



These FAQs are drawn from PACE’s Faith In/And Democracy Information Sessions, held on June 17 and June 25, 2020.

The comments, questions, and answers raised during the sessions are captured here, and have been edited for clarity and length. Additional questions can be emailed to Faith@PACEfunders.org

- The session started with a brief presentation to provide overall framing and insights into the program and ethos of PACE. [PACE](#) is a philanthropic laboratory for funders seeking to maximize their individual and collective impact on democracy and civic life in America. We are membership-based and our community achieves this through learning, experimenting, collaborating, and modeling vibrant civic space.
- Origin Story for [Faith In/And Democracy](#):
 - PACE members approached us with this idea in late 2018. There was a concern that in conversations about democracy, faith/religion were most referenced as things driving divisions rather than constructive forces that could bring people together around common values.
 - We had a hypothesis that there was actually TONS of great work happening in a constructive way, but that work wasn’t necessarily breaking through, and one reason might be because it was under-resourced.
 - Members began pooling resources to test this hypothesis through our pilot effort in 2019. After receiving over 130 applications totaling \$6.3 million in requests in the first year, we knew the hypothesis about under-resourcing was true. We began working to shift from pilot to program in order to see where we might be able to have impact in addressing this issue.
 - But for us, addressing this will take resources, attention, and a commitment to understanding what works from both the perspective of the practitioners (those focused on what it means to *do* the work) and funders (those focused on how to *support* the work). This led us to develop our Learning Community.
- About the Learning Community:
 - Learning is a core purpose for PACE, so we treat funding and learning as co-equal priorities in this initiative. It is important to resource the work and share learnings from it in order to help more people understand why this work matters, and why it’s also worthy of their investment.
 - In that spirit, we convene a Learning Community for the initiative over the course of the grant year. It is composed of our advisory committee members, grantees, and others who serve as resources to the group.

- We meet quarterly. The fundamental purpose is to be in relationship with each other and to serve as resources to each other. As a community, we strive to peer-celebrate successes and peer-troubleshoot challenges. We also explore and debate the core questions of the program and how they're showing up in our work.
- When appropriate, we share these out broadly through our communications channels and relationship channels. Our hope is that our sharing will help scale attention to work being done at the intersection of faith and democracy, and leverage some additional interest and investment in it over time.
- About the Program's Design
 - The core questions we're addressing this year are informed by the pilot experience, our Advisory Committee's advice, and our 3-year goal to be able to identify what makes this work possible and successful.
 - We're focusing on two questions. The first is what it takes for leaders themselves to do the inner work that prepares them to lead others and their organizations (things like relevant values, knowledge, training, skills). Secondly, we're asking what it takes for institutions to do this work--what capacities, networks, resources, structures are needed to do bridge-building work in service of civic engagement. This year, we seek to understand the qualities and conditions for bridge-building that will enable us to invest in scaling in our third year.
 - The application process this year is two parts: LOI and Proposal. This is important based on our learnings from the first year:
 - Because we know it can be discouraging to hear 130 applications were received for 5 grants, we want to minimize the lift on applicants wherever possible. We streamlined the application questions to support the goal of making it easier to complete, and to increase clarity and transparency.
 - We anticipate inviting about 30 LOI applicants to submit a full proposal, but that may change depending on the number of LOIs received.
 - The LOI is meant to assess the Project Lead's (or head of the project's) readiness/preparedness for the work; the proposal is meant to assess the work itself. We ultimately need to understand both.
 - We received some questions about why the LOI is focused on the project leader and not the organization's mission. This is because we believe that *who* leads the work matters as much as the work being done. Especially given our commitment to the Learning Community, we are choosing both the leader and the organization. So the LOI is about the project leader's commitment to the work, and the RFP is about the organization and how that work and commitment would be tangibly realized.
- Program Goals
 - Speaking of tangible realization, we received some questions about what types of programs will be considered.
 - For those who are invited to complete a full proposal, we will ask you to tell us three things: 1) articulate how your work explores and creates understanding around our core questions, 2) what that work looks like, and 3) how involvement in this program would catalyze that work.
 - The proposed work can be new programming or build on existing efforts; it can be project-based or integrated throughout the organization's programming/approach.

