

THE NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN CENTER
VOLUNTEER GUIDE

VOLUNTEERING FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE



NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN CENTER

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THE NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN CENTER

(NDC) was founded in 1968 by a group of architects and planners who volunteered their time and talent to help low and moderate income communities in Baltimore combat urban decline and disinvestment. Over the subsequent decades, the organization has broadened its scope of services and volunteer base to provide a range of design and planning assistance, while always focusing on community engagement, education, and revitalization. In addition to its Baltimore office, NDC also maintains an office in Prince George's County that provides design assistance to under-served communities and non-profits within the Washington D.C. Beltway.

WHAT IS OUR MISSION?

The mission of the Neighborhood Design Center is to mobilize volunteer professionals and resources to provide pro-bono technical assistance in support of community development initiatives that directly improve local neighborhood livability and viability. NDC takes on projects that fit within this mission and serve to achieve our community service goals:

- Strengthen citizen involvement in neighborhood improvement initiatives
- Educate the public about the essential value of good design, planning, and preservation practices as community revitalization tools
- Be a catalyst for increased investment for neighborhood development

NDC's volunteer work is used by community groups to clarify project goals, evaluate the feasibility of the project, fundraise for project development, and seek further professional design services to complete the conceptual work. In this way, NDC serves as a catalyst for projects that otherwise would not become realities.

WHY VOLUNTEER?

The benefits of volunteering with NDC range from altruism to individual professional development. In order to leverage design resources for low and moderate-income communities NDC relies on its greatest strength — volunteer professionals.

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING WITH NDC

Giving back to communities in need ■ The most beneficial reward that volunteers get from their work is helping groups and communities in need through the donation of their skills, knowledge and expertise. Giving back is important and provides an enriching experience. Volunteers also get to meet a variety of local residents, leaders and city agency staff.

Professional development through community design projects

■ NDC volunteers are given the opportunity to use their skills as trained professionals on a wide variety of interesting and challenging projects that may not be available to them through their employment.

Exploring individual potential and gaining experience

■ Various areas of interest can be explored through work as a volunteer. The variety of projects provides an opportunity to collaborate with other professionals, and to learn from community leaders. Volunteers often gain insight and experience from their colleagues on various topics and disciplines through the informal networking that occurs.

Continuing education through workshops and interactive design courses

■ Throughout the year, NDC organizes professional workshops to provide volunteers with up-to-date information in the design disciplines and to respond to a wide variety of interests. These workshops often provide continuing education units (CEU).

Volunteer Recognition events, open houses and awards ceremonies

■ NDC recognizes its volunteers and their commitment through receptions, open houses and award ceremonies. "AfterHours" evenings bring volunteers together and offer them the opportunity to network with other professionals and celebrate the successes gained working in community development projects.

Intern Development Program (IDP) credits for architects

■ Credit hours for volunteer work can be used in Category D Related Activities, Professional and Community Services, as well as in other IDP training areas. (This can be arranged through your IDP supervisor).