

Advancing Mission 2.0: Women Religious in the 21st Century
A program of Lake Institute on Faith & Giving at the
Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy

Request for Proposals

Purpose

The Lake Institute on Faith & Giving at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy seek applicants for Advancing Mission 2.0: Women Religious in the 21st Century. This program helps select congregations of Catholic women religious (sisters and nuns) build a “culture of development” or “mission advancement” within their communities. It fosters the creation of an intentional community of practice that supports a diverse cohort of women religious who learn together and support one another. Congregations of women religious who are accepted into the program will be eligible to apply for and receive up to \$100,000 in grant funding during a three-year period.

Please note that upon acceptance in the program, three leaders from each community of women religious (including the congregational leader or superior and the chief development officer) are expected to participate in three convenings during the grant period. The first gathering is December 2-5, 2018, in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Background & History

For two millennia, women religious have greatly enriched the Church and advanced the common good. Through the spiritual witness of their communal lifestyle and their service to those in need, lives are transformed for the better. Each congregation is given a charism, that is, a particular way in which it is called to be the face of Christ in the world. Some manifest their charism as the face of Christ at prayer, others as Christ the healer, the teacher, or the preacher. A charism is generative: it spills out in lives devoted to the wellbeing of others, particularly those at the margins of society.

Religious life evolves, sometimes quickly. With changes come opportunities and challenges. In the United States, where religious life is experiencing significant changes, many congregations find themselves inadequately resourced for mission. The stream of women entering religious life, although steady, is much smaller than it once was. A preponderance of aging sisters creates financial strain. Many congregations are “property rich” but “cash poor.”

Yet amid change, opportunities abound. What religious life will look like in the future will be determined, in no small measure, by today’s leaders’ faithful and creative responses to new circumstances.

In 2013, Lake Institute on Faith and Giving and The Fund Raising School at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy launched Advancing Mission, a bold response to the development challenges facing communities of women religious. The program—fully funded through the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and the GHR Foundation—created a cohort of 13 congregations of women religious who received world-class development training, coaching and funding to increase their ability to raise financial resources to sustain their communities and ministries.

The Opportunity

Advancing Mission 2.0 is the second round of grant-making aimed at contributing to the vitality of Catholic sisters' and nuns' lives by helping congregations build their capacity to attract, steward and grow needed resources by strengthening their capacity for fundraising.

Participants will approach fundraising as a ministry. For many people, including women religious, it may not come naturally to approach fundraising this way. For Catholic sisters and nuns, asking for support—rather than providing it—may be challenging. But as theologian and pastor Henri Nouwen put it, “It is a way of announcing our vision and inviting other people into our mission.”

The program takes a comprehensive approach to fundraising. Robust fundraising is far more than a discreet function within an organization to raise dollars. In fact, if approached narrowly, fundraising is less likely to be effective. Successful fundraising is an organization-wide, ongoing endeavor that involves leaders and members, as well as communications and development personnel.

Advancing Mission 2.0 encourages efforts to build a “culture of development” (or mission advancement) within congregations. By culture of development, we mean an institution-wide embrace of the practice of ongoing planning, communication, and fundraising that leads to the sustainability of an institution’s mission.

To help congregations build a culture of development, Advancing Mission 2.0 will foster an intentional community of practice, connecting people from different backgrounds and organizations, enabling them to share experiences, creating a social fabric of learning, and growing a body of knowledge and practice for the greater good.

For Advancing Mission 2.0, this means supporting a diverse cohort of congregations who together, will learn from and support each other in the work of building the ability to attract, steward and grow resources needed to advance congregational mission.

Advancing Mission 2.0 will support a community of practice over 3 years.

- It will *provide coaching*. Two coaches will be available to participating congregations. Coaches will check in regularly with participating congregations to provide support and advice as they develop and implement plans to strengthen fundraising efforts. Both coaches are very familiar with congregations of women religious and have significant experience in fundraising and philanthropy.
- It will *provide grant support*. Through the generosity of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and the GHR Foundation (which underwrote the entire Advancing Mission program), Advancing Mission 2.0 can provide congregations with grants to support efforts to improve fundraising. Grants will be available over a three-year period in amounts up to \$100,000.
- It will *facilitate peer learning*. Advancing Mission 2.0 coaches will facilitate peer learning experiences based upon the needs expressed by participating congregations. In peer learning, it envisions representatives from participating congregations playing active roles, both in defining topics and learning from one another. Congregations with greater experience in various areas of fundraising and development will be asked to work with less experienced congregations.