- In more traditional fundraising terms, it doesn't need to be fully project-based but it's not fully general operating support either. Funds need to be used for the purpose of advancing the work, but we don't want to be overly prescriptive or restrictive on what that looks like, so we are asking *you* to tell *us* how you would achieve the spirit and goals of this program through your work, and how you would allocate resources to do that.
- We have not defined or prescribed an audience or beneficiary; we will be leaning on you to tell us who the community is for the work you propose, and how you will engage and involve them.
- We also received some questions about how we're adapting or adjusting due to COVID. We actually heard from our pilot year grantees that the necessity of physical distancing is creating *more* desire for people to find connection to each other, and to their faith. So we haven't changed anything about our goals or intent in the program, but we will lean on applicants to tell us how they can best achieve the vision of their work within the realities and limitations of the moment.
- Who is Eligible?
 - 501(c)(3) nonprofits with work based in the US.
 - Yes, this includes schools, universities, and houses of worship.
 - Both religious and secular institutions are eligible, as long as they have a 501(c)(3) designation.
 - You do not have to be a faith-based institution, but you do have to be working with faith communities and with a faith lens as a strategic component of the work. This can be interfaith or intra-faith—meaning it can be about working across faith traditions, or about bridging within divides of a specific faith tradition.
 - We received a few specific questions about organizational types, specifically think tanks and research institutions. They are eligible if they have 501(c)(3) status, but we are prioritizing the *application* of theory and data through practice in communities, rather than the creation of new research or thought leadership.

Open Discussion and Q+A with Attendees

On the Application and Eligibility:

- **Question:** Are fiscally sponsored organizations eligible for this funding opportunity?
 - Yes. Fiscally sponsored projects are eligible for this funding opportunity. The sponsored project must be fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in the United States, and the work of the sponsored project must be focused in the United States.
- **Question:** Can an organization submit an LOI with a co-sponsor?
 - Yes. We will ask you to designate one Project Lead from one organization to serve as the participant in the Learning Community, and we will make one grant to that Leader's institution. But we do anticipate that some of the successful projects will be administered as partnerships between institutions.

- **Question:** Is it possible for two organizations to collaboratively write a grant together and to be co-funded? We want to collaborate with a group that works in another part of our state.
 - Yes, but for our purposes, it would be a single grant. Both organizations could apply together but one person, even if there are two co-equal leaders, would need to be designated as the Project Lead. The Project Lead would be involved in the Learning Community. PACE would administer the grant to one organization and then on your end, you can allocate those funds as needed to fulfill the grant project.
 - Even though there will be one primary contact and organization that liaisons with PACE, we encourage you to tell us about the leadership structure you will have as a part of this project-- what it looks like, how it's built and managed, and what it means and represents for your work.

- **Question:** If we have a collaborative co-led project, why do we need to choose only one Project Lead?
 - On your end, your leadership can be structured however you like, and you can have multiple co-leads if that's what your project needs. But for the purpose of the Learning Community, we discovered in our pilot year that it is helpful to have one consistent person to serve as a liaison between the project and PACE and who participates in the cohort experience.

- **Question:** In the application, where it says Project Lead, is PACE looking for applicants to provide the name of the head of the organization or the head of the project who will be a participant in the Learning Community cohort?
 - The Project Lead should be the person that is closest to the work and is designated to be part of the Learning Community. We expect that the person listed in the application as the Project Lead will remain part of the Learning Community throughout the grant year.

- **Question:** Does the program leader need to be someone already on staff? Or could we bring in somebody that is already engaged with us, such as an alum or grad student?
 - Determining the Project Lead is at your discretion. But we are looking for organizations with a demonstrated track record and leaders with some demonstrated training and experience. You should make sure you can communicate both of those things in your LOI.
 - We expect that the person listed in the application as the Project Lead will remain part of the Learning Community throughout the year.

- **Question:** Is a resume or CV required, or can applicants upload information about a Project Lead's education, qualifications, and previous experience in another format, such as a brief biography instead?
 - We do need to understand the Project Lead's experience and qualifications, but we are flexible as to the format that takes. You can upload a resume/CV, a bio, or another document, as long as it includes the training(s) and experience(s) that are relevant to the goals and focus of this program.

- **Question:** I understand that PACE is not looking for new programming that is starting from square one. However, if it's work that will be continued from an organization that is no longer in existence and that programming is now moving to a new organization, is that something that

would be a candidate for funding, so long as there is a clear representation that this is a continuation of previous ongoing work?

