

Summary of Your Design Narrative: Please provide a summary of your design in 500 words or less. *

Where is it located? Who is the community impacted? Problems solved? What goals does it achieve?

Wild Indigo Guild equips communities to use their collective land for food production and ecological restoration through permaculture education and design. We identify communally owned land, especially congregations within the City of Pittsburgh, and help them create designs that use that land to grow food and restore ecological function. We are poised to work with 8 to 12 sites in 2025. Our pilot program began in 2024 after a year of program development, designing curriculum, market research and other planning. The program focuses heavily on both the establishment of food producing landscapes and education on how to care for those landscapes. The design of Wild Indigo Guild is programmatic and educational, leading toward the production of food and ecosystem services using permaculture. Our work results in productive landscapes and equipped communities for years to come. Each community that we work with receives full permaculture design services after education and discernment. In 2024 we piloted our program and found it to be ready for large scale implementation. The following section is a quick overview of our program, this is expounded upon further in the Program Description on page 6.

Phase 1: Learn and Explore

The Wild Indigo Guild programming begins with eight experiential learning modules designed to help participants connect their faith traditions to issues of ecology, food justice and communal resiliency. Through readings by top writers on ecological farming and climate resilience participants gain valuable knowledge and insight. These eight modules are led by John and Evan who both have extensive work leading and teaching in the classroom and on the farm. During this first phase of the program the teams gel together, learning from one another and developing vision for communal projects. Through introductory teachings on principles of permaculture, participants become more familiar with the methods of design that will be used in Phase 2.

Phase 2: Dream and Design, a Collaborative Process

The Wild Indigo Guild staff conduct community-wide participatory listening sessions with all stakeholders (landowners, community members, neighbors, maintenance crews) for each site and then collaboratively create a design for each site to meet the needs identified during the listening sessions, including culturally relevant foods and a site maintenance and food distribution plan.

Phase 3: Dig In and Go Deeper, Implementation and Installment

Plants, tools, and materials are sourced and gathered. Each site's design is installed. These work days are led by the Wild Indigo Guild in collaboration with Tree Pittsburgh and volunteers from each site.

Phase 4: Cohort Support to Ensure Longevity

A dedicated site manager or team from each site is determined. These are the people who are responsible for the long-term care and maintenance of their sites. These management teams, together, form a cohort of learners, who are supported and resourced with five educational sessions on how to maintain their sites and

access to the designers and each other for open communication, peer learning, and the ability to ask questions as the project moves forward.

Design Impact and Visibility: We are looking for designs that reach multiple partners and stakeholders and that shine light on permaculture solutions. *

Who benefits from this design? Who sees and interacts with it? What potential does your design have to become a permaculture viral meme (aka catch on with media and spread)?

Our design is first and foremost a program that results in hundreds of people being educated in permaculture. Each community that takes part in the education phase of the project participates in the physical design of their communally owned property. Each design is focused on ecological restoration, food production and community involvement.

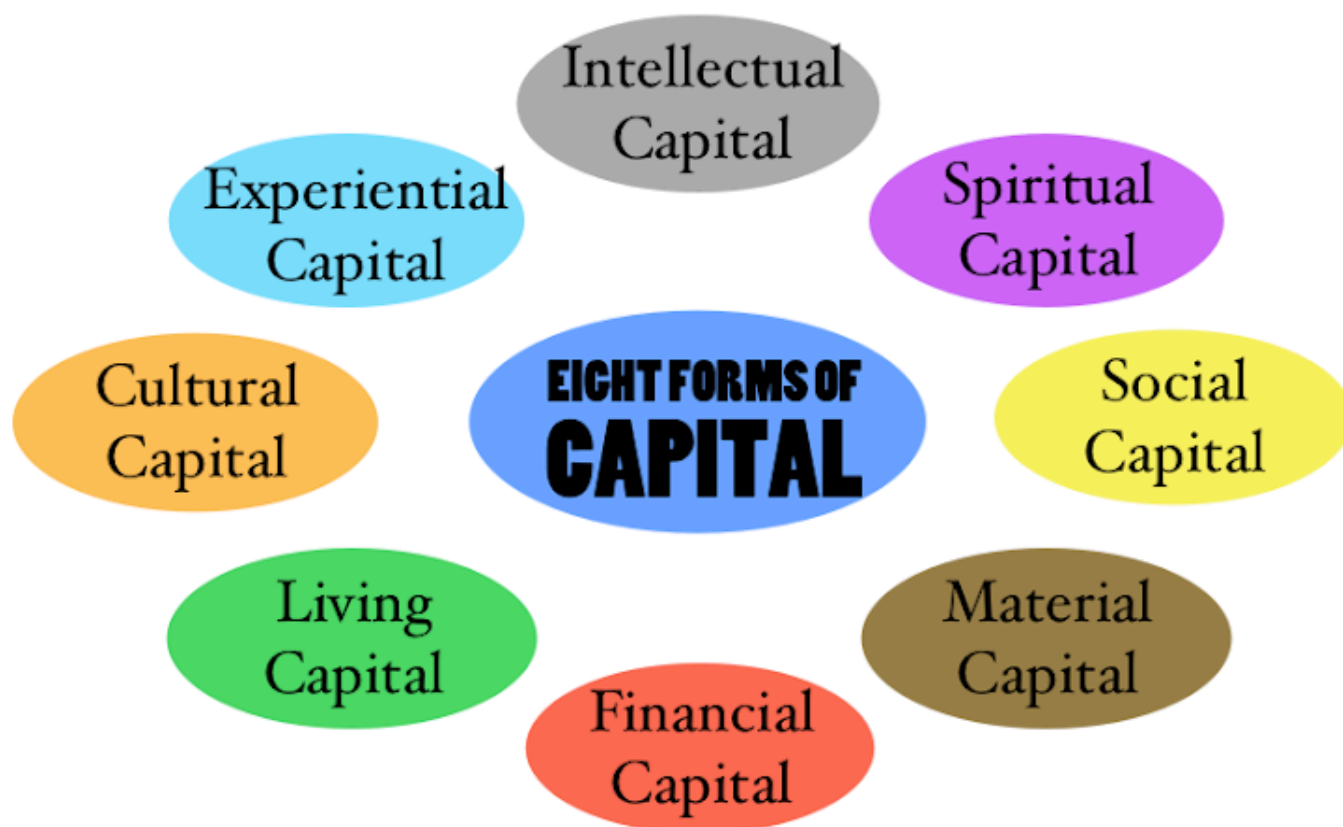
Budget: The winner will receive \$5,000 to kick-start their design. Consider this seed money to implement a key portion of your larger vision/design for high-impact, high-visibility permaculture project. *

