



# Professional Development Awards

## *Invitation for Applications*

**Deadline: April 12, 2024**

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The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) invites colleges and universities that are members of its Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE) to apply for a one-year Professional Development Award in the amount of \$8,000 to \$12,000. This grant is intended to support on-campus professional development activities for faculty members and staff, with the goal of increasing the institution's capacity to support its undergraduate students as they explore their many callings and discern their future vocations.

### *The Opportunity*

The collegiate experience can provide students with the time, space, and opportunities needed to explore the full range of possibilities for their future directions in life. NetVUE member institutions are committed to supporting their students in their vocational journeys, but their staff and faculty members may not have had many opportunities to prepare to offer such support. Through its program of NetVUE Professional Development Awards, CIC seeks to offer expertise, guidance, and funding to member institutions as they develop and sustain programming for educators who are seeking to support their students' work in this area.

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

NetVUE Professional Development Awards may be requested in amounts ranging from \$8,000 to \$12,000 for use over one year. Funds should be designated for activities that enhance the knowledge, skills, capacity, and expertise of staff and faculty members in support of vocational exploration and discernment among their undergraduate students. Grant funds may be used for a range of purposes, but some expenses are ineligible for grant support; for details, please consult the Grant Budget Guidelines document on the NetVUE website.

Examples of programs that might be considered include (but are not limited to):

- Materials, speakers, and/or refreshments for gatherings of faculty and staff leaders who read and discuss key texts to expand the vocabulary and frameworks through which they can help students wrestle with questions about their callings;
- A retreat for faculty members, student services staff, and/or senior administrators to explore the range of intellectual resources (historical, theological, philosophical, ethical, and affective) that support the institution's mission and identity and bear on its commitments to its students' vocational exploration and discernment; or
- A series of workshops in which campus leaders learn about effective strategies for advising and mentoring students as they consider their future directions in life.

Brief descriptions of the kinds of programming that has been undertaken by previous recipients of various NetVUE grants may be found on the NetVUE website by navigating to the particular grant and clicking on the button marked "View Previous Grant Awards."

Grants will be awarded based on proposals that explain (a) the professional development needs and the relationship of those needs to vocational exploration at their institution, (b) the purpose and plan of proposed activities, and (c) the ways this NetVUE-supported program would enhance the institution's capacity to support and sustain vocational exploration and discernment efforts after the grant period.

### *Special Initiative: Diversity and Inclusion in Vocation Programming*

CIC will offer additional Professional Development Awards, at a higher level of funding, for projects that build institutional capacity for creating more inclusive vocation-related programming that will reach a more diverse range of students. While all applicants for NetVUE grants are expected to encourage diverse participation and inclusive outcomes in grant-funded activities, some member institutions may wish to focus their work more intensively in this area. Professional Development Award proposals submitted under this special initiative have the same eligibility rules and application procedures as the general award, but funding may be requested up to \$15,000.

Statistical and anecdotal evidence suggests that students in various demographic and socio-cultural categories participate in vocational exploration and discernment programs at markedly different rates. Many NetVUE member institutions have sought opportunities to

examine more closely the reasons for these differences and to encourage participation among students in underrepresented groups.

Institutions applying under this special initiative are expected to have some level of vocation-related programming for students already in place. The proposal should demonstrate the institution's desire and willingness to deepen its understanding of present patterns of student participation and to assure a broader reach for their programming related to vocation and calling. Proposals should specify current levels of participation, indicate the specific vocation-related needs of students that are participating at lower levels, describe any previous efforts to increase diversity among program participants, and explain how the proposed professional development activities will lead to more diverse student participation in these programs.

## *Eligibility and Funding Timeline*

All NetVUE member colleges and universities are eligible to apply for funding, provided that, at the time of application, they do not hold (nor have already been awarded and are about to hold) a NetVUE Vocation across the Academy Grant or Program Development Grant. If the member has previously held a NetVUE Professional Development Award, that grant must have been concluded no later than December 31, 2021.

In the first ten rounds of NetVUE Professional Development Awards, CIC awarded 218 grants to NetVUE member institutions. The application deadline for this round is **April 12, 2024**. Decisions will be announced in June of 2024, with funds disbursed in July for use between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025. Spending must be completed by June 30, 2025.

## *Expectations of Grant Recipients*

If awarded a NetVUE Professional Development Award, the institution will agree to:

- Submit final narrative and financial reports to CIC by August 30, 2025, which describe the outcome of the project and reflect on the effectiveness of the initiatives during the grant period;
- Participate in efforts by CIC and NetVUE to assess grant-funded activities, including (but not limited to) participation in surveys, virtual focus groups, and virtual gatherings of grant directors;
- Permit the inclusion of information about its professional development initiative 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;

- Be willing to send a campus team headed by the president, chief academic officer, or another officer at the vice-presidential level to the next NetVUE Conference; and
- Maintain membership in NetVUE through at least the 2025 calendar year.

## *Application Guidelines*

Proposals should be submitted online as a single document and consist of the following components. Please use a 12-point font and standard 1-inch margins for legibility.

**A Brief Public Description** of the project (120 words, maximum), to be posted on the NetVUE website if the project is funded. This description should provide a concise account of the planned project that will be understandable to those who have not read the grant proposal. Examples may be found in the listings of previously awarded Professional Development Awards on the NetVUE website.

**A Two- to Three-Page Narrative** that provides sections that correspond to the following points:

- A description of professional development needs and their connection to the institution’s vocational exploration efforts;
- A statement of project goals and objectives that can be referenced and assessed at the end of the grant period as a basis for evaluating project success;
- A description of proposed activities to be undertaken during the grant period, as well as proposed resources and materials to be used in this effort;
- A description of the institution’s strategy for encouraging broad participation across demographic and socio-economic categories (not only in planned professional development opportunities, but also in any future programming for students that may arise from this work)—and in particular, for building institutional capacity to promote participation among underrepresented, disadvantaged, or marginalized groups;
- If applying under the special initiative on Diversity and Inclusion, an account of (a) the current levels of participation in current vocation-related programming among various student demographic and socio-cultural groups; (b) any specific vocation-related needs among those groups of students that are participating at lower levels; (c) any previous efforts to increase diversity and inclusion within these programs; and (d) how the proposed professional development activities might lead to more diverse and equitable student participation in vocational exploration and discernment programs;
- A statement of how the institution will benefit from the professional development initiative after the grant period; and
- A statement of the institution’s willingness to share outcomes, lessons learned, and newfound expertise gained through grant activities at future NetVUE Conferences, regional/topical gatherings, online events, and/or other venues.

## A One-Page Project Timeline

**A One-Page Roster of Project Leaders** that lists the names and contact information for (a) the principal project contact; (b) the senior (cabinet-level) administrator who will oversee the project; and (c) other individuals who will lead and/or carry out the project, including a one-sentence description of each person's role. **Note:** Institutions that currently hold a NetVUE Grant for Reframing the Institutional Saga and/or a Grant for Fostering Leadership for Communities of Faith should clearly explain how staffing responsibilities and other resources will be distributed in ways that would allow all NetVUE-funded projects (whether new or ongoing) to succeed.

**A One-Page Budget** that describes 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.) 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 or chief academic officer indicating the institution's support for this effort. The letter also should state the institution's willingness to send a campus team headed by the president, chief academic officer, or another officer at the vice-presidential level to the next NetVUE Conference and to continue NetVUE membership at least through the 2025 calendar year.

## *Application Deadline*

The application deadline is **April 12, 2024**. Proposals should be submitted electronically as a single document via the portal on the NetVUE website. Proposals must be submitted through this system in order to be considered.

## *Questions?*

Questions about NetVUE Professional Development Awards (including the Diversity and Inclusion initiative) should be addressed to Carter Aikin, NetVUE grant director, at [caikin@cic.edu](mailto:caikin@cic.edu) or (217) 854-5619.