- We are looking for leaders that have already demonstrated some leadership in this work, and whose institutions have a demonstrated commitment to it. The transition of the work between organizations likely does not matter, as long as both things are still true about demonstrated experience of the organization and the leader.
- **Question:** Will you be prioritizing interfaith projects over intrafaith projects?
 - We are not placing a priority on one or the other. We know that no community is a monolith and differences exist within communities all the time. We want to understand what type of divide you are bridging, with whom, and how faith plays a role in that.
- **Question:** We've been reframing our community advocacy work as an expression of Christian faith. For faith-based organizations that are applying are there any restrictions on "advocacy" activities besides not proselytizing?
 - There are two ways to think about advocacy: education and lobbying. We adhere to the IRS guidelines of what is permissible for 501(c)(3) organizations. [Here's a resource](#) that may be helpful.
 - If your organization also has a 501(c)(4) status, you are still eligible to apply, but the funds of this program have to be restricted toward (c)(3) permissible activities and handled as such on your books.
- **Question:** Your pilot year seemed to have focused on community-based or state-based projects. Do you have a sense of whether or not it would be helpful to the Learning Community to look at some national work or programs that are leading across denominations at a national level?
 - In the pilot, we did end up gravitating more towards community-based groups where it was easier for our Advisory Committee to see how the applicant could bring together the practical application of theory, research, and practice. However, we also funded a national project. We're certainly open to national or multi-state regional projects that cover a large geographic area, so long as we can really understand and see how it will be applied to a community, however "community" is defined in your context.
- **Question:** You've described how PACE is a collaborative space that has lots of different funding partners. Can you tell us a little bit about the funding and decision-making process?
 - There are two stages in the application: the LOI stage and the proposal stage. We bifurcated the process because we know it's not a small lift to apply for grants, so we want to try to focus energy as much as possible.
 - As far as the stages of review and decision making, there are three stages.
 - Each LOI will receive two reviews in order to determine who will be invited to submit a proposal.
 - Proposals will go through a review where they'll be reviewed by three members of our Advisory Committee. The review committee will then prepare a slate of recommendations based on their collective qualitative and quantitative assessment of proposals.
 - That slate is then recommended to the PACE board of directors for their consideration and approval. A due diligence process is conducted as well.

On the Pilot Year and Learning Community:

- **Question:** Can you quantify the Project Lead's investment in the Learning Community and what type of time commitment it involves?
 - The Community meets quarterly, and we *hope* that two of those gatherings will be in-person meetings and two will be virtual gatherings.
 - The dates and locations of our in-person Learning Community meetings have not yet been determined. Our ability to convene in person is dependent on the COVID-19 pandemic; if we are unable to safely travel and gather in-person, we will meet virtually.
 - The two in-person meetings are usually a 2-3 day commitment, including travel time, depending on how far you have to travel. The two virtual meetings will be about 2-3 hours each.
 - We provide a stipend, in addition to the grant funds, to cover the cost of your time and technology to participate in the meetings, as well as to offset travel costs.

- **Question:** What are some of the lessons learned by the pilot grantees and can you share any pivots they might've made during the grant year?
 - One of the biggest pivots our grantees made in the first year had to do with the COVID-19 crisis. The nature of this work is fundamentally about building relationships, which naturally lends itself to in-person, community-based convenings. When COVID-19 hit, a lot of grantees and pilot partners pivoted to convening and collaborating online. Several said it helped them scale the number of people they could support, and helped increase the diversity of people they could engage.
 - We also heard that our grantees are asking themselves what can help move their work from relationship-building toward action (especially in the realm of advocacy and policy-making) without compromising their non-partisanship identity and commitment to bridging. This is a profound question that we'll continue to examine and as our grantees respond to changing needs and dynamic political circumstances.

- **Question:** Is there a strategy to help facilitate a dialogue between the pilot cohort of this project and the second year cohort? Will there be a mentorship relationship? Will there be best practices passed down?
 - We want the whole of this community to be larger than the sum of its parts. So we will strive to create space for fellowship and continuity between cohorts. We also want the new cohort to bond together and create their own unique experience.
 - When we design our learning community gatherings, we lean on the cohort to tell us three things: What they need right now? How do they want to be supported? How do they want to support others in the cohort?
 - We will continue to ask these questions of the pilot cohort about if/how they want to stay involved, and we will ask these questions of the new cohort as well. This will help us make sure we design an experience that is responsive to the needs of both of those groups and create programming for the community accordingly.

On Our Spirit, Intent, and More Information

- **Question:** What is the amount of the grant and how many grants does PACE expect to give out.
 - Grants can be requested for up to \$50,000 each. We will award 5 or 6 grants.

- **Question:** Does PACE anticipate there being additional funding opportunities beyond the planned three year program?
 - PACE has made a three year commitment to this program, and this (2020-2021) is year two. We will have another round of grants in 2021-2022. After the three years, we will consider what, if anything, a longer-term commitment may entail.

