REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Supporting Student Leadership Grants

Investing in student leadership on campuses across the country

Opportunity

Funding available for university and college educators committed to supporting and developing student interfaith and bridgebuilding leadership abilities.

Grant Overview

At Interfaith America, our goal is to foster pluralism, which includes respecting people's identities even when we disagree, forming mutually inspiring relationships, and cooperating with others towards a shared good. Investing in pluralism-centered student leadership is vital for colleges and universities in our current moment. In addition to its value in developing the personal leadership skills of student leaders, it can positively impact relationships among students and promote healthy campus climates where diversity is valued, and differences are engaged constructively across identities and ideologies. This grant offers funding and support for educators and campus professionals to design, lead, and/or facilitate interfaith and bridgebuilding programming for undergraduate students – in partnership with student leaders – in the 2025-2026 school year. Projects should create opportunities for religiously and ideologically diverse students to come together to build relationships and cooperate across differences. Strong proposals will demonstrate how these student leadership projects also reflect the vision of the Campus Pluralism Practices (for detailed information on these Practices, please refer to Page 11 of the linked document), and positively impact the broader climate at their college or university.

Grantees will become members of a year-long cohort, led by Interfaith America staff. The cohort will serve as a community of practice, equipping grantees to successfully execute their projects and helping them connect their work to campus-wide advancement of pluralism.

Ongoing or already existing programs are eligible for this grant, as are new or not-yet-launched programs. Grant amounts will be based on the goals of the proposed project and the stated budget request of the applicant, with a maximum amount of $5,000 per grantee institution. Funds will be awarded to the college or university upon completion of all required financial forms by awardee. Grant projects and activities must be completed by June 1, 2026.

This grant is only open for educators and campus professionals who attended the 2025 Interfaith Leadership Summit. Undergraduate students may not apply.

interfaithamerica.org | Interfaith America, 141 W. Jackson Blvd, Suite 3200, Chicago, IL 60604 | 312.573.8825

Grant Requirements

- Grantees must design and/or run a program, project, or initiative focused on developing student interfaith and bridgebuilding leadership.
- Grantees must attend quarterly virtual cohort meetings hosted by Interfaith America (4 meetings throughout the 2025-2026 school year).
- Grantees must be willing to contribute to Interfaith America storytelling opportunities and initiatives. Also, we ask for the submission of any media material (i.e. news articles, university media mentions, etc.) concerning the project and/or any significant created resources or tools related to the project.

Funding Information

- Grant funds should primarily be used for purposes that directly support the grant proposal.
- Grants may be awarded up to a sum of $5,000.
- Applicants should be prepared to request a specific amount of $5,000 or less in their application. A detailed budget is not required, but grantees should indicate how the requested funds will be used.
- Grantees may use up to 10% of disbursed grant funds for operational costs if needed.
- Grant funds may be used to compensate students who help lead or substantively support project execution.
- The grantee is responsible for understanding and navigating their institutional or organizational grant processes.
- Grants will be disbursed to higher education institutions, not to individuals.

`Restrictions`

Grant funds may not be used for:

- Alcohol
- Expenses associated with political campaign activities, including directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office; making contributions to political campaigns; or attempting to influence legislation (i.e., lobbying)
- Capital funds or expenses (e.g., endowments, capital campaigns, annual funds, tuition, or student fees)
- While not restricted, we generally do not fund grantees to use a large portion of their funds for Interfaith America's fee-for-service offerings, such as campus consultations or speaking engagement fees.

Deliverables

- Participation in the Supporting Student Leadership cohort meetings; four virtual meetings will be hosted by IA during the 2025-2026 school year.
- Submission of any media material (i.e., news articles, university media mentions, etc.) concerning the project and/or any significant created resources or tools related to the project.
- Completion of progress report and final report surveys sent by IA, summarizing the achievements of grant project and sharing the number and type of participants engaged (students, staff, faculty, alumni, community members, etc.).

Proposal Review & Selection

Applications will be reviewed after the deadline of September 26, 2025. Selection decisions will be communicated within 14 business days of this deadline.

Applications will be reviewed for awards based upon the criteria outlined in the Grant Overview section.

Program Timeline

- August 27, 2025: The application period is open.
- September 29, 2025: The application period is closed.
- October 2025: Selection decisions communicated to applicants.
- October 2025: Grant implementation period begins.
- February 6, 2026: Grantees will submit a progress report on their projects.
- June 19, 2026: Grantees will submit a final report on their projects.

For further information, please contact Carr Harkrader, charkrader@interfaithamerica.org

Project Examples

Projects for this grant can take a range of forms; indeed, we encourage you to think first of what would most benefit your campus in deepening student leadership and advancing pluralism. We encourage projects that can meaningfully address the needs of your campus community and engage a wide range of diverse communities on your campus.

Examples of this could include, but are not limited to:

- Student interfaith groups leading a campus-wide service project involving multiple religious and/or political groups.
- Events or trainings focused on facilitating productive encounters across deep religious or political difference often found on campus.

- Organized media campaign involving students from across the university stating their shared values.
- Planning sessions for the establishment of bridgebuilding fellowships.
- A campus-community project involving students working with a local nonprofit or community group that bring together students and community members of different religious or political backgrounds.
- Training focused on interfaith leadership and religious diversity for campus student leaders with an accompanying project or initiative focused on bridgebuilding (for example: student government officers, student paraprofessionals, student religious/worldview group leaders, etc. that then lead an initiative in their area of influence focused on bridgebuilding).

Additional Resources

Guide for Applying to Interfaith America Grants and Fellowships

Resources for developing student leadership capabilities:

Foundations of Interfaith Leadership: An online, self-paced course that introduces the foundational tools and concepts of interfaith leadership for students.

Bridgebuilder Basics: A tool for exploring the vision, knowledge, and skills for engaging across difference.

interfaithamerica.org | Interfaith America, 141 W. Jackson Blvd, Suite 3200, Chicago, IL 60604 | 312.573.8825