



Sustaining the Vocational Discernment of Young Adults through IMMERSIONS AND COMPETITIVE MINI-GRANTS

What is PROJECT CONNECT: Calling Leaders for a Changing World?

Project Connect: Calling Leaders for a Changing World, is an initiative of the Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries (Philadelphia, Gettysburg, and Southern). These seminaries are part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Project Connect is funded by a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc.

The purpose of Project Connect is to organize an enthusiastic network of church leaders to mentor and provide theologically sound vocational discernment programs for young adults.

This endeavor will be accomplished by **identifying** young adults who are active in church life; **nurturing** relationships with those who are open to a process that extends, deepens, and provides focus for vocational discernment; and **sustaining** these relationships by providing profound experiences in congregational ministry.

IMMERSIONS

What are IMMERSIONS?

Immersion provides for theological exploration in the midst of deep congregational engagement which will combine to deepen discernment and test a call to pastoral ministry.

For who are IMMERSIONS intended?

To apply for participation in an Immersion, you should be a young adult who is considering ministry as a career (although it isn't necessary to have fully decided). It is required that you have completed at least one academic year of full time study at an accredited college or university and under the age of 30 by May 31 of the year for which you are applying. The successful applicant will demonstrate openness to growth in faith, passion, integrity, vision, self-awareness and motivation for a lifetime of service as pastors and in other forms of public ministry.

Who designs IMMERSIONS?

Immersion is designed by the young adult and pastor of the congregation in consultation with the congregation council. Details of the Immersion will be delineated in a letter signed by the young adult, the pastor, and a representative of the congregation council.

What are the important characteristics of an IMMERSION?

- The arena for an Immersion is the congregation, preferably not the student's home congregation. Please contact Don Johnson, director of Project Connect, if you need guidance in locating a congregation.
- The pastor of the congregation will serve as a mentor and be willing to share his or her own call stories and experiences in ministry.
- Immersions take place either full-time (40 hours per week for 10 weeks) in the summer / or part-time (12 hours per week for eight months) during the academic year.
- Congregations will typically provide housing, make provisions for travel, and offer support and encouragement.
- Recipients of Immersions will agree to abide by the ELCA's *Vision and Expectations* statement for Associates in Ministry (see the LEADERS tab of the Project Connect website).

What kinds of experiences are included in IMMERSIONS?

Congregations and their pastors are expected to provide exposure to various aspects of pastoral ministry such as:

- Visitation of sick and homebound members.
 - Administration, including council and committee meetings.
 - Study and preparation for worship leadership and preaching.
 - Experience with a broad range of age-specific ministries.
 - Exposure to social ministry organizations and community groups.
 - Exposure to synods, including face-to-face conversations with key leaders.
 - Exposure to and involvement with cross-cultural communities.
 - Spiritual formation.
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What is included in an IMMERSION stipend?

Stipends of up to \$2,500 will be awarded for each of 15 Immersion experiences during the year 2010

In addition, the student and pastor will be expected to attend a gathering with other Immersion students and pastors, prior to the beginning of the Immersion, providing orientation, peer interaction, and team-building. Project Connect will cover the costs of room, board, and program during the event as well as travel expenses. In 2010, students and supervising pastors will be able to choose from among the following orientation options:

- May 19 at the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, SC
- May 27, at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, PA
- June 7, at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, PA

How and when to apply for IMMERSIONS:

Applications are available from the Project Connect office and can also be downloaded from the GRANTS section of the Project Connect website, www.projectconnect.org.

Project Connect
665 Eaton Road
Freedom, NH 03836

For more information please contact Don Johnson, Project Director, at the address shown or don@projectconnect.org 603-539-7257 (office) 603-848-9904 (cell)
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First Application Deadline: February 1, 2010

Applicants will be informed of the status of their applications in letters postmarked no later than February 19.

