



ACLS Graduate Internships on the Spiritual Infrastructure of the Future 2026

Project Organization	Quaker Action for Migrant Justice American Friends Service Committee
Location	Philadelphia, PA
Stipend	\$15,400
Duration	9 weeks, Summer 2026

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

Guided by the Quaker belief in the divine light of each person, the [American Friends Service Committee](#) (AFSC) works with communities and partners of all faiths worldwide to challenge unjust systems and promote lasting peace by nurturing the seeds of change and respect for human life to fundamentally transform our societies and institutions. AFSC has three strategic program goals: Just and Sustainable Peace—building conditions for peace, protecting civic space, upholding human dignity and rights, and reducing reliance on criminalization; Just Economies—supporting community initiatives for food justice, housing rights, and sustainable incomes while challenging inequality and corporate abuse; and Just Responses to Forced Displacement & Migration—working for a world where all people have the power to determine where they live by addressing migration drivers and supporting migrants and refugees.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Quaker Action for Just Migration project will establish a network of Quaker congregations committed to acting for migrant justice in direct alignment with AFSC's mission and strategic goals, joining together those experienced in the work and those new to it. Members of the Quaker Action for Just Migration Network will share, learn, and support each other in activism to ensure the rights, safety, and dignity of migrant communities in the US. The fellow will contribute to communications and community engagement work in establishing and growing this network. The fellow will support the supervisor, AFSC's Director of Quaker Engagement, in a number of project activities, including recruiting Quaker congregations to join the Quaker Action for Migration Justice Network (QAMJN) through in-person and online presentations with Quaker audiences, collaborating with AFSC's Director of Migration Justice and relevant staff working on migration justice in NH, NJ, CO, CA, OR, and FL to identify ways to engage Quakers in AFSC's local program work. The fellow will distribute project-related materials (posters, brochures, etc.) to Quaker communities by mail and develop a plan with AFSC's Director of Quaker Engagement to transfer management of the network and data collected. The internship appointment is for 9 consecutive weeks, with an expected time commitment of approximately 37.5 hours per week.

Key Responsibilities:

- Outreach to Quaker Community: Maintain a database of relevant stakeholders and representatives from Quaker communities.
- Conduct exploratory research on current work being done within Quaker communities/congregations.
- In collaboration with members of QAMJN, develop a set of goals for the network.
- Host regular meetings with representatives from QAMJN Quaker congregations to generate organizing for collective action and impact.
- Produce a project webpage, featuring participating congregations and an FAQ.
- Gather and begin posting educational resources for the webpage and write 1-2 short articles which give guidance for effective activism using examples from Quaker communities.

Qualifications:

- PhD student in any field of the humanities or humanistic social sciences, with a dissertation/research focus on the study of religion. Read more about eligible fields [here](#).

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- Experience with community outreach and/or interest in developing skills/experience in community engagement.
- Ability to organize, plan ahead, and prioritize multiple tasks while meeting deadlines.
- Comfort and appreciation for working in a diverse and inclusive work environment.
- Respect for Quaker values and testimonies, and knowledge of the American Friends Service Committee's principles and philosophy, including non-violence and the belief in the intrinsic worth of every individual across cultural, ethnic, racial, gender, and religious differences.

Preferred

- Interest in migration justice and faith-based community organizing.
- Facilitation skills and/or experience.
- Confidence with using Microsoft Office Suite software (including Word, PowerPoint, Teams, Outlook, and Excel) and a willingness to learn how to develop digital content for a webpage.

APPLICATIONS

- Information on the Graduate Internships on the Spiritual Infrastructure of the Future Program: <https://www.acls.org/competitions/acls-graduate-internships-on-the-spiritual-infrastructure-of-the-future/>
- All applications must be submitted through the ACLS Online Fellowship Application System (ofa.acls.org).
- Application deadline: **Wednesday, January 14, 2026, 9 PM EST.**



ACLS Graduate Internships on the Spiritual Infrastructure of the Future 2026

Project Organization	Mapping and Strengthening Muslim Spiritual Infrastructure in Minnesota CAIR-MN
Location	Minneapolis, MN
Stipend	\$15,400
Duration	9 weeks, Summer 2026

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

[CAIR-MN](#)'s mission is to enhance the understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding. Since 2007, CAIR-MN has served as a leading voice for civil rights and religious freedom in Minnesota, advocating for Muslim communities and building cross-cultural partnerships. The organization addresses challenges faced by Minnesota's diverse Muslim population, with a focus on East African/Black Muslim communities who experience disproportionately high rates of Islamophobia. Through civil rights advocacy, media engagement, civic participation, and diversity training, CAIR-MN works to ensure that Muslim communities are fully included in Minnesota's social and political life.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The fellow will be integrated into CAIR-MN's Research and Advocacy team, working closely with senior staff and community partners to ensure the project supports CAIR-MN's long-term efforts to strengthen community resilience and expand public understanding of Minnesota's Muslim communities. Using a mixed-methods approach, the fellow will carry out a study that brings together both qualitative and quantitative data, designed to lead to a curated collection of texts. This will include mapping the institutions that shape daily life for Minnesota's Muslim communities, such as mosques, Islamic schools, community centers, and cultural organizations. These spaces provide much more than worship. They are where families find support, young people build identity, and community members access education, health resources, and immigrant services. Alongside this mapping, the fellow will conduct oral histories and interviews, administer surveys, and analyze community needs. This project will document and strengthen the spiritual infrastructure of Minnesota's Muslim communities, with a particular focus on East African/Black Muslims. The fellow will also engage in public-facing work by helping to develop an online, publicly accessible directory of spiritual and community resources, helping draft policy recommendations in areas such as mosque and community security, religious accommodations in schools and workplaces, and equitable access to public services, and organizing community workshops to share findings. This work directly supports CAIR-MN's mission by generating data-driven insights to inform advocacy, strengthen community resilience, and expand public understanding of Minnesota's Muslim communities in the broader context of religious change in the U.S. The internship appointment is for 9 consecutive weeks, with an expected time commitment of approximately 37.5 hours per week.

Key Responsibilities:

- Contribute to a comprehensive mapping report of Minnesota's Muslim spiritual infrastructure, with a focus on East African/Black Muslim communities.
- Collect and organize oral histories, community narratives, and survey data that will serve as the foundation for a longer-term anthology project.
- Support community workshops and presentations to share preliminary findings and foster dialogue.
- Assist in drafting policy recommendations that build on CAIR-MN's ongoing priorities, including mosque security and religious accommodations.
- Lay the groundwork for a public online directory of spiritual and community resources that CAIR-MN will continue to develop beyond the internship.

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Qualifications:

- PhD student in any field of the humanities or humanistic social sciences, with a dissertation/research focus on the study of religion. Read more about eligible fields [here](#).
- Strong research skills in qualitative methods, such as interviews, oral histories, and ethnographic approaches.
- Ability to work with basic quantitative tools, such as survey design, data entry, and simple descriptive analysis.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills.
- Experience or interest in working with Muslim and immigrant communities.
- Commitment to equity and cultural responsiveness in research.

Preferred

- Experience with public communication or community-engaged scholarship, especially making research accessible to wider audiences.
- Interest or experience in oral history collection, storytelling, or ethnographic research.
- Familiarity with basic web design or digital platforms for creating public-facing resources.
- Proficiency in Somali, Arabic, or another language spoken within Minnesota's Muslim communities is helpful but not required. We value alignment with our mission work and those with expressed interest in community engagement. A translator will be provided for the fellow in situations where they do not have language proficiency.

APPLICATIONS

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ACLS Graduate Internships on the Spiritual Infrastructure of the Future 2026

Project Organization	Discerning Our Way Forward: A Spiritual Toolkit for Justice Leaders Coalition for Spiritual and Public Leadership
Location	Chicago, IL
Stipend	\$15,400
Duration	9 weeks, Summer 2026

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

The [Coalition for Spiritual & Public Leadership](#) is a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-generational, spiritually-rooted organization that labors to transform racial, economic, social and environmental systemic structures through grassroots coalition building, community organizing, and liberative formation. As a Catholic and Christian-rooted community organizing coalition, we focus on two primary components within our work. The first is to train, form, and equip grassroots Catholic leaders with the tools of community organizing to create change in their communities. We do this by merging liberation theology, Catholic Social Teaching, and the historical Jesus into a formation program that is spiritually grounded. Within training and formation, we also equip leaders with spiritual tools and practices that can help elevate and sustain their interior lives for justice work. We believe that when we are spiritually grounded and disciplined, our work for justice is sharper. The second part of our work is the action - running campaigns, conducting power analysis, conducting listening sessions, meeting with elected officials.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The intern will report to the Director of Training and Formation and will lead a participatory research project in collaboration with grassroots Catholic community members to explore how spiritual discernment can better support justice-oriented leaders in decision-making, collective action, and resilience. Rooted in the belief that sustainable justice leadership must be spiritually grounded, this project seeks to understand how discernment is currently practiced by Catholic organizers and community leaders and how it can be deepened and reimaged in community.

The intern will combine theological research with qualitative data collection to develop a practical Spiritual Discernment Toolkit for leaders and organizers. Drawing from a range of Christian traditions, including Ignatian, Benedictine, Carmelite, Franciscan, Dominican, women religious, and early Christian sources, the fellow will examine how historical models of discernment can speak to the lived realities of today's movement leaders. The research process will involve conducting interviews and story circles with grassroots Catholic leaders, including organizers, pastoral ministers, and lay leaders. These conversations will explore key questions such as:

- How do leaders currently practice discernment in their justice work?
- What spiritual tools, questions, and traditions help or hinder clarity and courage in moments of risk, tension, or transition?
- What does collective discernment look like in community organizing settings?
- How can Christian discernment traditions be adapted to meet the emotional, political, and spiritual complexity of grassroots leadership?
- What supports are most needed to counter burnout and cultivate resilience?

The intern will synthesize these insights into a practical toolkit that includes frameworks for discernment, reflection prompts, prayer practices, and strategies for group decision-making. This resource will be designed in collaboration with community partners to ensure accessibility and cultural relevance. The internship appointment is for 9 consecutive weeks, with an expected time commitment of approximately 37.5 hours per week.

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Key Responsibilities:

- Conduct an overview on Christian discernment traditions (e.g., Ignatian discernment of spirits, Benedictine practices, communal decision-making, Carmelite interior silence, Franciscan embodiment of mission, Dominican theological reflection, the early Christian monastic practice of silence, women religious models, and other cultural models of discernment).
- Design and facilitate listening sessions or interviews with 20-40 grassroots Catholic leaders, parishioners, students, and organizers. Fellow will travel to member parishes, organizations, and universities throughout Chicago, which has a robust public transportation system.
- Attend organizing meetings and workshops across the organization to gain a broader understanding of CSPL's work.
- Synthesize findings into themes that integrate lived experiences of discernment with theological traditions.
- Collaboratively design and test a draft Spiritual Discernment Toolkit with community partners, tailored to justice work, staff burnout, and collective decision-making.
- Deliver a final report summarizing findings and offering actionable recommendations for strengthening discernment amongst grassroots leaders.
- Present the toolkit in a community session or mini-workshop to leaders and staff.

Qualifications:

- PhD student in any field of the humanities or humanistic social sciences, with a dissertation/research focus on the study of religion. Read more about eligible fields [here](#).
- Deep knowledge of Christian theology and spirituality, particularly Catholic traditions.
- Experience in culturally sensitive qualitative research (e.g., interviews, focus groups, oral histories).
- Ability to clearly translate complex theological or historical concepts for diverse audiences.
- Commitment to social justice and solidarity with marginalized communities.
- Strong written and oral communication skills, with sensitivity to intergenerational and intercultural dynamics, and timely, professional follow-up with stakeholders.
- Skilled in collaborative work with community members, organizers, and staff; able to facilitate group conversations with humility and respect.
- Flexibility to meet community members at their convenience (including evenings/weekends).
- Access to a car or comfort with public transit for travel in the Chicagoland area.
- Highly self-motivated, professional, and solution-oriented; able to work under pressure, meet deadlines, and prioritize tasks effectively.

APPLICATIONS

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ACLS Graduate Internships on the Spiritual Infrastructure of the Future 2026

Project Organization	Developing AI for Interfaith Literacy and Dialogue Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies, Inc.
Location	Remote
Stipend	\$14,000
Duration	9 weeks, Summer 2026

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

The [Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies](#) (ICJS) is an independent, educational nonprofit advancing interreligious dialogue and understanding in order to build and sustain a multireligious democracy in the United States. Through educational programming, public-facing scholarship, and relationship-centered fellowships and workshops, ICJS models a new conversation in the public square that affirms religious diversity and creates opportunities for participants to practice the art of interreligious dialogue. Our audiences include the general public, civic leaders, teachers, chaplains, clergy, congregational leaders, seminarians, librarians, museum professionals, and higher-ed faculty.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

ICJS will be launching a planning and development project to explore how a large language model (LLM) can be ethically adapted to facilitate nuanced, respectful, and accurate interfaith dialogue that dismantles religious bias and builds interfaith understanding. As generative AI becomes a common tool for answering interreligious questions, there is an urgent need to ensure these technologies promote understanding rather than reinforce religious bias and bigotry.

With the public launch of ChatGPT in 2022, generative AI entered a new phase of accessibility and public influence. People from various sectors use AI—including faith communities, religious denominations, and interfaith practitioners. While AI tools are increasingly used to answer religious questions, current applications focus on either 1) transmitting insider beliefs to other religious insiders, or 2) religious conversion. Currently, generative AI is not designed to increase interreligious understanding or to facilitate dialogical encounters with religious differences.

This project addresses a critical gap: the need for AI technologies that promote nuanced understanding across religious boundaries. Current Large Language Models (LLMs) flatten religious diversity, overgeneralize traditions, and prioritize shared values over substantive differences. If left unchecked, these technologies could exacerbate religious stereotyping, misrepresentation, and even deepen isolation in more homogenous or digitally dependent communities. With this project, we seize a transformational, field-shaping opportunity to ethically shape LLMs that reflect the values of interreligious learning, including respecting religious differences and prioritizing the capacity to dialogue around those differences.

The 2026 intern will be working on phase one of a three-phase project. This is the “Plan and Convene” phase. During this phase, ICJS will convene an interdisciplinary cohort of interfaith religious scholars, technologists, and ethicists to assess the current state of LLMs and define core values. We will then write a white paper on the state of interfaith literacy on existing LLMs and current limitations as it pertains to interfaith dialogue.

