

2024 PROJECT GRANT FOR RESEARCHERS APPLICATION GUIDE

The Louisville Institute Project Grant for Researchers supports **individual or collaborative scholarly research projects** about Christian faith and life, the practice of ministry, religious trends and movements, Christian and other faith-based institutions, and religion and social issues. Projects may be independent or in collaboration with others, and may be rooted in fields such as history, systematic and practical theology, social science, ethics, biblical studies, etc., or may be interdisciplinary in nature. Of particular interest to the Louisville Institute are projects that bridge academic scholarship and the life of the church in North America.

GRANT DETAILS

Project Grant Amount:

Up to US\$30,000

Project Timeframe:

January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2025

Application Due Date:

September 1, 2023 (11:59 p.m. EDT)

Awards Announced:

December 1, 2023

Winter Seminar:

January 22-24, 2025



WHAT IS THE PROJECT GRANT FOR RESEARCHERS?

The Project Grant for Researchers (PGR) is designed to support scholars conducting academic research projects about Christian faith and life, the practice of ministry, religious trends and movements, Christian and other faith-based institutions, and religion and social issues. We are looking for projects that demonstrate a desire to bridge the North American church and academy. You can read more about previous PGR grantees and their projects on [our website](#).

Grants awarded in the fall of 2023 will fund projects taking place between January 1, 2024, and December 31, 2025. Funds are typically used for scholarly resources and activities, such as:

- hiring research assistants
- conducting personal or group interviews
- preparing and implementing quantitative surveys
- completing interview transcription and coding
- travel for hands-on examination of archival records or site visits
- other activities involved in gathering and analyzing data

In contrast, the LI [Sabbatical Grant for Researchers](#) buys release time from academic duties.

PGR grantees are also invited to Winter Seminar, a three-day gathering in Louisville, KY, in which award recipients from four different Louisville Institute programs gather to share their projects and engage in valuable collaboration together. Winter Seminar for this grant cycle will take place January 22–24, 2025, and all related expenses for participants are paid by the Louisville Institute.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR A PGR?

Eligible candidates:

- are scholars in the United States and Canada who have earned a terminal research degree, typically a Ph.D. or Th.D.
- teach in a university, seminary, or theological school, but may also work for institutes and organizations, in other academic or ecclesial settings, or be independent researchers.
- may work in various fields such as history, systematic and practical theology, social science, ethics, biblical studies, etc., or be interdisciplinary.

Additional eligibility information:

- Doctoral students are not eligible for a PGR but may be eligible for one of [our fellowship programs](#).
- Applicants with a professional degree such as a D.Min. are usually better suited for our [Pastoral Study Project grants](#). If you hold a professional doctorate such as a D.Min. rather than a terminal research degree and want to apply for a PGR, you must first contact us by email at grants@louisville-institute.org to confirm your eligibility. You will also need to demonstrate your experience with and capacity for academic-level research in your application.
- Any previous fellowships or grants from the Louisville Institute must be completed and final reports submitted before applying for another LI fellowship or grant. Additionally, you may only apply for one LI grant or fellowship between June 1, 2023, and May 31, 2024.
- Members of the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary staff, faculty, Board of Trustees, or student body or their immediate family members (parents, spouses, or children) are ineligible for Louisville Institute grants or fellowships. Members of the Louisville Institute Advisory Board and their immediate family members are also ineligible.
- Louisville Institute grantees may not simultaneously hold two individual grants from Lilly Endowment-funded organizations that together total more than US\$45,000.

QUESTIONS?

Please email grants@louisville-institute.org.

HOW CAN I USE PGR FUNDS?

