

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

NEA

Leading
through
Design

Since its inception in 1965, the Endowment has provided a model for design advocacy. From its visionary support of The Railroad Revitalization Act of 1976, which led to the adaptive reuse of dozens of historic railroad stations and the reclamation of major down-town areas across the country, to the sponsorship of the design competition for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Endowment has displayed its commitment to promoting the nation's well-being and social consciousness through design.

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A History of

Leadership

The Growing Role of Design in a Changing World

The approaching turn of the millennium serves as an ideal time to recognize how profoundly the societal, economic, technological, and cultural shifts of recent decades have impacted the ways in which people live, work, and interact with each other and with their surroundings.

Design possesses the power to connect spheres of economic activity; it enables individuals and communities to relate meaningfully to their surroundings; and it levels barriers to new ideas. Design acts as a bridge, facilitating the functioning of products, services, environments, and communications while delivering economy, efficiency, beauty, and clarity to everyday life.

The Endowment's Role

The National Endowment for the Arts significantly impacts the public realm through a series of initiatives and programs aimed at introducing the nation's wealth of design resources to governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, foundations, and businesses as they embark on projects that will affect the physical and visual environment. Whether through the development of public housing, the renovation of federal buildings, or the conservation of ecologically unique tracts of land, the Endowment provides a meeting ground for all those concerned with effecting positive change through design.

The initiatives, though broad in scope, are unified in their demonstration of the power of design to work across social, political, geographic, and professional boundaries. Through these programs, the Endowment offers concrete—and widely felt—design solutions to the increasingly complex problems affecting our nation.

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Your Town:
Designing Its Future

Preserving the Special Spirit
of America's Rural Communities



The communities of rural America are facing a range of critical problems—in some cases, heavy outmigration and a loss of jobs; in others, rapid growth from suburban sprawl, the location of a new facility or an influx of a retirement population. These problems affect the vitality of the community, its design and sense of place. Rural leaders often feel powerless to keep rural towns intact and to preserve community pride.



Your Town: Designing Its Future

workshops focus on an important aspect of community spirit and community integrity: the process of design. The workshops aim specifically to introduce rural technical assistance providers and rural decision makers to the role of design in community planning.



Your Town is intended for those who provide rural technical assistance in economic development or land use and those who influence and make decisions about the way rural communities will look and work in the future: civic organization and business leaders, local elected officials, regional and county planning commissioners, board members of Certified Local Governments, rural electric cooperative board members and employees, recreation and tourism officials, and federal and state employees active in rural economic development.

The workshops take place over a two-and-a-half day period. It is a participatory workshop, with an emphasis on the practical application of learned material through small-group exercises. The culmination of the workshop is a group problem-solving effort. A proposed bypass, a new subdivision, infill development on Main Street—these are some of the issues the groups must resolve and present their solutions graphically. The exercise is a dynamic learning process in which participants apply the key concepts of the workshop as they learn from, and teach, each other.

The workshop course material addresses a range of issues in rural community planning. The curriculum focuses on the process by which rural communities construct a vision about their future, evaluate their natural and cultural assets, and implement decisions about how their community should look and function. The aim is not to promote specific answers to specific questions but, rather, a framework for problem solving. Materials are presented in a highly visual format, principally through slides and maps.

Your Town workshops are produced by regional institutions that have been selected for the excellence of their faculties as well as their ability to provide on-going technical assistance to rural communities. Each workshop also brings in guest speakers who are design professionals or experienced practitioners in rural community issues. The workshops are coordinated by the director of the Rural Heritage Program at the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the chair of the Department of Landscape Architecture at SUNY Syracuse.

left
Workshop in Unicoi Lodge,
Northern Georgia

top
Talbot Street Historic Area
St. Michaels, MD





front cover
Coon Valley, Wisconsin



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NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

Civiscape

Shaping the
Online Civic Landscape





http://

//civiscap

Indeed, I d

The construction of our nation's great urban civic spaces—

Central Park in Manhattan, Boston's Copley Square

required designers, engineers, citizens and government representatives to come together in a common purpose.

