CLIENT / PARTNER GUIDE

COMMUNITY DESIGN WORKS

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the Neighborhood DesignCenter

WHAT'S IN THIS GUIDE:

1: What is NDC's Community Design Works program and conceptual design assistance?

2: How do I know if this program is right for my organization and project? Am I ready to apply?

3: What is the CDW process and my role in it?

4: What happens after I receive assistance?

1. What is NDC's Community Design Works program and conceptual design assistance?

NDC's Community Design Works program partners local volunteer design professionals with community-initiated projects relating to the built environment (architecture, landscape architecture, or urban planning). The types of projects with which we assist include but are not limited to parks, edible gardens, vacant lot stabilization, adaptive building reuse, non-profit offices, streetscaping, and various types of neighborhood plans. We work in Baltimore City and Prince George's County.

Through this program we offer pro bono conceptual design assistance to help community organizations and non-profits turn their ideas into plans. NDC adds value to a project early on by engaging in a multi-month collaborative design process that combines the stakeholders' vision with the designers' technical expertise.

Resulting conceptual designs are both environmentally sustainable and able to be well-sustained by the community, and exhibit the highest levels of design thinking and problem solving. They are documented in visual formats including plans, photos, sketches, and renderings so that the client organization can share their conceptual design with others. Client organizations that have received conceptual design assistance are better positioned to secure funding and partnership opportunities as they move forward towards implementation.

OUR SERVICES ARE PRO BONO, BUT NDC REQUESTS AN ADMINISTRATIVE FEE

NDC can provide pro bono assistance through Community Design Works because of the support of our dedicated volunteers and our generous funders. However, we do request that client organizations contribute a token administrative fee to signify their dedication to the process and seeing the project realized. The fee is a fraction of our costs to administer the project, and a fraction of the typical market value of conceptual design services provided.

Administrative fees are discussed after the application is received and before the client organization commits to receiving services from us. The amount requested ranges from $250-1000 for most projects, depending on size of project and whether the client organization is all-volunteer or has paid staff. We request payment by the end of conceptual design, rather than at the beginning, to allow time for the client organization to raise funds if needed.

Uncertaintly over the administrative fee should never prevent you from applying for design assistance. Once we have your application, NDC staff can estimate the application fee for your project and discuss possible extenuating circumstances. Inability to pay an administrative fee does not preclude a project from receiving design assistance if it is otherwise eligible.

NDC OFFERS SERVICES THROUGH OTHER PROGRAMS, TOO

The Neighborhood Design Center offers design assistance through a variety of programs in our Baltimore City and Prince George's County offices. You can learn about our other programs on our website located at www.ndc-md.org.

NDC COMMUNITY DESIGN WORKS PROJECT PROCESS

IMAGINE

APPLICATION
Available at ndc-md.org, can be submitted at any time.

INTERVIEW

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
Between NDC and the client organization.

1 MONTH

RECRUIT

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT
Conducted by NDC staff based on project needs.

VOLUNTEER INTRODUCTION MEETING
Between NDC staff and design volunteers. Optional.

PROJECT KICKOFF MEETING
Introduction between client organization and design volunteers.

1-2 MONTHS

ENGAGE

PLANNING

COMMUNITY CHARRETTE
Facilitated by volunteers with support of client organization.

DOCUMENTATION

Optional inclusion in scope for projects that need a wider community engagement process.

1 MONTH

DESIGN

VOLUNTEER DESIGN PROCESS

INTERNAL DESIGN REVIEW
Volunteers present at one internal review session. These are held monthly with senior NDC volunteer professionals.

STAKEHOLDER DESIGN REVIEW
Formal or informal meeting with client organization.

2 MONTHS

REVISE

VOLUNTEER DESIGN REVISION

STAKEHOLDER DESIGN REVIEW

Include as needed.

1 MONTH

HANDOFF

VOLUNTEER DESIGN REVISION

FINAL DESIGN HANDOFF
Final design documents submitted to client organization.

