

2022

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



Intellectual Humility Reporting & Production Grants

*An opportunity for journalists and
other nonfiction media producers*

G G Greater Good
S C Science Center

Berkeley
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

About the Greater Good Science Center

Based at the University of California, Berkeley, the [Greater Good Science Center](#) (GGSC) studies the psychology, sociology, and neuroscience of well-being and teaches skills that foster a thriving, resilient, and compassionate society. The GGSC provides a bridge between the research community and the general public, producing multimedia resources that put “the science of a meaningful life” into practical and accessible terms.

Requests for proposals overview

The GGSC is pleased to announce a request for proposals (RFP) to report and produce stories related to “intellectual humility”—a concept defined, most simply, as “the degree to which people recognize that their beliefs might be wrong.”

With funding from the John Templeton Foundation, **the GGSC will distribute grants of between \$5,000 and \$50,000 to journalists and media producers** who approach the topic of intellectual humility from a variety of angles and across a range of media, including articles, videos, radio stories, podcasts, and more. The grants are part of the GGSC’s [Expanding Awareness of the Science of Intellectual Humility](#) project.

In addition to financial support, we will also connect the grantees with scientific experts who will serve as advisors to their projects, guiding them to relevant research and supporting the accuracy and integrity of their work.

The submission window opens **January 5, 2022**, and the application deadline is **March 31, 2022**. For grant winners, the project period will run from **August 1, 2022**, to **January 31, 2024**.

What exactly is “intellectual humility”?

Intellectual humility is defined, most simply, as “**the degree to which people recognize that their beliefs might be wrong.**”

Research on the topic has increased dramatically over the past decade. While psychologists and philosophers have offered a range of definitions of intellectual humility, most of those definitions center on recognizing that

What exactly is “intellectual humility”? (cont’d)

one’s beliefs and opinions might be wrong, acknowledging those limitations without feeling defensive or threatened, and being open to others’ views and appreciating their intellectual strengths.

When researchers try to measure intellectual humility, they ask people to complete scientifically validated surveys asking how much they agree with statements like “I am willing to admit it if I don’t know something,” “I welcome different ways of thinking about important topics,” “I accept that my beliefs and attitudes may be wrong,” and “In the face of conflicting evidence, I am open to changing my opinions.”

While the science of intellectual humility has taken off only recently, the practice of intellectual humility has been celebrated by leading thinkers for centuries. Somewhat paradoxically, they often suggest that recognizing our limitations drives us to learn more about the world, leading to new discoveries and insights. “It is unwise to be too sure of one’s own wisdom,” said Mahatma Gandhi. “It is healthy to be reminded that the strongest might weaken and the wisest might err.”

What is the purpose of this RFP?

Today we are arguably facing a crisis of intellectual humility, particularly in the United States. In politics, Americans seem increasingly wedded to their own party’s positions and hostile to other viewpoints. Recent surveys suggest that social and political polarization in the United States is getting so intense that 73 percent of Americans say Democrats and Republicans don’t only disagree on matters of opinion and policy but [can’t even “agree on the basic facts”](#). What’s more, 70 percent of Democrats and 52 percent of Republicans see members of the other party as “closed-minded” and roughly one-third from each party see the other party as “unintelligent.” Not surprisingly, an overwhelming majority—85 percent—of Americans say that political debate in the U.S. has become less respectful, fact-based, and substantive.

What these findings point to is a social and political environment where people are less open and respectful toward those who hold views that are different from their own. What’s more, the increasingly fragmented and filtered

What is the purpose of this RFP? (cont'd)

way that people get their news and information suggests they are more likely to be exposed only to ideas that confirm what they already believe rather than ideas that can productively challenge their beliefs and expand their worldview.

This can have damaging effects on public discourse, particularly when misinformation proliferates across media: A [recent study in *Science*](#) found that people share false news stories much more widely and rapidly than they share true stories on social media, suggesting that people are not only trapped in their own information bubble but that their bubble might be filled with falsehoods. If we are to extricate ourselves from that trap, we need to be able to recognize that the things we have been led to believe might not always be true or correct; we need to be open to the idea that people with whom we disagree might be (at least partially) right; we need to be able to critically evaluate the glut of information hurled at us every day—and even apply that same critical lens to our own judgements.