PGR funds can be used for:

- **Compensation** for research assistants, interviewees, focus group participants, consultants, and others who will work on the project with you
- **Tools** to facilitate your study, like database access, a recording device, survey or data software, transcription programs, etc.
- **Travel** directly related to your project and its investigation, such as to access archives, museums, or libraries; to interview participants or conduct focus groups or participant observation; or for experiences connected to your project (e.g., historical settings, site visits, etc.)
- **Resources** related to your learning, such as books, trainings, or consultations
- **Childcare** or other family support you need to undertake your project
- **Time away** from your regular job, such as a course buyout or salary replacement for unpaid time off

PGR funds *cannot* be used for:

- Your regular salary to continue your current job
- New programs or staff positions in your department
- Expenses in pursuit of a degree
- Tools for your everyday work, such as an office chair, desktop computer, or cell phone

More details about how to use grant funds can be found in the budget section of this guide, starting on page 13. For any questions about grant proposals, please email grants@louisville-institute.org.



QUESTIONS?

Please email grants@louisville-institute.org.

HOW DO I APPLY?

- Specific components and requirements of the application are described starting on page 8.
- All application elements are submitted online through our [application portal](#).
- Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. EDT September 1, 2023, and letters of recommendation are **due from the recommenders** September 8, 2023.
- We strongly encourage you to share your proposal with trusted colleagues — ideally those who will write your recommendation letters — to receive feedback and suggestions prior to submitting your application.

WHAT MAKES FOR A STRONG APPLICATION?

- Read the application materials and make sure you follow the instructions carefully.
- Strong applications offer a clear and intriguing primary question and a thoughtful project plan related to that question. Selection committees want to know what makes you passionate and excited about your idea, and how you intend to dig into it.
- The most competitive projects are connected to or important for the North American church, and demonstrate the importance of bridging the church and the academy.

CAN I APPLY WITH A TEAM OF PEOPLE?

Yes, up to three people can apply for a grant together *if it seems necessary* for your project. Each member of the team should have significant involvement in the planning and implementation of the project. More information and application instructions for teams can be found on page 8.

QUESTIONS?

Please email grants@louisville-institute.org.

WHAT IS THE SELECTION PROCESS?

- The Louisville Institute appoints a selection committee to review proposals and award Project Grants for Researchers.
- In recent years, we have averaged 80–90 applications, and this year will award 8 grants.
- The selection committee meets about 8–10 weeks after the application due date. All applicants are notified by email as soon as possible after the selection process.
- Awards will be announced publicly around December 1, 2023.

WHAT IS WINTER SEMINAR?

PGR grantees are invited to Winter Seminar, a three-day gathering in Louisville, KY, in which award recipients from four different Louisville Institute programs gather to share their projects and engage in valuable collaboration together. Winter Seminar for this grant cycle will take place January 22–24, 2025, and all related expenses for participants are paid by the Louisville Institute.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

- You are welcome to apply again for any of our grants or fellowships — in fact, it's very common! However, you may only apply for one grant or fellowship between June 1, 2023, and May 31, 2024.
- Any previous fellowships or grants from the Louisville Institute must be completed and final report submitted before applying for another LI fellowship or grant.

QUESTIONS?

Please email grants@louisville-institute.org.

HOW CAN I ASK FOR FEEDBACK?

We can provide some initial feedback on your project idea to see if it's a good fit for our grants. Being specific and focused about what you hope to study will yield more helpful feedback from us. Before you submit a feedback request, please run your idea by trusted colleagues to get their thoughts. Additionally, if your project involves other participants, please seek their input before asking for LI feedback.

To request feedback, use [this link](#) to respond to the following questions:

- What is the primary question you want to explore? (50 words or fewer)
- Why is this project important to you, your community, and/or the church in North America? (100 words or fewer)
- How are you planning to carry out your study? Give a brief overview of where and/or with whom you hope to work, the research methods you might use (e.g., archival research, interviews, surveys, observation, visits, etc.), and why you've chosen these strategies (350 words or fewer).

Because we receive many requests for feedback, responses can take several weeks, but we will respond to all feedback requests submitted prior to August 1.



PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION

- 1** **Read through all the application materials** in this guide so you know what you will need to prepare.
- 2** **Create an online profile on our [application portal](#).** You will be asked to provide your name, contact information, and other information about yourself. If you have previously applied for a Louisville Institute program, make sure to update your contact information.
- 3** Once you have created your profile, **click the “[Apply](#)” button and select “Project Grant for Researchers”** to begin entering the elements of your application.
- 4** **Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. EDT September 1, 2023.** We recommend that you put together the application elements in time to share them with friends or colleagues for feedback before submitting them. Please do your best to provide clear, refined, and edited documents.
- 5** **Recommendation letters are due from the recommenders September 8, 2023.** In the application portal you will be asked to provide contact information for your recommenders — name, email address, and phone number — and we will send them a link to upload their letters.

If you are applying as a team (up to three members including the project director):

- Team members should share equally in carrying out the project, though they may have different roles. The purpose and roles of team members should be clearly explained in the narrative essay.
- One team member will take the role of project director, fill out the application, and upload shared materials, such as the narrative essay, on behalf of the team.
- The project director will add team members to the application, who will be sent a link to create a profile and join the team. To do so, [open the online application](#) and click on “Manage Team” to input the email addresses of team members.
- All additional team members must submit their own CV/resume and contact information for colleague letter of recommendation. Once they are connected to the application, each team member will use the application portal to submit their materials.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Project Grant for Researchers applications require the following elements. After you have created your online profile, you will be prompted to provide the following:

1

General information about your project. Fill in the title of your project, the proposed amount in US dollars, and start and end dates. Then complete the following:

- a. **Project core question.** In a few sentences (about 100 words/maximum 500 characters and spaces), describe the primary question you want to explore and why it is important to you, your community, and/or the church in North America.
- b. **Project summary.** In approximately 200 words (maximum 2000 characters and spaces), give a brief overview of your project. Strong summaries are focused, well-articulated glimpses into your thinking that help our selection committee envision the project and your capacity to carry it out.
- c. **Project snapshot.** In one sentence, provide an intriguing, quotable “snapshot” of your project for use on our website and in publicity materials.

2

Project narrative essay. Prepare an essay of about 1500 words (5-7 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font) that tells the story of your project. Using the framework below, share how you came to care about the topic you’re studying, why the topic is important to the North American church, how you plan to carry out the project, and why you should be the one to do so. Note that the Louisville Institute is particularly interested in projects that bridge church and academy. Include your name and page numbers on each page of the document, and upload to the application as a PDF.

In the essay, please include:

- a. The primary question you want to explore, and how you came to care about that question. Why does this project matter to you, your community, and the larger North American church?
- b. The importance of your project, how it connects or bridges the academy and the church, and why you are well placed to carry it out. In other words, why should the *Louisville Institute* fund *your* project at *this time*? (*continued*)

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

In the essay, please include (*continued from previous page*):

- c. A comprehensive plan for how you will conduct your research. Include the following, as applicable to your project:
- What research methods will you use, and why? (You don't need to finalize every detail of your research plan for your application, but you do need to convey that you've thought through the "how" of your project and its planning.)
 - Who do you hope will be involved? How will you determine your partners/participants? How will you build those relationships? How will you compensate participants and partners?
 - How will you analyze the data you collect?
 - How will you share what you learn and discover? Who is the intended audience for your project? Who do you hope will benefit from it? If this is a book project, describe the kind of book it will be and steps you've taken toward publication.
 - What impact do you hope your project will have? What contribution will your project make to your field or the academy? How will your project be useful to theological or religious education, or to religious leaders or practitioners?
 - If you are applying as a team, the plan should describe the roles of each of the team members carrying out the project.
- d. A timeline and schedule for the project, and how do you intend to carry out the project within that timeline.
- Projects need to be conducted between January 1, 2024, and December 31, 2025.

3 **Bibliography.** Compile a carefully-selected bibliography (2–3 pages, double-spaced) that identifies the major relevant literature and other seminal resources related to your project, and that demonstrates your developing expertise with the subject matter. Include your name and page numbers on each page of the document, and upload to the application as a PDF.