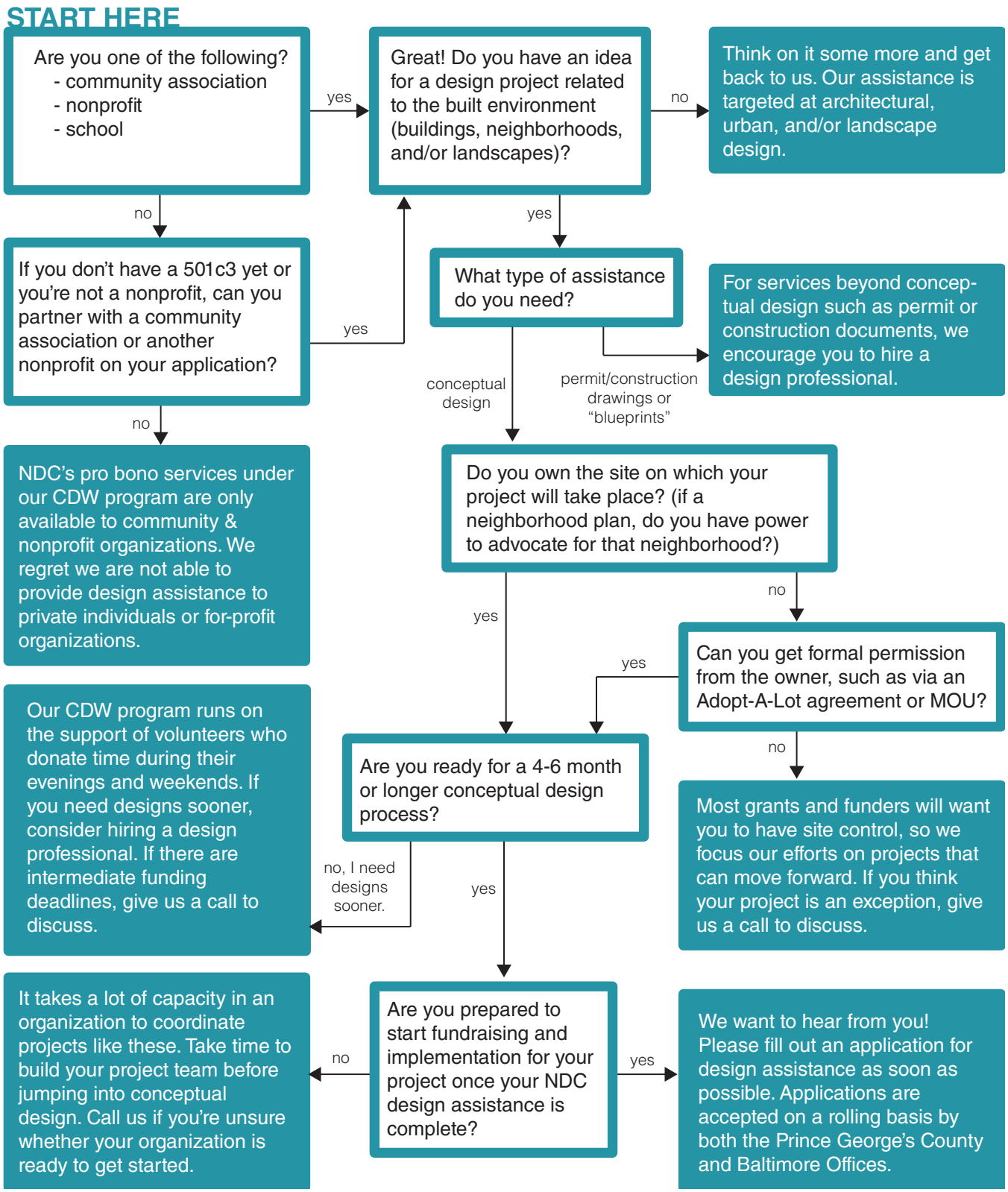
PROJECT CLOSEOUT
NDC issues project summaries and thank yous.

<1 MONTH

FUNDRAISING & IMPLEMENTATION BY CLIENT ORGANIZATION

2: How do I know if this program is right for my organization and project? Am I ready to apply?

The Neighborhood Design Center strives to accept all projects to which we believe our services will be helpful. That said, there are a few reasons we do have to return applications. Use this flowchart to help determine if you're ready to apply.



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3. What is the CDW process and my role in it?

You as the client organization have a critical role to play in the NDC conceptual design process! Please review the following breakdown of typical phases to better understand how we assist you with our design services, and where we need your help in the process.

IMAGINE

Potential client organizations apply for design assistance from NDC. If the project is accepted by NDC a memoradum of understanding (MOU) is negotiated outlining the partnership. Signing the MOU is required to move to the next phase.

CLIENT ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBILITIES

- ☐ Submit your application for conceptual design assistance! This is the very first step of the process. Call NDC with any questions about the application. Please remember that until we receive your application, we may lack the information to effectively answer questions about project timelines, scope, and administrative fees beyond what is contained in this guide.
- ☐ Review the draft MOU sent by your NDC staff contact. This outlines the scope of the pro bono conceptual design assistance NDC is offering to provide. Request revisions if applicable - does it outline what you need to move forward with the project? Recruitment of volunteers will not begin until you sign and return a MOU.

