CIRD supports rural communities with a population of 50,000 or less located in a non-metropolitan county or a metropolitan county on the urban fringe. 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 an economic base, agricultural land or open space, and recreational opportunities.

Entities that are eligible to serve as the lead applicant to coordinate a CIRD workshop in a host community include but are not limited to: municipal, tribal, or county governments; local non-profit entities such as main street organizations, preservation groups, historical societies, or chambers of commerce; regional planning organizations; university community design centers located within 50 miles of the community; or local for-profit businesses. Two or more communities may submit a joint application. State-level entities may support an application, but cannot serve as the primary applicant.

Community buy-in and action is rarely successful without the support and active participation of community partners, so we encourage applicants to begin building local partnerships during the application process in order to apply as a team.

Competitive CIRD applicants will be able to demonstrate:

- Ability to carry out the logistical and practical preparations for a two-and-a-half workshop (secure a facility for the workshop, provide breakfast and luncheon for participants, provide audio visual equipment, arrange for field trips), including a public engagement event
- Matching funds (suggested \$7,000 in cash or in-kind donations)
- 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
- Support of additional local and/or regional partner organizations and leaders
- Ability to identify and engage a diverse group of community members as participants in the workshop and follow-up activities
- Intention and readiness to implement actions emerging from the workshops, participate in the evaluation of the workshop, and report on results

PROGRAM GOALS

- To raise awareness about the role of design in enhancing the quality of life and economic vitality of rural communities and to spur innovative design solutions.
- To empower citizens to play a role in guiding and determining appropriate development for their communities, including best use of available federal and state funding.
- To equip participants with the tools and techniques to identify, value, protect, 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.
To provide a forum for rural technical assistance providers to share their professional skills, learn new techniques that would aid them in their work with rural communities, and exchange ideas and experiences with rural communities and other providers.
- To provide participants with access to best practice approaches to place-based architecture, landscape architecture, heritage tourism, cultural development, arts-based civic engagement, historic preservation, and land management.
- To contribute to the creation of a community of practice for rural design.

Program Details

DESIGN WORKSHOPS

CIRD design workshops bring together participants from one or several communities in a 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, 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. See examples of previous workshops at www.rural-design.org/workshops.

Workshop Format

CIRD workshops are typically two-and-a-half days, with the exact schedule and agenda to be 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 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 offer feedback.

Workshops typically begin with a public engagement event, followed by educational and working sessions with a resource team comprised of national and local design professionals.

Potential workshop sessions include:

- Panel discussions and presentations by a resource team of design professionals
- Interactive community design activities
- Applied strategy sessions for a core group of community members and leaders
- Field trips and site visits
- Public presentations of ideas, designs, and solutions

Workshop Planning & Development

If you are selected to host and produce a CIRD workshop, CIRD staff will send you a Coordinator's Manual to guide you through the planning process and will be available to advise you on organizing the workshop. Workshop hosts are responsible for the majority of the logistical details, such as securing workshop location(s), food, marketing, and outreach. CIRD staff will work closely with selected communities to identify resource team members and to determine workshop format, sessions, and schedule.

We recommend that applicants form a local planning committee with key constituents. CIRD staff will arrange a pre-workshop site visit to meet with the committee, explore the community, and help kick off workshop planning. CIRD staff will work with the committee to identify the diverse stakeholder groups in your community and develop strategies for engagement, but workshop hosts are responsible for engaging a full range of participants and building broad community support.

Additional workshop planning and development resources are available in the [Resources](#) section of the CIRD website.

Workshop Resource Team

CIRD workshops include participation by a Resource Team of design and community development professionals, whose expertise matches the specific design issues or challenges of the host community. CIRD will cover the travel costs and honoraria for up to four resource team members per workshop; communities may propose additional or more expensive professionals at their own expense.



CIRD maintains a network of nationally recognized professionals in architecture, landscape architecture, community and regional planning, historic preservation, creative placemaking, and other design fields who may be available to participate in the workshop. We will work with each host community to identify the most appropriate resource team members for the workshop, drawing upon local

and regional design leaders whenever possible in combination with national subject matter specialists. Host communities are welcomed to suggest resource team members, however all qualifications must be submitted to CIRD for approval.

Workshop Funding and Matching Funds

Up to \$7,000 will be awarded to each local host organization to support coordination of the workshop. If your organization is selected, the funds will be provided through a fee-for-service contract with Project for Public Spaces, Inc.

As \$7,000 will not cover all of the workshop expenses, host communities are strongly encouraged to secure matching funds to supplement CIRD funding. We encourage applicants to seek at least \$7,000 in matching funding, which may take the form of funds raised or donated by local organizations, including in kind donations of goods and services (eg., printing, space, or refreshments during the workshop).

Matching funding can also include commitments of staff time and resources, which are critical to organizing a workshop. Host communities are expected to conduct most of the logistical arrangements for the workshops, including securing facilities and food; identifying and inviting participants; communicating with the general public about the workshop and outcomes; and planning post workshop follow-up activities.

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

The \$7,000 stipend and matching funds may be allocated to cover:

- Facility rental
- Breakfast, luncheon, or refreshments for participants and resource team members during the workshop
- Planning and producing a public engagement event
- Printing course materials and other resources
- 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
- Outreach and publicity for the workshop, including website and traditional media
- Transportation or special arrangements for field trips or tours
- Recording and sharing stories and results from workshops, including photography or videography
- Implementation of follow-up steps and actions from the workshop
- Labor and any associated costs for organizing the workshop, including:
 - o Organizing workshop logistics
 - o Workshop program development
 - o Recruiting workshop participants
 - o Writing post workshop evaluation reports
 - o Maintaining and reporting on expenditures

Local participants' expenses (lodging and transportation) are their own responsibility. Registration for participants is typically offered free of charge.

