



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

2026-27 BRAID Student Fellowship

Empowering the next generation of interfaith bridgebuilders

Opportunity

The Bridgebuilders Relating Across Interfaith Differences (BRAID) Fellowship is Interfaith America's leadership opportunity for undergraduate students who want to change campus culture through interfaith and bridgebuilding work.

IA's mission is to activate leaders to build an Interfaith America. The BRAID Fellowship advances this mission by equipping and empowering a national network of undergraduate student leaders who will foster an ethos of respect, relationship building, and cooperation across difference in the U.S.

Through IA's pedagogical expertise and extensive networks, fellows gain the training, skills, education, and hands-on experience they need to thrive as interfaith bridgebuilding leaders on their campuses and in their communities.

Program Overview

The BRAID Fellowship is a next level opportunity for students who are not only interested in building upon their interfaith cooperation skills but are also looking to develop their [pluralism](#) leadership skills. Through the BRAID Fellowship, student fellows elevate their literacy in interfaith leadership and pluralism, cultivate meaningful connections with peers and mentors from a variety of backgrounds and institutions, and gain confidence in engaging and working collaboratively across difference.

The fellowship program begins with pre-work (to be completed online), followed by an opening leadership retreat in Atlanta, Georgia in October 2026. Post-retreat fellows will attend monthly virtual meetings with their mentor groups and virtual trainings with IA staff. They will apply their pluralism leadership skills by planning and facilitating interfaith bridgebuilding projects on their campuses. The fellowship concludes in May 2027 with a final retreat in Chicago, IL where fellows will have the opportunity to present on their campus projects.

Program Requirements

Eligibility

- Undergraduate students in the U.S. with at least one full academic year remaining in their program.
- Demonstrated participation in prior Interfaith America programming including but not limited to completion of an [Interfaith Leadership Summit](#) track, the [Foundations of Interfaith Leadership](#) online curriculum, or an on-campus Interfaith America training.
- International students are welcome to apply if they attend a U.S.-based institution and demonstrate a commitment to pursuing interfaith bridgebuilding work in the U.S. Please note that it is the fellow's responsibility to ensure that funding received through this fellowship is not in violation of any visa agreements.

Interested students will submit the following as a part of their online application:

1. Demographic information
2. Short essays focused on their interest and commitment to interfaith leadership
3. A brief description of a proposed interfaith bridgebuilding campus project
4. Agreement to fulfill all program requirements including participation in both in-person convenings and virtual meetings throughout the fellowship.

Select applicants will be asked to participate in a 15-minute virtual interview and to share contact information for an on-campus professional who can serve as a reference

Funding Information

- Accepted fellows will receive:
 - Fully funded travel and lodging to the October 2026 Opening Retreat and May 2027 Closing Retreat.
 - Up to \$1000 in grant funding to support a campus project. Release of funds is contingent upon proposed budget approval, which will be discussed at the opening retreat.
 - \$2000 stipend for participation in the fellowship, split into two disbursements.
- Project funds are to be used for purposes that directly support the project proposal.
- The grantee is responsible for understanding and navigating their institutional or organizational grant processes.
- Grantees are expected to utilize awarded funds within the designated grant implementation period. If a grantee anticipates that they will be unable to expend the full amount within this timeframe in alignment with the scope of work outlined in the MOA, they must proactively consult with Interfaith America staff to determine appropriate next steps.

- Some forms of payment, such as stipends and reimbursements, may be considered taxable income by the IRS. Participants are responsible for understanding and reporting any income they receive. Those who receive funding may receive a 1099 tax form from Interfaith America at the end of the year. This information does not constitute legal or tax advice. For questions about your specific situation, we recommend consulting a tax professional.

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 don't 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

Throughout the implementation of the BRAID Fellowship, each fellow is required to:

- Attend both in-person fellowship convenings (Opening Retreat in Oct 2026 and Closing Retreat in May 2027);
- Attend one virtual mentor or cohort meeting a month from November 2026 to April 2027;
- Design and facilitate a campus interfaith bridgebuilding project;
- Complete surveys, brief check-in assignments, and/or focus groups to assess fellowship learnings and experiences;
- Present a final project review at the Closing Retreat;
- Complete a final program evaluation and participant survey, which includes a campus project budget report and final report.

Proposal Review & Selection

Through its programs, Interfaith America is committed to supporting initiatives that meaningfully engage people with a range of religious, philosophical, or ideological perspectives as well as diverse racial and ethnic identities. As such, a diverse cohort of 20 fellows representing colleges and universities across the nation will be selected to participate in the BRAID Fellowship.

The selection committee, comprised of IA staff members of diverse identities and perspectives, will convene to review applications and make final selections.

Once applications are reviewed by the selection committee, finalists will be asked to share contact information for an on-campus professional who can serve as a reference. Finalists will also be invited to participate in a 15-minute interview.

Program Timeline

- May 15, 2026: The application period is open.
- June 19, 2026: The application period is closed.
- July 8, 2026: Selection decisions communicated to applicants.
- September 2026: Fellowship begins with a Kickoff Call
- October 9 – 11, 2026: Opening Retreat in Atlanta, Georgia
- October 2026 – May 2027: Virtual Meetings and project implementation
- May 2027: Closing Retreat: Grantees will provide a final report on their projects; grant implementation period concludes.

For further information, please contact Noa Nakao, nnakao@interfaithamerica.org.

Project Examples

Below are examples of previous BRAID fellows and their successful projects.

- [Service is a Shared Value: How One BRAID Student Mobilized Her American University Community](#)
- [BRAID Fellow Advocates for New Interfaith Space at Muhlenberg College](#)
- [BRAID Student Fellows Speak on Their Bridgebuilding Projects](#)

Additional Resources

- [Guide for Applying to Interfaith America Grants and Fellowships](#)
- [7 Popular Interfaith Student Events](#)
- Explore the [Learning and Action Bridge](#) Higher Education Pathway for more resources