4 **Budget plan.** Tell us how you plan to use the grant money by providing two versions of your budget: a line-item budget in which you list your anticipated expenses, and a budget narrative in which you describe in more detail how each expense will contribute to the objectives of the project. Budgets are described in detail starting on page 13. Include your name and page numbers on each page of the document, and upload to the application as a PDF.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

5

Curriculum vitae or resume. Provide a current CV or resume (no more than 4 pages) that includes:

- your education with dates attended and degrees earned, starting with the most recent
- employment starting with current/most recent
- publications and/or presentations
- professional affiliations
- other information that will help the selection committee get to know you, such as academic or other services, church leadership, etc.

6

Two letters of recommendation, due from recommenders on September 8. In the online application portal, you will be asked to provide contact information (name, email address, and phone number) for your recommenders, and they will be sent a link by email through which they can upload letters. As soon as you submit contact information, your recommender will automatically receive that email. Make sure to contact your recommenders in advance to explain the PGR grant and to share your project proposal.

- a. Your **first recommendation** letter should come from a **colleague** within or outside your institution who can discuss:
 - your reliability and capacity to carry out the proposed project
 - how your previous work demonstrates skills needed to conduct this study and coordinate this grant
 - how the project bridges the North American church and academy.
- b. Your **second recommendation** letter should come from someone who can assess the **feasibility and significance of your project**, specifically:
 - the viability and potential of your project and its plan
 - the project's broader academic and/or ecclesial significance
 - the distinctiveness of this project in light of what others are doing or have already done
 - why this proposed project matters to the North American church and/or how it bridges the church and academy.

We will notify you via email when we receive the letters from your recommenders.

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

You can edit all portions of your application until 11:59 p.m. EDT September 1, 2023. Changes cannot be made after the application due date. Letters of recommendation are **due from the recommenders** September 8, 2023. Late applications will not be accepted.

In the week following the application due date, LI staff will process the applications to prepare for the selection committee. We will follow up with you if your application is incomplete. We will also send you confirmation when we receive your letters of recommendation, and will email you when your application is complete.



QUESTIONS?

Please email grants@louisville-institute.org.

PREPARING YOUR BUDGET PROPOSAL

The PGR budget proposal shows the nuts and bolts of your project — how you will use grant funding to bring your idea to life. Your budget proposal should help the selection committee understand some of the specifics of your project and what it entails.

There are two parts to your budget proposal:

- A line-item budget
- A budget narrative

In short, your line-item budget is a list of categories of expenses for your project and a dollar figure for each category. The budget narrative briefly explains each category and how it is relevant to the project. The line-item and budget narratives are described below. Most budget proposals are 2–3 pages total. Save budget documents as a single PDF with your name on each page.

BUDGET GUIDELINES

PGR funds can be used for:

- **Compensation** for research assistants, interviewees, focus group participants, consultants, and others who will work on the project with you
- **Tools** to facilitate your study, like database access, a recording device, survey or data software, transcription programs, etc.
- **Travel** directly related to your project and its investigation, such as to access archives, museums, or libraries; to interview participants or conduct focus groups or participant observation; or for experiences connected to your project (e.g., historical settings, site visits, etc.)
- **Resources** related to your learning, such as books, trainings, or consultations
- **Childcare** or other family support you need to undertake your project
- **Time away** from your regular job, such as a course buyout or salary replacement for unpaid time off

PGR funds *cannot* be used for:

- Your regular salary to continue your current job
- New programs or staff positions in your department
- Expenses in pursuit of a degree
- Tools for your everyday work, such as an office chair, desktop computer, or cell phone

COMMON BUDGET ITEMS

Below are examples of common budget items. This is not an exhaustive list, so please create a budget and categories that align with your project.

