

DESIGNWORKS FELLOWSHIP

DesignWorks Project Support Fellow

Help advance community-centered design across East Tennessee.

This opportunity is a critical part of the ETCDC Community Design Fellows Program. The fellow will contribute to ETCDC's current DesignWorks projects through collaborative design, photography, client communication, historical research, writing, and project management.

WHAT YOU'LL DO

- Assist during "potential client" interviews and prepare background research documents for 5-7 DesignWorks projects.
- Participate in site visits; photographic documentation, pre-design assessment, and diagrammatic program summaries.
- Prepare DesignWorks project briefs for volunteer selections.
- Prepare conceptual decision documents for at least one DesignWorks project in cooperation with a local professional.

WHAT YOU'LL GAIN

- A professional understanding of design and client communications and project understanding.
- A professional portfolio featuring real-world community design projects.
- Mentorship, feedback, and connections with design and nonprofit leaders.
- Practical skills in research, pre-design, design, client interaction, and professional interaction skills.

AT A GLANCE

Term: Jan 25 - Apr. 30, 2027

Time: Up to 20 hours/week

Pay: \$15/hour

Location: Knoxville-based with regional travel

APPLY BY

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16
5:00 PM EASTERN

Send the following to

info@communitydc.org

- Current résumé
- Brief statement of interest
- Relevant work samples, if available
- One academic or professional reference

SUBJECT LINE:

"Storytelling Internship"

Reliable transportation is required. A consistent weekly schedule will be established around academic commitments and ETCDC project needs.

A STRONG FIT FOR

Undergraduate or graduate students in architecture, landscape architecture, interior architecture, urban planning, or related fields. Strong graphic, written communication and organizational skills, as well as an interest in community impact are essential. Architecture, landscape architecture, interior architecture, urban planning educational experience is preferred. A candidate with a desire to build the skills necessary to communicate clearly and collaborate effectively is essential.

A FELLOWSHIP THAT INVESTS IN PEOPLE, PLACE & POSSIBILITY

TALENT PIPELINE

Paid experience, mentorship, and a professional portfolio.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

A stronger archive and clearer stories of impact.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Narratives that help communities envision and fund what comes next.

DesignWorks Fellowship

Spring 2027 DesignWorks Project Support

The East Tennessee Community Design Center envisions, inspires, and improves communities through design by connecting nonprofit organizations and community groups with professional design services.

Through its DesignWorks program, ETCDC supports projects throughout a 16-county region, helping strengthen neighborhoods, public spaces, and community-serving organizations.

About the ETCDC Community Design Fellows Program

The **ETCDC Community Design Fellows Program** provides paid, semester-based fellowships that connect emerging design and storytelling talent with meaningful, real-world community work.

Through hands-on experience, mentorship, and professional development, fellows build practical skills while expanding ETCDC's ability to serve community partners, document impact, steward supporters, and elevate stories from across East Tennessee. The program is supported by the **ETCDC Community Design Fellows Fund**

About the DesignWorks Fellowship

The East Tennessee Design Center was founded in 1970 for the purpose of bringing professional design and planning assistance to non-profits and community groups that face barriers to resources needed to obtain these services through the private sector. For over 56 years the ETCDC has been collaborating with professionals in the 16 county service footprint to assist communities with design inspiration and tools for communicating an idea.

A core program of the East Tennessee Design Center is known as DesignWorks.

DesignWorks is still seen as a core guiding ETCDC program. DesignWorks is widely recognized for its ability to offer help nonprofits and community groups move from the seed of an idea to something visible, fundable, and actionable. The program requires a significant interface with the community and ETCDC's "clients" to prepare project setup, understanding and proper project tracking of any professional services.

Fellowship Overview

ETCDC is seeking a **DesignWorks Fellow** for Spring 2027.

This fellowship is a unique opportunity to participate in the initial stages of project understanding, research, and initial visualization. Known professionally as pre-design, this phase of a project is often the most crucial to determine overall feasibility and substantiate the project approach. The chosen fellow will assist in researching and documentation for selected ETCDC DesignWorks projects, that will help prepare a professional understanding of the situational characteristics and opportunities for use in establishing the agreed scope of work, and project criteria.

The fellow will also help establish a consistent method of properly evaluating ETCDC DesignWorks projects, creating standards, and templates. This fellowship will be guided closely by a registered architect and hours may be attributed to Architecture Experience Program requirements.

Key Responsibilities

1. Attend and assist in conducting initial interviews with potential DesignWorks clients. Listen, research, collect, and compile necessary information to prepare project overview and summary materials.
2. Participate in project site visits throughout East Tennessee.
3. Capture photography and written notes of project parameters, conditions and people.
4. Prepare DesignWorks project briefs in presentation form for use in communication with ETCDC staff, board and volunteer professionals.
5. Organize project preparation materials on ETCDC digital file server.
6. Utilize consistent file-naming, tagging, and documentation practices.
7. Collaborate with ETCDC staff to align project assessment documents with communications, outreach and ongoing project communications reporting..
8. Participate in mentorship and professional-development opportunities through the ETCDC Community Design Fellows Program.

