Citizens’ Institute on Rural Design

Request for Applications to Host a Citizens’ Institute on Rural Design™ Workshop in 2018
INTRODUCTION
The Citizens' Institute on Rural Design™ (CIRD) connects communities to the design 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 Project for Public Spaces, along with the Orton Family Foundation.

Simply stated, rural design utilizes design strategies – improvements to a community’s streets, buildings, public spaces, or landscapes – to address the specific physical, environmental, social, and economic challenges facing rural areas. CIRD was founded by NEA 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 75 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, CIRD helps rural communities celebrate and enhance their existing local resources.

Rural communities are invited to respond to this Request for Applications to host a local design workshop in 2018.

IMPORTANT DATES
➢ Request for Applications release: January, 2018
➢ Webinar to review program and application: January 25, 2018, 3:00-4:00PM EST
➢ Applications due: February 16, 2018 at 5pm EST
➢ Phone Interviews with Finalists: March 2018
➢ Awardees notified: April 2018
➢ Local workshops: June – December 2018

PURPOSE
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 rural communities, and rural design can play a powerful role in this process. Forming collaborative multi-sectoral partnerships that cross county lines and town boundaries as well as governmental agency jurisdictions that include trusted local institutions and public agencies, is one of the key goals of the program.
The CIRD 2018 program is focused on helping rural leaders and residents come together to find creative solutions for the following design issues:

- **Multimodal Transportation** – Examples of design challenges include: Improving bike/pedestrian access in your community; retrofitting commercial strips to accommodate pedestrians; the development of recreational trails for mobility and economic development; mobility for the elderly and aging in place; context sensitive rural highways and byways; integration of arts/culture/design to improve transportation or pedestrian experience.

- **Healthy Living by Design** – Examples of design challenges include: Creating public space that supports play and active recreation; improving access to healthy food and local food eco-systems; enhancing access for walking, biking, and active transportation/recreation; building social cohesion and opportunities for social interaction via creative placemaking.

- **Main Streets** – Examples of design challenges include: Leveraging Main Street for economic development; redesigning Main Street as a local street versus state highway/thruway; cultivating/enhancing public space on main street via design or creative placemaking; branding and design along Main Street; historic preservation and adaptive reuse of Main Street buildings; maximizing the role that arts and culture can play as an economic driver for local and regional economies.

Click [here](#) for information on past CIRD workshops, particularly from 2013, 2014, 2016, and 2017.

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY**

Selected rural communities will receive $10,000 cash stipend for planning and hosting a two-day community design workshop and follow up activities. ($10,000 cash or in-kind match by host communities is required).

Selected communities will also receive technical assistance in 2018 to plan and design an effective public design workshop, as well as an action plan for the community going forward.

**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.

**BENEFITS TO SELECTED COMMUNITIES**

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, select Resource Team members that best fit your design challenge, co-develop community outreach strategies, develop the session content and set the schedule.

In addition to the $10,000 cash stipend, CIRD will provide a comprehensive package of technical assistance services to support the workshops. This includes:

- Honoraria, travel and lodging expenses for up to four regional or national Resource Team members;
- Advise on 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;
- A write up of an action plan and key summary of the workshop event;
- Opportunities to connect with a broad network of rural practitioners and resources.

**EXPECTATION OF SELECTED COMMUNITIES**

Applicants must designate a local coordinator who will act as the main point of contact for the workshop 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;
- Prepare for the workshop itself, including drafting the workshop planning timeline and communications plan; establishing a call schedule with CIRD staff; coordinating all local logistics, such as the local guided community tour for the Resource Team; Resource Team accommodations, workshop location(s), and catering;
- Manage all communications and outreach to workshop attendees;
- Assist in the review and drafting of the post-workshop action plan and key summary of the workshop event (in collaboration with CIRD staff) and any post-workshop implementation funded by the program by December 31, 2018;
- Track both cash and in-kind expenditures and provide a final budget report to CIRD staff following the workshop.
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. The full budget for the workshop and follow-up activities should total $20,000. The full match does not have to be secured at the time of application. Identifying proposed sources of matching funds is acceptable.

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.

WORKSHOP FORMAT
CIRD workshops span two days. The host community will be provided with a proposed agenda, schedule, and workshop activities by CIRD staff. The host community will have the opportunity to tailor the agenda with CIRD staff to best fit the host community's needs and particular design challenge, and to ensure the full participation of community leaders and local citizens.

The workshop will feature two days of intensive educational and working sessions facilitated by a Resource Team comprised of national and local rural design professionals. See a sample workshop agenda in Appendix A.

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 are also responsible for all of 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.

SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA
As many as four CIRD host communities will be selected to host workshops during 2018 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 review criteria of merit and excellence:

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**: Presents clear and achievable goals for the 2-day workshop, which will result in creating meaningful change in the community. The proposed design concerns fit within outlined themes (multimodal transportation, health, and main streets) and are relevant to community values, goals, priorities, assets, and needs. 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 and Implementation**: 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. 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.

- **Realistic Budget**: 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:

- **Partner Commitments**: 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

- **Applicant Experience**: Demonstrates experience and capacity of lead applicant and partner organizations to coordinate a workshop, conduct effective outreach and communication, and engage their community.
APPLICATION SUBMISSION
Applications to host a 2018 workshop must be submitted online via the CIRD website: http://rural-design.org/application-form

All applications must be received no later than Friday, February 16, 2018 at 5:00pm EST. Please do not wait until the last moment to submit your application. It may take 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. Incomplete applications will not be accepted and additional materials cannot be added to your application after the deadline.

Remember to register for our pre-application assistance webinar on January 25th, 2018 3:00-4:00PM EST. 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)
   • News articles, stories, or reports providing background and context (optional)

PAGE LIMITS AND FILE FORMATS

• Budget: 10MB file limit; only xls and pdf files will be accepted
• Letters of Support: 10MB file limit; only pdf files will be accepted; 3-5 letters with maximum 2 pages each
• Map or Aerial Images: 10MB file limit; jpg or pdf format only; 1 image required, may include up to 2 additional images of community, region, or site
• Optional News Article: 10MB file limit; only pdf files will be accepted; maximum 2 files, each 5 pages maximum

SUBMISSION DEADLINE
February 16, 2018, 5:00 pm EST

WEBSITE – http://www.rural-design.org

CONTACT – cird@pps.org