The white paper will help establish internal evaluation metrics for phase two (development and testing). The intern will be assisting the project manager with all aspects of phase one, including reviews of relevant technical literature, experimenting with current LLMs, and establishing internal evaluation metrics. The internship appointment is for 9 consecutive weeks, with an expected time commitment of approximately 37.5 hours per week.

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Key Responsibilities:

- *Explore LLMs*: Become familiar with existing current LLMs and what answers they provide to questions regarding faith, religion, or interreligious issues.
- *Prepare Literature Review*: With supervisor guidance, prepare and review the existing academic literature on Large Language Models (LLMs) and any of the following: faith, religion, interreligious studies.
- *Identify Experts*: Work with the project manager to identify technologists, ethicists, and religious studies scholars to invite to a Phase One convening where they will develop internal evaluation metrics for the development and testing phase.
- *Recruit and Onboard Experts*: With project manager, invite and engage technologists, ethicists, and religious studies scholars to Phase One and engage this group of professionals in their initial inquiry.
- *Assist with White Paper*: Contribute to a white paper on the state of interfaith literacy on existing LLMs.

Qualifications:

- PhD student in any field of the humanities or humanistic social sciences, with a dissertation/research focus on the study of religion. Read more about eligible fields [here](#).
- Capacity to communicate clearly and effectively, in oral and written form; if selected, finalists may be asked for writing samples.
- Ability to perform job duties with high degree of initiative and professionalism.
- Ability to meet deadlines and prioritize tasks.

Preferred

- Interest or experience with interfaith / interreligious engagement.
- Familiarity or interest in digital humanities, AI, or LLMs.

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Project	Reviving Pluralism: Charting the Next Chapter of an American Tradition
Organization	Interfaith America
Location	Chicago, IL
Stipend	\$15,400
Duration	9 weeks, Summer 2026

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

[Interfaith America](#) is a national nonprofit organization based in Chicago. We believe that religious diversity is a foundational American strength, and we are building a nation that achieves that promise for the common good. Our mission is to activate leaders to build an interfaith America. We leverage our expertise in interfaith leadership in different sectors in American life, activating a public discourse on pluralism with a focus on higher education, workplaces, and civic partners. IA activates leaders and institutions in these sectors with the tools and resources they need to positively engage religious diversity for the common good.

At Interfaith America, we are ever-adapting and changing. We look for people who set audacious goals and love that one workday may not be like the next. We have a strong commitment to pluralism and building bridges across deep differences. Our programs help people build skills to bridge deep ideological divides. Our work is about staying in relationship with one another and contributing to the common good even when we might disagree on fundamental things.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Today, questions about how people of different identities and divergent ideologies can live together are more urgent than ever. Pluralism—respect for diverse identities and divergent ideologies, mutually inspiring relationships between diverse communities, and cooperation across difference for the common good—is a distinctly American tradition, shaped by thinkers such as Jane Addams, Horace Kallen, Alain Locke, John Courtney Murray, John Rawls, Diana Eck, and Danielle Allen. It has long served as both a philosophical ideal and a practical framework for democratic life in a diverse society. This project seeks to carry that tradition forward by convening today’s leading voices to explore how pluralism can respond to contemporary tensions and strengthen the civic fabric of American democracy.

The ACLS Graduate Intern will play a key role in a new initiative from Interfaith America that aims to recover, extend, and publicly engage the rich intellectual and civic traditions of pluralism in American life. Working closely with Interfaith America’s higher education team, the fellow will help support a national initiative that brings together scholars, public intellectuals, and civic leaders to examine pluralism’s philosophical, historical, and practical dimensions. The project includes a series of both small and public gatherings, a curated editorial process leading toward an edited compilation, and contributions to public-facing discourse on pluralism. These efforts will catalyze deeper engagement with pluralism as both an academic field and a civic imperative, shaping discourse and practice across higher education and American public life. The internship appointment is for 9 consecutive weeks, with an expected time commitment of approximately 37.5 hours per week.

Key Responsibilities:

- Conduct targeted research on pluralism and religious diversity, with particular attention to higher education and key thought leaders in the field.
- Assist in strategic planning, logistics, and communications for virtual and in-person convenings.
- Document key insights from convenings and contribute to internal memos and public-facing summaries.
- Support the development of public scholarship, including articles, opinion pieces, and digital content.

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- Contribute to preliminary editorial work and research for a future journal issue or edited scholarly volume.
- Collaborate with the higher education team to integrate project insights into campus-based pluralism initiatives.
- Attend relevant meetings to gain a broader understanding of Interfaith America's work.
- Write two project-related essays for IA Magazine.

