



Compelling Preaching Initiative

Frequently Asked Questions

Is submission of the Interest Form required?

No. The submission of the Interest Form from your organization is not required. Lilly Endowment, however, strongly encourages organizations to submit the Interest Form and upload a one-page Letter of Interest. These items will help the Endowment know about your interest and prepare to receive your proposal. Please submit your Interest Form and Letter of Interest by March 1, 2023, through the Compelling Preaching webpage on the Endowment's website. If your organization is unable to submit these materials by the deadline, you may still submit a proposal by the proposal submission deadline of May 15, 2023.

Should we wait for a response from Lilly Endowment about our Interest Form before working on the proposal?

No. The Interest Form and Letter of Interest are intended to indicate your organization's intent to submit a proposal, not for a preliminary evaluation by the Endowment of the merit of potential proposals. Please go ahead and begin working on your proposal.

May we speak with someone to discuss ideas, receive feedback on a proposal or obtain further clarification about this initiative?

Unfortunately, no. The Compelling Preaching Initiative is a national competitive initiative, and the Endowment anticipates receiving a high volume of proposals. Because this is a competitive initiative, Endowment staff is unable to provide feedback on ideas or proposals. Please carefully read the Request for Proposals and accompanying documents for guidance as you design your programs and prepare your proposals.

The Endowment will host information sessions on January 12 and 18, 2023, to go over the Request for Proposals in detail. Questions for clarification about the initiative may be directed to preaching@lei.org. Descriptions of previously funded Compelling Preaching programs can be found [here](#).

What kind of preaching does Lilly Endowment have in mind?

The Endowment recognizes that preaching practices vary widely in accordance with the denomination, tradition, region and context of particular congregations, as well as with the race, ethnicity, and age or generation of audiences. It is up to each organization to discern what is compelling for the audience(s) it seeks to serve through its proposed program. The Endowment hopes to receive proposals from organizations that represent the rich diversity of Christian communities and reflect a broad spectrum of preaching practices.

What does Lilly Endowment mean by evaluation, and what are its expectations?

Evaluation entails the activities built into the organization's program to gauge its progress toward the program's intended outcomes. Evaluation also is intended to help organizations learn from their work so that they can refine their programs to make them more effective. The Endowment considers carefully the organization's evaluation plan in reviewing its proposal. Most evaluation plans include quantitative and qualitative measures to gauge the effectiveness and impact of the organization's program.

What types of outcomes and performance indicators are appropriate for inclusion in an organization's proposal?

Outcomes and performance indicators can be qualitative or quantitative and should be indicative of (that is, clearly pointing toward) what the organization plans to achieve and what changes will occur as a result of the program funded by the grant.

What are Lilly Endowment's expectations regarding sustainability?

Through the Compelling Preaching Initiative, the Endowment seeks to help organizations design, launch, refine and sustain programs that advance the initiative's aim. Therefore, organizations should submit proposals to develop programs that they will be able to sustain, if successful, beyond the end of the grant period. As described in the Request for Proposals, the Endowment encourages each organization to apply for an amount appropriate to its capacity, the needs of the proposed program and the organization's ability to sustain its program. Organizations should have no expectation that Endowment funding will be available for its program beyond the grant period. In the proposal, describe the organization's sustainability plan and how the organization will continue the program with other funding sources.

May an organization submit multiple proposals?

No. Each organization may submit only one proposal that presents the organization's best idea.

May multiple organizations work together to submit a proposal?

Yes. Organizations may work collaboratively to design a program and prepare a proposal. While the Endowment encourages collaborative endeavors, only one lead organization may submit a proposal requesting a grant for a collaborative program. If the proposed program involves other collaborating organizations, letters of support from the leaders of the other organizations or agencies must be submitted with the application.

May an organization submit a proposal for a program that would work with congregations in different denominations and/or in a variety of Christian traditions?