Thus we believe that now is an opportune moment to raise public awareness about the value of intellectual humility. Indeed, at a time when people seem to gravitate only toward beliefs with which they already agree, and disparage or dismiss other viewpoints, practicing intellectual humility offers a welcome alternative—a path to greater understanding and cooperation. Finding ways to encourage it seems increasingly vital to the health of our democracy, to the quality of public discourse, and even to our personal relationships.

By generating stories on the science and practice of intellectual humility, this project has four main goals:

1. To deepen the public's—and the media's—awareness, understanding, and appreciation of intellectual humility, guided by recent scientific findings.
2. To highlight the relevance of intellectual humility to various sectors, including K-12 education, health care, faith communities, business, and politics.
3. Encourage journalists and other thought leaders to engage with the existing research on intellectual humility and raise provocative questions that influence future research.

What is the purpose of this RFP? (cont'd)

4. Build relationships between intellectual humility researchers and journalists/media producers to promote quality reporting on intellectual humility research in the near- and long-term.

We welcome a wide range of angles on intellectual humility, produced in a variety of media. Stories could include, though by no means be limited to: profiles of people who have changed their mind or reconsidered their beliefs on an important topic; accounts of what can happen when members of different, even hostile groups engage in an exchange of ideas and perspectives; pieces on how the skill of intellectual humility can be developed in schools and families; explorations of some of the complex questions surrounding intellectual humility—for instance, when, if ever, should we *not* compromise our beliefs or be open to others' views?

While the project encourages journalists to explore existing research on intellectual humility, and to feature this research in their work, the stories they produce do not necessarily need to report explicitly on this research in order to qualify for funding. However, in their grant applications, they should at least be able to explain how they will draw on this research to guide their reporting.

How can I learn more about intellectual humility research?

Please check out the GGSC's [Introduction to Intellectual Humility Research](#) for a summary of research exploring what intellectual humility is, why it matters, and how it can be developed.

For more, you can review [this overview](#) of intellectual humility research from the John Templeton Foundation, along with this more detailed [research summary](#) written by Professor Mark Leary of Duke University.

Who should apply?

We encourage any journalist or other nonfiction media producer in North America to apply for a grant.

The grants will support the reporting and production of stories on intellectual humility across a range of media, including stories for print newspapers and magazines, video, radio, podcasts, and various digital publications or platforms. We have a particular interest in partnering with podcasts.

We believe pieces on intellectual humility may be of particular interest to the following audiences:

- Politically-minded audiences, particularly those seeking constructive strategies for moving past hyper-partisanship and polarization;
- Science-minded audiences, eager to learn about cutting-edge research findings;
- Spiritually-minded audiences, curious about dialogue across faith and spirituality traditions and also about the relationship between science and religion;
- Educators and parents, interested in how intellectual humility can be nurtured in children;
- Others interested in big ideas and their implications for pressing cultural issues of the day.

This list is by no means exhaustive. We encourage journalists or media organizations serving other audiences to apply as well.

How may I apply?

Individuals or organizations that would like to apply for funding should complete the [online submission form](#) by **March 31, 2022**.

For your reference and preparation, below we list the main sections of this application form.

What should I include in the Project Overview?

The project overview should include the following sections and address these questions:

- **Project Title** (100 characters max)
- **Short description** (600 characters max)
- **The medium in which your project will be produced**
- **Outlet/Platform:** Where do you plan to publish your project (i.e., for what publication, radio program, podcast, website, etc.)? If you have not yet confirmed the outlet, please tell us where you hope to publish it and why you believe they are likely to publish it.
- **Output:** Will it be a single piece or a series of pieces?

What should I include in the Project Narrative?

