



Program Development Grants

Invitation for Applications

Deadline: November 22, 2024

The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) invites colleges and universities that are members of its Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE) and that meet certain other requirements to apply for grant support to develop, expand, or otherwise strengthen existing campus programs for vocational reflection, exploration, and discernment.

The Opportunity

Colleges and universities that are members of NetVUE are already committed to campus activities that encourage vocational exploration by students. These institutions are making significant investments of their own resources to develop and sustain vocational exploration initiatives. In order to support NetVUE member campuses in their work, Lilly Endowment Inc. has provided funding to CIC to be used for NetVUE Program Development Grants. Many NetVUE campus leaders have observed that grants for program development at even modest levels will enable their institutions to strengthen and expand existing programs.

**The Council of Independent Colleges is grateful to
Lilly Endowment Inc. for its generous support of this program.**

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NetVUE Program Development Grants may be requested in amounts ranging from \$40,000 to \$60,000 for use over two years to deepen, expand, or otherwise strengthen vocation programs that are already underway (including those planned or initiated through recently completed NetVUE Professional Development Awards). Grant funds may be used for a variety of purposes, but some expenses are ineligible for grant support; for details, grant writers are expected to consult the Grant Budget Guidelines document on the NetVUE website.

A wide range of proposals that augment existing programs in vocational reflection and discernment will be considered. Examples of initiatives that might be proposed include:

- Mini-grants to support released time for faculty members or instructional staff to design or revise courses so as to include greater engagement with vocational reflection;
- A program that brings faculty members into partnership with administrative staff (from, for example, career services, student life, or campus ministry) for vocational exploration in advising, mentoring, and/or experiential learning opportunities;
- A project to integrate reflection on calling and vocational discernment into an institution's general education requirements, or to help specific academic departments infuse this work into their major or minor field requirements; and
- Released time for one or more project leaders to coordinate grant-funded activities.

Grants will be awarded based on proposals that explain (a) the purpose and goals of the proposed activities and their relationship to the ongoing vocational exploration program of the institution; (b) the extent of institutional support for vocational exploration efforts to date; (c) the proposed enhancements to existing programs, including specific goals for these efforts; and (d) the ways in which NetVUE-supported initiatives would be sustained by the institution after the grant period. *Programs consisting mainly of direct financial support for students in the form of internships, scholarships, or stipends will be considered only if the institution can confidently demonstrate how it will sustain the proposed programs after the grant period.*

Eligibility and Funding Timeline

All NetVUE member colleges and universities are eligible to apply for funding, as long as they do not hold a NetVUE Vocation across the Academy grant or a NetVUE Professional Development Award at the time of application, and any prior Program Development Grants were concluded no later than June 2022. **Note:** if an institution currently holds a Grant for Fostering Leadership for Communities of Faith and/or a Grant for Reframing the Institutional Saga, it is still eligible to apply for this grant; however, the application must demonstrate that staffing and other resources are adequately distributed to allow both projects to succeed. Ordinarily, this will require that the projects be directed by distinct leadership teams.

This is the twelfth round of selection for NetVUE Program Development Grants. In the first eleven rounds, CIC awarded 228 grants to NetVUE member institutions. The application deadline is **November 22, 2024**. Decisions will be announced in March 2025. Funds will be disbursed in two equal payments: the first half in May 2025, and the second half in May 2026 (following the approval of an interim report). Spending must be completed by April 30, 2027.

Expectations of Grant Recipients

If awarded a NetVUE Program Development Grant, the institution will agree to:

- Submit a written progress report to CIC by March 31, 2026—that is, toward the end of the first year of grant activities;
- Provide final narrative and financial reports to CIC by June 15, 2027, over the signature of the president or chief academic officer, which describe the outcomes of the project, indicate the degree to which project goals were met, reflect on the effectiveness of the initiatives, and chart directions for the future;
- Participate in efforts by CIC and NetVUE to assess grant-funded activities, including (but not limited to) surveys, virtual focus groups, and gatherings of grant directors, making use of the data that will be supplied from these activities (as well as from internal assessment efforts) in grant reports, in order to document the degree to which project goals were met and initiatives proved effective;
- Permit the inclusion of information about its project in CIC and NetVUE publications;
- Be willing to share—at future NetVUE Conferences and gatherings, and by means of a one-page summary to be posted on the NetVUE website—what the institution has learned through its grant-supported activities;
- Identify the funded activities as supported by the Council of Independent Colleges and Lilly Endowment Inc. in all project materials and publicity;
- Maintain membership in NetVUE throughout the grant period (minimally, calendar years 2025–2027); and
- Send a campus team headed by the president, chief academic officer, or another officer at the vice-presidential level to the next national NetVUE Conference (keeping in mind that three-person teams attend with only a nominal registration fee; costs for accommodation and meals are waived).

