

# **Stewardship of Life Institute**

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL New Stewardship Ministry Concept**

**PROJECT NAME: Sharron Blezard Innovation Fellowship  
Stewardship of Life Institute  
61 Seminary Ridge  
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania 17325  
PH: 7173383011 FAX: Stewardship of Life Institute  
mzimmann@uls.edu**

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**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**  
**Sharron Blezard Innovation Fellowship**  
**Stewardship of Life Institute**  
**Gettysburg, Pennsylvania**

**Article I. Introduction**

For thirty years, the Stewardship of Life Institute (SOLI) has sought “to provide specific opportunities for the education and development of leadership skills in stewardship as a way of life” (Article III.3 of SOLI Bylaws). SOLI will now launch the Sharron Blezard Innovation Fellowship, a new initiative to direct resources to ministry communities while prioritizing those that are overlooked or marginalized because of tradition and systemic hierarchies/racism. SOLI invites ministry contexts outside mainstream ELCA congregational/institutional ministries to submit a proposal for the fellowship. This request for proposal outlines the fellowship’s goals and provides the format for ministries’ proposals. Submissions must follow this format and meet an agreed upon timeline.

**Section 1.01 Location and Sponsor**

Submissions for funding are considered under the Sharron Blezard Innovation Fellowship provided by SOLI, 61 Seminary Ridge, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 17325.

**Section 1.02 Partnership**

Fellowship recipients are responsible for their project’s timely completion. SOLI board members will not be immediately available during the project.

**Section 1.03 Contact Information**

Please direct questions about the fellowship to Martin Otto Zimmann, Executive Director of SOLI:

Phone: 7347554523

E-mail: mzimmann@uls.edu

**Article II. The Sharron Blezard Innovation Fellowship**

**Section 2.01 Mission**

The Sharron Blezard Innovation Fellowship will prioritize marginalized or new ministries that share SOLI’s goal of fostering an understanding of stewardship as a way of life. Grants of up to \$40,000 will be made to persons in ELCA-related ministries who devise and implement creative new resources for ministry that encourages stewardship. Examples of new resources could include podcasts, YouTube channels, innovation within church building infrastructure, or the formation of a community within a ministry context. Special consideration will be given to historically new ministry startups. This grant may be renewable.

**Section 2.02 Project Specifications**

Please refer to the separate application document describing the Project Specifications.

### **Section 2.03 Collaborator Requirements**

Successful proposals are expected to:

1. Provide a working budget. (Budgeting assistance is available.)
2. Engage periodically with a designated member of the SOLI board.
3. Keep a journal (written or video) to share the joys and frustrations of the effort.

### **Article III. The Proposal**

#### **(a) Expectations**

Successful fellowship proposals are those judged by SOLI to be the most beneficial to our mission based on the factors listed in (c) below. SOLI reserves the right to: award more than one fellowship; award fellowships before the posted fellowship submission deadline; award fellowships before all proposals are received; and refuse any projects without obligation to SOLI or to those submitting proposals.

#### **(b) Proposal Deadline and Project Timeline**

**A proposal with a cover letter must be submitted to SOLI by August 23, 2023, to be considered for the fellowship. The project is to be undertaken no later than October 1, 2023, and completed no later than October 31, 2024.**

#### **(c) Selection Criteria**

Submissions will be considered solely upon the materials provided in the proposal and submitted by the deadline. Consideration will be given to any ELCA ministry context with preference given to marginalized or new communities. The following criteria will be primary considerations in awarding proposals:

1. Creativity: promoting stewardship as a way of life in new and different ways
2. Inclusivity: reaching out to diverse audiences (ages, identities)
3. Relationships: building connections that foster lives lived in relationship with God and neighbor
4. Spiritual nurture: contributing to growth and formation in faith
5. Church affiliation: connecting to an ELCA congregation or affiliated ministry
6. Outcomes: yielding positive change within their community and the world around it

SOLI may suspend or discontinue proposals at any time without notice or obligation to the organization/individual that submitted the proposal.

**(d) Proposal Format:** Applicants should be prepared to answer the following questions to be eligible for funding.

1. Describe your idea and the ELCA faith-based community where it will be based.
2. What does your organization hope to learn about yourself and those you accompany through this project?
3. What milestones does your ministry group hope to see in this journey?
4. What are the resources your ministry can bring to the table? What will be your biggest challenges?
5. How will you use SOLI funds? Where will you find additional material and spiritual support?
6. Who in your ministry context will hold you accountable in this project? How can SOLI walk with you in this journey?
7. How will you share results of your work and whether or not your vision for ministry has become reality?

**(e) Proposal Assistance:** If an applicant would like to have a conversation with a SOLI board member to complete the application, please email [mzimmann@uls.edu](mailto:mzimmann@uls.edu) or call 734-755-4523 for assistance. An application form is attached. You are welcome to use this form or create your own application as long as you include the information requested in this document.