Qualifications:

- PhD student in any field of the humanities or humanistic social sciences, with a dissertation/research focus on the study of religion. Read more about eligible fields [here](#).
- Strong qualitative research and analytical skills.
- Exceptional organizational and communication skills, including clear and effective writing; if selected, finalists will be asked for writing samples.
- Ability to work collaboratively and independently in a professional environment.
- Interest in issues related to pluralism, democracy, and higher education.
- Experience engaging others in culturally, politically and religiously diverse and intellectually rigorous settings.

APPLICATIONS

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ACLS Graduate Internships on the Spiritual Infrastructure of the Future 2026

Project Organization	Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women Jewish Women's Archive
Location	Newton, MA
Stipend	\$15,400
Duration	9 weeks, Summer 2026

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

The [Jewish Women's Archive](#) (JWA) is a national organization dedicated to collecting and promoting the extraordinary stories of Jewish women and gender-expansive people. JWA explores the past as a framework for understanding the issues important to women today; inspires young people with remarkable role models; and uses Jewish women's stories to excite people to see themselves as agents of change.

JWA is the world's largest collection of information on Jewish women. Each year, millions of people of all ages, genders, and backgrounds, from more than 230 countries, engage with and rely on JWA's resources. JWA hosts [public programs](#); trains the thought leaders of tomorrow through the [Rising Voices Fellowship](#) and [Pomegranate Writing Fellowship for Jewish Women of Color](#); sparks conversation with its [blog](#), [podcast](#), and social media presence; and is a leading voice in feminist and Jewish spheres.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The online [Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women](#) is one of JWA's flagship projects. First published in 1997 as *Jewish Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*, edited by pioneering historians of Jewish women Paula Hyman and Deborah Dash Moore, it was later expanded as *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*, edited by Paula Hyman and Dalia Ofer and published on CD-ROM in 2006. In 2009, it was made freely available on the JWA website; a new, expanded, and renamed edition was launched in 2021. The Encyclopedia, which currently includes 2283 entries, now receives nearly 2.5 million page views each year from scholars, teachers, students, genealogists, and religious leaders of all faiths and genders, from more than 200 countries around the world. It is used broadly by rabbis, cantors, Jewish educators, and members of other faith communities in preparing sermons, lesson plans, study groups, and more. Entries on Biblical women are consistently among the pages with the highest traffic.

Moving forward, JWA is updating and adding to the Encyclopedia on an ongoing basis, with a particular emphasis on communities previously underrepresented in Jewish historical narratives, including Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews, LGBTQ+ Jews, Jewish women of color, and Jewish women from Diaspora communities outside the United States and Europe.

The ACLS Graduate Intern will serve as an assistant to Encyclopedia Editor Dr. Jennifer Sartori, helping with all aspects of the Encyclopedia expansion. This project will play an important role in JWA's mission to educate lifelong learners, educators, scholars, rabbis, students, and a global public in an effort to expand and transform both the Jewish narrative and the place of Jewish women in other narratives. The Encyclopedia covers a wide range of topics and disciplines, including history, literature, the arts, religious studies, and more. Depending on their area of expertise, the ACLS Graduate Intern could focus specifically on the religious studies entries.

The internship appointment is for 9 consecutive weeks, with an expected time commitment of approximately 37.5 hours per week. JWA staff and interns follow a hybrid work schedule, reporting to the office 2-3 days per week. In-office time helps facilitate deeper connections among teammates and with the work itself.

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Key Responsibilities:

- Helping to identify and prioritize individuals and topics to be added to the Encyclopedia.
- Determining when existing entries should be reviewed for updates.
- Identifying potential authors for Encyclopedia entries.
- Researching and writing updates to existing entries.
- Editing approximately 5 newly submitted entries.
- Depending on interests and abilities, possibly researching and writing a new Encyclopedia entry.
- Contributing to other JWA efforts, such as our “This Week in History” feature or working with JWA’s extensive oral history collection, depending on the intern’s interests and expertise.

Qualifications:

- PhD student in any field of the humanities or humanistic social sciences, with a dissertation/research focus on the study of religion. Read more about eligible fields [here](#).
- At least some background in gender studies and Jewish Studies, and keen interest in the history of Jewish women and feminism.
- Excellent writing and research skills; finalists will be asked to submit writing samples.
- Detail-oriented.
- Ability to work both independently and collaboratively and to meet deadlines.

Preferred

- Interest in public history/humanities a plus.
- Experience writing for online publications a plus.

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ACLS Graduate Internships on the Spiritual Infrastructure of the Future 2026

Project	A Solution-Oriented Assessment of Faith Communities' Health Engagement
Organization	Norton Healthcare
Location	Louisville, KY
Stipend	\$15,400
Duration	9 weeks, Summer 2026

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

[Norton Healthcare](#) is a leader in serving adult and pediatric patients from throughout Greater Louisville, Southern Indiana, the commonwealth of Kentucky and beyond. The not-for-profit hospital and health care system has six Louisville-based hospitals and three hospitals in Southern Indiana. Norton Healthcare is guided by its mission “to provide quality health care to all those we serve, in a manner that responds to the needs of our communities and honors our faith heritage.” More than ‘words on a wall,’ the mission is a vibrant and guiding beacon for the organization.

