



# Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **May a theological school ask Lilly Endowment to provide feedback on its ideas?**

Phase 1 of the Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative is invitational and noncompetitive. Lilly Endowment staff is pleased to answer questions regarding a theological school's letter of request for a Phase 1 assessment and planning grant.

Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the initiative are competitive. In these phases, Endowment staff will answer questions to clarify the initiative's objectives or application guidelines. Regretfully, however, the Endowment is not able to provide counsel or feedback on specific proposed Phase 2 or 3 activities. Theological schools should refer to the Request for Proposals (RFP) as they shape their Phase 2 proposals and Phase 3 concept papers.

### **May a theological school with an existing Lilly Endowment grant apply for grants under the Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative?**

Yes. A theological school with a current grant from the Endowment may apply.

### **The RFP states that the primary objective of the Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative is to help theological schools strengthen and sustain their capacities to prepare and support pastoral leaders for Christian churches. What leaders are included in this objective?**

Lilly Endowment's primary interest is to help theological schools prepare and support ordained pastoral leaders who shape and guide the ministries of local churches. The Endowment anticipates that most schools will propose projects focused on the preparation and support of ordained pastors. At the same time, the Endowment recognizes that lay ministers are playing an increasingly important role in leading the ministries of local churches. These include professional lay ministers who are employed by churches on a part-time or full-time basis and perform key pastoral functions, as well as volunteer lay ministers who take on pastoral roles in the absence of full-time clergy, especially in small membership churches. The Endowment is open to proposals submitted by theological schools for projects to include as a secondary focus the preparation and support of congregational lay ministers.

### **May a theological school submit multiple letters of request in Phase 1, proposals in Phase 2 or concept papers in Phase 3?**

No. Each eligible ATS-accredited school is invited to submit one letter of request in Phase 1, one application for an implementation grant in Phase 2, and one concept paper for a large-

scale collaborative project in Phase 3. However, a school can be a collaborating organization in up to two additional Phase 3 concept papers submitted by other theological schools as provided in the RFP.

**Is it necessary for a theological school to apply for Phase 1 funding in order to be eligible to submit a proposal in Phase 2 or a concept paper in Phase 3?**

No. Theological schools are welcome to submit applications in just one phase or any combination of phases as best fits their current circumstances and future vision.

**Should a theological school wait to hear a response from the Endowment about its Phase 1 request before working on a Phase 2 proposal and/or Phase 3 concept paper?**

No. Theological schools may feel free to begin working on a Phase 2 proposal and/or a Phase 3 concept paper as soon as they are ready. Theological schools will be notified of Phase 1 grant awards approximately three weeks after each Phase 1 deadline as noted in the RFP.

**The RFP, as well as other initiative materials, mentions a broad range of challenges and opportunities faced by theological schools. Is it necessary for a theological school to design a project to respond to all of the challenges and/or opportunities?**

No. Lilly Endowment encourages each theological school to be intentional and selective in prioritizing the challenges and/or opportunities that it wishes to address. Proposals and concept papers reflecting this kind of strategic focus will be viewed more favorably in the adjudication process.

**Must a theological school address the same challenges and/or opportunities in its Phase 2 proposal and Phase 3 concept paper?**

No. A theological school may choose to address the same challenges and/or opportunities in its Phase 2 proposal and Phase 3 concept paper, but it is not required to do so. Lilly Endowment's review of Phase 3 concept papers will be done independently of Phase 2 proposals.

**May a theological school submit a letter of request in Phase 1, a Phase 2 proposal and/or a Phase 3 concept paper that would involve multiple theological schools and/or other institutions?**

Yes. The Endowment encourages collaboration among multiple theological schools and/or with other institutions in Phase 1 and Phase 2. Phase 3 concept papers must propose collaborative projects with multiple theological schools and/or other institutions.

In Phase 1 and Phase 2, two or more eligible ATS-accredited theological schools may wish to work together and engage in some joint activities. Each theological school should apply for its own Phase 1 assessment and planning grant and/or Phase 2 implementation grant. The applications of each of the participating schools in the collaboration should identify the schools with which it is collaborating and describe the purpose of the joint activities, how grant funds would be expended, and how the joint activities would be managed. During the adjudication process, the Endowment will review together the applications submitted by the participating schools for joint activities.

Theological schools also may wish to engage in Phase 1 assessment and planning activities and/or propose Phase 2 implementation projects in which they would work collaboratively with other institutions that are not theological schools. These institutions may include colleges and universities, denominational agencies, *institutos bíblicos*, congregations, and other faith-based organizations, among others. Applications should identify the collaborating institutions and describe how the joint activities would be coordinated as well as how grant funds would be managed and distributed among the collaborators. Proposals also should include letters of support from the presidents or chief administrative officers of the collaborating organizations.

In Phase 3, theological schools must submit concept papers for projects in which they would work collaboratively with multiple theological schools and/or other institutions. The concept papers should describe one of the following three options of collaborative endeavors:

1. Theological schools may submit concept papers that describe large-scale collaborations among multiple theological schools. For this option, one theological school should submit the concept paper on behalf of the participating schools and serve as the lead grantee for the proposed collaborative endeavor. The concept paper should identify the other collaborating schools and describe how the joint activities would be managed and grant funds distributed.
2. Theological schools may submit concept papers for large-scale collaborations with multiple institutions that do not involve other theological schools. The concept paper should identify the collaborating institutions and describe how the joint project activities would be managed and grant funds distributed.
3. Theological schools may submit concept papers for large-scale collaborative projects that would involve a combination of multiple theological schools and other institutions. One theological school should submit one concept paper on behalf of the collaborating schools and institutions and serve as the lead grantee for the proposed collaborative endeavor. The concept paper should identify the participating schools and institutions and describe how the project would be managed and grant funds distributed.

