

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Creative Placemaking for Rural (CPR) Initiative

Release Date: July 12, 2022
Deadline: August 5, 2022
Submit via: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HAC-CPR22>
Contact: CPR@ruralhome.org

The Housing Assistance Council (HAC), under Cooperative Agreement with USDA Rural Development as part of its Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge Initiative (RPIC), is excited to announce the Request for Applications (RFA) to the HAC 2022 Creative Placemaking for Rural (CPR) Initiative. Rural communities are invited to submit applications to receive support and technical assistance to host a virtual and on-site local Placemaking Workshop (if local public health guidelines allow) or participate in the Placemaking Learning Cohort. Specifically, the CRP Initiative will focus on improving rural prosperity and building the capacity of rural organizations to create and implement innovative placemaking strategies into their larger community development planning goals and activities.

WHAT IS RURAL PLACEMAKING?

Under USDA, Rural Development, Placemaking is defined as a collaborative process among public, private, philanthropic and community partners to strategically improve the social, cultural, and economic structure of a community. This work is based on a sense of place with qualitative and quantitative outcomes.

Objective: Improve rural prosperity and build the capacity of rural organizations and communities to create and implement innovative placemaking strategies into their larger community development planning goals and activities

OPPORTUNITY

Up to ten (10) rural communities will be selected to participate in the **CPR Initiative**.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The CPR Initiative will assist and encourage rural communities to develop and implement innovative solutions into their project proposals. Each community will leave the program with a scalable vision created and developed through a coordinated peer approach. Work Plans will include practical approaches built rooted in community engagement. Resource development, technical assistance, and specialized training aimed at increasing the competitiveness of rural communities in attracting and retaining businesses that provide employment and services (i.e., affordable housing, community facilities, broadband and e-connectivity and transportation infrastructure) for residents will be tailored to each cohort. Communities will use the work plan process to practice telling their story, identify program challenges, develop adaptive work plans, workshop their approach with peers, and vision for the future.

Rural community leaders from government, non-profits, local business, and civic organizations will:

- participate in virtual trainings and sessions on placemaking, planning, community engagement, facilitation, and fundraising techniques
- connect and exchange ideas with peers from other rural communities in the cohort
- receive technical assistance and coaching from experienced placemaking and design professionals tailored to local needs
- receive support in navigating funding opportunities to make their community's vision a reality
- receive on-the-ground technical assistance and peer-to-peer support to the extent allowed by budgets, geography, and the public health situation

CPR WORK PLAN

Each community that participates in CPR will work with HAC staff, program advisors, and specialists to develop a Work Plan for tackling their placemaking challenge. From the total of groups selected, HAC will divide groups into 3-4 peers around a common

community challenge: such as those working to increase the availability or improve the stock of affordable housing, those developing or preserving community facilities within their communities, those increasing broadband capacity in their communities, or those looking to create workforce programs of assistance. To support the workplan development, program participants will receive technical assistance throughout the project period, to help identify and apply to appropriate local, state, and other federal funding sources, deepen community engagement and partnerships, link artists and designers to community development initiatives and engagements and assist with merging placemaking into community-wide planning processes and other resources.

The CPR Initiative **will provide \$5000 in challenge grant funds** to support each selected community's rural placemaking plan. Each community will be encouraged to provide, and 1-to-1 cash match or in-kind contribution to extend the support and capacity to fully develop an implementable plan.

CASE STUDY DEVELOPMENT

In cooperation with HAC and USDA—RD, CPR cohort communities with the most innovative Work Plans will receive assistance with transforming their workplans into an implementable case study.

WORKSHOPS

With support from design, planning, and creative placemaking professionals, CPR will include design and placemaking workshops intended to convene residents, local leaders from non-profits, community organizations, and government stakeholders with a goal of developing actionable solutions to a specific placemaking challenge or opportunity. Examples might include but are not limited to:

- Historic preservation and adaptive reuse of community buildings
- Designing quality affordable housing that supports livable and equitable communities; including housing and other amenities that support young people, families, and/or the elderly and aging in place
- Creating public or civic spaces that support and integrate cultural expression and local identity and/or play and active recreation
- Developing recreational trails for mobility, active transportation, and

economic development

- Redesigning Main Street as a local street versus state highway/thruway
- Designing spaces and places that improve access to healthy food and local food systems
- Leveraging Main Street or local businesses for economic development, including branding, wayfinding, façade improvements, and streetscape design
- Integrating cultural identity into the built environment to drive heritage tourism.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicant Organizations must:

- be part of a rural or tribal community of 50,000 or less in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and or West Virginia.
- identify a specific placemaking challenge to address through the CPR program,
- be able to participate in CPR as indicated in Participation Expectations below, and
- plan a workshop or commensurate event with HAC staff during the period of programming from August 2022 - December 2023.