In addition to the \$7,000 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 & lodging expenses for up to four resource team members
- Developing and producing workshop content and instructional materials
- One-on-one assistance in planning workshop logistics and developing workshop content
- Conference calls and webinars to guide applicants in assembling their applications, organizing their workshops, overcoming challenges, and moving their projects ahead towards completion
- Opportunities to network with other CIRD host communities and rural practitioners through the CIRD website
- Post-workshop assistance with implementation and capacity building

Documentation and Evaluation

Documenting and evaluating each workshop is critical to the CIRD program. Successful applicants will propose methods for documenting the workshop and communicating its outcomes in the community and beyond.

CIRD staff will conduct an external evaluation of each workshop, however host communities are required to submit a final report to CIRD that includes an evaluation of the workshop's success. Documentation and evaluation efforts may include 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; drafting an implementation plan; and tracking budget and expenditures.

Workshop hosts may be invited to contribute periodically to a dedicated section of the CIRD website to help establish a peer network about rural design issues.

CAPACITY BUILDING

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



Conference Call & Webinar Series

CommunityMatters and the Orton Family Foundation will host a series of conference calls and webinars to cover critical topics in community engagement, rural design, partnership development, and workshop planning. These calls will be geared toward helping selected CIRD communities design effective public events and create the community infrastructure needed to successfully host a workshop and implement results. The calls will also be useful to communities that want to undertake rural design and community engagement activities on their own.

All conference calls and webinars will be free and open to the public, followed by closed sessions during which the selected CIRD host communities can network and receive direct assistance from CIRD staff. Registration is required. Please visit www.rural-design.org/resources to register and for more information about schedules and topics.

Follow-up Assistance

CIRD staff will continue to serve as a resource for the workshop hosts through December 2013. CommunityMatters and the Orton Family Foundation will host additional follow-up calls focusing on the skills needed to implement actions from the workshops, with topics to emerge from the workshops themselves. 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.

Visit the "[Frequently Asked Questions](#)" section of the CIRD web site for topics relevant to all CIRD applicants and host communities.

Selection Criteria

As many as four CIRD host communities will be selected through a competitive review process following the NEA's panel procedures. A panel of national professionals in rural design and planning (plus a layperson) will evaluate CIRD applications based on the following criteria:

EXCELLENCE

Excellence is a reflection of the quality of the partners and strength of the applicant team to plan and host the workshops, as well as quality of services they currently provide to their constituents.

1. Application Quality & Applicant Experience
 - Organizational experience and capacity of applicant, including ability to coordinate a workshop, conduct effective outreach and communications, and engage the community in their efforts
 - Overall quality of the proposal (well-thought out, clear, complete)
 - Clear and achievable goals for the workshop which if achieved has the potential to create meaningful change in the community
 - Degree to which arts and cultural practitioners are involved in creatively engaging the community, if appropriate.

MERIT

Merit reflects the relevance of the identified design issues to the local community and to other rural communities, the community's readiness for a workshop, a commitment to engaging and reaching out to a diverse audience, and potential for follow up activities.

2. Strong Application Concept
 - Proposed design concerns are relevant to community values, goals, priorities, assets, and needs
 - Clearly defined need for design assistance (ie., assistance is timely in that the problem has been clearly articulated and agreed upon yet solutions have not been determined)
 - Realistic budget with adequate matching funds (cash and/or in kind) to support the workshop

3. Commitment to Diverse Participation

- Commitment to creating a workshop environment that will enable broad-based engagement and action
- Clear plan for achieving diverse citizen engagement and participation in the workshop and follow-up activities, such as diversity in gender, ethnicity, age, and income
- Strong and specific commitments from partnering organizations to actively participate in the workshop and follow-up activities.
Committed partners must include:
 - o Government entity including elected officials and staff members
 - o One or more other local partners, such as:
 1. Local design organizations
 2. Arts and cultural organizations
 3. Business community
 4. College or university
 5. Community action groups
 6. Regional planning or governmental bodies



4. Potential for Action & Results

- Plan for conducting follow-up activities and taking action based on workshop results
- Commitment and plan for sharing workshop results broadly with community
- Demonstrated track record of taking action to implement community values, goals, and results



5. Broader Significance & Reach

- Relevance of project and design issues to other rural communities nationwide and potential for results to inform other communities
- Commitment to network, learn from, and communicate with a network of other rural practitioners

How to Apply

The process of developing a workshop proposal and successful application is not something that can be done in isolation: it takes early outreach, partnership and coalition building, and the collaborative efforts of a community team. That may include meetings with partners, site visits, and presentations or discussions at a town meeting in order to craft an application that really speaks to and about your community. Our hope is that this process will help you forge valuable partnerships and identify the most critical design issues facing your community.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applications to host a 2013 workshop must be submitted online via the CIRD website at: www.rural-design.org/apply. Hardcopy or emailed applications will not be accepted.

All applications must be received **no later than 5:00pm EST on March 5, 2013.**

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

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
 - Map or photographs of project location if known
 - Video or multimedia clips about the community or relevant project background
 - News articles, stories, or reports providing project background and context

Visit www.rural-design.org/apply for detailed instructions, page limits, and acceptable file formats for all required application materials.