

# Valparaiso Project Practice Grants Program

Through its Practice Grants Program, the Valparaiso Project provides financial support for activities designed to help specific communities nurture a way of life shaped by Christian practices.

Application deadline for the final round of Practice Grants: **June 1, 2006.**

## 1 Introduction to the Practice Grants Program

### **Purpose of the Program**

The Valparaiso Practice Grants Program seeks to support projects that engage groups of people in Christian practices in ways that incorporate high degrees of intentionality, contextual awareness and theological reflection. Through this program, we seek to nurture the relational, critical, and constructive skills necessary to sustain faithful, ongoing participation in Christian practices.

The Practice Grants Program also provides the Valparaiso Project with opportunities to learn from creative leaders about strategies for strengthening teaching, learning and reflection on Christian practices in a variety of contexts. These grants aim to honor and nurture promising local work that may be inspiring and instructive to other communities.

### **Eligibility**

Valparaiso Practice Grants are available to nonprofit institutions. Congregations, campus ministries, theological schools, camps, service organizations, denominational bodies, musical ensembles, hospitals, colleges and other institutions have received grants for projects designed to strengthen Christian practices.

Valparaiso Practice Grants can also be made directly to individuals. However, we encourage individual applicants to apply through institutions if possible.

Grants support projects that:

- Involve project participants in Christian practices in conjunction with theological reflection
- Show sensitivity to the needs and the resources that exist in specific local contexts
- Bring a practices approach to bear on a significant challenge facing other American religious communities.
- Support engagement in Christian practices over a significant period of time, rather than focusing on a single event.
- Incorporate focused attention to one or more Christian practices in a way that is informed by Valparaiso Project publications.

Grants are not meant to support:

- Salaries or operating expenses beyond those specifically required by the proposed project.
- Projects that depend primarily on “outside experts”.
- The costs of group travel far from home.

Fundable projects may:

- Develop something new, or expand upon something already established that needs to be improved or shared with others.
- Be focused within a single community or involve several communities in a shared project.
- Support research and publication focused on Christian practices and the opportunities and challenges facing contemporary practitioners

### **Amount and Duration of Grants**

Grants range in size from \$1,000 to \$10,000. The number of grants awarded each year will vary depending upon the quantity, quality, and budget requests of proposals submitted during each application period.

### **Application deadline for the final round of Practice Grants: June 1, 2006.**

Applicants will receive written notification of their grant status within nine weeks of this application deadline. Typically, funds will be spent during the eighteen months following the awarding of the grants. Extensions of time may be approved by the Board upon the written request of a grantee. Additional funding will require a new proposal and will be approved only in exceptional cases.

### **Consultation**

You are welcome to discuss your project and its suitability for this grants program with **Don Richter** [[info@practicingourfaith.org](mailto:info@practicingourfaith.org)], the Associate Director of the Valparaiso Project. If you receive a grant, you will also have opportunities for consultation with Project staff and sometimes with other grantees.

### **Before Writing Your Proposal**

Your proposal will be stronger if you allow key questions to guide your preparation. As you ponder and plan, we especially encourage you to involve a project planning team in exploring the following questions:

- What *need* have we identified in our context that a practice-based project can address?
- How will the activities we're designing be informed by the approach set forth in *Practicing Our Faith* and other Valparaiso Project publications?
- What *openings* for ministry currently exist with respect to this practice? In what ways are people in our community already engaging this practice in life-giving ways?
- What *obstacles* or barriers stand in the way of people participating more fully in this practice?
- What do we envision as the *short-term* and *long-range impacts* of our project?
- What *key people* need to be involved for this project to succeed?
- What *resources*, including but not limited to funding, do we need to undertake and complete this project?
- In what forms of *theological reflection* will project participants engage? Will conversation, reading, prayer, and Bible study be part of our planning? Part of the project itself?

- What will give our project *staying power*, so that its positive effects won't be merely temporary?
- How can our project *benefit* more than our own community?
- How will we tell the *story* of what we accomplish through this project?

## 2 Developing & Submitting Your Proposal

### Part 1: Application Information Form

Determine whether to apply as an individual or as an institution. Select the appropriate Application Form below.

