

The Community Design Collaborative  
in partnership with



solicits

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)  
PROJECT DESIGN TEAM**

**Mt. Airy CDC**

*Literacy Rich Neighborhoods Initiative*

## Introduction

The [Community Design Collaborative](#) “the Collaborative” has received funding from the William Penn Foundation as a technical assistance provider for the Literacy-Rich Neighborhoods Initiative (LRNI) to support four community organizations in the development of conceptual designs. The four Philadelphia neighborhoods have been selected to embark on a 3-year process to engage community leaders and stakeholders around literacy and to design and implement playful learning opportunities in the communities.

This RFP is seeking a pro-bono design team to facilitate the schematic design process using the Community Design Collaborative’s community engagement method in partnership with **Mt. Airy CDC**, the Community Based Organization (“CBO”). This initial conceptual design process is anticipated to take 4-6 months and involve collaboration and support of Mt. Airy CDC on their LRN project focused on place-based storytelling in their Germantown neighborhood. At the end of the schematic design process, the selected design team may be contracted by the Community Based Organization (CBO) to complete design and construction documentation and provide construction administration on the installation of the playful learning elements at sites within their neighborhoods over the remaining 18+ months of the initiative.

Selected design teams will work primarily with Mt. Airy CDC and will be supported as needed by the LRNI technical assistance team: which includes multiple project partners that include a project management team, design consultants, Playful Learning experts, and engagement and evaluation consultants. The selected design teams will receive tailored Playful Learning trainings to support the goals identified by each CBO. To determine selection, a design jury will be identified comprised of design professionals and community stakeholders. In addition to collaboration with Mt. Airy CDC’s project team throughout the engagement, this design jury will provide feedback on the preliminary designs at the mid-point and final draft of the design at one of the Collaborative’s Design Reviews, with possible dates occurring twice each month.

The selected design team will receive a \$5,000 stipend from the Collaborative to offset staff time and additional reimbursables related to project completion. All volunteer hours will be tracked by the Collaborative as a donated service and part of the pro bono conceptual design grant.

## Literacy Rich Neighborhoods Initiative (LRNI)

The [William Penn Foundation](#) (“WPF”) is exploring ways to support community-based organizations to engage in a planning and implementation process to create a “Literacy-Rich Neighborhood” offering multiple opportunities in a single neighborhood for families with young children to interact with literacy rich materials and activities prompting adult-child conversation and interactions. The theory is that by installing opportunities for engagement with literacy and learning (e.g., signage, playful learning installations, programming etc.) in multiple sites throughout a community, the collective impact of these experiences will increase quality adult-child interactions related to literacy and language.

A successful project will purposefully engage the entire community, including families, neighborhood leaders, and community organizations, in discussion of the importance of early learning and literacy and generate ideas about how “literacy-rich neighborhoods” can be created in a manner that is authentic to the community and driven by the science of early learning. This meaningful engagement will result in a community led and stewarded intervention to address community-defined goals focused on literacy.

The neighborhoods and CBOs awarded are:

- Mt. Airy CDC
- Puentes De Salud
- Village of Arts and Humanities
- Indochinese American Council (IAC)

Each community has a [place-based approach based](#) on the specific needs surrounding literacy in their community. Each site will be reviewed independently. Respondents are welcomed to submit proposals for more than one site, but separate proposal submissions are required.

### Mt. Airy CDC Overview

Founded in 1980, Mt. Airy CDC has a mission to preserve, empower, and enrich a vibrant and diverse Mt. Airy. The organization was initially focused on acquisition and rehabilitation of neglected commercial storefronts along the Avenue, transforming them into locally owned, income-producing properties. That focus has since evolved into a multi-faceted approach to support the growth of Mt. Airy.

Currently, Mt. Airy CDC works towards its mission in four core program areas: Housing Counseling, Real Estate Development, Business Services, and Community Programs. Mt. Airy CDC’s Literacy-Rich Neighborhood (LRN) Project in Germantown is a collaborative, iterative project with local partners including Johnson House, Historic Germantown, Pomona Cherokee Civic Council, Reading Recycled.