- **Administrative costs:** expenses directly related to performing the proposed grant project, such as supplies, printing, postage, Zoom or conference software, etc. Generally, such items can be grouped under one category in the line-item budget but should be explained individually in the budget narrative. However, any significant single expense should be listed as a separate line item.
- **Books and resources:** print, digital, and/or media materials that foster your learning. Specific titles do not need to be included in the budget proposal.
- **Participant compensation:** gift cards, stipends, meals, or other compensation for participants in your project, such those being interviewed or completing a survey.
- **Travel expenses:** can include flights, mileage, public transit, ride shares, etc., as well as accommodations, food, and other likely expenses. Travel expenses should be based on your organization’s standard travel policies, including per diem amounts. Document your calculations and estimates, and explain in your narrative essay how the travel is intrinsic to the project. PGR funds should not be used for vacation travel or general tourism.
- **Personnel:**
 - *Salary replacement:* salary or wages used to compensate the grantee and any project team members taking unpaid leave to conduct the project. If you are currently working less than full time and will not be taking time off to conduct your project, please describe this in your application essay and the budget narrative. Anyone receiving salary replacement should be named in the budget narrative.
 - *Fringe benefits:* the amount your organization charges for benefits such as health insurance and retirement savings. This is typically a percentage of the overall compensation amount. If rates are different for different individuals, please include a summary of these amounts in the narrative budget. Sample fringe benefits table:

Sample Table:	Salary	Fringe Rate	Total
Project Director	\$ 40,000	25%	\$10,000
Admin. Assistant	\$ 15,000	20%	\$3,000
Research Assistant	\$20,000	N/A	\$0
TOTAL			\$13,000

COMMON BUDGET ITEMS

- **Contracted assistants or consultants:** compensation for transcription services, research assistance, etc. If you plan to hire project assistants or consultants, describe in your proposal the purpose, expected duration, and rate for the consultant's work. When you hire consultants, initiate and retain for your files a contract that includes the following:
 - consultant's name, address, and social security number
 - beginning and ending dates of engagement, and estimated number of consulting hours to complete the project
 - description of work to be performed, reports written, etc.
 - hourly rate and method of payment for work performed
 - description of any special arrangements such as hiring of secretarial/clerical assistance, renting of office space or equipment, overhead expenses, etc.
 - a termination statement noting time requirement and obligations for payment
- **Indirect costs.** The grant or contract office at your institution may require that a percentage of your grant go to "indirect costs" or overhead to administer the grant. If your institution requires indirect costs, include this as a line item in your budget.
 - The Louisville Institute stipulates that **no more than 10 percent of the grant may go toward indirect costs.**
 - Indirect costs are calculated as a percentage of the grant money awarded, and the total of both the grant and the indirect costs cannot exceed US\$30,000. For example, the maximum amount of indirect costs we will accept in a US\$30,000 grant is US\$2,727 — US\$27,270 for the grant, and US\$2,727 for indirect costs, for a total of US\$29,997.
 - Before you submit your application, please be in touch with the grant or contract office of your institution with any questions you might have about indirect costs, and to alert them to the Louisville Institute maximum of 10 percent.
- **Miscellaneous costs:** items that are not easily included in another category, but may be necessary to conduct the project.

QUESTIONS?

Please email grants@louisville-institute.org.

OTHER BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

- **Projects with additional funding.** If a PGR represents a portion of a larger project you are pursuing and for which you are receiving funding from other sources, include a general budget for the whole project, as well as its sources of funding, and indicate within it the expenditures the PGR will fund.
- **Tax considerations.** Because individual recipients of Louisville Institute grants may be liable for income taxes on funds awarded, grantees often find it more convenient to have their grants made payable to a tax-exempt nonprofit organization with a 501(c)(3) status. The Institute does not provide advice on tax matters; we advise grantees to consult their own tax advisors to determine the tax consequences of receiving grant funds.

LINE-ITEM BUDGET

Your line-item budget is a table of categories in which you anticipate money being spent for your project (see sample categories above), and the anticipated costs of each. The total of these line items should equal the amount you are requesting for the grant. If you are in Canada, you may put together your line-item budget and budget narrative in Canadian dollars, but please indicate the exchange rate and show that the final amount is equal to or less than US\$30,000.

Create a table or spreadsheet that includes your proposed budget items. If grant funds will be spent over two years, include columns and amounts for each year, as well as the total amount for the two years combined. See sample budgets below.

