



# Religion and Cultural Institutions Initiative

## IMPLEMENTATION GRANT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

2023

**L**illy Endowment is pleased to invite select museums and cultural organizations to participate in the second stage of the Religion and Cultural Institutions Initiative. Select organizations may submit proposals for implementation grants of up to \$2.5 million each that may be used for up to a five-year period to develop and execute plans to mount exhibitions and conduct educational programs, as well as engage in other activities, to strengthen their capacities to provide fair, accurate and balanced portrayals of the role religion has played and continues to play in the United States and across the globe.

The primary aim of the Religion and Cultural Institutions Initiative is to improve the public understanding of religion and thus foster greater knowledge and respect among people of diverse religious traditions.

Please note that these guidelines are prepared *only* for organizations that have been invited to submit proposals for implementation grants in the second stage of this initiative.

**Implementation proposals are due to the Endowment by August 5, 2024.** The Endowment anticipates announcing implementation grant awards in December 2024.

### Implementation Grant Selection Criteria

In the first stage of this open and competitive initiative, museums and cultural organizations submitted concept papers for compelling projects that demonstrated significant potential to advance the initiative's aim. These organizations proposed concepts for projects that portray diverse religious traditions, beliefs and practices in ways that are: 1) fair, accurate and balanced; 2) nonproselytizing and multivocal; 3) authentic; and 4) appreciative. Organizations also explained how their proposed concepts for exhibitions and programs on religion are aligned with their educational missions and appropriate for their constituents. The Endowment reviewed the concept papers and awarded planning grants to select organizations to engage in planning activities to develop their proposed concepts into compelling and realistic projects.

These select organizations are invited to submit proposals for implementation grants to execute their plans for their proposed projects. These proposals for implementation grants must provide more details about the following: results of the organization's planning activities; proposed project's design

and objectives; organization's approach to religion, and the project's anticipated outcomes, project leaders and advisors; and partner organizations and other collaborators in executing the project, among other details.

Although the Endowment hopes that all invited organizations submit compelling proposals and receive funding for implementation grants, an invitation is not a guarantee of funding. Funding is at the complete discretion of the Endowment.

In determining whether to approve an implementation grant proposal, the Endowment will consider the following criteria, among others:

- Creativity and promise of the proposed project for advancing the initiative's aim.
- The extent to which the proposed project relates to and builds out in compelling ways the ideas presented in the organization's concept paper.
- Thoughtfulness of the organization's approach to religion and whether it demonstrates the characteristics noted above (e.g., fair, accurate, balanced, non-proselytizing, multivocal, authentic and appreciative).
- Quality of the project's design and the feasibility of its execution.
- Potential reach of the project and its impact(s) on visitors and constituents.
- Commitment and capacity of the organization to execute a compelling and distinctive project, and, if relevant, sustain it into the future.

## Application Procedures

A complete implementation grant proposal must include the following:

- Official Request Letter
- Executive Summary (up to one page)
- Proposal Narrative (up to 12 pages)
- Grant Budget and Budget Narrative
- Information Form
- Additional Supporting Materials (optional)

**Official Request Letter:** The grant proposal must be accompanied by an official request letter signed by the organization's chief executive officer. The letter should specify the amount requested from the Endowment for the implementation of the proposed project.

**Executive Summary:** Begin with a **one-page** executive summary that describes the organization, its mission and constituencies, the primary objective(s) of the proposed project(s), highlights of key activities and anticipated outcomes.

**Proposal Narrative:** The proposal narrative should address the topics and questions below and should not exceed 12 pages in length, excluding budget and other supporting materials.