Whether you apply as an individual or as an institution, you will need to designate a *project director* to be responsible for managing the grant funds and submitting final program and financial reports. Include the name and contact information for this person on your Application Form.

- [Applicant Information Form for Individuals \(pdf\)](#)  
Institutions requesting funds must be tax-exempt under Section 501(c-3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Grants awarded to individuals will be reported to the Internal Revenue Service as the earned income of the project director.
- [Applicant Information Form for Institutions \(pdf\)](#)

### Part 2: Project Abstract

Complete the Project Abstract Form. We recommend that you complete this form after developing your project proposal.

- [Project Abstract Form \(pdf\)](#)

### Part 3: Project Director Qualifications

This form describes the qualifications of the person who will be chiefly responsible for leading this project. If you prefer to attach a standard resume for the Project Director, it is not necessary to use this form. If more than one person will be centrally involved in leading this project, you may submit more than one form.

- [Project Director Qualifications Form \(pdf\)](#)

### Part 4: Reference Letter

Include a one-page letter of reference from a pastor, administrator, principal, or board officer of your organization. List the name of this reference on the Applicant Information Form (above).

## Part 5: Project Proposal

Instructions: Attach a project proposal of approximately five to seven pages, double-spaced and typed, no more than 2000 words. Put your full name and a page number in the upper right-hand corner of each page. The following topics may serve as an outline to structure your proposal.

Please answer as many of these questions as possible.

- **Project Purpose:** Provide background information as necessary to explain the purpose of your project. What is the context for this project? What needs is the project designed to meet, and why do you think that the approach you are proposing promises to respond helpfully to these needs? How will your project help develop the relational, critical, and constructive skills and habits that will enable participants to sustain faithful engagement in Christian practices over time?
- **Project Activities:** What specifically do you hope to do? Who will be involved, and how?
- **Theological Reflection:** How you will you involve participants in reflecting theologically on the project, the needs it addresses, and Christian practices? How will you prepare participants for it, talk about what you are doing, and look back on it afterwards to consider what you learned?
- **Resources:** What resources, including but not limited to funding, will this venture need if it is to succeed? Think this through and be as specific as you can. Please append a concise bibliography listing books, films, or other material that will inform your project.
- **Evaluating and Sharing What You Learn:** What do you hope to learn through this project? How do you plan to evaluate the project and reflect on what you have learned? How do you intend to publicize or promote what you have learned in order to inspire or benefit others?
- **Timeline:** Propose a timeline for your project. When will preparations begin? When will key events in your project likely occur? When will your project be completed? (Note: While your larger initiative may be designed to extend beyond the formal grant period, your project as defined by this grant proposal must be completed within 18 months.)
- **Budget:** Append a line item budget for your project. List each anticipated expense for which you are requesting funding. Next to each budget line, or at the bottom of the budget page as a whole, explain clearly how you arrived at each dollar figure -- number of hours times rate of pay, number of meals times estimated cost per meal, etc.

*Note:* If your project budget exceeds your funding request, and you anticipate additional funding or in-kind contributions toward your project, please specify the expenses that

Valparaiso Project funding would cover. E.g., for a total project budget of \$15,000 with a grant request for \$7,500, identify which specific expenses would be funded by the grant.

We recommend that you organize your budget in these categories (not every project will incur expenses in each category):

1. **Project personnel** - stipends for persons within your institution who are paid to work on the proposed project
2. **Outside consultants** - fees for project work contracted with persons external to your institution
3. **Office expenses** - supplies, printing, phone, postage
4. **Print and media resources** (books, films, etc.)
5. **Publicity and Promotion**
6. **Travel expenses** - transportation and lodging
7. **Meals**
8. **Other** - additional expenditures not included in the above categories

### **Part 6: Assembling & Submitting Your Proposal**

Assemble your grant proposal in this order:

- Applicant information form (1 page)
- Project abstract (1 page)
- Project director qualifications (1 page form or resume)
- Reference letter (1 page)
- Project proposal (5-7 pages plus budget and bibliography)

Prepare **3** typed copies of the **completed grant proposal** and mail to:

**Valparaiso Project**

Linwood House

Valparaiso University

Valparaiso, IN 46383-6493

**Proposals must be mailed rather than faxed. Projects must be postmarked by the application deadline date.** We ask you to notify the Project Office by **e-mail** [pof.grant@valpo.edu], so we know that you have submitted a grant proposal.