Yes. The Compelling Preaching Initiative seeks to encourage charitable organizations to cultivate practices among aspiring and active preachers that can help them to proclaim the gospel to a variety of audiences in more engaging and effective ways. An organization may submit a proposal for a program that would work with aspiring and active preachers in different Christian denominations if such a program is appropriate for the organization's mission.

May an organization submit a proposal for a program that would work with preachers outside of the United States?

Only charitable organizations in the United States are eligible to apply for the Compelling Preaching Initiative, and proposed programs should be for activities that support preaching in the United States. Programs directed to audiences outside the United States are not the focus of the initiative.

May a single congregation apply?

Lilly Endowment encourages organizations to give careful thought to the scale of the organization's proposed program. Funding decisions will take into consideration the reach of the program and its potential positive impact through preaching on a significant number of hearers. If a congregation is interested in applying and may not have the capacity to develop a program that would involve other congregations or organizations, the Endowment encourages you to identify potential collaborators with whom your congregation may work to develop a Compelling Preaching program.

May an organization with a current grant from Lilly Endowment submit a proposal in the Compelling Preaching Initiative?

Yes. An organization with a current grant from the Endowment may submit a proposal. Organizations that received grants in the invitational round of the Compelling Preaching Initiative in 2022 should not apply again, however.

May an organization provide a subgrant to another organization?

Yes. An organization may provide subgrants to, or fund contractual relationships with, collaborating organizations that will implement program activities. The amount of funds the organization will distribute to collaborating organizations should be indicated in the budget submitted with the proposal.

May an organization use grant funds to advocate for legislation that supports the mission of a church and/or the improvement of life for citizens (e.g., affordable housing, alleviation of poverty, education of children)?

No. Lilly Endowment grant funds cannot be used for lobbying or political activities per federal tax regulations. Please consult your organization's legal counsel for clarification.

When should we propose to start the grant period?

Lilly Endowment anticipates notifying organizations of funding decisions in the fall of 2023. The Endowment anticipates that most organizations will propose to begin activities in January 2024, but each organization should discern and propose to the Endowment when it would like to start its program. Funding decisions will be based to an important degree on the capacity and readiness of the organization to develop and sustain the proposed program.

Does Lilly Endowment anticipate offering this opportunity again next year?

No. The Endowment has no plans to offer this opportunity next year.

Is there a page limit for appendices?

No. But Lilly Endowment strongly encourages organizations to include key information about the proposed program and the capacity of the organization to carry it out in the proposal narrative (12-page limit). The Endowment also encourages organizations to be judicious in appending additional materials to their proposals.

Will Lilly Endowment provide guidance about how to prepare the grant budget?

Please see the Guide to Budget Preparation, which is provided on the [Compelling Preaching webpage](#) on the Endowment's website. The guide includes helpful information to assist organizations in preparing their budgets. Please consult with your organization's financial officers for guidance when preparing your budget.

Are indirect costs allowable for inclusion in proposal?

Yes. Lilly Endowment allows organizations to request funds for indirect costs in their proposals. Indirect costs should not exceed 10 percent of the direct costs included in the proposed budget. For example, if an applicant requests a \$1.25 million grant, the maximum allowable indirect costs would be \$113,636 (approximately 10 percent of \$1,136,364 in direct costs). Please see the Guide to Budget Preparation, which is provided on the [Compelling Preaching webpage](#) on the Endowment's website for more guidance on indirect costs.

Where can we get information about formatting proposal documents as a PDF?

Lilly Endowment asks organizations to upload their proposals through the website as a single PDF file. Please consult your IT support for advice, if needed.

Where can we learn about related grant opportunities?

Please see [Lilly Endowment's website](#) for more information about other grant initiatives.

Are there any other kinds of activities for which Lilly Endowment grant funds cannot be used?

Grant funds in the Compelling Preaching Initiative should not be used to provide scholarships or to build an organization's endowment.

For more information about the Compelling Preaching Initiative, please refer to the Request for Proposals or the news release regarding the initiative, which may be accessed through the [Compelling Preaching webpage](#) on the Endowment's website