Applications for Immersions will include:

1. Application Form
2. Resume
3. Three-page personal essay
4. Academic Letter of Reference with signed waiver
5. Ministry Letter of Reference with signed waiver
6. Description of project, signed by applicant, pastor, and congregation council

Second Application Deadline: April 10, 2010

If Immersion grants are still available after the February 1 deadline, applications received by April 10 will be considered. Applicants considered at this time will be notified of the status of their applications in letters postmarked by April 23.

COMPETITIVE MINI-GRANTS

What are COMPETITIVE MINI-GRANTS?

A Competitive Mini-Grant is a ministry experience that has been designed by the young adult applying for the grant.

For whom are COMPETITIVE MINI-GRANTS intended?

Competitive Mini-Grants are for young adults who are seriously considering a call to pastoral ministry, who have a passion for ministry and the interpersonal and organizational skills to design and implement their own congregation-based ministry experience with the aid and counsel of a pastor or Discernment Advocate.

Who designs COMPETITIVE MINI-GRANTS?

Competitive Mini-Grants are designed by the applicant. The applicant should consult with the pastor of the congregation with whom they will be working. Details of the mini-grant program will be delineated in a letter signed by the applicant, the pastor, and a representative of the congregation council.

What are the important characteristics of a COMPETITIVE MINI-GRANT?

The arena for a Competitive Mini-Grant is the congregation.

- The pastor and / or Project Connect Discernment Advocate will serve as a mentor and is willing to share his or her own call stories and experiences in ministry.
 - Competitive Mini-Grants will range in time from 3 months to one year. Young adults can apply for grants of up to \$5,000 for each project, of which up to \$2,500 can be designated for a stipend for the Mini-Grant recipient.
 - Congregations will typically provide housing; make provisions for travel, and offer support and encouragement.
 - Recipients of Mini-Grants will agree to abide by the ELCA's *Vision and Expectations* statement for Associates in Ministry (see the LEADERS tab of the Project Connect website).
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What kinds of experiences are included in COMPETITIVE MINI-GRANTS?

A Competitive Mini-Grant will offer a young adult with creativity, demonstrated leadership ability, and a growing sense of call to pastoral ministry the opportunity to work with a congregation to design a ministry project. The project should both serve the needs of the congregation/community as well as help the applicant further discern his/her sense of call by actively engaging in ministry.

What is included in a COMPETITIVE MINI-GRANT Award?

Competitive Mini-Grants will be awarded in amounts of up to \$5,000 for projects in duration of 3 months to one year. A portion of the mini-grant (up to \$2,500) will be earmarked as compensation for the recipient's work; the other portion will be earmarked to defray expenses incurred in carrying out the mini-grant ministry experience. Design of the ministry experience will include a budget.

In addition, the student and pastor will be expected to attend a gathering with other Competitive Mini-Grant and Immersion students and pastors, prior to the beginning of the Mini-Grant project. This event will provide orientation, peer interaction, and team-building. Project Connect will cover the costs of room, board, and program during the event as well as travel expenses. In 2010, students and supervising pastors will be able to choose from among the following orientation locations and dates:

- May 19, at the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, SC
- May 27, at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, PA
- June 7, at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, PA

How and when to apply for COMPETITIVE MINI-GRANTS:

Applications are available from the Project Connect office or can be downloaded from the Project Connect website at www.projectconnect.org.

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First Application Deadline: February 1, 2010

Applicants will be informed of the status of their applications in letters postmarked no later than February 19.

Applications of Competitive Mini-Grants will include:

1. Application Form
2. Resume
3. Three-page personal essay
4. Academic Letter of Reference with signed waiver
5. Ministry Letter of Reference with signed waiver
6. Description of the project, signed by applicant, pastor, and congregation council that will include:
 - Project idea
 - Timeline
 - Congregational component and how this project will fit within the scope of the congregation's ministry
 - Budget
 - Method of accountability/reporting – should include goals to be accomplished and periodic review of progress (what will determine the successful completion of this project?).

Second Application Deadline: April 10, 2010

If Competitive Mini-Grants are still available after the February 1 deadline, applications received by April 10 will be considered. Applicants considered at this time will be notified of the status of their applications in letters postmarked by April 23.