### 3 Our Selection Process

Valparaiso Project Grants are sponsored by the Valparaiso Project on the Education and Formation of People in Faith, a project of Lilly Endowment Inc. based at Valparaiso University.

#### **The Advisory Board**

The Valparaiso Project's Grant Advisory Board meets three times each year to review proposals and award grants. The Advisory Board's five members are:

- DOROTHY C. BASS, Director of the Valparaiso Project
- SUSAN BRIEHL, ELCA pastor, author, Valparaiso Project associate
- MICHAEL COBBLER, ELCA pastor, community organizer, composer, and jazz musician
- THOMAS CUMMINGS, Institute for Church Life, University of Notre Dame
- DON C. RICHTER, Associate Director of the Valparaiso Project

#### **Selection Criteria**

Successful applications must incorporate the attention to Christian practices that is at the heart of the Valparaiso Project. We expect all applicants to have read at least one Project-sponsored book and to demonstrate in their proposals that the approach they plan to take is informed by the Project's work. Proposals for projects that stretch, expand, or contextualize these ideas for the sake of creative ministry are especially welcome.

Other questions addressed by the Grants Advisory Board include the following:

- Is theological reflection an integral part of the project?
- Is a specific community being served?
- Does the project both have a realistic short-term timeframe and show the possibility of having enduring influence?
- Might this project be instructive to other communities?
- Will funds be spent appropriately?
- Does the project director appear to be reliable?
- Have pertinent theological and intellectual resources been identified and incorporated?
- Is there evidence of institutional investment and stakeholder commitment?

#### **Reporting**

Grant recipients will be required to provide a brief summary of their work halfway through the implementation of the project.

At the project's conclusion, a complete program and financial report must be submitted to the Valparaiso Project office and a project summary posted to the **What Others Are Doing** section of [www.PracticingOurFaith.org](http://www.PracticingOurFaith.org). The final report will summarize the activities of the project, describe what was learned about Christian practices in the process, and indicate how these learnings might benefit other congregations or organizations.

Valparaiso Project Practice Grants Program  
Linwood House  
Valparaiso University  
Valparaiso IN 46383-6493

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Applicant Information Form for Individuals

#### *Contact Information*

Project Director (include title): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ SSN\* \_\_\_\_\_

\* Grants awarded to individuals will be reported as earned income to the Internal Revenue Service.

#### *Project Information*

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Grant Amount Requested: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Grant Period: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
m/d/y m/d/y

#### *Reference Information*

Name (include title): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn about this program? \_\_\_\_\_

Valparaiso Project Practice Grants Program  
Linwood House  
Valparaiso University  
Valparaiso IN 46383-6493

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Applicant Information Form for Institutions

#### *Institution Information*

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tax ID No. \_\_\_\_\_

#### *Project Information*

Project Director (include title): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Grant Amount Requested: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Grant Period: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
m/d/y m/d/y

#### *Reference Information*

Name (include title): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn about this program? \_\_\_\_\_

**Valparaiso Project Practice Grants Program**  
**Linwood House**  
**Valparaiso University**  
**Valparaiso, IN 46383-6493**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Valparaiso Project Grants Program**  
**Project Abstract**

**Project Director's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
First Middle Last

**Project Title:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Describe your project in one paragraph of 200 words or less.*

**Project Summary:**

**Valparaiso Project Practice Grants Program**  
**Linwood House**  
**Valparaiso University**  
**Valparaiso, IN 46383-6493**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Project Director Qualifications Form**

*Please tell us about the qualifications of the person who will be chiefly responsible for leading this project.*

Name of Project Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Education:

Relevant prior employment and volunteer experience:

Relation to the community you hope will benefit from the project:

Any publications or other projects that would demonstrate competence:

Other information you would like to share with us: