

Climate Science in Theological Education Grant Application Instructions Cohort 3

The Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion (DoSER) program at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) seeks applications that engage forefront science related to climate change in the education of religious community leaders.

The Climate Science in Theological Education (CSTE) initiative provides grants to theological education institutions to engage forefront climate-related science with the goal of equipping current and future religious leaders to lead their communities in understanding climate change and addressing associated challenges at the local level. In addition to providing grant funds for educational activities, this initiative provides learning opportunities for project personnel, including pedagogical resources related to science literacy and engagement on a wide variety of topics and collaborative relationships with scientists.

Activities funded by this grant may include capacity-building, course engagement, ministry/leadership applications, or other activities engaging climate-related science.

Grant Projects Overview

Amount: The grant award amount shall be up to \$15,000.

Timeline: The grant period will begin in August 2026 and end in December 2027.

Reporting requirements: An update report will be due midway through the grant period (March 2027), and a 2-4 page final report and financial report will be due at the end of the project (December 2027).

Institutional eligibility: These grants are intended for institutions that train future and current religious leaders who will be serving local communities and congregations. These may include institutions at both graduate and undergraduate levels, as well as those that provide dedicated training for future and current religious leaders. If you have questions about your institution's eligibility, please reach out to us at doser@aaas.org.

Project Leadership: Projects will have one or more project leaders. To promote impact and sustainability of the project, we encourage the project leadership to include at least one core or permanent faculty member. If that is not the case for your project, please make sure that your project description and institutional letter of support specifically address how this project will be supported and sustained by your institution. Projects are encouraged to include additional personnel in a project co-leadership role.

Project Activities:

To be eligible, project proposals must outline one engagement event, generally an in-person, on-campus activity accessible to the entire community, that addresses climate-related science. Beyond this core requirement, project activities, approaches, and aims will vary based on resources, opportunities, challenges, and priorities of the project personnel, host institution, prospective partners, and the religious community (or communities) served. Three framings for engagement have been offered to help focus

additional efforts: capacity building, course engagement, and ministry/leadership applications. While these do not exhaust the variety of ways a project might leverage activities to advance the aims of the initiative, we encourage applicants to use the examples provided to identify strategic actions that can advance and sustain engagement with climate science in their context.

Campus-wide event: Grantees must plan and host one campus- or institution-wide event or activity that addresses the relevance of climate science to theological reflection, education, and/or practice in congregational or other ministry/leadership contexts. This event may be held in-person or virtually. Examples of events include: hosting a climate science or other relevant science area conference or workshop for faculty and students, sponsoring an Earth Day event at a local religious community, or taking a field trip to a local science lab or museum for students or local religious leaders.

Project activities funded through these grants may focus in any of the following ways:

Capacity building: Grantees may use funds to plan and implement activities that increase the institution's capacity to equip students for leadership through engagement with climate change and related scientific fields. Such activities may focus on the faculty community (in whole or in part), the student body (in whole or in part), a particular program or curricular area, or an aspect of campus culture. Examples include: workshops to increase faculty and/or administrative understanding of and support for engagement with climate science; events to build student awareness and interest in the scientific aspects of climate issues and actions; engagements with local science experts to explore relevant climate evidence and community impacts; or incorporating climate science into the curriculum in ways that are meaningful for students. This could also include generating strategic support for climate-conscious changes to institutional practices or developmental projects that aim to build momentum towards institutional climate action and/or responsibility.

Course engagement: Projects may direct funds toward the revision of specific existing courses or the development of new courses to incorporate thoughtful engagement with climate science. Modifications may include assigned readings, lectures, written assignments, class field trips, hands-on activities, and/or community engagement tasks that expose students to different types of scientific evidence related to climate and create opportunities for students to make connections between scientific and theological dimensions of climate change, its causes, and impacts. Such curricular revisions should raise awareness of climate change as relevant to the theological content of the course and help students to consider the relationship between climate change and their vocation. For course engagement activities, please describe the course or courses that you will be revising and how you anticipate climate science will be integrated into the content and format of the course. If course engagement is the main focus of your grant activities, at least one course must be part of the core curriculum.

Ministry/Leadership applications: Grantees may use funds to develop opportunities and resources that prepare and empower students, alumni, and/or current religious leaders to engage in climate science conversations within their leadership and ministry contexts (congregational leadership, counseling, spiritual direction, religious education and formation, community-service vocation, etc.). Such activities should help current and future religious leaders to connect a scientific understanding of climate change with skills in organizing, community care, and/or

leadership. Activities may include continuing education courses, community events, workshops, book clubs, etc.

Topics: Projects are intended to meaningfully engage climate-related science within the theological education curriculum. Projects should have a compelling theme that frames and focuses the science engagement for the relevant context. The areas of science engaged, and theological connections made, are up to the project leaders. Previous topics include air quality and health; agriculture and food security, flooding and drought, wildfires, eco-grief and eco-anxiety, marine systems and coastal change, local natural history and ecology, paleoclimatology, energy transitions and resource sustainability, and climate migrations, among others. Past projects have incorporated these topics into courses in scripture, ethics, theology, history, and pastoral care; making creative connections to physical, biological, and social sciences. Your proposal should reflect what is best for your students, faculty, and wider institution community.

Broader Impact: Proposals should consider how the proposed activities may continue to have impact beyond the grant period and live on as resources for students, faculty, and/or religious communities.

Grantee Support

Scientific and interdisciplinary advisors:

Grantee institutions will be encouraged to work collaboratively with practicing scientific researchers and educators to develop and implement their project activities. For each project, in addition to the grant amount, AAAS DoSER will provide honoraria for up to two advisors with relevant scientific backgrounds and/or expertise engaging science in theological education or ministry. If you have already identified individuals who you want to fill this role, please include that in your proposal. AAAS can also help to connect you with appropriate advisors should you receive the grant.

***Science* magazine and AAAS Annual Meeting:**

Grant recipients will also receive a two-year subscription to *Science* magazine and registration for one project leader to attend the AAAS Annual Meeting or a local relevant scientific meeting.

Virtual kickoff meeting and project planning activity:

Grantees will participate in a two-hour kickoff meeting (Thursday, August 20, 1-3pm ET), and a two-day virtual workshop with other grant recipients (Wednesday-Thursday, September 16-17, 12-5pm ET), and at least one project leader should plan to attend the entirety of these meetings. Early on in the grant period, we also suggest that each project hold a meeting that may include science advisors, administrators, collaborators, and others to start relationship building and planning of project activities.

In addition, there will be periodic check-ins and virtual workshops for project leaders and other institution staff or collaborators.

Review Criteria

Selections for funding will be based primarily on your proposal's articulation of the following:

- The positive, substantial impact this project would make on your institution, with new engagement with climate science

- How this project will equip and empower future and/or current religious leaders to actively engage climate science in their ministerial or leadership contexts
- How this project is uniquely suited to the context of your educational institution and community
- The experience and ability of the personnel on this project (project leader, faculty, etc.)
- The commitment of your institution to engagement and completion of all project goals
- The impact of this project beyond your institution and its sustainability beyond the length of the project

Application Requirements

Proposals are due **June 24, 11:59pm PDT**. Proposals should be submitted using the online submission form <https://form.jotform.com/261165952488165> . Proposals should include the following:

- **Project Title**
- **Project Leadership information and CVs**
- **Institutional information, including affiliation or accreditation**
- **Institutional Description (300 word limit):** Briefly describe your institution; the theological education you provide, including degrees or certifications granted; and your constituency. Please include a brief statement outlining why this opportunity is particularly appropriate for your institution and constituency.
- **Letter of Support from Academic Dean or other institutional administrative leadership**
- **Project Description Summary (400-word limit):** Please give a brief summary of your project, team, goals, and proposed activities. Describe how your institution will support the project leader(s) and other involved personnel in their efforts to integrate climate science and what your team and institution will do over the course of the project to encourage a broader appreciation for climate science among students and faculty.
- **Description of Specific Activities and Outputs (1000-word limit):** Please describe the main activities and outputs of your project. Include the specific activities to be undertaken, climate science topics to be engaged, the goals of the activities, and the anticipated impact of activities on students. Clarify the orientation of your project's activities with regard to the goals of your teaching and/or students' learning and vocational training. You may choose to draw from the frameworks provided (capacity building, course engagement, or ministry/leadership) or to put forward other frames more suitable to your context. See the Project Activities section above for more details. Please address not only the immediate impacts of the project, but how these impacts will be sustained beyond the life of the grant. Furthermore, briefly expand upon how your stated outputs and goals are unique to your context in engaging with climate science with your proposed audience(s).

- **Campus-wide event (400-word limit):** Please provide details of at least one campus-wide activity or event exploring the relevance of climate science to theological reflection, education, or practice. Include details on when the event will be held, the format of the event, and the proposed audience that will be the focus of the event. This activity can be held either in-person or virtually.
- **Timeline (400-word limit):** Please outline a timeline of the project from August 2026 to December 2027. The timeline should include a virtual project planning meeting with content advisors and faculty, grant activities including any course offerings, and campus-wide activity.
- **Budget:** The amount of the grant award is up to \$15,000. Include in your budget items associated with the output(s) including faculty course time, the cost of the campus-wide event (speaker honorarium, cost of facilities, food, etc.), costs of student workers, costs of needed resources, etc. AAAS will provide a \$500 honorarium each for up to two advisors. If you wish to include additional honoraria as part of your grant budget, you may do so. If you anticipate using any matching funding or in-kind support for this project, you may include that here.
- **Budget Narrative (400-word limit):** In your budget narrative, give a brief explanation of how you would allocate the requested funds and rationale for each budget item.
- You may include attachments relevant to your activities (for example, course syllabi). Attachments will not count towards word count limit.

Examples from past initiatives in science engaged theological education can be found at DoSER's websites: ScienceforSeminaries.org/schools and ScienceReligionDialogue.org.

Submission: Please submit applications through the [online submission form](https://form.jotform.com/261165952488165) (<https://form.jotform.com/261165952488165>) by **June 24, 11:59 PM PDT**. Submission is not completed until you receive a confirmation email within 48 hours of your submission. Please contact us if you do not receive a confirmation email. Email and paper submissions by postage mail will not be accepted. Decision and notification of accepted applications will be made by August 14.

Questions should be submitted Curtis L. Baxter (cbaxter@aaas.org) 202-326-6778 or Leif Castren (lcastren@aaas.org) 406-471-0670. Two FAQ sessions will be held on May 18 and June 11 at 1pm ET. Please register here (<https://aaas.zoom.us/meeting/register/o-JtoteGQoa2dXuGIByshA>) for the May 18 FAQ and here (https://aaas.zoom.us/meeting/register/oyoAcnL_TbaCMUKpeP_2Fw) for the June 11 FAQ to receive a link to the sessions. Recordings of these sessions will be available on ScienceforSeminaries.org.