MEETINGS

INTERVIEW

The NDC staff contact meets with the client organization by phone or in person to discuss their submitted application and determine the potential scope of conceptual design assistance. Approx. 30-60 min.

RECRUIT

NDC staff use this phase to recruit and prepare volunteers to work on your project. Your NDC staff contact will update you periodically on how recruitment is progressing. You can use it to prepare for meeting your NDC volunteers. The recruitment phase concludes with the Project Kickoff.

CLIENT ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBILITIES

- ☐ Determine your Core Stakeholders. Select 3-5 people who represent those affected by your project and will provide direction and feedback to the conceptual design process, including attending all meetings. These people can be from within or outside your organization. Give their names and emails to your NDC staff contact.
- ☐ Prepare for briefing the NDC volunteer team at the Project Kickoff. How will you show/explain the site, your design goals, and your design constraints (especially budget). Old design plans are always welcome!

MEETINGS

VOLUNTEER INTRODUCTION

The NDC staff contact meets with the NDC volunteer team by phone or in person, without the client organization present. This meeting allows volunteers to meet and develop a team working relationship. Approx. 30-60 min.

PROJECT KICKOFF

The NDC staff contact, NDC volunteer team, and client core stakeholders meet in person at or near the site. The NDC volunteer team and client core stakeholders review project constraints and goals. An initial timeline for the rest of the project is determined. Approx. 60-90 min.

ENGAGE - OPTIONAL PHASE

This phase is for conceptual design processes that require wider community engagement. The goal is to build consensus on the community vision for the project ***before*** *the NDC volunteer team begins to design.*

CLIENT ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBILITIES

- ☐ With your NDC volunteer team, make a list of potential project stakeholders. Select a workshop time and location with your NDC volunteer team that maximizes project stakeholder participation. You may choose to welcome participants with food and/or drink. If you decide to provide food or drink, let the NDC volunteer team know so they can include time in the agenda.
- ☐ Invite people to the Community Visioning Workshop. NDC recommends considering which methods (email, flyer, phone calls) will work best for those you wish to attend, and how much advance notice is necessary. Spreading the word is your responsibility, but your NDC volunteer team can assist you by creating invitation text or graphics.
- ☐ Review the NDC volunteer team's proposed charrette agenda and activities and provide feedback.
- ☐ Help the NDC volunteer team as requested to facilitate the Community Visioning Workshop in a manner that is welcoming and respectful of diverse opinions.

MEETINGS

PLANNING MEETING

The NDC volunteer team and core stakeholders meet in person to review details of the upcoming workshop.

COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOP

The client organization hosts potential project stakeholders to discuss the project through visioning exercises facilitated by the NDC volunteer team. Approx. 2-4 hours.

DESIGN

During this phase the NDC volunteer team creates an initial design for the project based on the information provided by the core stakeholders, their own research, and, if applicable, the Community Visioning Workshop. The initial conceptual design is presented to an internal NDC review group, revised, and then presented to the core stakeholders for feedback.

CLIENT ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBILITIES

- ☐ Provide constructive feedback of the NDC volunteer team's intial conceptual design at the Stakeholder Design Review. They know design, but you know your neighborhood/organization/building/site!
- ☐ Tell the NDC volunteer team if there is a specific format in which you need your final deliverable. A booklet? A poster? A powerpoint presentation? Consider what will best help you pursue future partnerships and grants.

MEETINGS

INTERNAL DESIGN REVIEW

The NDC staff contact, NDC volunteer team, and NDC reviewers meet to practice the Stakeholder Design Review presentation and receive constructive internal feedback from experienced local design professionals.

STAKEHOLDER DESIGN REVIEW

The NDC staff contact, NDC volunteer team, and core stakeholders meet to review initial conceptual designs. Based on the extent of changes requested by core stakeholders, it is determined whether a Revise Phase is required. If only minor changes are necessary, this may be the last official meeting. Approx. 90 min.

REVISE

An optional, but frequently utilized, phase that allows NDC volunteer teams to make substantial changes to the selected design option. Additionally, this phase can be used as a way of presenting ideas to a larger group of stakeholders (such as a public presentation) after a design review by core stakeholders.