For more information on Mt. Airy USA visit <https://mtairycdc.org/>.

### Project Timeline

Selected design teams will be kicked off in January 2022, with a kickoff meeting hosted by the

Collaborative inviting the project team from Mt. Airy CDC. Design Reviews are targeted for March (mid-review), April (community presentation and feedback loop), and May (final draft review). Teams will finalize implementation plans by July 2022.

**Key Benchmarks\*:**

RFP Release: 11/11/22  
Proposal Submission Deadline: 12/13/21  
Design Teams Selection: 12/20/21  
Project Kick-Off: 01/07/22  
Playful Learning Training: 01/14/22

Community Stakeholder Presentation/s: 03/17/22; 05/26/22  
Design Review/s: 03/22/21; 5/31/21  
Final Conceptual Design: 6/27/22  
Final Report and Closeout: 07/18/22

*\*Target dates are subject to change*

**Summary of Scope**

Design services will be selected for the implementation of playful learning interventions and opportunities for one (1) of four (4) neighborhoods supporting the LRNI. Proposers to this RFP are specifically responding for the opportunity to work with the Collaborative and Mt. Airy CDC. Through this scope of services, the selected design team will establish a meeting and check-in schedule based on the Mt. Airy CDC project objectives. Key benchmarks are target dates that will be supported and tracked by the Collaborative’s Design Services staff and Mt. Airy CDC’s team representatives.

This project will entail collaborating with community-based organizations on the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of at least three new playful learning interventions in their neighborhoods. Led by Mt. Airy CDC, their leadership team and neighborhood stakeholders will identify site(s) that align with the organization’s goals for the community. Selected design teams may be tasked with vetting, reviewing, or identifying appropriate sites throughout the project development.

The Community Design Collaborative, in partnership with the CBO identified above, is seeking services to include the following:

1. Engagement of the CBO and community stakeholders to understand their process and plans and confirm sites for minimum three playful learning installations.
2. A conceptual plan for the interventions led by the CBO’s plans, community engagement feedback and data, neighborhood goals and community desired outcomes.
3. Specific conceptual drawings for interventions at the proposed sites, as requested by the community-based organization.
4. A project management and implementation plan to occur over two years upon concept design completion.



5. Engagement with the community-based organization on their desired process to include community representatives and stakeholders to contribute feedback, preferences, and cultural context for the playful learning site interventions.
6. Ongoing collaboration and engagement of the Collaborative Design Services staff team and the Literacy Rich Neighborhood's project management team and partners, as needed.

This request for proposals is specific to the conceptual design phase. The contractual obligation for the design team to the Community Design Collaborative ends at the completion of the conceptual design and the submission and acceptance of all final deliverables. Each CBO will then proceed into the implementation stage and may choose to continue their relationship with the selected design team. It is preferred that respondent be available and willing to continue partnership throughout the remainder of the three-year LRN Initiative. Each CBO has been approved for an implementation budget, which the scope and compensation for that phase of service being administered directly by the CBO. The individual CBOs may at that point enter a separate contract for implementation and construction with the Selected Design Team to complete pre-construction requirements, fabricate and install the final conceptual design. The budget will be provided during the project kick-off. Should the design team or the CBO decide at that point not to continue the relationship, all conceptual designs produced in the final report will remain the property of the client (CBO) for further development and implementation.

## **SITE CONSIDERATIONS**

Mt. Airy CDC 's Literacy-Rich Neighborhood (LRN) Project in Germantown is a collaborative, iterative project with local partners including Johnson House, Historic Germantown, Pomona Cherokee Civic Council, Reading Recycled. Mt. Airy CDC has a variety of literacy and reading centric programs offered by the nonprofit, offering opportunities for alignment and enhancement. Current efforts include Reading Spaces Everywhere! - an outdoor summer reading camp and play street initiative and summer reading initiative in partnership with the Free Library branch. The community has a history and familiarity with "book distribution hubs" like Little Free Libraries, Sidewalk Libraries, and Book Nooks. Leveraging existing historic sites and assets in their target neighborhood, the organization hopes to engage the rich history of these locations and institutions in the site selection for LRN interventions.