The same melding of talent must occur today to shape the nation's nascent virtual civic places on the Internet.

forums



The goal of **Civiscape** is to weave together the talents of the technology and design communities with other interested audiences to help shape the online civic landscape. Civiscape is a forum for interdisciplinary discussions of design and technology, and a laboratory where online technology is developed with constant input the design communities and other interested audiences.

As a site on the World Wide Web, **Civiscape** provides a window into an online research laboratory, where designers from all disciplines can experience cutting edge software tools for shaping the online world. The site brings designers into the loop of research and development by giving them a chance to experience and critique emerging online technology.

As a place for community building among designers and other interested citizens, **Civiscape** provides interdisciplinary discussion forums and virtual galleries for communities and individuals to post design work and receive feedback on it. The program's education and outreach component also sponsors non-digital symposia and presentations for the design community and other interested audiences.

You can explore **Civiscape** on the World Wide Web at the following address:

<http://civiscape.media.MIT.EDU/CIVISCAPE/>

projects

resources

for Daley Plaza in Chicago—

galleries



above

© Alex Maclean / Photonica

front cover

© Rob Silvers



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Federal Design *Improvement Program*

Fostering Design Excellence in
the Federal Government



Design has been a concern of our nation since the federal government came into being.

Washington, Jefferson and Madison's concern for the beauty and stature of the fledgling nation's capitol and executive buildings evidence an understanding of design's integral contribution to image, performance and quality of life.

Design activity and political thought



left
U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC

below
Computer image of redesigns
of HUD plaza by Martha Schwartz



are indivisible.

— Thomas Jefferson

Regard for good design in federal undertakings has both waned and soared throughout America's history. Today, with financial and material resources dwindling, federal officials must get the best results with fewer dollars. How can they do this? Through understanding the benefits of and investing in good design.

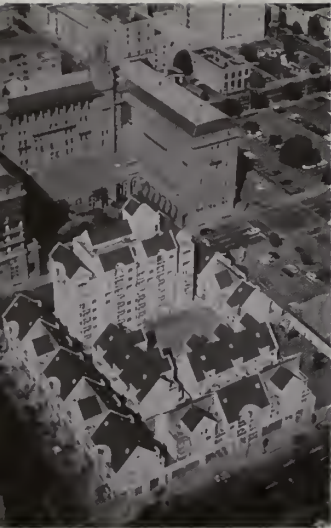
To help federal agencies understand the benefits of good design and achieve design excellence in federal undertakings, the National Endowment for the Arts established the Federal Design Improvement Program (FDIP) in 1972. FDIP projects have ranged from the Federal Graphics Improvement Program, which helped more than 60 federal agencies review and improve their visual communication standards, to the Federal Architecture Project, which updated the Guiding Principles of Federal Architecture, helped secure the passage of the Public Buildings Cooperative Use Act and produced the *Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics, and Symbols in United States Federal Building*. Current activities include providing private sector peer review for the design of federal facilities, organizing design workshops, and implementing design awards programs.

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The Federal Design Improvement Program forms partnerships with various agencies and assembles some of the country's top design professionals to participate in intensive workshops. The two- or three-day brainstorming sessions yield useful design guidelines for such diverse projects as:

- The development of housing on Indian reservations with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); exploring how the social, spiritual and cultural values of Native Americans can be incorporated into low-cost housing.
- The creation of an integrated identity and marketing scheme, including a logo, advertising campaign and all communications, for the Department of Education's newly launched Direct Student Loan Program.
- The conservation of an ecologically unique 1,400-acre tract of forest and farmland in Maryland, and its conversion into a nature/education center for the Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- The rehabilitation of historic buildings for various agencies, including the Department of Treasury's main building next to the White House, the 1930s Department of Justice headquarters, and the HUD building and plaza in Washington, DC, designed in 1963–65 by Marcel Breuer. The participating design experts advise on such topics as adaptive reuse, energy conservation, urban reclamation, visual identity and historic preservation.





above
 Frank G. Mar
 Community Housing Project
 Oakland, CA

top right
 Ellis Island Immigration Museum
 New York, NY

front cover
 © Kazuya Shimizu/Photonica



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The Federal Design Improvement Program promotes good design and provides models of design excellence by helping to organize national design awards programs for federal agencies such as the General Services Administration, Department of Transportation, and the Department of Defense. The Arts Endowment gives its own design awards, Federal Design Achievement Awards, every four years, in conjunction with its administration of the Presidential Design Awards. These awards recognize exemplary projects in architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, urban planning, historic preservation, as well as product, interior, and graphic design.