How would you spend the \$5,000 Grand Prize to implement your design in the next year? Please be as detailed as possible.

The \$5k from PINA will kickstart the first three "guilds" of our larger program. This will pay for the education and design phase of the projects. Our first design of the labyrinth garden at Westminster Presbyterian Church will be implemented in full with the \$5000. Further funding will come through other granting foundations and payment from the churches that we work with.

8 Forms of Capital: For large and impactful projects, \$5,000 may not be enough to achieve the full results. However, permaculture urges us to utilize ALL forms of capital by design. *

How does your design leverage the 8 Forms of Capital? How can your design utilize the cash award to bolster the other forms of capital abundance surrounding your project?



Intellectual: We will consult with regional permaculture experts and educators who are already a part of our network.

Spiritual: Pennsylvania Interfaith Power and Light will assist us in connecting with diverse spiritual traditions. Evan and John are both spiritual directors, trained in working with people of all faith traditions. They will use their spiritual direction skills and tools to help guide the guilds and the individuals in the program.

Social: Our network within churches is quite expansive and will be used as a tool to help us identify communities of faith ready for our program. Garfield Community Farm is a very well known entity in the urban agriculture community of Pittsburgh. Through this network we will have access to multiple assets as needs arrive.

Material: Through the same network of permaculture and urban agriculture we will have access to locally grown trees, shrubs, compost, lumber, etc.

Financial: Through our work in the nonprofit sector John and Evan have already developed relationships with local foundations and philanthropic organizations. Through our church connections we have access to

funding through endowments and wealthy individual donors.

Living: The Pittsburgh region has a wealth of natural space teeming with native plants. Foraging plant and tree seeds is an annual practice as we plan for the following spring. We also have access to the living capital of non-profit organizations like Tree Pittsburgh and Phipps Conservatory where thousands of species are made available to us. Finally, Pittsburgh has recently seen the emergence of several privately owned nurseries, many focusing on native plants.

Cultural: Our network of gardeners and permaculture practitioners includes many BIPOC folks, LGBTQ folks, and people of a diversity of religious traditions including Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Christian. We benefit from this extremely diverse mix of cultures.


Experiential: John Creasy has 15 years experience as a permaculture farmer and designer. Evan Clendenin, likewise, has been farming and/or gardening for over 20 years. Our social network and mentors include permaculturists who have been practicing their craft for over 30 years in various parts of the world.

Site Analysis and Assessment: Tell us about the current conditions of the land. Please include * something about the Climate, Soil, Water, Sectors, Zones of Use/Access and Circulation, Existing Plants, and Social Conditions involved in your project.

We began Wild Indigo Guild in response to the problem of large unused lawns that many faith communities own and do not use. The classic suburban church with a few acres of lawn is a common site in the Pittsburgh region. We've learned that the congregations hate seeing money spent on lawn care, most people wish their land could be used for something more.

Each site will be unique with its own assets and challenges. So far we've found that many of the sites we'll be working with have a few specimen quality trees but little other native or beneficial plants. We've found that some urban churches often have more diversity and put more care into their small landscapes than the larger churches in the suburbs. One of our churches has over 25 acres of land, some of wooded and some is an historic cemetery, they are hoping to rethink the use of much of this land. As we begin the design work on each site we will help our "guilds" consider climate, soil, water, sectors, zones, access and circulation. We will help congregations recognize the beauty and usefulness of existing plants and the potential for greater social connections through their land use practices.

Full Design Narrative and Scope: Please upload your full design proposal here. Please include a * section in your design for collaboration considerations.

 Copy of Program...

 Add file