



INNOVATIVE MINISTRY PARTNERSHIP APPLICATION GUIDE

Greetings!

Augsburg University's Riverside Innovation Hub is thrilled to be offering local faith communities an opportunity to partner and learn together through the Innovative Ministry Partnership. This partnership is an opportunity to collaborate with the Riverside Innovation Hub and other faith communities in the exploration of innovative place-based ministry with young adults where public life and faith intersect.

As you consider this opportunity and begin looking through the application process, please know questions are always welcome. This is not an application you will be able to complete in one sitting. In addition to written responses, you will be asked to recruit some outside voices to contribute their thoughts. You will also be given creative license to share some of your responses via video. Our hope is that the process of completing the application itself will provide helpful discernment and reflection about your faith community, your context and the dynamic relationship between the two, especially as it relates to your young adult neighbors. We have designed the application to be mutually beneficial to our review team and to your faith community.

Our deadline for submitting applications is April 15, 2018. We hope this allows sufficient time for your faith community to consider thoughtfully and creatively the questions in this application, among the many other demands of your call and time.

The following guide offers supplemental information to accompany and clarify portions of the application.

Topics covered include:

1. Explanation of tracks
2. Selection criteria
3. Application timeline
4. Application tips
5. Video instructions
6. Glossary
7. Innovation Team description

As you work to complete this application, know our Riverside Innovation Hub Team is grateful for the opportunity to learn more about your faith community and what God is up to in your corner of the world through this application.

If you have any questions or need further clarification, contact Program Manager, Kristina Fruge at 612-330-1410 or frugek@augsborg.edu. Information sessions will be offered Jan. 22 and 23. More information can be found on our website.

Peace to you as you consider how this partnership opportunity can deepen your ministry and those God has called you into relationship with.

In Gratitude,
The Riverside Innovation Hub Team



1) EXPLANATION OF TRACKS FOR PARTNERSHIP

The Innovative Ministry Partnership has been designed with three different ways faith communities can participate. The three tracks provide different entry points for faith communities to partner with Riverside Innovation Hub and the larger learning community we aim to cultivate around common curiosities and calls to ministry with young adults. We recognize that faith communities may come to this work with different resources, contexts and capacity for partnership.

Who are the different tracks designed for?

Innovative Ministry Partnership Track 1	Track 1 is designed for faith communities ready to commit focused energy and time to discerning and innovating ministry with young adults over the next four years. Track 1 includes coaching support with a young adult hired by the Riverside Innovation Hub in Year One and eligibility for grant funding in Year Two and Three of \$25,000 - \$30,000. Year Four will include evaluation and continued learning together about the experience. This track is limited to faith communities within a 30 minute drive of Minneapolis to make the sites accessible for the Innovation Coaches.
Innovative Ministry Partnership Track 2	Like Track 1, Track 2 is designed for faith communities ready to commit focused energy and time to discerning and innovating ministry with young adults over the next four years. The primary difference is that Track 2 faith communities would identify their own Innovation Coach in Year One to receive training with the Riverside Innovation Hub and would fund their own new ministry idea in Year Two and Three. Like Track 1, Year Four would include evaluating together the experiences and learnings in the first three years. This track is designed for faith communities located further away from the Twin Cities and/or faith communities who may prefer to use their own resources (for coaching and funding) to support their work and ministry ideas.
Innovative Ministry Associate Faith Community Track 3	Track 3 is designed for faith communities who currently don't have capacity to tackle a new ministry initiative but are committed to being a learning partner throughout the project. These faith communities would be committed to being at the table for learning and conversation with Track 1 and 2 faith communities by attending learning seminars and workshops hosted by the Riverside Innovation Hub over the four years.

2) SELECTION CRITERIA

Whether faith communities are currently engaged in meaningful ways with young adults or not, what we are looking for is evidence that faith communities sense a call into deeper ministry with young adults – a call rooted in hopefulness and not anxiety or wishfulness. We think that “evidence” might include some of the following....

