



ACLS LEADING EDGE FELLOWSHIP

Project:	Reporting on Faith and Religion in Pittsburgh Amid the Pandemic
Organization:	PublicSource
Location:	Pittsburgh, PA [Fellow will work remotely]
Stipend:	\$60,000 per year, plus health insurance and professional development funding
Start Date:	January or February 2021

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

PublicSource inspires critical thinking and bold ideas about Pittsburgh through journalism rooted in facts, diverse voices and pursuit of transparency. The PublicSource newsroom—founded in 2011—is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, digital-first media organization dedicated to serving Pittsburgh and the region. We are an organization of 14 people, 12 of whom are journalists. PublicSource covers K-12 education, local government, economic development, the environment, health and public safety. We tell stories for a better Pittsburgh. To learn more about PublicSource, visit <https://www.publicsource.org/>.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on religious communities and institutions in the Pittsburgh area. In just a few months, the churches, schools, temples and other places of worship have had to pivot and figure out how to reimagine Sunday schools, sermons, Ramadan celebrations, baptism ceremonies, and funerals. In Pittsburgh, changing markets and coronavirus shutdowns in March led to a halt of distribution for a 166-year-old Diocese of Pittsburgh publication, shrinking congregations and shut down parishes.

Through a project based in journalism and research, the Leading Edge Fellow will play key role as we devise ways to measure the impact on the sense of religious identity in our area. (A background in journalism will not be required. The fellow will be mentored and supported by the PublicSource team on this aspect of the project.) Some of the questions the fellow will explore with our team include: How are religious institutions managing (or not) to preserve and foster faith and religious identity in the times of the pandemic in the Pittsburgh region? How has the pandemic affected the physical footprint of religious institutions? And, what social issues (e.g. child care and senior isolation amid COVID-19, race relations, addiction recovery, etc.) are religious institutions expanding into or adjusting their work to because of the pandemic?

The fellow's research, analysis, and reporting will serve a large population of the Pittsburgh region who are engaged with places of worship and religious concepts at a time when the pandemic is isolating many from their communities and information gaps are broadening. The fellowship tenure is 12 consecutive months, with an expected time commitment of approximately 40 hours per week.

This position is *only* available through the Leading Edge Fellowship program.
You may *not* contact the host institution to inquire about this position.

Responsibilities and tasks:

- Assess the landscape of religious institutions in the region, conduct meaningful in-depth interviews (remotely) with stakeholders across denominations and then write for the public about what they have learned, while providing deeper context
- Building on this work, conduct research, data gathering, remote interviews, story pitches, and journalistic articles (under the guidance of experienced editors)
- Each month, produce two stories that will be published on PublicSource.org
- Research and recruit people to write first-person essays, in consultation with editors
- Following a few months of reporting, conceive of, plan and execute one signature journalistic project; this project will include multiple stories, data and visual elements among other multimedia, and will be completed in partnership with other journalists on the team
- Participate in or host panels and webinars, as opportunities arise

Qualifications:

- PhD in any field of the humanistic social sciences, so long as the applicant's research contributes to the scholarship and understanding of religion, theology, or ethics. Read more about eligible fields [here](#).
- Strong research skills with ability to locate appropriate people and databases
- Capacity to communicate clearly and effectively, in oral and written form; if selected, finalists will be asked for two writing samples, which need not be journalistic in nature
- Experience in or desire to speak on panels or on webinars
- Experience engaging with stakeholders in politically sensitive and culturally diverse settings
- Ability to perform job duties with high degree of initiative, professionalism and solution-oriented mindset
- Ability to work under time pressure, meet deadlines, and prioritize tasks

APPLICATIONS

- Information on the Leading Edge Fellowship Program: <https://www.acls.org/Competitions-and-Deadlines/Leading-Edge-Fellowships>
- All applications must be submitted through the ACLS Online Fellowship Application System (ofa.acls.org)
- Application deadline: 9pm EST, November 2, 2020

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