



Frequently Asked Questions

General

- 1. Does Lilly Endowment anticipate offering an opportunity for organizations to apply for grants in the Exploring Christian Practices Initiative again next year?**

At this time, the Endowment has no plans to offer this opportunity next year.

- 2. May an organization communicate with Lilly Endowment to discuss ideas, receive feedback on a proposal or obtain further clarification about the initiative?**

No. Because this is a competitive initiative, the Endowment is unable to provide feedback on ideas or concepts from individual organizations. Please read carefully the Request for Proposals and accompanying documents for guidance while designing your program and preparing to submit your proposal.

- 3. Will a recording of the informational webinars for Exploring Christian Practices Initiative be made available?**

No.

- 4. Where can an organization learn about related grant opportunities?**

Please see the Endowment's website for more information about other initiatives.

Interest Form

- 5. Is submission of the Interest Form required?**

No. Submission of the Interest Form from your organization is not required. The 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. If your organization is unable to or decides not to submit the Interest Form and Letter of Interest by the deadline for these items, you may still submit a proposal by the proposal submission deadline.

- 6. Should an organization wait for a response from Lilly Endowment about its Interest Form before working on the proposal?**

No. The Interest Form is intended to indicate your organization's intent to submit a proposal for the Endowment's internal planning purposes, not for a preliminary evaluation by the Endowment of the merits of potential proposals. Please go ahead and begin working on your proposal whenever ready to do so.

Eligibility

7. What kinds of organizations are eligible to apply for this initiative?

Charitable organizations operating in the United States (which includes U.S. territories) that are tax-exempt public charities under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3) and corresponding statutes and regulations that have a demonstrated interest in Christian faith and life are eligible to apply for grants in the Exploring Christian Practices Initiative.

8. May an organization with a current grant from Lilly Endowment apply for this initiative?

Yes. An organization with a current grant from the Endowment may submit a proposal in the Exploring Christian Practices Initiative

9. May multiple organizations work together to submit a proposal?

Yes. Organizations may work collaboratively to prepare a proposal. While the Endowment encourages collaborative endeavors, only one lead organization may submit the proposal on behalf of the collaboration. Letters of support from the leaders of the other organizations should be submitted with the proposal.

10. May an organization submit a solo proposal if it also intends to partner with other organizations in one or more collaboration proposals?

Yes. An organization that intends to participate in one or more collaborations but is not the lead applicant on any of such collaborations may submit a separate non-collaboration proposal.

11. If an organization that operates under the umbrella of another organization (e.g., a school that operates under a church), would implement the program, which organization should apply?

If an implementing organization is not independently eligible to participate in the initiative, its eligible umbrella organization may apply. As with any fiscal sponsor (described below), however, the eligible umbrella organization will remain responsible for any grant awarded to it through the initiative, including responsibility for submitting program and financial reports and complying with all obligations under its corresponding grant agreement with the Endowment.

12. May individuals apply for grants under the initiative?

No. The Endowment will only accept proposals from eligible organizations. Individuals may not apply on their own.

13. Is an organization or person who has a fiscal sponsor eligible to apply?

A fiscal sponsor that is a charitable organization that has a demonstrated interest in Christian faith and life and is otherwise eligible to apply for this initiative may submit a proposal that includes collaborations with other organizations or individuals.

If successful, the fiscal sponsor will remain responsible for any grant awarded to it through the initiative, including responsibility for submitting program and financial reports and complying with all obligations under its corresponding grant agreement with the Endowment.

14. Are charitable organizations that are primarily secular but also engage in activities related to Christian communities eligible?

Yes. An eligible organization may apply if it has an interest in developing and implementing a program that helps individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds explore and engage in Christian practices

to address their spiritual interests and questions, find and build community with others, nourish their religious lives and grow in faith.

15. Is a charitable organization that serves interfaith communities eligible to apply

Yes. But the proposed program would need to help individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds explore and engage in Christian practices to address their spiritual interests and questions, find and build community with others, nourish their religious lives and grow in faith.

16. May a new organization that has applied to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for its Code section 501(c)(3) and public charity status but has not yet received a determination from the IRS still apply?

No. Organizations that are required to have IRS recognition as a public charity must receive notification from the IRS that confirms their public charity status before submitting proposals. Such organizations must submit a copy of their IRS Exempt Status Determination Letter with their proposal.

17. May an organization submit a proposal if the organization is located outside of the United States?

No. The Exploring Christian Practices Initiative is focused on eligible charitable organizations located and operating in the United States, which includes U.S. territories.

