

Lilly Endowment Inc. announces second round of *Pathways for Tomorrow* grants

BY JO ANN DEASY

Lilly Endowment Inc. has announced plans to offer a second round of grants as part of the Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative. The additional offerings will include individual grants—expanding the program to reach more ATS accredited schools—and more collaborative grants designed to explore projects with the potential to inform new, more sustainable, and effective models of theological education to prepare pastors and congregational lay leaders in the United States and Canada.

While many of the first round *Pathways* projects focused on new programs, this second round will also include more opportunities for institutional capacity building, particularly related to financial sustainability. Grants in this second round of the Initiative could total more than \$300 million.

The second round of *Pathways* will include three phases: (1) assessment and planning grants, (2) individual grants, and (3) collaborative grants. The assessment and planning grants as well as the individual grants are open to all ATS accredited schools in the United States and Canada who did not receive Phase 2 grants during the first round of the Initiative. **Non-competitive assessment and planning grants** of up to \$50,000 will be available through the *Pathways for Tomorrow* Coordination Program hosted by ATS and the In Trust Center for Theological Schools. These grants are designed to help schools as



they prepare proposals for individual grants as part of the Initiative. **The deadlines to apply for planning grants are December 19, 2024, and January 31, 2025.**

All ATS accredited schools who did not receive Phase 2 grants during the first round of the Initiative are also eligible to apply to the Endowment for **individual implementation grants** of up to \$1 million. These grants are being offered for schools to explore emerging challenges and opportunities, to gain clarity about their missions, to assess the effectiveness of their financial and educational strategies, to design and implement projects to address these challenges and opportunities, and to build institutional capacities for their schools' continued preparation and support of pastors and congregational lay ministers. **The deadline to apply for individual implementation grants is May 15, 2025.**

More information about assessment and planning grants as well as individual implementation grants, including links to apply, can be found on the [Lilly Endowment Inc. website](#).

The Endowment will also host two information sessions—Monday, December 9, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. ET or Tuesday, December 17, from 3 to 4:30 p.m. ET—to share more about both the assessment and planning grants and the individual implementation grants.

In 2022, Lilly Endowment Inc. offered collaborative grants to 16 ATS accredited schools of \$5 to \$8 million for large-scale endeavors designed to strengthen the financial and educational capacities of networks within their broad ecologies. The grants were for recipients to prepare and support pastoral leaders into the future and to offer compelling and sustainable models that, if successful, could be adopted by other theological schools and collaborating organizations. In 2025, the Endowment will expand this program by offering as many as **35 large-scale collaborative grants** of up to \$10 million each.

Concept papers for collaborative grants are due March 5, 2025.

In this second round of collaborative grants, the Endowment is especially interested in the following types of endeavors:

- Mergers/consolidations between two or more schools
- New financing models/structures for theological schools
- Shared funds and/or endowments to support scholarships for ministerial candidates or to support the operations of multiple theological schools
- Large-scale collaborations between theological schools and denominational agencies
- Shared facilities/operations between schools and/or other institutions
- Collaborations to identify and prepare future faculty for theological schools
- Other compelling large-scale collaborative endeavors

More information about the collaborative grants, including how to apply, can be found on the [Lilly Endowment Inc. website](#).

The Endowment will also be hosting information sessions on Friday, December 13, from 3 to 4:30 p.m. ET or Monday, December 16, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. ET about the collaborative grants.

This second round of the *Pathways for Tomorrow* Initiative will be supported by the *Pathways for Tomorrow* Coordination Program hosted by ATS and the In Trust Center. Through the Coordination Program, both organizations will provide resources and support to schools as they apply for, receive, and implement their grants. For more information, please see the [Pathways for Tomorrow coordination page](#) or contact the ATS Coordination Program (pathways@ats.edu).

We are grateful for Lilly Endowment Inc.'s ongoing investment in graduate theological education as a way to prepare and support pastoral and lay leaders for congregational ministry and for their vision to expand pathways to the future for ATS member schools.

Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based, private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly Sr. and sons J.K. Jr. and Eli through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. While those gifts remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, the Endowment is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff, and location. In keeping with the founders' wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education, and religion and maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana.



PATHWAYS
for TOMORROW
Coordination Program



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