Fellowship Deliverables

By the end of the fellowship, the DesignWorks Fellow will produce:

1. Project Documentation Portfolio

Approximately 5-7 DesignWorks projects documented through:

- Excerpts from project briefs;
- Written project summaries, and diagrammatic understanding;
- Approved and attributed “client” quote;
- Relevant plans, reports, and historical research documentation.

2. Maintained Digital Archive System

- An organized and searchable digital asset library;
- Standardized file-naming and tagging conventions.

3. Concise Project Tracking Reports

- From attending and assisting with client interviews, the Fellow will prepare 5-7 Project Tracking Reports that will be professionally formatted for external review if needed;
- Preparing diagrams, maps, and historical timeline graphics to describe the project in greater detail;
- Collecting and organizing photographs, quotations, project goals, and other reusable communications assets.

Major Fellowship Milestones

Approximately 13 Weeks

Weeks 1–2: Orientation and Planning

- ETCDC and Community Design Fellows Program onboarding;
- Introduction to ETCDC's programs, projects and historic impact portfolio;
- Review of existing project records and communications materials;
- Selection of potential projects;
- Development of a fellowship work plan, interview list, and documentation schedule

Weeks 3–8: Research, Fieldwork, and Draft Documentation

- Site visits, interviews, photography, and initial documentation;
- Drafting historical research, and initial diagrams;
- Regular review and feedback sessions with ETCDC staff;
- Organization, and drafting of Project Tracking Reports;
- Presentation of edited / refined Draft Project Tracking Reports.

Weeks 9–11: Synthesis and Production

- Expansion and enhancement of template Project Tracking Reports;
- Developing DesignWorks standard outline procedures for future project tracking;
- Completion of the DesignWorks project structure and documentation templates.

Week 12-13: Final Presentation and Handoff;

- Presentation of findings, themes, and future recommendations;
- Final “portfolio review” with ETCDC staff and fellowship mentors.

Preferred Qualifications

- Current undergraduate or graduate student in architecture, landscape architecture, interior architecture, urban planning, communications, journalism, history, public relations, nonprofit management, or a related field preferred, but not required
- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Demonstrated interest in community design, civic impact, historical documentation, or storytelling
- Experience with photography, video, interviewing, graphic design, archival research, or visual documentation preferred
- Strong organizational skills and attention to detail
- Ability to manage independent assignments and meet project deadlines
- Comfort engaging with nonprofit leaders, design professionals, volunteers, donors, and community stakeholders
- Ability to participate in field-based travel throughout East Tennessee

Fellowship Logistics

Fellowship term: Spring 2027, Monday, January 25, 2027 through Friday, April 30, 2027.

Compensation: \$15 per hour, up to 20 hours per week

Location: Knoxville, Tennessee, with travel to project sites throughout the region

Transportation: Reliable transportation required; approved mileage reimbursed

Equipment: Necessary equipment provided by ETCDC

Schedule: A consistent weekly schedule will be established based on the fellow's academic commitments and ETCDC project needs

Supervision and Mentorship

The DesignWorks Fellow will be supervised by the ETCDC Interim DesignWorks Director and will also work closely with the Executive Director.

The fellow will receive ongoing mentorship, professional feedback, and opportunities to connect with design professionals, nonprofit leaders, community partners, donors, and ETCDC volunteers.

The fellow can receive credit hours for the Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®), or other design related credit hours.

The fellow will have opportunities to network with local professionals and become more familiar with the work of firms in East Tennessee.

Why This Fellowship Matters

The DesignWorks Fellowship advances three priorities of the ETCDC Community Design Fellows Program:

- **Talent Pipeline Development**
Prepares emerging community-centered designers for careers in the design and nonprofit sectors while reducing financial barriers to meaningful professional experience.
- **Organizational Capacity**
Expands ETCDC's ability to document impact, understand community history and context, elevate project tracking communications, and support high-quality community design work.
- **Community Impact**
This internship helps ETCDC produce the best holistic tracking for our work to have impact in the community.

The fellowship also offers the selected student an opportunity to:

- Add to a professional portfolio featuring community led design and pre-design conclusions;
- Develop skills in research, interviewing, and documenting a project as it relates to community assets and tracking;
- Gain experience within a nonprofit community design organization;
- Receive mentorship from ETCDC staff and regional professionals;
- Build relationships with nonprofits, designers, and community leaders;
- Preserve ETCDC's history, demonstrate its values, and contribute to the long-term impact of its work

How to Apply

Applicants should submit:

- A current résumé
- A brief statement describing their interest in the DesignWorks Fellowship, community design, and storytelling
- A portfolio or relevant writing, photography, design, research, or communications samples, if available
- Contact information for one academic or professional reference

Application deadline: October 16, 2026 - 5:00 PM, Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)

Please use the Subject Line: "Spring 2027 DesignWorks Internship"

Anticipated start date: Monday, January 25, 2027

Submit application materials to: info@communitydc.org