SAMPLE BUDGET #1 : Applicant Name, Project Title, Proposed Budget

	2024	2025	TOTAL
Personnel			
Salary replacement [3 months @ \$3,000 per mo]	\$9,000	\$9,000	\$18,000
Research Costs			
Books & Reference Materials	\$500	\$200	\$700
Telephone, Zoom, mailing, copies, supplies	\$500	\$500	\$1,000
Travel & Lodging	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$4,000
Participant Compensation	\$1,000		\$1,000
TOTAL REQUESTED	\$13,000	\$11,700	\$24,700

LINE-ITEM BUDGET

SAMPLE BUDGET #2: Applicant Name, Project Title, Proposed Budget

	2024	2025	TOTAL
1. Personnel			
Research Assistant (18 months @ \$500/mo)	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$9,000
Transcription services (140 hrs @\$12/hr)	\$1,680		\$1,680
Summer stipend for Project Director (3 mos)		\$8,000	\$8,000
2. Equipment			
Digital Voice Recorder	\$65	-	\$65
3. Travel			
Ground transportation, 500 miles @ \$.655/mile	\$328		\$328
Airfare to Denver, Atlanta, Dallas	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,000
Lodging (8 nights)	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,000
Meals (12 days @\$75 per diem)	\$450	\$450	\$900
4. Supplies			
Printing, materials, etc.	\$250	\$300	\$550
5. Participant Compensation			
22 church leaders for interview @\$25	\$550		\$550
6. Supplies			
Books & Reference Materials	\$750	\$250	\$1000
		Direct Cost	\$26,073
		Indirect Cost (10%)	2,607.30
		TOTAL REQUESTED	\$28,680.30

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The budget narrative is essentially a series of sentences or paragraphs that illustrate your budget proposal. The budget narrative gives explanations for the items in your budget and enables us to understand your proposal more fully. To create a budget narrative, list all the items in your line-item budget and provide a brief description of and rationale for each. Specifically include:

- the budget item
- how it helps accomplish the project
- how you calculated the amount requested

Budget narrative examples:

- **Item 1: Research Assistant, \$1200.** In order to complete my project, I anticipate needing a research assistant 60 hours, and we pay \$20/hour.
- **Item 2: Participant compensation, \$250.** I plan to conduct five 1-hour long interviews, and will provide \$50 gift cards for each participant.



QUESTIONS?

Please email grants@louisville-institute.org.



WHO WE ARE

Funded by the Religion Division of Lilly Endowment, the Louisville Institute's mission is to bridge Church and academy through awarding grants and fellowships to those who lead and study North American religious institutions, practices, and movements, and thereby promoting scholarship that strengthens Church, academy, and society, and ultimately contributes to the flourishing of the Church.

- [Grants](#)
- [Fellowships](#)

The Institute's [Advisory Board](#) shapes mission and policy, helps review and approve grant proposals, and evaluates initiatives and programs. Edwin Hernández (Executive Director, beginning June 1, 2023) Aimee Moiso (Associate Director), Jessica Bowman (Assistant Director of Programs), Keri Liechty (Assistant Director of Marketing & Communications) and Briana Zeitz (Administrative Coordinator) guide the Institute work on a daily basis.

The mission of the [Religion Division of Lilly Endowment](#) frames its work and grantmaking in terms of the following mission statement:

Our primary aim in religion is to deepen and enrich the religious lives of Christians in the United States, principally by supporting efforts that enhance the vitality of congregations. We value the broad diversity of Christian traditions and congregations today and endeavor to support them in a wide variety of contexts. We seek to ensure that all types of congregations have a steady stream of wise, faithful, diverse and well-prepared leaders. We work to strengthen theological schools as well as religious institutions and networks that nurture pastors and support the ministries of congregations. We support efforts that help Christians draw on the wisdom of their theological traditions as they strive to understand and respond to contemporary challenges and live their faith more fully. We are especially interested in efforts that nurture the religious lives of children, youth and young adults and share the beauty and vibrancy of Christian faith with a new generation.

Contact Us:

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