Community partner institutions will have a voice in the design and implementation process to balance function, style, and the unique historical preservation benchmarks desired by community stakeholders. Installations and Playful Learning spaces will be built and placed in such a way as to foster adult-child interactions without disrupting resident preferences and the overall aesthetics of buildings and homes in the surrounding neighborhood.

For more insight on the Mt. Airy CDC LRNI site considerations please reference this [presentation](#) prepared by the nonprofit.

## **REQUIRED SERVICES**

Deliverables under the Literacy Rich Neighborhood Project will include:

- Conceptual design for minimum three (3) sites in the defined community
- Site plan(s)
- Preliminary budget

- Rendering(s) of key ideas and intervention
- Participation in necessary project meetings
- Ongoing collaboration and communication with the CBO to ensure that deliverables are meeting their needs, plans, and vision for the project
- Presentation of project to Community Stakeholders (min. 2 convenings scheduled by Community Design Collaborative).
- Presentation of Project and participation in Design Review, a peer critique that occurs bimonthly within the Collaborative network (scheduled by Community Design Collaborative)
- Final Presentation to CBO after the acceptance of report by Community Design Collaborative
- Participation in preliminary and post design evaluation interviews
- Completion of tailored Playful Learning Landscape training and incorporation of the PLLAN design guidelines throughout the design process  
[Reference the [Playful Learning Playbook](#) for more details]

The preferred respondent will bring their design and technical expertise to the project, while possessing an enthusiasm to engage and integrate into the community-based organization's existing overall plan and community engagement strategy for the initiative. Beyond the primary community-based organization partner, there are multiple technical assistance advisors that each have specific interactions with the community-based organization. In addition to close collaboration with the community-based organization, notes and information gathered will be shared amongst the group to be incorporated in the design, programming, and evaluation of the LRN initiative. In the case of Mt. Airy CDC, some community engagement and planning activities have already been completed, to ascertain and determine resident's desires and interests. This information will be provided to the design team upon selection, as part of collaboration with the Mt. Airy CDC.



## Submission Criteria

**Proposals must be submitted online via portal and application form at [www.cdesignc.org/LRNI](http://www.cdesignc.org/LRNI) by December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021, at 3 PM EST.**

Proposals must be a combined PDF and include the name of the submission firm. Email submissions must identify the proposed site and community-based organization on the cover related to the submission. PDFs can have links to additional websites or resources.

Respondents must complete the LRN Design Team Application form provided on the LRNI landing page on the Collaborative's website.

Responders for this contract should submit evidence of work experience in the creation and design of play and/or engagement spaces for youth, as well as design project management experience. Playful Learning experience is desired, but not necessary, as project teams will receive playful learning training with the Collaborative and the Playful Learning Landscapes Action Network (PLLAN). Experience working with immigrant communities is also desired.

Successful proposals will include names, bios, and resumes for all members of the project team; 3-5 relevant project examples; 3 professional references; and a responsive proposal that addresses project deliverables and goals while responding to the specific site considerations outlined by the CBO.

## Basis for Selection

The criterion for selection considers:

- Design and technical expertise, including experience with incorporating handmade design components
- Commitment to inclusive collaboration with community-based organization and with immigrant communities
- Language capacity
- Local zoning/building code expertise
- Design team composition
- Professionalism

The Community Design Collaborative reserves the right to cancel this RFQ/RFP at any time, and issue amendments and/or corrections. The Community Design Collaborative reserves the right to award this contract or to not award this contract and to reject any or all qualifications.

Project teams that have representation from DBE, MBE, WBE enterprises or have a connection/representation/history of work within the neighborhood will be strongly encouraged. Please submit evidence that your firm complies as part of your proposal submission.

***All questions related to this RFP will be accepted via online form [www.cdesignc.org/LRNI](http://www.cdesignc.org/LRNI), no phone calls or emails will be allowed. All questions must be submitted by Monday November 29, 2001. Responses will be emailed on or before December 3rd to any contact that submits a question and posted as a project FAQ to the Collaborative's website.***