Past winners include:

- A low-income housing development in Oakland, California, jointly undertaken by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the city of Oakland, a local non-profit housing developer, neighborhood interest groups, and an architecture firm with expertise in affordable housing.
- The rehabilitation of the historic 225,000 square-foot main building on Ellis Island into an immigration museum by the Department of the Interiors, the National Park Service and two architectural firms.
- A visually compelling new atlas of fast-changing Eastern Europe, covering geography, demographics, economy and historical boundaries, executed by the Central Intelligence Agency and a cartography consultant firm.
- A master plan for the reclamation of a waterfront site in Washington, DC, sponsored by the General Services Administration. The plan for Southeast Federal Center calls for 5.8 million square feet of new and adaptively reused office space, plus other mixed uses, and is aimed at reintegrating the area into the city's urban grid.



PRESIDENTIAL

*Design
 Awards*

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NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

The Mayors' Institute *on City Design*

Improving the Design and
Livability of America's Cities



Cities are dynamic political and economic organisms
that shape the very nature of our society and
provide the physical anchor of our cultural identity.
Cities are places where ideas are exchanged,
where social trends are set in motion, where
political movements are shaped, where artists find
audiences and where authors are given voice.

Mayors, as the chief proponents





Civic Plaza
Denver, CO

of their cities, can also be seen as their most influential urban designers.

They are places of commerce, where business ventures are incubated, deals are struck, marketable skills are developed and refined and wealth is generated. Cities exercise powerful economic and environmental influences on entire regions and are home to an ever expanding percentage of the population. Cities are the very essence of our civilization.

The mayor's desk often is a checkpoint for every significant development regarding the form and fabric of the city. Consequently, decisions made by the mayor—matters of public works, transportation policy, redevelopment and new construction, zoning and community planning—manifest themselves in a physical form that will endure for generations. These decisions should be informed by a mayor's understanding of his or her role as caretaker of the city and advocate for the future.



12th Mayor's Institute,
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA

Not surprisingly, few mayors have received formal education in urban design, and this presents the Mayors' Institute with an opportunity to expose mayors to the transforming power of design. The National Endowment for the Arts, in partnership with schools of architecture and urban design across the country, sponsor the Mayors' Institute on City Design as a forum in which mayors can engage in a mutually rewarding exchange of ideas with experts in architecture and urban planning, public housing and private real estate development, urban economic analysis, historic preservation, transportation planning, environmental conservation, and other facets of city building and design.

In over forty sessions since its inception in 1986, the Mayors' Institute has hosted over 300 mayors from more than 250 cities. During each session, a team of high-caliber design professionals spends three days with a select group of elected officials, discussing ways in which the mayors can exercise their political leadership to make their cities more economically vibrant, more environmentally sustainable, more livable, more attractive and more secure—in short, how to improve function of their cities' many roles as home, workplace, centers of culture and recreation, and supreme symbols of human accomplishment.



Participating mayors have gone on to become active defenders and conservators of their cities' public realm through their advocacy of intelligent development and support of home-grown efforts to improve the quality of the built environment. Their efforts have resulted in a number of national design awards. Design professionals who have participated are better able to understand the complex potential and limitations of the political process in city building. Together, alumni form a grassroots network of enlightened designers and public officials whose example echoes through their communities long after the institute has ended.

above
Overtown Pedestrian Mall
and Transit Access
Miami, FL

front cover
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The mission
of the

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

is to foster the excellence, diversity, and vitality of the arts in the United States, and to broaden public appreciation of the arts. Through its leadership initiatives the Endowment supports and encourages exemplary projects that promote the social, artistic, and economic welfare of our nation.



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