With more than 23,000 employees, over 1,750 medical providers employed and more than 3,000 total providers on its medical staff, Norton Healthcare is Louisville’s second largest employer. It provides care at more than 400 locations throughout Kentucky and Southern Indiana. The hospitals provide inpatient and outpatient general care as well as specialty care, including heart, neuroscience, cancer, orthopedic, women’s and pediatric services. The system also includes 10 outpatient centers, 19 Norton Immediate Care Centers, 14 Norton Prompt Care clinics and an expanded telehealth program. A strong research program provides access to clinical trials in a multitude of areas.

Norton Healthcare’s Louisville hospitals and Norton Cancer Institute are LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leaders. The facilities first received this designation from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) in 2018 and have received it in all subsequent years that the designation has been awarded. Norton Healthcare also was recognized in 2022, 2023 and 2024 on the Disability Equality Index’s list of Best Places to Work for Disability Inclusion.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Norton Healthcare’s purpose is to provide quality health care to all those we serve, in a manner that responds to the needs of our communities and honors our faith heritage that includes founding organizations (United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church and Episcopal Church) and others that are part of our faith history (Roman Catholic Church and Presbyterian Church).

For more than two decades, the Norton Healthcare Board of Trustees Committee on Faith & Health Ministries has guided the work of Norton Faith and Health Ministries. One of the primary objectives has been to advance congregational health ministries, faith community nursing and other health-related programs. The department offers faith communities professional guidance, education and resources to support faith community nursing and health ministries. Nurse educators specifically trained in the faith community nursing specialty work with churches and faith groups to weave together health and wellness promotion with the intentional care of the spirit. The department hosts a yearly conference uniquely designed for faith leaders and others to attend at no cost.

The department has active relationships with nearly 130 faith communities and an additional 18 faith communities are in the queue to work in partnership. The department is expecting to conduct over 120 activities in 2025 (159 activities in 2024). The needed value-add is a practical and strategic assessment of the impact of these services. And, to ask, “What next?” It’s envisioned that the intern will help the department develop analytics and tools to improve and advance services to religious communities. The internship appointment is for 9 consecutive weeks, with an expected time commitment of approximately 37.5 hours per

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week.

Key Responsibilities:

- Map faith communities in partnership with Norton Faith & Health Ministries.
- Identify ways the faith communities are using office resources Norton Healthcare to impact the health status of their congregants and community. Assess the strengths and gaps in services.
- Assess if religious communities are aware of and utilize community resources to advance their health care initiatives; identify barriers and solutions.
- Develop a practical tool for Norton Faith & Health Ministries to assess and track health care related activities of an active faith community partner.

Qualifications:

- PhD student in any field of the humanities or humanistic social sciences, with a dissertation/research focus on the study of religion. Read more about eligible fields [here](#).
- Interest in the religious life of a city and how religious communities are vital to the personal identities of various groups.
- Sensitivity to the challenges faced by leaders of religious communities.
- Strong relational and interpersonal communication skills.
- Self-directed; ability to assess situations and take appropriate and balanced initiative.
- Experience engaging leaders in culturally diverse settings.

Preferred

- Familiarity/experience with the integration of whole person health.
- Demonstrated ability to translate data and theoretical formulations into practical and applicable initiatives.
- Proficiency with Excel.

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ACLS Graduate Internships on the Spiritual Infrastructure of the Future 2026

Project Organization	Enhancing Networks of Support for Jackson’s Youth with Faith Communities Operation Shoestring
Location	Jackson, MS
Stipend	\$15,400
Duration	9 weeks, Summer 2026

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

[Operation Shoestring](#) invests directly in the children, families, and neighborhoods of Jackson, Mississippi, aspiring to transformative change by supporting student success, providing family-centered programming, and cultivating community.

We provide year-round academic, social and emotional support to children in central Jackson from pre-K through 8th grade through our Project Rise afterschool and summer program. Currently, we serve nearly 200 school-aged children from approximately 160 predominantly low-income households. Our program includes reading interventions with the Mississippi Reading Clinic, academic remediation with licensed teachers, and exposure to opportunities like visits to colleges and museums. Our work has taken many forms over the years, but one thing has remained constant—We provide safe spaces for kids and families and promote thriving communities.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Operation Shoestring’s summer camp provides academic, arts, and cultural enrichment and has many facets of its programming provided by volunteers, including at places of worship in Jackson. The internship project would be to support this programming, and to help them learn more about the program participants and the communities of faith who support Operation Shoestring’s summer camp. The intern would help coordinate and enrich the lesson plans and activities taking place at these places of worship and other civic organizational partners, while expanding the capacity of both Operation Shoestring staff and volunteer partners. The intern will help plan curriculum and activities for campers under the direction of the Programs team, and in conjunction with our faith-based partners to ensure community partnerships and lessons are high-quality and meaningful for both volunteer and student. They will also help design and implement advocacy workshops for our community with the intention of building greater community cohesion and understanding while also sharing findings from their own individual field of study.

