

2022 Call for Projects: The Neighborhood Nature Project



Nature Sacred exists to inspire, inform and guide communities in the creation of public green spaces—called Sacred Places—designed to improve mental health, unify communities and engender peace. The Nature Sacred Design Process forges a partnership between a community leader and a landscape architect to guide community members through a visionary charrette process to achieve a welcoming Sacred Place. As each community imagines its own space, the design becomes a unique reflection of its culture, story and place—making it inherently sacred to them.

Overview

What is Nature Sacred?

Nature Sacred exists to inspire, inform and guide communities in the creation of public green spaces — called **Sacred Places** — designed to improve mental health, unify communities and engender peace. For 25 years, Nature Sacred has partnered with over 100 communities across the country to infuse nearby nature into places where healing is often needed most: distressed urban neighborhoods, schools, hospitals, prisons and more. Through a collaborative, community-led **process** and an evidence-based design model, each Sacred Place is bonded together by a common goal: to reconnect people with nature in ways that foster mindful reflection, restore mental health and strengthen communities. As each community imagines its own space, the design becomes a unique reflection of the community's culture, story and place — making it inherently sacred to them. Get to know our **model**, our **approach** and our **network**.

What is the Nature Sacred difference?

- **Our design concept.** Nature Sacred applies **4 guiding principles and 4 design elements** to each of our Sacred Places. The guiding principles ensure that all Sacred Places are welcoming to all and easily accessible to the communities they serve. Meanwhile, the 4 design elements provide a framework for imbuing a Sacred Place with a special sense of intentionality and peace, while retaining the flexibility to be intricately honed to each community's unique values and needs.
- **Our design process.** The Nature Sacred Design Process forges a partnership between a community leader — **whom we call a Firesoul** — and a landscape architect or designer — a Nature Sacred Design Advisor — to guide community members through a visionary charrette process to achieve a welcoming Sacred Place. Our process is as follows:
 - For each project, Nature Sacred works to designate a Design Advisor (DA), a Firesoul, and a Sacred Place Steering Committee (SPSC) to support the Firesoul during the design process.
 - Nature Sacred and the DA work with the Firesoul and the SPSC to solicit community participation

in the form of a survey and two visionary charrettes (interactive design workshops). Based on the feedback from the survey and charrettes, the DA will craft and refine a design for the site.

- At the end of the design process, this design now belongs to the community to implement.
- **Our investment.** During the design process, Nature Sacred invests approximately \$50,000 in design and community engagement services into your project. This includes an installation of the signature Nature Sacred bench at your site. And Nature Sacred stays with you beyond the design, too.
- **The Nature Sacred Firesoul Network.** After your site is opened, Firesouls are oriented into the Nature Sacred Firesoul network, which exists to cultivate collaboration and alliance between Firesouls across cities and states. They have continual access to the benefits it offers, including eligibility for enhancement grants for your Sacred Place, educational programming, and networking sessions.

About this Opportunity: *The Neighborhood Nature Project*

Join with your neighbors to dream and build a greener community.

Nature Sacred is ready to make a **long-term investment** in your community by supporting you in the creation of a new shared green space, a Sacred Place.

As a special program this fall, we are inviting applications from **urban** neighborhoods in the Washington, DC,/Baltimore region — places where quality, accessible nature spaces are lacking — to apply to **The Neighborhood Nature Project**.

A handful of applicants will be selected to receive:

- Nature Sacred's full scope of design services
- \$50,000 in construction funding to bring their green space dreams to life
- A signature Nature Sacred bench and journal
- Lifetime membership in our Firesoul Network, supporting community leaders and ongoing programming for years to come

What's unique about this opportunity? Nature Sacred has spent 25 years connecting people with nature — often in places where nature is lacking. We work closely with communities, helping draw them together, guiding them through a collective visioning process for a shared green space, what we call a Sacred Place. The final result: Sacred Places that resonate with the communities in which they are nested.

Timeline & How to Propose a Project

- Call for Projects opens: 10/15/2022
- Call for Projects closes: 12/9/2022
- Site visits and interviews: 1/9/2023 – 2/8/2023
- Accepted projects for the 2022 pipeline announced: 3/15/2023
- To propose your project for consideration, fill in and submit this form by the deadline above.
- Please note that throughout the selection process, Nature Sacred may request additional information about the proposed site, including but not limited to virtual meetings, site visits, and 1-2 minute walk-through videos of the site.
- If you have questions about this form, please contact Neha Srinivasan at nsrinivasan@naturesacred.org

Project Criteria

- Affiliated Organization must own the land or hold a 10-year minimum lease or easement on that land.
- Affiliated Organization has specific site, goals, and direction determined
- Site adheres to Nature Sacred's **guiding principles**
- Affiliated Organization has capacity to oversee and project manage construction process

Questionnaire

Tell us about you.

1. What is your name?
2. What is your email address?
3. What is your phone number?
4. What organization do you represent?
5. What are the mission and goals of your organization? In particular, please tell us about how your organization supports diverse populations.
6. What is your role at your organization?
7. Is your organization a 501(c)(3), public agency, or tribal entity?
8. What were your organization's total expenses in the last year?
9. Does your organization have an endowment?
 10. If yes, what is the size of your organization's endowment? If no, you may write N/A.
11. Does your organization provide services to disinvested populations?
12. Do you own the site or hold a 10 year minimum lease or easement on that land?

Tell us why you want to create a Sacred Place.

13. How did you hear about Nature Sacred?
14. What inspired you to fill out this form?
15. How would a Sacred Place bring healing to your community? What community needs would a Sacred Place serve?
16. Who do you think would be the Firesoul for this site? Tell us about them and their passion for your community. For reference, see our [directory of Firesouls](#).
17. Can you give us a current snapshot of the surrounding area? What is your community like? Who lives there? Who would be engaged in the creation of the Sacred Place?
18. History! Tell us the history of your community. How has it evolved and changed through the years? Have there been any major events that have shaped its current state?
19. To what extent is your community currently able to access high-quality contemplative green space?
20. Outside of this opportunity, do you have potential sources of funding for the construction of a Sacred Place?
21. Openness: To what extent would your site be welcoming to the broader community?
22. Can you identify any additional potential stakeholders in this design process? These can be businesses, neighborhood associations, nonprofits, clubs, individuals, etc.

Tell us About Your Proposed Site!

This information helps our Design Advisors glean an understanding of your site before they have even seen it. And it helps us make sure this Sacred Place is designed to fit the needs and capacity of your community. Don't worry if you don't know all the answers — it won't affect whether your site is chosen!

23. What is the address of your proposed site?
24. What is the approximate area of your proposed site?
25. Does the site have water access?
26. Does the site have existing lighting or an electrical connection?
27. What's going on above the site? Is it open or shaded, are there utility lines overhead?
28. Do you have a plan for ongoing maintenance post-construction or are you prepared to develop one?
29. Please share with us some photos of your site. You must submit at least 5.