- **Question:** When it comes to impact, are you looking more for quantity or quality? So, for example, is it better if a program impacts a larger group of people, or a smaller group in greater depth?
 - We are looking for both. Organizations that are invited to complete a proposal will be asked to describe their anticipated impact in two dimensions: action impacts and learning impacts.
 - Action is more of a quantitative assessment: how many people will you engage and how? Learning is more of a qualitative assessment: what do you want to learn, how do you want to learn it, and why do you feel that it is valuable to learn?
 - We want you to tell us how the impact you are trying to make in both dimensions is integral to your organization and the trajectory of your work, and how it relates to the goals of this program.

- **Question:** How do you measure success? Are there key outcomes that you are looking for? Did any come out of last year's pilot cohort that might shape what you are looking for in this year's applicants?
 - In terms of projects, we're looking for organizations and leaders to communicate to us what success looks like for them; we're trying not to assume or presume what a grantee's success should be, because we know that it is very context-specific and situation-specific.
 - From our perspective in administering this program, success is being able to get a sense of what work is happening out there, how it is happening, glean best practices from it, and sparking new interest and attention to this intersection, particularly from funders.
 - We know what success means for our work, but we're really leaning on applicants to tell us what success looks like for them and how their success will help us answer the core questions of our program. That, in turn, will help us achieve the impact we are looking to have in the world. Our ability to be successful is intertwined with that of our grantees.

- **Question:** Given what's going in the world right now, is there a special emphasis on racial justice this year? Does anti-racism work qualify?
 - Yes; we deepened our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion this year. On the LOI there is a specific question that asks how DEI shows up in your work, both in spirit and in practice.
 - We're also asking more demographic questions this year, both about the Project Lead and about the organizations involved. Our hope is that by asking these demographic questions, we can have a truly diverse cohort, including racially diverse and religiously diverse as well.
 - We want to be as representative as possible in our own spirit and practice of prioritizing equity. We want to understand what you are trying to bridge, to what end, and how faith plays a role in that. So for example, if that divide is racial, you want to bridge it for

the sake of advancing justice, and you will do that by using religious teachings about the divine humanity in everyone, that's what we would want to understand.

- **Question:** Have you experienced or witnessed any stirred up interest since you've identified this as important work? Have you received any backlash from people that believe that religion and democracy need to be inherently separate?
 - We have seen interest in the project from journalists and funders, and we're excited about amplifying that interest moving forward as a way to spur more investment in this under-resourced and important work. We haven't seen any backlash, but our ongoing commitment is to deeply interrogate and understand what the relationship between faith and democracy should be, and how it can be more constructive and fruitful.

- **Question:** What is the difference between the framing questions of the program and the core questions that PACE is addressing in this year's round of applications?
 - The framing questions of the Faith In/And Democracy program are about encouraging the bridging of divides and how faith communities can be viable sites to do that. Those are big, existential, theoretical questions that animate our interest and curiosity in this initiative. One of our core funders, Lippman Kanfer Foundation for Living Torah, calls them "universal human questions." We will explore them in our Learning Community.
 - The core questions which we ask you to address in the LOI cover individual and organizational capacities needed to do this work. They are more practical and tangible. Diving into these questions in immediate, concrete ways allows us to understand how those larger, more existential questions can be made real and actionable. It's essentially how we try to balance theory and practice.

- **Question:** How do you define faith? How do you define democracy? How do you define engagement?
 - We define faith as the practice of religion or spirituality, whether organized through a formal congregation or not.
 - We define democracy as participation in a system of representative government and the practice of self-governance. [See our primer on democracy here.](#)
 - We define engagement as the process of helping people be active participants in building and strengthening their communities. [See our primer on civic engagement here.](#)

- **Question:** Who are the funders of the initiative? If we have a pre-existing relationship with them, does that influence our ability to participate?
 - The core funders of the initiative are the Democracy Fund, the Fetzer Institute, and the Lippman Kanfer Foundation for Living Torah. Having a pre-existing relationship with them neither advantages or disadvantages your ability to participate in this initiative.
 - While representatives of the funding institutions do sit on the Advisory Committee of the initiative and participate in proposal review, anyone with a relationship constituting a conflict of interest (the inability to be objective in their analysis due to pre-existing relationship or financial interest) is asked to recuse themselves from review of that proposal. All Advisors, both funders and non-funders, are asked to abide by this conflict of interest policy.

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