The goal of this project is to add capacity to the summer camp and help align our programming for students to more closely mirror our mission, vision, and ethos, provide more service learning for students in partnership with our faith communities and help us enhance our experiential learning offerings. Working closely with teaching staff, the intern will help to ensure lesson plans and field trips are academically rigorous, high quality, and engaging. The intern will work with many different places of worship from diverse backgrounds, and should be able to intentionally include and expose students to a diversity of life experiences and faith traditions. Work prior to summer camp beginning will include supporting and providing resources for these academic and service-learning experiences, and work after summer camp will include surveying partners and assessing the effectiveness of our activities.

The internship appointment is for 9 consecutive weeks, with an expected time commitment of approximately 37.5 hours per week. Hours are 9 am-5 pm Monday through Friday when summer camp is not in session. During summer camp weeks (roughly the first week of June to the second week of July) this position will take place from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday through Thursday. The internship will begin in the first week of June.

This position is *only* available through the ACLS Graduate Internships on the Spiritual Infrastructure of the Future program. You may *not* contact the host institution to inquire about this position.



ACLS Graduate Internships on the Spiritual Infrastructure of the Future 2026

Key Responsibilities:

- Develop at least 5 lesson plans to be used with volunteers at Operation Shoestring's affiliated places of worship during summer camp.
- Support volunteers, K-8 participants, and faith leaders in executing these curriculum enhancements.
- Reflect on this experience to help generate some "best practices" around service-learning partnerships that Operation Shoestring can use in their future work through surveying participants, conducting focus groups, and assessing effectiveness of lesson plans.

Qualifications:

- PhD student in any field of the humanities or humanistic social sciences, with a dissertation/research focus on the study of religion. Read more about eligible fields [here](#).
- Experience or comfort in working with people from diverse faith traditions.
- Alignment with Operation Shoestring's mission.
- Must be able to pass a Mississippi Department of Health background check.

Preferred

- Experience working with K-8 students or children in some capacity.

APPLICATIONS

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ACLS Graduate Internships on the Spiritual Infrastructure of the Future 2026

Project	Enriching Public Understanding of Religion Through Digital Media
Organization	Religion News Service
Location	Remote
Stipend	\$14,000
Duration	9 weeks, Summer 2026

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

[Religion News Service](#) (RNS) is the leading independent nonprofit news organization dedicated to producing fact-based journalism and thoughtful commentary on religion, ethics, and spirituality in all its forms. Our work provides essential context to consequential issues and focuses on the intersection of religion and politics, race, gender, science, education, and social justice. Our staff of 15 reporters and editors, plus our contributing columnists and writers, serve over one million readers and listeners each month through our website (www.rns.org), daily newsletters, podcasts and social media platforms. We serve millions more through our partnerships with NPR, the Associated Press, and secular and non-secular publishers including The Washington Post, Christianity Today, and National Catholic Reporter.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The intern will serve as a reporter, contributing ideas and working on assigned topics, covering a broad range of religion topics. They will help educate and engage readers about important issues, people, and events; build audience for the RNS website and flagship newsletter; and reach new audiences by learning to amplify content through social media channels. They will enhance our work by contributing the deep contextual knowledge and interpretive skills that are hallmarks of humanistic and social scientific training. This perspective is especially valuable as we seek to deepen our coverage of underreported spiritual communities and evolving religious movements—what we think of as America’s “spiritual infrastructure.” An intern would both support and shape editorial priorities, while gaining practical experience in writing for a general audience and working in media. This partnership would strengthen RNS’s capacity to produce thoughtful, inclusive coverage of religion while providing a meaningful, hands-on experience for a scholar committed to bringing humanistic insight to the public square. Examples of stories that might be produced include:

1. Stories at the Intersection of Faith and Public Life

A fellow might explore how religious communities are responding to rising political tensions, violence, or social unrest—examining how faith traditions are adapting their theologies, practices, or community roles in the face of these challenges.

2. Emerging and Underrepresented Faith Communities

The fellow could report on lesser-known spiritual movements or marginalized religious identities, translating academic insight into accessible narratives. These stories might highlight how individuals and groups are creating space for themselves within mainstream religious structures, illuminating broader shifts in American religious belonging.

3. Transformations in Religious Practice and Community

This story might examine how demographic shifts, economic pressures, or cultural changes are reshaping religious institutions, from rural congregations to urban spiritual collectives. For example, an aging congregation may develop outreach to serve, and merge with, younger, culturally diverse neighbors.

The internship appointment is for 9 consecutive weeks, with an expected time commitment of approximately 37.5 hours per week, generally between the hours of 9 a.m.-6 p.m. local time, M-F. Reporters occasionally have interviews and events in the evenings or on the weekends but are given the latitude to adjust their work schedule accordingly.