Project narratives should cover the following topics and address these questions (5,000 total characters max):

- **Project idea and Proposed Activities:** What big questions related to intellectual humility will your project address? What form(s) will your project take—what will you actually produce in order to address those questions? What will be your main steps to develop and produce your project? Who might you interview or feature in the story? What do you hope your audience will take away from it—i.e., what might they learn or consider about the significance, relevance, and/or challenges of intellectual humility today?
- **Related Research:** What scientific studies or insights will shape your story? Even if you do not plan to report on scientific research in your final piece, how will the science of intellectual humility inform the development of your idea? To learn more about this science, visit our curated list of scientific resources.
- **Timeliness:** What is new or timely about your project idea? Why is it urgent or important right now? How will it go beyond existing coverage and similar stories?
- **Diversity of Perspectives:** The Greater Good Science Center has a strong commitment to amplifying diverse voices and perspectives. Please describe how your project will support this objective, such as through the point of view it will present and/or the people/sources it will interview and feature.

What information should I include about my intended audience?

Information about your intended audience should include the following sections and address these questions:

- **Target Audience:** Who is the target audience(s) for your project? How will your project speak to their needs and interests? Why is this an important audience to reach? (1,500 characters max)
- **Distribution Strategy:** What steps will you or others take to ensure that your project is widely distributed and finds its audience? How might you capitalize on your own distribution channels and/or work with partners who can help distribute your project to their audience(s)? Will you use any other audience engagement activities (e.g., events, webinars) to increase your project's reach and/or impact? (1,500 characters max)
- **Reach:** Approximately how many people do you expect to reach directly with your project (e.g., how many readers, views, listeners, downloads, etc.)? You can use circulation figures for print publications, average downloads for podcasts, unique monthly visitors for web-based platforms, etc. (1,500 characters max)

What financial information should I include?

- **Total Amount of Request** (in US dollars):
 - **Grants will range from \$5,000 to \$50,000.** Roughly half will be between \$5,000 and \$10,000, and only a few will exceed \$25,000. We anticipate that most articles for print or the web will receive grants in the \$5,000-\$10,000 range. Projects that receive grants above that range will likely be podcast/audio, video, multimedia projects, or a larger series for print. We expect to award a total of 20-25 grants.
- **Project Budget:**
 - Please download and complete the [budget template document](#). Please include each requested line item relevant to your project with brief descriptions.
- **Will the payment of this grant be made to a for-profit organization, a nonprofit, or an individual?**
- **Name of person/organization that will receive the funds, if awarded, and the mailing address where grant checks should be sent.**

What other information or documents should I include?

Please also provide:

- **Project Team:** Please list the members of your project's creative team and designated roles.
- **Capacity for Success:** Please explain the strengths, qualifications, and track record of your organization, and/or of the individual(s) on your project team, that speak to your capacity for success on this project. (2,000 characters max)
- **Resumes:** Please upload resumes or provide a link to LinkedIn profiles for up to four members of your project team, including the project lead.
- **Work Samples:** Please provide links to two samples of your previous work that are relevant to your proposed project. For each, please include a title and brief explanation of why this piece is relevant to intellectual humility and/or the project you're proposing. For proposals from an organization, each work sample should have been produced by at least one of the team members for the proposed project.
- **Letter of Support (optional):** We invite you to provide one letter from an editor, publisher, executive producer, or another colleague that conveys their confidence in your work, their support for your project, and/or their intention to publish and promote it.

What are the evaluation criteria?

Awardees will be selected based on the following criteria:

1. **Project Relevance:** Will they report on intellectual humility, highlighting its significance and practical implications, preferably drawing on relevant research?
2. **Strength and Novelty of Project Idea:** Do they clearly convey what they will produce? Are they taking an original approach or angle on intellectual humility? Will they address compelling questions? Do you think you would want to read/watch/listen to the final product?
3. **Timeliness:** Do they convey what is urgent about their project, what timely issues or questions it addresses?
4. **Connection to Research:** Will they report on the science of intellectual humility, or do they at least clearly convey how relevant research has shaped their thinking and will inform the development of their project?

