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Invitation to communities to host design workshops that address specific local design challenges.

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## Funding and Design Assistance Available for Rural Communities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### CITIZENS' INSTITUTE ON RURAL DESIGN™ ISSUES REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

New York (October 27, 2015) — The Citizens' Institute on Rural Design™ (CIRD) has issued a request for proposals to rural communities interested in applying for funding to host a community design workshop in either 2016 or 2017.

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. CIRD provides communities access to the resources they need to convert their own good ideas into reality.

CIRD offers annual competitive funding to six small towns or rural communities to host a two-and-a-half day community development and design workshop. With assistance from a wide range of design, planning, and creative placemaking professionals, the workshops are intended to bring together local leaders from non-profits, community organizations, and government agencies to develop actionable solutions to the communities' pressing development challenges. The communities will receive additional support through webinars, conference calls, and web-based resources on [www.rural-design.org](http://www.rural-design.org).

Design and development challenges include but are not limited to the following: Main Street revitalization, managing and shaping community growth, the design of community-supportive transportation systems, preservation of natural and historic landscapes and buildings, protecting working agricultural lands, and maximizing the role of arts and culture as an economic driver for local and regional economies. 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.

**The deadline for submitting a proposal is Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2016 at 11 p.m. EST.** Successful applicants will receive a \$10,000 stipend (that must be matched one-to-one) in addition to in-kind professional design expertise and technical assistance **valued at \$35,000**. The Request for Proposals is

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announced in March of 2016 and workshops will be held during the fall of 2016 through spring of 2017.

CIRD staff will also offer two pre-application assistance webinars to answer questions and guide interested applicants in assembling their proposals. The first is scheduled for **Tuesday, Nov. 10**, and the second will take place on **Thursday, Dec. 10**. Both calls will begin at 3 p.m. EST and last approximately one hour. Participation in each call is free but registration is required. To register visit: [www.rural-design.org/application-assistance](http://www.rural-design.org/application-assistance).



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### About the National Endowment for the Arts

Established by Congress in 1965, the NEA is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the NEA supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the National Endowment for the Arts and the agency is celebrating this milestone with events and activities through September 2016. Go to [www.arts.gov/50th](http://www.arts.gov/50th) to enjoy art stories from around the nation, peruse Facts & Figures, and check out the anniversary calendar.

### 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 [www.rd.usda.gov](http://www.rd.usda.gov).

### About Project for Public Spaces

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 [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org).

### About the Orton Family Foundation

With its Community Heart & Soul™ method, the Orton Family Foundation empowers 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 communities. The Foundation assists the residents of small cities and towns in the use of the Community Heart & Soul™ method, a barn-raising approach to community planning and development that invites residents to shape the future of their communities in ways that uphold the unique character of each place. For more information visit [www.orton.org](http://www.orton.org).

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