The following entities who meet the criteria above are encouraged to apply:

Partnerships are strongly encouraged to apply

- Municipal, tribal, or county governments
- Local nonprofit organizations, including, but not limited to Main Street organizations, art centers, preservation groups, historical societies, or chambers of commerce, working in rural areas
- Local education entities (e.g., rural schools) or organizations that include schools or colleges as part of the project team
- Regional planning organizations working in rural areas
- University community design centers or university agricultural extension offices with close ties to the community presenting the

placemaking challenge or opportunity

PARTICIPATION BENEFITS

COHORT COMMUNITIES

Ten (10) communities will be selected to do a deep dive into a pressing placemaking challenge or opportunity that is impacting their community. Each workshop includes:

- \$5,000 stipend to the host community for workshop staff time and related expenses
- A tailored virtual design process working with a dedicated resource team, including goal setting, and online sessions with design and/or placemaking experts to assist with project visioning and advancement toward implementation
- Potential site visit from a local/regional designer if local public health guidelines allow
- An action plan following the workshop, with project-specific placemaking and planning recommendations, created by the CPR resource team
- Ongoing technical assistance related to project until December 2023

LEARNING COHORT

The opportunity allows leaders from each selected community to participate in virtual trainings in design, planning, community engagement, and facilitation techniques; engage with peers from rural communities; and receive support in navigating funding opportunities to make their vision a reality. The opportunity includes a dozen engagements, specifically:

- A series of online learning sessions led by nationally recognized field experts, tailored to engage cohort members, and activate peer learning
- A series of public webinars and private breakout sessions that connect cohort members to design experts
- Technical assistance through office hours, one-on-one coaching, optional in-person convenings, and online resources

- Additional opportunities to socialize and share best practices and experiences with rural peers from around the country
- Note: Online learning sessions might be supplemented or partially replaced by in-person or small group peer learning gatherings, depending on the geographic dispersion of the cohort, public health conditions, and other factors.

COHORT EXPECTATIONS

To receive a stipend and community-specific placemaking and design expertise, Cohort Communities must:

- Designate a local coordinator who will serve as the main point of contact with the CPR resource team. This person may also be responsible for tracking expenses and other administrative and logistic details.
- Provide a \$5,000 match to the \$5,000 stipend for hosting a workshop or event in their community. A match can be cash or in-kind, which could include assets like local photographer time, additional designer, or artist contracts, and/or staff time.
- Collaborate with the CPR resource team to organize a site visit and virtual engagements. This will include:
 - Setting an achievable scope, sharing important documents, developing an engagement plan, and identifying final products from the CPR resource team that fit the community-specific placemaking challenge.
 - Coordinating a socially distanced site visit from a local/regional team (if local public health guidelines allow)
 - Assist with conducting a local workshop or event aligned parameters agreed upon by HAC and the Cohort member
- Participate in Cohort activities and broader HAC network of activities, including, but not limited to CPR workshops and events, both online and in-person (where local public health guidelines will allow).

SELECTION CRITERIA

Applications will be evaluated based on the strength of community support for the

project as evidenced through broad-cross section of identified stakeholder, the ability to bring together diverse cross-section of community members, along with the following equally weighted criteria:

Excellence reflects the commitment, quality, and capacity of the applicant and partners to host a workshop and engage the community to address placemaking and rural design challenges, including:

- Alignment with CPR goals and technical assistance offerings
- Capacity to steward activities in their local community
- Commitment to partner and collaborate locally to address a placemaking or challenge or opportunity

Merit reflects the relevance of the identified placemaking challenge or opportunity to the local community, the community's readiness, and enthusiasm to tackle the design challenge, and a commitment to stewarding a local design agenda, including:

- Clear evidence of a proposal connected to community needs
- Proven history of strong stakeholder engagement and willingness to engage in future community engagement processes
- Commitment to participation in the CPR program, willingness, and capacity to implement ideas from the program

If circumstances warrant, CPR may give special consideration to applications in certain geographies and/or applications that promise unique contributions to national rural placemaking conversations.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:

We recommend that applicants prepare their answers prior to starting the application process, as you do not have the ability to save your progress while submitting. Your responses can be copied and pasted into the application form. Please contact CRP@ruralhome.org if you have any questions about the application submission process.