- **Hopeful Honesty:** Faith communities honest about the realities and challenges at play - both within the faith community and within the larger cultural contexts of the day. Leadership recognizes that the landscape of our communities and the ways we are called to be church in this time and place has shifted. In spite of the anxiety this current context creates, we are looking for congregational leadership that is making decisions and moving to action from the place of hopefulness.
- **Spirit-filled Imagination:** Faith communities that have imagination for ministry that is not simply more and bigger of the same. That have imagination for creative ways to cultivate life-giving relationships with young adults. That have imagination for something beyond hiring a new staff person or setting up a new program. That have imagination which leaves room for the Spirit to show up.
- **Humble Openness:** A culture open to a coaching relationship with a trained young adult through the Riverside Innovation Hub. The Innovation Coach will not be coming on board to take orders or share in the existing workload, but rather to coach faith communities



through listening and discernment work in their community and with their neighbors. The Innovation Coach may potentially be younger than the faith community's existing leadership and therefore present a twist on more common power dynamics. Faith communities will need to demonstrate an openness to learning in new ways with new people.

- **Broad Congregational Buy-in:** Faith communities will need to show that there is buy-in among the various leadership structures in their context - staff, councils, and other key leadership - to the vision and spirit of the Riverside Innovation Hub. The partnership lasts four years, but we hope this partnership will stir up something that outlives this four-year period. Long lasting transformation will require continued leadership and support from the congregation among all types of leaders and influencers.
- **Eager Curiosity:** Faith communities with a genuine curiosity about what God is up to in this current context at the intersection of young adults and faith communities. A curiosity and eagerness to learn new ways to do ministry and be church. A curiosity that seeks meaningful and messy insights rather than easy answers. A curiosity that could liberate faith communities to embrace how God might each, challenge, and transform them throughout this four-year experiment.
- **Collaborative Spirit:** Faith communities willing to share their success and failures with a larger network of leaders and communities so that we learn together. When we are collaborative and innovative, successes and failures are both equally valuable spaces for learning.
- **Commitment to the project:** Faith communities with the capacity and willingness to participate in every aspect of this project over its entire length, following through on the tasks and presence required to do this collaborative work well.
- **Called to ministry with young adults:** Faith communities who sense a deep call to engage with people in the 22-29 year old age range. This would be meaningful engagement and not simply a desire to have 20-somethings showing up at church again. Do you love young adults and do you love all the reasons why they stay away from church?

What will not be selection criteria?

- The size of your faith community.
- Your faith community's denomination or lack thereof.
- How long you've been around as a faith community.
- Whether you have young adults involved currently or not.
- Your faith community's budget.
- Your faith community's location, with one caveat. Track 1 Partners will be limited to faith communities within a 30 minute drive of Minneapolis because we need sites to be relatively accessible for our Innovation Coaches. However, location is not a factor for Track 2 Partners or Track 3 Associate Faith Communities.

3) APPLICATION TIMELINE

Jan. 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application process opens - 1/15 • Info sessions 1/22 & 1/23
Mar. 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend Hub Seminar highlighting learning from Riverside Innovation Hub research - 3/12 (Optional)
April 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application deadline - 4/15
May 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected faith communities invited into Track 1, 2 or 3 - 5/15 • Deadline for faith communities to accept invitation - 5/31
June & July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site visits (Track 1) & homework for all faith communities - TBD
Aug. 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation Coach training - 8/6 thru 8/24 @ Augsburg (Track 2 coaches) • Ice cream social @ Augsburg with Track 1 & 2 faith communities and innovation coaches - TBD • Track 1 faith communities meet their innovation coach - TBD
Sept. 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hub Seminar Official Launch with all faith communities and Innovation Coaches - 9/18



4) APPLICATION TIPS

- **Completing the application online** - The final application must be completed online, a link can be found at the Riverside Innovation Hub website resource page. IMPORTANT NOTE: It is recommended you fill out your responses in a separate location to keep and save your work while in progress. You are able to return to the online form and edit your responses up until the deadline but ONLY IF you scroll through to the end of the application and hit "submit" and then copy and save the URL link given at that time. You can return to edit your application via the URL link anytime up until April 15. A PDF of the application questions is available on the website resource page.
- **Full application vs. short-form application** - Faith communities applying for Tracks 1 or 2 must complete the full application. All questions included in the online form are required, unless otherwise indicated in the application. Faith communities applying for Track 3 will complete a shorter version of the application. Directions for what portions of the application are necessary for Track 3 can be found on the application itself.
- **Letters of support** - Section 3 of the application requests three letters of support be submitted for your faith community (Tracks 1 and 2) - two from within the faith community and one from outside the faith community. Letters should be 1-2 pages. It will be helpful to ask individuals whom you would like to write a letter of support early on in the application process to allow for sufficient time for them to complete the letter.
- **Information sessions & other support for applicants** - This application process is designed to create a structure for faith communities to reflect on their sense of call within their context to be in relationship and ministry with young adults. The Riverside Innovation Hub aims to assist and support applicants throughout this process. Two information sessions will be hosted Jan. 22 at St. Timothy Lutheran Church in St. Paul and on Jan. 23 at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Edina - both offered from 1:30-3:00pm. Applicants are welcome to email or call Riverside Innovation Hub Program Manager, Kristina Fruge, with questions at 612-330-1410 or frugek@aubzburg.edu.