What are the evaluation criteria? (cont'd)

- Does their proposal suggest that they will do justice to this science? Might they raise provocative questions or suggest new directions that future research could explore?
5. **Target Audience:** Does their target audience align with one or more of the audiences we are targeting through our project?
 6. **Diversity of Perspectives:** Will their project amplify diverse voices and perspectives, such as through the point of view it will present and/or the people/sources it will interview and feature.
 7. **Reach and Impact:** Will they reach a large audience and/or will their project reach an audience that will, in turn, have an influence on many other people? Do they have a clear strategy for reaching that audience?
 8. **Capacity for Success:** Based on their strengths, qualifications, and track record, and their apparent support from their intended platform/publication, will they be able to deliver on their proposal, with the amount of funds they're requesting? Is there a large risk that their project will not actually be published/posted?
 9. **Cost Effectiveness:** Does the amount of their grant request seem appropriate, given their project's activities, the volume and form of their output(s), and its potential reach and impact?
 10. **Timeline:** Will they be able to complete their project, and have it published or released publicly, by January 31, 2024?
 11. **Overall Assessment:** In light of all of the criteria described above, how strongly do you feel that we should fund this project?

What is the budget range?

The GGSC will distribute 20-25 grants of between **\$5,000 and \$50,000**. We anticipate that roughly half of the awards will be between \$5,000 and \$10,000, and the rest will be greater than that, up to \$50,000.

What are the project terms?

Grant recipients will have 18 months to complete their project.

After they receive their grant, they will be paired with a scientific advisor who can point them toward relevant research, help them make sense of that research, and vet the accuracy of their reporting on the science.

What are the project terms? (cont'd)

Toward the start of the grant period (likely in September/October 2022), the GGSC will host a gathering in the San Francisco Bay Area that brings together all of the grantees and scientific advisors. This convening will be designed to help build connections among the grantees and advisors, give the journalists insight into the latest scientific findings on intellectual humility, and help the researchers better understand how to communicate their work to the public.

Subsequent to this gathering, the GGSC will host six optional Zoom calls for the grantees over the following year. These calls are intended to help the grantees connect with one another as a group; share updates, insights, and challenges around their reporting; and learn from relevant experts to support the development of their stories.

At the end of the 18 months, all awardees will be required to provide a link to their final story, a brief explanation of how their story has been distributed, reach and engagement metrics to date, and responses to a brief survey, asking them to reflect on their process and their final product.

The following conditions will apply to all project grants:

1. Grant recipients will have full editorial control over their final pieces. They will not need any editorial review or approval from the Greater Good Science Center.
2. Grant recipients will not be required to report on intellectual humility research that was funded by the John Templeton Foundation. In fact, they will have complete autonomy to report on any research they choose—or to not report on any research at all.
3. The Greater Good Science Center will strongly encourage grant recipients to disclose the source of the funding that has supported their piece when it is published/broadcast/released, noting their affiliation with the GGSC and the Templeton Foundation. This is to provide greater transparency around their work.

What is the timeline?

- **January 5, 2022:** RFP launches and application form opens
- **March 31, 2022:** Applications due
- **June 10, 2022:** Application review process completed, grantees notified
- **August 1, 2022:** Project period officially begins
- **January 31, 2024:** Project period ends

Who may I contact with further questions?

Please email Greater Good Science Center project staff at intellectualhumility@berkeley.edu

Learn more

- Website for the GGSC's [Expanding Awareness of the Science of Intellectual Humility](#) project
- The GGSC's [Introduction to Intellectual Humility Research](#), summarizing studies of what intellectual humility is, why it matters, and how it can be developed
- The John Templeton Foundation's [overview of intellectual humility research](#) and a more detailed [research summary](#) written by Professor Mark Leary of Duke University
- General websites for the [Greater Good Science Center](#) and its [Greater Good magazine](#), which has published a number of [articles on intellectual humility](#).
- [Online Submission Form](#): Opens January 5, 2022