Please provide responses to the following questions:

1. Lead Applicant Contact:
 - Organization
 - Physical Address
 - City, ST, Postal
 - Email Address:
 - Phone Number:
2. Population size of applicant community (city, county etc.,)
3. Primary contact information, if different than above:
 - Name
 - Title
 - Email address
 - Phone number
4. What aspects of the CPR Initiative would be most valuable to you and your organization? (Up to 100 words)
5. Describe your organization's mission and primary focus. (Up to 200 words).
6. Describe your community (Descriptions of the people and places affected by the community placemaking challenge are encouraged here. You will have an opportunity to describe the placemaking challenge or opportunity itself in the following questions.) (Up to 200 words)
7. Placemaking Challenge or Opportunity Information
Please describe the placemaking challenge your community is facing (i.e., street redesign, adaptive reuse, and preservation of a historic structure, etc.):

- a. Describe your placemaking challenge (100 words)
 - b. Why is this a critical issue? (100 Words)
 - c. What do you need help with? (100 Words)
 - d. Who will benefit from this project and why? (100 Words)
8. What next steps do you have planned on your specific challenge? (100 Words)
9. Describe your current project team and partner organizations that will be involved. Who is a part of this project? Have you worked together in the past? How will you collaborate on this project? (200 words) **We recognize that teams change over time - please respond here with the most current information.**
10. What is your organization's current staffing capacity to work on this program? (100 words) Please submit a budget using the [sample template provided](#), listing proposed uses for the \$5,000 stipend and \$5,000 match. CPR understands that budgets will evolve. But a baseline is helpful. **Selected applicants can adjust budget later.**
11. Supporting Material **(Supporting materials, including photos, videos, press clippings, website links, and letters of support are welcome, but not required.)**
 - a. Photos/Images: you may provide up to 15 photos or images that show your community and the context and location of your placemaking challenge or opportunity. Maps of relevant sites are encouraged. Please combine all images into a single pdf document and include short captions with the images or on a separate page.
 - b. Video/Online material: you may include a link to one video (for example, through Vimeo or YouTube) or a link to a static web page or online pdf document.
 - c. Letters of support: you may provide up to 3 letters of support from community leaders or partners. These letters help CRP understand the extent of community support for the proposed or placemaking challenge or opportunity.
12. How did you hear about the CRP program?
 - Social media
 - HAC Newsletter
 - USDA
 - Other Newsletter
 - Word of Mouth

- Previous work with Citizens' Institute on Rural Design

IMPORTANT DATES

July 12, 2022	Request for Applications launched
TBD 2:00PM (ET)	RFA Information Webinar
August 5, 2022	Applications due 11:59PM(ET)
Mid-to-Late August	Successful applicants notified
Mid-to-Late August	Successful applicants officially announced
August 2022 - December 2023	CRP Program activities, including local workshops and learning cohort programs

ABOUT THE HOUSING ASSISTANCE COUNCIL

The [Housing Assistance Council \(HAC\)](#) is a national nonprofit that supports affordable housing efforts throughout rural America. Since 1971, HAC has provided below-market financing for affordable housing and community development, technical assistance and training, research and information, and policy formulation to enable solutions for rural communities. Since 2019, HAC has carried out the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design (CIRD) in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts. HAC's national scale merged with CIRD's rural design expertise is creating exciting opportunities for rural citizen-led design and placemaking.

For more than 50 years, HAC has been at the forefront of providing safe, secure, affordable housing in rural areas. HAC has, and will continue to, meet each new challenge head on to ensure that the poorest of the poor, in the most rural places receive attention and support through our loan fund, training and technical assistance, and research and information divisions.