5) SHORT VIDEO INSTRUCTIONS

This application includes space for applicants to create, innovate and have fun reflecting on what God might be up to in their faith community. Applicants for Tracks 1 and 2 will select either section 5, 6 or 7 of the application and submit a short video (100 MB max) addressing the questions asked in that section. The video will replace written responses in that section.

The intent behind this requirement is to give your faith community the opportunity to tell us who you are and what God is up to in a creative and genuine way, one that written essay type questions don't fully allow for. The questions in the section you select provide a framework for you to share with us, in your own unique way, some sliver of the story unfolding in and among your faith community today.

- **Section 5** questions provide an opportunity for you to show and tell us more about the identity and heart of your particular faith community.
- **Section 6** questions provide an opportunity for you to show and tell us more about your particular context and what excites you about this particular place and the people who make up your neighbors.
- **Section 7** questions provide an opportunity for you to show and tell us more about the dynamic relationship between your faith community and context, particularly your hunches and sense of call regarding your young adult neighbors.

Additional guidelines for the video submission.

- The video response should be uploaded in Section 4 of the application. You may skip the written responses for the section you choose.
- Track 3 applicants can skip this requirement.
- To upload to the application, files must be no larger than 100 MB.
- An alternative option for uploading your video file is to upload it to YouTube and create a private link. The link can be submitted on the application instead.
- High production quality or flashy effects are not being measured. We simply want to learn more about your faith community, your particular context and what you sense God is up to in this time and place in a creative way. Have fun with this!



6) GLOSSARY

Different faith communities use contextual language to describe who they are, how they gather, and how people connect. A description of the language chosen for this application is included to help applicants understand the intent behind questions being asked.

- **Faith Community** - This is our broad term for your particular community. Many, but not all, might use the term congregation, church, or worshipping community synonymously.
- **Context** - This refers to the neighborhood, city, or other surrounding cultural traits that make up the place your faith community exists within.
- **Participant** - This refers to the people who engage with your faith community. Some faith communities might use the term “members.” However, especially with younger individuals, the notion of membership is viewed cautiously. People may engage or participate with your faith community or ministries in a wide variety of ways.
- **Young adult** - Our funding partner, Lilly Endowment Inc., has defined young adult as anyone between the ages of 22-29. While this project centers on this 20-something demographic, we recognize that in reality “young adults” and ministry with young adults is much more dynamic. The application leaves room for applicants to describe who young adults are in their unique contexts.

7) INNOVATION TEAM DESCRIPTION

Each faith community accepted into Tracks 1, 2 and 3 will need to identify four to five people from your faith community to steward your community's involvement in the Innovative Ministry Partnership. Section 2, question 10 of the application asks you to describe who you would like to recruit for your Innovation Team and what skill sets you imagine each person would contribute. This team should include both staff and non-staff participants from your faith community. Applicants are not required to have their Innovation Team recruited and committed in order to apply, but it will be helpful to begin envisioning who will help your faith community carry this project forward. Question 10 simply asks you to share how you would envision filling this team.

Innovation Team responsibilities - Track 1 and 2

- Participate in seminars and workshops at Augsburg 2-4 times a year.
- Champion the Innovative Ministry Partnership in your faith community.
- Steward the listening and discernment process in your faith community during Year One with guidance from the Innovation Coach.
- Based on the discernment work in Year One, create a ministry idea proposal for the sub-grant funding in spring of 2019 with guidance from the Innovation Coach.

Innovation Team responsibilities - Track 3

- Participate in seminars and workshops at Augsburg 2-4 times a year.
- Champion the Innovative Ministry Partnership in your faith community.
- Commit to meet regularly as a team to reflect and discern how what you are learning intersects with your particular context and young adult neighbors.



