

2025

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



Spreading Love Through the Media Reporting and 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 support nonfiction content and reported stories related to love. We are interested in projects that extend well beyond romantic love; we define love as a deep, unselfish commitment to another person’s well-being—even to put their interests before your own.

With funding from the John Templeton Foundation, **the GGSC will distribute grants of between \$5,000 and \$50,000 to two dozen journalists and media producers** who approach the topic of love from a variety of angles and across a range of media, including articles, videos, radio stories, podcasts, social media content, and more. The grants are part of the GGSC’s [Spreading Love Through the Media](#) 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 helping them align their work with the science of love.

The submission window opens **January 7, 2025**, and the application deadline is 11:59 pm PT on **March 24, 2025**. For grant winners, the project period will run from **September 1, 2025 to February 28, 2027**.

What is “love” in the context of this project?

Love is at the heart of the human story. It connects us to others, drives us to nurture and protect, and gives richness and meaning to our lives. Though love can feel like a mystery—a force beyond science—research reveals its deep roots in our biology and its core role in our evolution.

What is “love” in the context of this project? (cont’d)

While romantic love often steals the spotlight, it’s just one piece of the puzzle. Love comes in many forms—compassionate, companionate, love for family, friends, and even strangers—each serving a unique role. What unites them is that they all involve:

- 1) a deep, unselfish commitment to another person’s well-being—even to put their interests before your own;
- 2) emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions—they involve our feelings toward others (in a fleeting moment or over long periods of time), our perceptions of them (we truly see them), and actions we take to support them or express our care for them.

In that light, love doesn’t just give us warm feelings and inspire affection and devotion. It also helps us bridge divides, cooperate, and promote the well-being of our extended community, including those we might not even know personally. Love is key to leading a flourishing, meaningful life. This more expansive view of love is central to our [Spreading Love Through the Media](#) initiative.

What is the purpose of this RFP?

At a time of extreme division, loneliness, and polarization, this three-year project aims to expand the public’s understanding and practice of love, with a particular emphasis on the power of love to bridge divides and forge deeper connections with people outside of our immediate social circles.

We believe that now is a critical moment to raise public awareness about the value of love and the many ways it shows up in our lives and communities. Indeed, when intense social conflict is undermining our relationships, health, and even the fabric of our democracy, practicing love offers a welcome alternative—a path to greater well-being, longevity, physical and mental health, and stronger bonds to other humans, near and far. Finding ways to encourage love seems increasingly vital to both our personal well-being and the health of our communities, locally and nationally.

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

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

1. expand and deepen the public's understanding and appreciation of love and its contemporary significance, encouraging them to see it as a virtue essential to flourishing in life—and to building a good society;
2. inspire more people to recognize their own capacity for love, particularly to expand their circle of care beyond their own group;
3. build a network of journalists and other media producers committed to exploring different angles on the science and experience of love;
4. strengthen relationships between media producers and love researchers to enhance reporting on love in the near- and long-term.

We welcome a wide range of angles on love, produced in a variety of media. Stories could include, though by no means be limited to: accounts of individuals who intentionally expanded their circle of love, perhaps by finding innovative pathways to loving neighbors, strangers, or even perceived enemies; narratives of love making a difference in unexpected places or among unlikely people; pieces about how to build the capacity for love in children or across communities; ways in which love might inform systems in our society, such as public policy, medical treatment, community development, elder care, or K-12 teaching strategies; exploration of difficult questions around love, such as whether it is always the right choice or whether we sometimes need to cut ourselves off from people we love; and stories of love intersecting with trauma, attachment issues, or mental illness. **We encourage ideas not listed.**

While we encourage grantees to explore existing research on love, and to feature this research in their work, the stories they produce do not 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 projects.

How can I learn more about love research?

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

Who should apply?