This position is *only* available through the ACLS Graduate Internships on the Spiritual Infrastructure of the Future program. You may *not* contact the host institution to inquire about this position.



ACLS Graduate Internships on the Spiritual Infrastructure of the Future 2026

Key Responsibilities:

- Identify, develop and pitch story ideas to editors at a national digital publication.
- Report and write factual news articles representing multiple points of view.
- Work directly with editors to correct, tighten and improve articles and to select appropriate visuals, images and graphics.
- Produce at least 7 original reported pieces over the course of a 9-week internship.
- Promote stories via at least one social media platform.

Qualifications:

- PhD student in any field of the humanities or humanistic social sciences, with a dissertation/research focus on the study of religion. Read more about eligible fields [here](#).
- Strong writer and self-editor.
- Open to learning tenets of journalistic writing and reporting.

Preferred

- Photography and social media skills a plus.

APPLICATIONS

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ACLS Graduate Internships on the Spiritual Infrastructure of the Future 2026

Project	Collaborative, Evidence-based Religion Journalism for the Public Good
Organization	The Conversation U.S.
Location	Remote
Stipend	\$14,000
Duration	9 weeks, Summer 2026

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

[The Conversation U.S.](#) is an independent, nonprofit national newsroom that has academics collaborate with editors to produce journalism for the public good. We publish 10-12 stories a day across a variety of subjects, including religion, business, climate, and many others. All the content we produce is free for anyone to read and republish, and as a result, we are in about 1,000 news outlets monthly and are the most read nonprofit news organization in America. We are a close-knit team of 38, consisting of 23 editors as well as audience, university relations, fundraising and operations staff.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Conversation's religion desk's mission is to produce explanatory journalism and analysis about the world through the lens of inter-disciplinary religion research and expertise residing in universities. Our special sauce is not covering breaking news but coming at the news – or just interesting research – with fresh angles, ideas, analysis and explanation.

Some recent stories we published include how colleges shape students' views on religion and how Protestant ideas shaped Americans' support for birth control. We are very open to any areas of interest and expertise but also hope the intern could contribute stories to our ongoing series on the examination of ancient texts for answers to today's challenges as well as a series on virtues. In addition they may contribute to other series such as superheroes, comics and religion as part of our Global Religion Journalism Initiative – a collaboration with the Associated Press and Religion News Service; religion literacy to help the public understand and analyze how different religions intersect with societies; new religious movements; the rise of religious extremism and nationalism in the U.S.; and the examination of ancient texts for answers to today's challenges.

The ACLS Graduate Intern will play an essential role on our religion desk by contributing ideas and unearthing interesting religion research by academics or finding experts to explain breaking news. With guidance from Kalpana Jain, senior religion and ethics editor, they will conceive ideas for stories, help shape story direction, tone and structure – and then edit the piece for clarity and accuracy for the public. By collaborating with individual academics writing pieces, they will extract important ideas from scholarly work, give constructive and diplomatic feedback and produce 3-4 pieces, including choosing photos and writing headlines. They will also be invited to join our weekly zoom meetings with the Associated Press and Religion News Service where they will learn how media organizations discuss, collaborate and conceive story ideas. If the Graduate Intern is far enough along in their research, they may also become an author to produce their own bylined piece. All of the Graduate Intern's work will be published on The Conversation website, as well as on the Associated Press newswire and distributed to more than 1,000 news outlets that choose to pick up the piece. We pride ourselves for our team-minded and supportive working environment.

We are looking for a Graduate Intern who is curious and has a strong desire to explain important ideas through the lens of religion to the public. The intern's work will serve demographically diverse readers across the U.S. The internship appointment is for 9 consecutive weeks, with an expected time commitment of approximately 37.5 hours per week.

This position is *only* available through the ACLS Graduate Internships on the Spiritual Infrastructure of the Future program. You may *not* contact the host institution to inquire about this position.



ACLS Graduate Internships on the Spiritual Infrastructure of the Future 2026

Key Responsibilities:

- Conceiving ideas and evaluating pitches from scholars through the lens of public interest.
- Collaborating with a scholar to frame a story, have them write it and then edit the story for clarity, accuracy and interest.
- Choosing pictures, headlines and fact-checking statements as well as ensuring statements are backed up with academic research links.

Qualifications:

- PhD student in any field of the humanities or humanistic social sciences, with a dissertation/research focus on the study of religion. Read more about eligible fields [here](#).
- Interest and/or experience in editing and providing feedback on written language to scholars.
- Interest and/or experience in helping academics translate their work to a broader audience in plain language.
- Curiosity and willingness to learn how stories are disseminated via our Creative Commons model and used in social posts from YouTube to Instagram to TikTok.

Preferred

- A desire to experiment with and learn how to produce graphics, data visualizations and videos to get scholarly work to the public.
- Strong communication skills and adaptability to work with our cross-disciplinary team and occasionally breaking news.

APPLICATIONS

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