- It will *facilitate mentoring*. Past participants from the first Advancing Mission cohort who expressed willingness to support and consult future cohorts will be trained to act as mentors and guides in partnership with an experienced professional consultant and coach. It is our hope that opportunities for education and spiritual development will continue.
- It will *convene*. There will be three convenings during the course of the grant. The first gathering is December 2-5, 2018, in Indianapolis, Indiana. Three leaders (including the congregational leader or superior and the chief development officer) from each congregation will participate in a three-day program “Faith and Fundraising,” offered jointly by the Lake Institute on Faith & Giving and The Fund Raising School. Subsequent gatherings will be announced in years 2 and 3.
- It will *sponsor research*. Advancing Mission 2.0 will coordinate research with an eye toward enriching the experience of participating congregations and informing efforts of other congregations seeking to strengthen their fundraising and development efforts.

Invitation

Advancing Mission 2.0 invites congregations who wish to participate to submit a proposal for how they will build an effective culture of development. By effective we mean proposed activities within the congregation will produce sustained increases in net revenues from fundraising and widened circles of support for the congregation and its mission.

A strong proposal will give evidence that:

- the congregation is poised to consider fundraising in relation to vision, mission, and the future orientation of the congregation—that the work of visioning and aligning vocations with fundraising practice empowers and reimagines a sense of mission and sustainability;
- the congregation is willing deepen its approach to fundraising as a ministry; it will make connections between fundraising and the congregation’s charism, mission, and spiritual life;
- the congregation plans to tie fundraising to other aspects of congregational life, such as ongoing planning, communications, community outreach, and vocation ministry;
- the congregation is prepared to invest its own resources (human and financial) in efforts to improve fundraising/development/mission advancement;
- the congregation will actively and consistently participate in the community of practice, including ongoing peer learning, assessment and evaluation;
- the congregation is inclined to share what it has learned with other groups, including other congregations and sponsored ministries.

Process and terms

- Please submit your application in .pdf format on the website <http://bit.ly/AdvancingMission2> by **September 7, 2018**.

- Proposals should be **no longer than 5 pages in length**, and they should address the following topics/questions:
 - Contact information:
 - Congregation/Community Name:
 - Name of Congregational Leader or Superior:
 - Contact Person:
 - Address:
 - Phone:
 - Email:
 - Website:
 - Provide a brief history of your religious community including (but not limited to), your foundress/founder, charism, mission/vision/values, current ministries, and demographic information about current sisters and vocations in the U.S. and abroad.
 - Please share information about the three greatest strengths of your community and its ministries. These strengths could convey reasons why donors may consider offering financial support to your community and/or ministries.
 - Describe the three biggest challenges to your fundraising, development, or mission advancement efforts. These challenges should indicate areas that could benefit from capacity-building and coaching assistance provided in this program.
 - Please confirm the availability of three leaders (including the congregational leader or superior) from your congregation to participate in a three-day program, “Faith and Fundraising,” offered jointly by the Lake Institute on Faith & Giving and The Fund Raising School from December 2-5, 2018, in Indianapolis, Indiana.
- In preparing a proposal, congregations may contact the program coordinator, Andrea Proulx Buinicki, CFRE. She is prepared to serve as a sounding board and offer advice. She can be reached at andreapb@giving-focus.com and (219) 252-6223.
- Congregations of women religious who are accepted into the Advancing Mission 2.0 program will be eligible to apply for and receive up to \$100,000 in grant funding during a three-year period.
- A committee will review applications. Decisions will be announced by October 8, 2018.
- Those receiving grant funding must participate actively in Advancing Mission 2.0 activities. They must also provide quarterly activities reports and annual financial reports. Failure to do so will jeopardize second- or third-year funding.

Thank you for your service to God and your ministry to God’s people.