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

The grants will support the reporting and production of stories on love across a range of media, including stories for print newspapers and magazines, video, radio, podcasts, social media, and other digital publications or platforms. **We have a particular interest in partnering with podcasts and social media creators, with some funding earmarked for projects produced for social media platforms.**

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

- Educators, caregivers, and parents, interested in how the capacity for love can be nurtured in children and to build more caring communities;
- Politically minded audiences, particularly those seeking constructive strategies for moving past social division and polarization;
- Science-minded audiences, eager to learn about cutting-edge research findings on the psychology or biology of love;
- Spiritually minded audiences, curious about the role of love across faith and spiritual traditions and also about the relationship between scientific and religious conceptions of love;
- Others interested in personal growth, human flourishing, and the implications of the science of love for pressing cultural issues of the day.

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

All proposals must be submitted in English. However, the actual projects that receive grant funding can be in any language.

How may I apply?

Individuals or organizations that would like to apply for funding should complete the [online submission form](#) by 11:59 pm PT on **March 24, 2025**. For your reference and preparation, we list the main sections of this application form on the following pages.

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, YouTube channel, 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 love 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? Is there a central conflict or narrative structure to your project? 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 love 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 love 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

What should I include in the Project Narrative? (cont'd)

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? In what language will the project be produced? (While proposals must be submitted in English, we welcome projects that will be produced in other languages.) (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 one-third will be between \$5,000 and \$10,000, one-third will be between \$10,000 and \$25,000, and one-third will be between \$25,000 and \$50,000; only a few will be for \$50,000. 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 (including for social media), 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.

What financial information should I include? (cont'd)

- **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 love 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 love, 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 love? Will they address compelling questions? Do you think you would want to read/watch/listen to the final product?

**What are the evaluation criteria?
(cont'd)**

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 love, or do they at least clearly convey how relevant research has shaped their thinking and will inform the development of their project? 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? Does it align with our goal to reach underserved or diverse audiences?
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? For instance, have they included sufficient funds for marketing, or do they make clear that they (or their organization) has a strong marketing apparatus in place to promote their work?
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?
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 February 28, 2027?
11. **Overall Assessment:** In light of all of the criteria described above, how strongly do you feel that we should fund this project?

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.

Toward the start of the grant period (in October 2025), 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 grantees insight into the latest scientific findings on love, enable them to receive constructive input on their project, and help the researchers better understand how to communicate their work to the public.

Before this gathering, the GGSC will host a Zoom call to kick off the project; after the gathering, they will host five additional Zoom calls for the grantees and scientific advisors through the end of the 18-month project period. These calls are intended to help the grantees connect with one another as a group; share updates, insights, and challenges around their reporting; receive ongoing input on their projects from the rest of the cohort; 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 piece(s), a brief explanation of how their project 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. Shortly after this deadline, the GGSC will host another gathering, reuniting the grantees and advisors to see what everyone produced and share lessons learned through the reporting and production process.

The following conditions will apply to all project grants:

1. Grant recipients will have full editorial control over their final pieces. They will not receive any editorial review or need approval from the Greater Good Science Center.

What are the project terms? (cont'd)

2. Grant recipients will not be required to report on love 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. We suggest (but do not require) a statement along the lines of: This piece was supported by a grant from the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley as part of its Spreading Love Through the Media project, funded by the John Templeton Foundation.

What is the timeline?

- **January 7, 2025:** RFP launches and application form opens
- **March 24, 2025:** Applications due (at 11:59 pm PT)
- **June 11, 2025:** Application review process completed, grantees notified
- **September 1, 2025:** Grantees' project period officially begins
- **October 22-24, 2025:** Grantees convene in Berkeley
- **February 28, 2027:** Grantees' project period ends

Who may I contact with further questions?

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

Learn more

Website for the GGSC's [Spreading Love Through the Media](#) project

The GGSC's [Introduction to Love Research](#), summarizing studies of what love is, why it matters, how it enriches our lives and communities, and how it can be developed.

We also encourage you to browse [articles on love](#) that we have published in our award-winning online magazine, *Greater Good*, as well as [this description of relevant research](#) that our partner the John Templeton Foundation published on their website.

Learn more (cont'd)

We hope that these resources inspire or enhance your ideas for your project and help you ground your proposal in relevant science.

[Online submission form](#) opens January 7, 2025

