

Bridge Builders Charlotte: An Interfaith Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic
Request for Proposals
May 10, 2020

The Vision

What will it take for our Charlotte community to rise out of the pandemic crisis more deeply committed to the wellbeing of all? Rethinking public policy, private charity, and corporate commitment may be important impulses, but it's our spiritual, religious, and faith traditions that undergird our shared values and practices. In turn, those traditions mobilize communities that have the social capital to be change agents in our world. By building bridges across those communities, we can leverage Charlotte's potential to expand opportunity for those who are most vulnerable in these precarious times.

Through the generous support of the Gambrell Foundation, IFYC will offer project grants to catalyze interfaith cooperation as we address the COVID-19 crisis. The initiatives selected will build bridges between Charlotte-area campuses, effective non-profits, and religiously-diverse communities devoted to the common good. Along the way, funded projects will strengthen Charlotte's social infrastructure by showcasing the value of religious pluralism in civic spaces. Ultimately, Bridge Builders Charlotte will lay important groundwork for a sustainable model of interfaith engagement that capitalizes on the best our faith traditions and philosophical values have to offer, in Charlotte and beyond.

Structured as a partnership between Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) and Queens University's Belk Chapel, Bridge Builders Charlotte will galvanize and showcase interfaith cooperation. Based in Chicago, IFYC is a nationally-recognized leader in the emerging fields of Interfaith Studies and interfaith cooperation and equips campuses nationwide to make interfaith engagement a vital part of the college experience and ultimately a positive force in our religiously plural society. With IFYC's active support, Queens University has embraced its Presbyterian and Pluralist identity in both academic and co-curricular learning and has emerged as a regional and national leader in this work.

Program Goals

Bridge Builders Charlotte is designed to promote the following outcomes:

1. Strengthen Charlotte's social fabric by building bridges of understanding and cooperation across religious and worldview difference.
2. Offer student opportunities to grow interfaith leadership skills.
3. Bring heightened awareness to the value of engaging meaningfully across religious and worldview difference in civil society.
4. Tell the story of Charlotte's religiously plural landscape in a compelling, attractational way.

5. Establish a model for campus-community partnerships that can be extended throughout the region.

Program Timing

Project proposals will be accepted through May 29, 2020. Recipients will be notified by June 5, 2020. Funded projects must be completed by November 15, 2020, and project funding must be spent and brief final reports submitted by December 31, 2020.

Project Design and Criteria

Projects funded through this grant will be implemented through partnerships anchored in Charlotte-area higher educational institutions. Each project will include the following partners:

- **Campus Leadership Team:**
 - A campus leader with experience in interfaith engagement will spearhead the project. This leader will supervise student interns and interface with community partners to ensure the project's success.
 - Each campus will select two student interns to work virtually on the project. Areas of responsibility may include planning and logistics, interfaith leadership training, communication and storytelling, and other items as needed.
- **Non-Profit Organization:**
 - Partner non-profit organizations with an interest in and history of effective civic service will serve as partners in the creation and implementation of the projects. Eligible organizations include those that address basic human needs such as food, housing, education, and healthcare, as well as those that strengthen civil society in other ways, including through the arts or storytelling.
 - Partner organizations must be willing to strengthen their capacity to promote religious pluralism in the context of their work.
- **Faith Communities or Philosophical Organizations:**
 - Each project will engage community partners who embrace a range of religious or philosophical traditions. Involve at least two
 - Preference will be given to projects that engage communities representing diverse ethnic and/or socio-economic perspectives as well.

Project proposals should address the following criteria:

- Clearly articulate a Charlotte-area initiative that responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, follows the timeframe named here, and can roll out through virtual platforms;
- Identify partner organizations (one non-profit partner, as well as two religious or philosophical organizations affiliated with different traditions or worldviews);

- Explain student interns' roles and responsibilities that strengthen their interfaith leadership skills;
- Specify the ways in which the project will build capacity for meaningful interfaith engagement (e.g., interfaith leadership training, opportunities to highlight and learn about specific faith or values commitments, etc.);
- Name two to three realistic goals as well as a means of determining the initiative's effectiveness; and
- Have a plan to collect stories of impact and influence that illustrate the project goals.

In addition, stronger proposals will feature these elements:

- Intentionality about crossing lines of racial, ethnic, geographic, and other kinds of difference;
- Consider the long-term sustainability of the project model and partnership; and
- An impact that extends beyond those directly affected by the project.

The following questions may help identify a clear, feasible focus for the project:

- What kind of response to COVID-19 fits well with your institution's or program's core values? What organizations are doing this work?
- What faith or philosophical communities emerge as likely partners OR would extend your campus's interfaith network?
- What organizations do you already work with or have connections to that might be a likely partner in this work?
- What concrete response will lay groundwork for sustainable interfaith partnerships between campus and community in the future?

Proposal Guidelines

Please submit a brief (two- to three-page) project proposal by email to Nancy Falls (nancybfalls@gmail.com) by May 29, 2020. Proposals should address the criteria listed above.

In addition, please provide a simple budget of up to \$25,000, including the following items:

- Campus Leader Stipend (suggested: \$5,000, or about 100 hours @ \$50/hour)
- Student Intern Stipends (suggested: \$3,000 each, or about 200 hours @ \$15/hour)
- Administrative Costs
- Non-Profit Funding, including indirect costs associated with running the project