- **Organization profile:** Provide a short description of the organization’s mission, history, size of its collections, major programs, and annual operating budget. Include information about the organization’s primary constituencies and number of annual visitors. The profile also should include information about the organization’s accreditations from agencies and memberships in associations, where applicable.
- **Objectives:** Describe the organization’s overall objectives for the proposed project. What is the organization’s rationale for the project, and how will the project advance its mission? Who are the organization’s primary constituencies, and why is it important to engage them in religion and religious topics? What does the organization hope to achieve through the project?
- **Planning activities:** Include a short narrative that chronicles the organization’s planning activities. What insights emerged during the planning process that helped the organization develop and refine the ideas proposed in its concept paper? How have these insights informed the design of the proposed project?
- **Approach to religion:** Describe the organization’s approach to religion. How was the organization’s approach confirmed or altered through the planning process? Why is this approach appropriate for the organization’s mission and its constituencies?
- **Project design:** Describe the proposed project.
  - › Objectives: What are the proposed project’s key objectives? Who are the project’s target audience(s)?
  - › Rationale: What is the proposed project’s rationale? Include any research or other evidence supporting why the organization believes the project would be effective in promoting the aim of the Religion and Cultural Institutions Initiative.
  - › Activities: What are the proposed project’s key activities?
  - › Resources: What existing and new resources are needed to implement the proposed project? If the amount of the implementation grant request differs significantly from the estimate stated in the organization’s concept paper, provide an explanation about the difference. If the project will require funding from other sources, please identify the sources and amounts of these other funds.
  - › Timeline: What is a realistic timeline for the implementation of the proposed project?
- **Outcomes and performance indicators:** Provide a description of the overall outcomes (qualitative and/or quantitative) that the organization hopes to achieve through the proposed project as they relate to the organization’s objectives. What are the project’s anticipated impacts on visitors, staff and board and its relationships with donors and stakeholders (e.g., number of visitors viewing exhibitions and/or participating in educational programs, increased visitor understanding of religious traditions and topics, increased knowledge among museum staff of religious artifacts in the organization’s collections or themes in its programs, strengthened relationships with religious and civic organizations, increased donor support for future exhibitions and programs).

Describe the key performance indicators (quantitative and/or qualitative) that the organization will use to track its progress toward the outcomes noted above. What methods that will be used to measure progress towards the outcomes (e.g., tracking number of visitors and evaluating their responses to exhibitions and programs; evaluating increased visitor understanding of the complexity and diversity of religious traditions and practices; tracking number of contacts and assessing the strength of relationships with local religious or civic leaders; tracking contributions from donors for future exhibitions on religious topics or themes)? What is the timetable for achieving the outcomes?

- **Sustainability (for activities that will be continued beyond the grant period):** Provide a future funding plan for sustaining key project activities beyond the implementation grant period. How will new sources of funding be cultivated to replace Endowment grant dollars? How will other institutional and intellectual resources be secured to sustain the project? Who will be in charge of long-term development and fundraising? How will development and fundraising activities be staffed and funded?
- **Leadership:** Identify key leaders for the proposed project. What roles and responsibilities will they have in implementing this effort?
- **Advisors:** Provide a list of advisors (e.g., scholars of religion, local religious leaders, other knowledgeable experts) who helped the organization develop its proposed project.
- **Organizational partnerships:** Describe any current or anticipated partners in implementing the proposed project. If a project involves cooperation with other organizations, evidence must be submitted in the form of letters of support from the leaders of the partner organizations.
- **Anticipated Obstacles:** Describe any anticipated obstacles in implementing the project. What challenges does the organization anticipate facing as the proposed grant-funded activities are launched? What are key strategies for addressing these challenges? What initial or ongoing technical assistance will be needed to address anticipated challenges?

**Grant Budget and Budget Narrative:** Detailed guidelines will be provided.

**Additional Supporting Materials (optional):** The application may include supplemental materials that support the proposal. Please use discretion in the amount of these materials submitted. These materials may include letters of support from collaborating organizations, local community and religious leaders and advisors, among others.

**Copy of Organization's Audited Annual Financial Statements:** This is a copy of the organization's most recently completed annual audited financial statements (reviewed by a certified public accounting firm). The financial statements should include a balance sheet, income and expense statement, and any footnotes or supporting schedules that provide an accurate assessment of the financial condition of the organization.

**Information Form:** This form provides key information about the organization, the proposed project and the individuals responsible for its execution. This form is linked below and available in the Resources section of the initiative's page on the Endowment's website.

## Implementation Proposal Checklist and Submission Instructions

A complete proposal must include the following items:

- Official Request Letter
- Executive Summary (up to one page)
- Proposal Narrative (up to 12 pages)
- Grant Budget and Budget Narrative
- Additional Supporting Materials (optional)
- Copy of Organization's Audited Annual Financial Statements
- [Information Form](#)

**Please email** one (1) copy of the proposal (including all documents listed above) as a **single PDF in the order listed above** and one (1) copy of the budget in Excel format to [religionandmuseums@lei.org](mailto:religionandmuseums@lei.org) by **August 5, 2024**. Include the organization's name in the subject line of the email.