Application Guidelines

Proposals should be submitted online as a single document. For the benefit of grant reviewers, please use a standard 12-point font with reasonable margins, such that the proposal may be printed if necessary. It should consist of the following elements:

An Executive Summary of the Proposal (one page maximum)

A Brief Public Description of the project (120 words maximum), which will be posted on the NetVUE website if the project is funded; examples may be found in the listings of previously awarded grants on the website.

A Four- to Five-Page Narrative that provides, *in clearly marked sections*, the following:

- A description of current vocational exploration programs on campus (including an estimate of the amount of ongoing annual expenditures for these programs), as well as an account of the institution’s understanding of vocation in relation to its mission and how this understanding guides the current program and its proposed development;
- A description of both the challenges and the opportunities that the grant would address in the institution’s program for the exploration of vocation;
- A statement of project goals that can be referenced and assessed—both during and at the end of the grant period—to evaluate project success;
- A description of proposed activities during the grant period;
- A description of the institution’s strategy for encouraging broad participation across demographic and socio-economic categories, and for building institutional capacity to promote vocation-related work among underrepresented, disadvantaged, or marginalized groups;
- A statement of the institution’s willingness to share—at future NetVUE Conferences and gatherings, and by means of a one-page summary to be posted on the NetVUE website—what the institution has learned through its grant-supported activities;
- A description of how the institution will continue the enhanced vocation initiative after the grant period; and
- A plan for assessment and evaluation of the project’s goals and objectives both during and at the end of the grant period, describing the assessment instruments that will be used to evaluate the degree to which each program element met its stated goals.

A One-Page Project Timeline

A One-Page Roster that lists the names and contact information for (a) the principal project leader (this person should be directly involved in grant-funded activities and is expected to be named as the primary contact if a grant is awarded); (b) the senior (cabinet-level) administrator who will oversee the project; (c) the project’s other leaders, including short descriptions of their qualifications for the specified roles; and (d) other individuals who will help carry out the project, including a one-sentence description of each person’s role. If the institution currently holds another NetVUE grant, the roster should make clear how staffing responsibilities and other resources are to be distributed in ways that would allow both projects to succeed.

A Concise Budget (typically two to three pages), as an Excel spreadsheet. It should describe the main expense categories, including programmatic expenses, faculty and staff stipends or released time, honoraria for speakers, meals and travel for meetings, and costs of materials and supplies. If the institution is contributing financial support to the project, the budget should also list this support in a separate column. (Such contributions are not required for this grant, but they can help to demonstrate the institution’s commitment to supporting the project.) Please format the budget for printing; see the guidelines above concerning font sizes and

margins. **Note:** Applicants are expected to follow rigorously the rules about eligible expenses and the construction of the budget, which are provided in the *Grant Budget Guidelines* document on the NetVUE website. This important document provides answers to frequently asked questions and a sample budget; please study it carefully in the construction of the budget.

A Letter of Support from the president indicating the institution's commitment to the proposed project and to sustaining it—not only during the grant period, but beyond it as well (and briefly describing plans for doing so). In addition, the letter should designate a member of the president's cabinet to provide oversight for the project. Finally, it should affirm the institution's plan to continue NetVUE membership throughout the grant period and to send a campus team headed by the president, chief academic officer, or another cabinet-level officer to the next national NetVUE Conference.

Application Deadline

The application deadline is **November 22, 2024**. Proposals should be submitted electronically with supporting materials as a single document at www.cic.edu/NetVUEgrant. Only applications submitted electronically will be considered.

Questions?

Questions about NetVUE Program Development Grants should be addressed to Carter Aikin, NetVUE grants director, at caikin@cic.edu or (217) 854-5619.