What is Equity-centered Community Design?
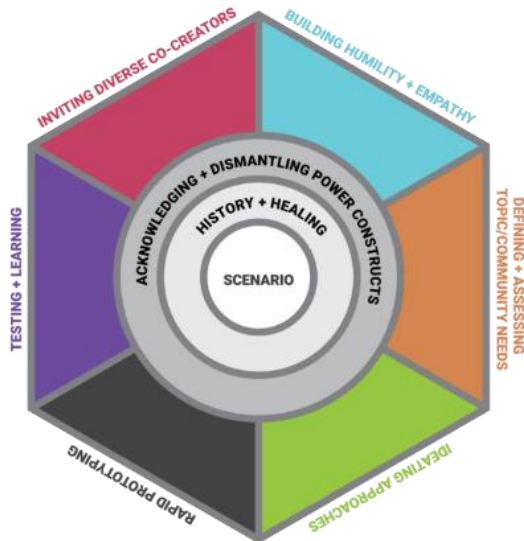
Created by [Creative Reaction Lab](#), Equity-centered Community Design (ECCD) is a unique creative problem-solving process based on equity, humility-building, integrating history and healing practices, addressing power dynamics and co-creating outdoor spaces with the community.

The ECCD process highlights a community's culture and needs while assessing and addressing what needs to happen to create lasting change. Dismantling systemic oppression requires an understanding that those most impacted by the inequities they experience are best equipped to solve them. Every community member, especially children and youth, is a valuable contributor or "designer" in this process.

Why integrate Equity-centered Community Design (ECCD) into the Built Environment?

ECCD is a flexible system for intersectional issues. When solving problems for complex, real-world issues, the process is not linear nor step-by-step. ECCD allows for various combinations when addressing different challenges and/or situations. Also, within the ECCD process, the integration of 'history + healing' and 'acknowledging + dismantling power constructs' is crucial in every step of the problem-solving process. Tools to dismantle systemic oppression and create a future with equity for all are designed with the community. ECCD is different from traditional design processes because ECCD focuses on the following four pillars to create the hexagon-shaped framework above.

- *Equity*

    The ECCD process lifts up the voices of people with different identities, perspectives and backgrounds. It will bring holistic insights into any setting through knowledge building, problem-solving and implementation. In addition, different views and knowledge bases need to include the individuals and communities affected, also known as living experts, who are often excluded from design and decision-making processes.

- *Humility-Building*

  Building empathy and humility helps communities understand others while acknowledging our biases. The ECCD engagement process requires the humility to recognize where our assumptions and biases lay and the empathy to observe and listen with suspended judgment.

- *Integrating History and Healing Practices*

  We have learned about our cultures and history through media, education and social interaction with our family, friends and colleagues. However, some important stories and identities have been forgotten because we have learned within the context of structural oppression. The ECCD engagement process will support the unlearning and reclaiming the culture and history part of our identity as the way toward restoring our collective legacy.

- *Addressing Power Dynamics*

  Power constructs are invisible delineations of power that are created and maintained by larger systems such as government, media, education and private industries. The ECCD process requires that communities acknowledge and dismantle these systems because they continually disenfranchise marginalized populations by limiting and erasing their social, economic and cultural growth.

ECCD allows for ideation, prototyping and feedback processes that must be thoughtful. In addition, the process minimizes the built environment being unusable or obsolete by the community in a short period of time because a swath of individuals must be a part of the design from start to finish.

What are we looking for?

Within the timeline of the funding opportunity, communities will be asked to demonstrate that their engagement process addresses the four pillars outlined in the ECCD framework. *Communities can do what makes the most sense regarding engaging in the planning process; however, we need to see that applicants can speak to each of these components when they come through.* The connections to living experts, understanding the impact of history on the community, dismantling power constructs, and converting problems to projects can be invaluable to change agents experiencing the design process. Communities can also access technical assistance support through the Foundation to support the engagement and design process. Costs for technical assistance will be covered separately from the funding allocated for the planning grant.