CLIENT ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBILITIES

- ☐ If the second Stakeholder Design Review is a public presentation, coordinate planning and outreach with your NDC Volunteer Team. Do you need to get time on a community association's/council's agenda? If hosting your own public meeting, where and when will it be held?
- ☐ Provide constructive feedback of the NDC Volunteer Team's design revisions at the Stakeholder Design Review. Tell the NDC Volunteer Team what specifically should be changed to prepare for a final design.

MEETINGS

STAKEHOLDER DESIGN REVIEW

The NDC staff contact, NDC volunteer team, and core stakeholders meet to provide comment and feedback on the revised design. We jointly determine what modifications are needed to make it a final design. If this meeting doubles as a public presentation we call it a Public Design Review. Public Design Reviews, like Community Visioning Workshops, are hosted by the client organization and facilitated by the NDC volunteer team. Multiple design options may be presented with the goal of determining the consensus choice that best represents the community vision. Approx. 90 min.

HANDOFF

This phase includes final revisions to the design and documenting the design and project process in a manner which can be utilized by the client organization to pursue funding and implementation of their project. There are no required meetings in this phase, as handoff of the final deliverable is usually coordinated via email. However, core stakeholders and NDC volunteers are encouraged to coordinate their own gatherings to celebrate the conclusion of conceptual design.

CLIENT ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBILITIES

- ☐ Pay the administative fee if one is requested for the project and you have not already.
- ☐ Receive the final design deliverables from your NDC staff contact. Let them know immediately if something is missing or needs to be changed.
- ☐ Respond to the NDC post-project survey. Provide your NDC staff contact with any updates to core stakeholder contact information for the project record and future follow up.

WHY WE CONCLUDE OUR PARTNERSHIP AT THE END OF CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

The conclusion of the handoff phase marks the end of the Neighborhood Design Center's conceptual design assistance via the Community Design Works program. CDW assistance ends with conceptual design so that our staff and volunteers can help more client organizations get their project ideas off the ground. It also reflects our policy that the work of our volunteers is not intended for regulatory permit or construction.

For many client organizations, this marks the end of their project partnership with NDC. Ultimately implementation, including fundraising, of the project is the responsibility of the client organization. However, some client organizations continue their partnerships with NDC through other programs or through new CDW conceptual design assistance projects.

4: What happens after I receive assistance?

The NDC process gives the client organization tools they can use towards implementing their project. These tools include both the final design deliverable and the stakeholder consensus generated through the participatory design process. Implementation will mean different things for each project. Possible next steps for a client organization include:

- Writing a grant application.
- Pursuing private or corporate funding opportunities.
- Hiring a professional design firm to prepare permit and/or construction documents.
- Soliciting a more detailed cost estimate from a contractor.
- Guiding neighborhood decision-making or policy.
- Advocating for investment or change by government agencies.

The Neighborhood Design Center does not assist with the above activities. Former NDC volunteers that choose to assist you with implementation do so as a volunteer or paid professional directly with your organization, not through NDC.

FREQUENTLY ASKED IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS

Where can I apply for grant funding to implement my project? - While NDC does not assist with the locating of grant opportunities, past client organizations have applied to grant programs at the following organizations:

- Parks & People Foundation www.parksandpeople.org
- Healthy Neighborhoods www.healthyneighborhoods.org
- Chesapeake Bay Trust www.cbtrust.org
- Baltimore Office of Promotion & the Arts www.promotionandarts.org/grants
- The Foundation Center http://foundationcenter.org/
- Prince George's County DHCD-CDBG Funding http://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/sites/DHCD/Pages/default.aspx
- MD DHCD Community Legacy Funding http://www.neighborhoodrevitalization.org/programs/cl/cl.aspx
- Maryland Open Space http://www.dnr.state.md.us/land/pos/index.asp
- National Fish and Wildlife http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/Pages/home.aspx#.VN0fE_nF-gw

Why can't my organization use the NDC designs for permit/construction? - NDC designs are for conceptual purposes only. Additional design investigation and technical expertise is often necessary to revise conceptual designs to the standard required for permitting and construction. NDC and its volunteers assume no responsibility or liability for any unauthorized use of conceptual plans. We encourage our client organizations to obtain the services of a design firm, architect, or landscape architect as needed for design services beyond conceptual design, and to build into their budget the fees for those services.

Can I use the rendering my NDC volunteers created for me in a press release? - Yes! When using any graphic or plan from your conceptual design documents, we ask that you cite the Neighborhood Design Center, and preferably the volunteer(s) by name as listed on your final design deliverables.

OTHER IMPLEMENTATION RESOURCES

The Neighborhood Design Center offers some implementation resources through our "Action Guide" pamphlet series available online at www.ndc-md.org.

HOW TO REACH US

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