In all three options, theological schools should include letters of support from the presidents or chief administrative officers of the collaborating schools and/or other institutions.

The Endowment reserves the right to invite selected theological schools to submit Phase 3 proposals for amounts greater than \$5 million to develop and implement large-scale collaborative projects. These invitations would be extended only to support concepts with exceptionally high promise and/or to encourage theological schools to engage in broader collaborations than may have been initially proposed in their concept papers. For example, the Endowment may receive concept papers from multiple theological schools to support similar innovative endeavors with exceptionally high promise. The Endowment may encourage the schools that submitted these similar concepts to combine their efforts, if appropriate, into a larger collaboration involving an even greater number of theological schools.

**May a theological school submit a Phase 3 concept paper as a lead grantee and participate as a collaborating organization in concept papers submitted by other theological schools? In other words, may a theological school be involved in multiple concept papers submitted for large-scale collaborative projects in Phase 3?**

Yes. A theological school may submit a concept paper for which it serves as the lead grantee and also be named as a collaborating organization in up to two additional concept papers submitted by other theological schools. Lilly Endowment encourages theological schools to think strategically and to use their discretion when considering how best to deploy their energy and resources in the development of and participation in possible large-scale Phase 3 projects.

**The RFP notes that Phase 2 applicants must provide “outcomes and performance indicators” in their proposals. How important are these? How specific and concrete do they need to be?**

The theological school’s ability to articulate clear and realistic outcomes and performance indicators to gauge its progress toward these outcomes will be weighted heavily in the adjudication of proposals. The outcomes should be articulated clearly and the performance indicators should be as tangible as possible. For example, a theological school may identify a 30 percent increase in student enrollment in its ministry programs as a key outcome of its project after five years. A 15 percent increase after three years would be an appropriate performance indicator. Another outcome may be a thirty-five percent increase in annual revenue after five years to reduce the annual draw rate on its endowment. A revenue increase of twenty percent by the end of the third year would be an appropriate performance indicator. A third outcome may be an increase to 90 percent of recent graduates designating as “effective” or “very effective” the theological school’s efforts to cultivate various ministerial skills as reported in the ATS Graduating Student Questionnaire. An increase from the school’s current benchmark of 70 to 80 percent at the end of the third year would be an appropriate performance indicator. Theological schools should include clear timetables for the achievement of proposed outcomes and performance indicators. Please note that theological schools may use quantitative and qualitative data to describe their outcomes and gauge their project’s progress toward them. These examples are provided for illustrative purposes only. Theological schools should provide outcomes and performance indicators that are appropriate for their proposed project.

**When will theological schools learn about decisions regarding Phase 1 and Phase 2 grant awards and invitations to submit Phase 3 full proposals?**

Lilly Endowment anticipates announcing Phase 1 assessment and planning grant awards approximately three weeks after each of the Phase 1 deadlines (February 15, March 1 and March 15, 2021).

The Endowment anticipates announcing Phase 2 grant awards in December 2021.

The Endowment also anticipates extending invitations in December 2021 for selected schools to develop their Phase 3 concept papers into full proposals for large-scale collaborative projects.

### **What will the grant periods be for each phase?**

Assessment and planning activities funded by Phase 1 grants may begin as soon as theological schools are notified of grant awards and schools have returned signed grant agreements to Lilly Endowment. The grant periods will be provided in the grant agreements. The Endowment anticipates that theological schools will carry out their Phase 1 planning and assessment activities in 2021.

For Phase 2, theological schools may request grant periods of up to five years beginning January 2022 or thereafter. For Phase 3, theological schools may request grant periods of up to five years beginning June 2022 or thereafter.

### **May theological schools submit proposals for projects that would serve students and congregational leaders in U.S. territories or in Canada?**

Yes. Eligible ATS-accredited theological schools may submit applications in any or all three phases of the Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative, regardless of the location of the schools or the students or congregational leaders that they serve. The eligibility criteria do require, however, that to be eligible a school must qualify as a tax-exempt public charity under Internal Revenue Code (Code) sections 501(c)(3) and 509(a)(1)(2), or (3) (other than organizations described in clause (i) or (ii) or Code section 4942(g)(4)(A)).

### **The RFP notes that letters of request in Phase 1 and applications in Phase 2 and Phase 3 must include a letter to be signed by the theological school's "president or chief administrative officer," and Phase 2 proposals and Phase 3 concept papers must also be signed by the chair of the applicant's governing board. Who should sign the letter?**

Lilly Endowment recognizes that theological schools have a variety of governance structures and key leaders carry different titles. For free-standing or independent theological schools, the letter should be signed by the officer who serves as the school's chief administrative or executive officer (e.g., president, CEO, rector, etc.). The letter also should be signed by the chair of the school's governing board. For theological schools embedded in the structure of larger universities, the letter should be signed by the university's president and the chief administrative or executive officer of the theological school (e.g., dean, principal, etc.). Questions about the required signatures should be addressed to the Endowment at [pathways@lei.org](mailto:pathways@lei.org).

### **Does Lilly Endowment anticipate offering this opportunity again next year?**

At this time, Lilly Endowment has no plans to offer another round of this initiative next year or thereafter.