Proposal Considerations

18. May an organization submit an idea that enhances current or ongoing programs?

Yes. If an eligible organization presents an idea to provide support for a current or ongoing program, its proposal will need to make a compelling case about how the proposed idea would enhance significantly its current work and advance the aim and objectives of the initiative.

19. Is there a minimum grant amount an organization can include as its estimated funding level for a grant?

No. In the proposal narrative, organizations should provide the estimated costs to implement the proposed program. Proposals will be evaluated on the quality and promise of the proposed program and the demonstrated capacity of the organization to undertake the effort.

20. May an eligible organization submit a proposal to provide funding from its grant (either through a sub-grant or contract) to another organization for the purpose of this initiative?

Yes. An organization may enter a contractual relationship or provide sub-grants to collaborating organizations that will implement particular grant-supported activities. However, as with a fiscal sponsor or umbrella organization, the eligible organization that submits the proposal must have a demonstrated interest in Christian faith and life and will remain responsible for the use of all funds awarded to it through the initiative, including responsibility for submitting program and financial reports and complying with all obligations under its corresponding grant agreement with the Endowment. The amount of funds that the organization intends to distribute through sub-granting or contractual arrangements to collaborating organizations should be described in the Proposal Narrative and included in the Budget and the Budget Narrative as appropriate.

21. Are capital improvement costs allowable for inclusion in the proposed grant budget?

Proposed grant budgets may include modest capital expenses that are directly associated with and required to implement the proposed activities.

22. Are indirect costs allowable for inclusion in a budget?

Yes. The Endowment allows organizations to request funds for indirect costs in their proposed budgets. Indirect costs requested from the Endowment should not exceed 10 percent of the direct costs of the proposed program. Indirect costs are generally associated with the conduct of more than one activity of the organization that cannot be assigned to a specific budget line item. Please see the Guide to Budget Preparation located in the Initiative Resources section on the Exploring Practices webpage.

23. May an organization submit a proposal for a program that targets audiences located outside of the United States?

The main audiences for Exploring Christian Practices should be based in the United States (which includes U.S. territories). Proposed activities should focus primarily on U.S.-based audiences.

24. May an organization submit a proposal that includes exploration of practices from Christian communities and individuals located outside of the United States?

Programs should be designed to reach and inspire audiences in the United States (which includes U.S. territories). To further this end, organizations may design programs that identify and share practices about Christian communities and individuals in a wide variety of settings, including practices of those located outside of the U.S. In all cases, organizations should explain in their proposals why these practices would be meaningful for U.S. audiences and how they would advance the aim of the initiative and respond to the initiative’s guiding questions.

Proposal Submission Guidance

25. May an organization submit multiple proposals?

No. Each organization may submit only one proposal in which it would serve as the sole or lead organization that presents the organization’s best idea.

26. Is the May 18, 2026, submission deadline flexible?

No. The Endowment will not accept proposals submitted after the deadline.

27. Where can an organization get information about formatting proposal documents as a single PDF?

The Endowment asks organizations to upload their proposals through the Proposal Submission Form on the Exploring Practices webpage on the Endowment’s website as a single PDF. Please consult your IT support for advice, if needed.

28. What documents should an organization submit if an audited financial statement is unavailable?

The proposal should include a copy of the organization’s annual financial statements for the most recently completed fiscal year. The financial statements should include a balance sheet, income and expense statement, and footnotes that provide an accurate assessment of the financial condition of the organization. Audited financial statements are preferred. If an organization does not have audited financial statements, it may submit with its proposal financial statements reviewed by a certified public accounting firm.

29. Should organizations submit audited financial statements for all organizations participating in a collaboration proposal?

No. Only submit the financial documents for the lead organization requesting the grant for the collaboration.

30. Is there a page limit for appendices?

Organizations may submit a limited number of appendices with their proposals. The Endowment strongly encourages organizations to be very judicious in adding pages to their proposals and makes no guarantee that these additional materials will be considered during the review process. Organizations should include key information about their proposed program and their capacity to develop and carry out high-quality activities in the 12-page limit of the Proposal Narrative.

31. May organizations include in their proposals links to online portfolios and/or other digital resources?

Yes. Organizations may include a limited number of hyperlinks in their proposals. The Endowment strongly encourages organizations to be very judicious in including hyperlinks and makes no guarantee that these hyperlinks will be viewed during the review process. Content accessed through hyperlinks should not replace the required information for a complete proposal as described in the Request for Proposals.

For more information about this initiative, please refer to the Request for Proposals or the News Release regarding the initiative, which may be accessed through the Exploring Christian Practices Initiative webpage at lillyendowment.org.