

# NORTHLAND COLLEGE

## Instructions for Writing a Successful Proposal

Please read and be familiar with the information in the Guidelines document before beginning your proposal.

### I. Overview

When composing your Parsonage Fund Application, remember that you are applying to a competitive grant program with limited funding. The Parsonage Fund Review Committee consists of Northland College staff and faculty who have an expectation of superior quality for the applications they review. Make sure that your application is: clear, complete, and concise; neatly organized on the provided application forms; and edited for spelling and grammar errors. Demonstrating a high level of care and attention in preparing your application materials increases the likelihood of your project being funded. Working with a writing tutor is highly recommended.

The Review Committee will rate your proposal based on the following criteria:

- Type of project: priority is given to research projects and presentations or posters at a professional conference, then capstone projects, followed by all other activities
- Strength and individualization of the faculty/staff recommendation
- Clarity and completeness of the general description of the project
- A clear explanation of how the project/event will benefit the applicant personally, professionally, and/or academically
- Method of sharing project with Northland community is effective and appropriate
- Budget is reflective of true costs and **documentation is included**
- Plan for reflection is appropriate and shows deep thought about your personal goals for the project
- Project proposed is likely to have a successful outcome
- Applicant's contribution to the project (see budget section for tips on this)
- Fundraising for the project was carried out
- Application is free of spelling and grammar errors
- **Incomplete applications will not be reviewed** and are not eligible for funding

### II. Application Forms

All application forms, including an application checklist, are located on [my.northland.edu](https://my.northland.edu) under **Academic & Career Planning, Career Development, Parsonage Fund**. Applications must be submitted using these forms.

#### A. Choosing An Application Form

- **Individual Application Form:** Use this form if you are the only person applying for a particular project. Please refer to Appendix I for examples of strong answers to application questions.
- **Group Application Form:** Use this form if more than one person is applying for funding for the same research project, event, conference, etc. Applicants will be rated individually, so if some students are presenting at a conference and others are not, this should be made clear. Please refer to Appendix II for an example of a strong group application.

#### **B. Tips for Sharing with the Community**

If you are funded, you are required to share what you've learned from your experience with the Northland community. You may use any of the options that the review committee has approved, listed below. You are welcome to brainstorm and propose any other idea that you believe best delivers the learning from your experience. In your proposal, inform the committee why you chose the method you did.

- Present your findings to a classroom (please be specific about when/where/what class)
- Be part of a panel discussion at a future conference/presentation (please provide details)
- Write an article for Drifts about one aspect of the experience (provide a deadline for your Drifts article and anticipated issue)
- Present your project via the Honor's Day Poster Session

If you're creating a poster or another form of visual presentation for your Parsonage-funded project, download the Parsonage Fund logo on the website and include it in your acknowledgments.

You should also reach out to the Communications Office after your project is completed to arrange for a story and photo, so they can share your experience with the broader community.

#### **C. Tips for Reflection**

Reflection increases the learning from an immediate experience. We include this requirement because the purpose of this fund is educational in nature, and a strong reflection component shows that you are serious about learning from the experience. Your reflection should help you connect this experience to new insights about past experiences, present initiatives, or future goals.

#### **D. Traveling with a faculty or staff member – groups only**

If your group is traveling more than 200 miles from campus in a campus vehicle, your trip requires that a Northland College faculty or staff member accompany your group. This faculty/staff member needs to fill out and sign the Accompanying Staff form. This form should be sent in along with the rest of your application materials.

### **III. Budgets**

An Excel spreadsheet is provided to applicants for reporting your project budget. See Appendix I or II for more information about filling in the spreadsheet. You **MUST** include documentation for EVERY item listed on the budget spreadsheet. **Your proposal will not be considered if documentation is missing.**

**A. College Vehicles**

Only College-authorized drivers are allowed to operate a College-owned vehicle. Please contact Sara ([maintenance@northland.edu](mailto:maintenance@northland.edu)) in the Facilities Maintenance Office for specific information on becoming an authorized driver. After your trip is approved for funding, your faculty/staff sponsor will need to reserve the vehicle for your group as students are not authorized to reserve vehicles. Faculty/staff sponsors should indicate on the reservation form that it is a Parsonage Fund trip. Trips over 200 miles from campus using campus vehicles require that a faculty/staff sponsor accompany the group. Groups using College vehicles should establish an emergency plan that includes emergency contact information for all participants and for the College. Vehicles are available at these costs:

Car	.45 per mile	carries a total of 4 people
11-12 person van	.55 per mile	includes driver
14 person mini-bus	.75 per mile	includes driver

**B. Showing personal contributions**

Proposals which include personal contributions are given special consideration by the Review Committee. It is important to explain your contribution and its monetary value in the budget justification section, and to show the dollar value of your contribution in the “Your Contribution” budget line on the Budget Worksheet. Special consideration is also given to students and groups that conduct fundraising events. Students should also try to use cost saving measures such as carpooling, meeting early bird deadlines, room sharing, or cooking one’s own meals to keep project costs at a minimum.

**C. Budgeting for a flight**

Airfare tickets are typically at their lowest cost and a relatively stable cost if they are purchased at least one month in advance of travel. Due to the day-to-day fluctuations in airfare ticket prices, students need to be prepared for the possibility that ticket prices at time of purchase may have increased or decreased from what was budgeted for in their proposal. In that circumstance, students would need to cover the difference with their own funds or reimburse the Parsonage Fund for any overage. The Parsonage Fund will not cover the cost of checked baggage or cover the cost of flight/trip protection insurance. If you feel that circumstances absolutely necessitate the purchase of either of these, you may write a justification for them in the “Budget Rationale” section of your application for consideration by the Parsonage Fund Review Committee.

**D. Documentation for Budgeted Items**

Lack of budget documentation is the most common reason funding is denied. **Every item that you request funding for must have documentation or your proposal will not be considered.** For example, if you include postage in your budget request, you must have documentation from the Post Office showing the current cost of postage. The committee may know the cost, but we

hold all applications to the same standards. Web addresses/URLs are **not** considered documentation.

If your group is traveling, be sure to include costs like:

- Taxes: hotels, car rental, flights, train tickets
- Checking luggage on a train or airline
- Tolls charged on toll roads
- Parking fees
- Shuttle or cab fares

Make sure your costs cover all legs of your trip! That includes taxes, multiple hotel nights, multiple parking fees, multiple shuttle or cab fares, etc. **This is your responsibility and the committee will assume you have budgeted for your needs. Requests for additional funding for “forgotten” budget items are unlikely to be reimbursed.**

#### IV. Faculty or Staff Recommendations

The recommendation is a key factor in a proposal’s success. Plan ahead and provide a copy of the proposal and budget to the person doing the recommendation, as the recommendation form specifically asks him or her to address the proposal and budget. The recommendation may arrive in the form that is provided or in a formal letter to the committee. The recommender may choose to either send you the document or send it directly to [parsonagefund@northland.edu](mailto:parsonagefund@northland.edu) by the application deadline. For groups, one faculty or staff member may fill out one recommendation form for the entire group; however, each group member must provide a reference person that can be contacted by the Parsonage Fund Review Committee.

#### V. Submitting the Proposal

For Individual Applicants:

- Submit all documents as attachments in one email to [parsonagefund@northland.edu](mailto:parsonagefund@northland.edu). Include your faculty or staff recommendation or have them send it directly.

For Group Applicants - Group leaders should:

- Submit all group application documents and all group member responses together. Group members should not submit separately.
- Submit all documents as attachments in as few emails as possible to [parsonagefund@northland.edu](mailto:parsonagefund@northland.edu). Include faculty or staff recommendations or have them send it directly.
- Ensure that the group members listed as applying for funding are on the group form AND that you have all of their individual pieces. If you have group members traveling with you, but not applying for funding, please enter their name(s) in the box after the group member list. Indicate they are not applying for funding.
- **Group leaders: you are ultimately responsible for your group.** It is your job to make sure budget accounts for all expenses. Reimbursements for “forgotten” expenses are unlikely to

**occur.** It is your job to make sure your group members submit their materials. In essence, make sure your ducks are in a row before submitting a group application!

If you need to send an update, please make it very clear what document(s) is/are being replaced. Use “updated” or “new” in the file name so it is easy to tell which file is which.

File names: It is incredibly helpful to have easily identifiable file names for processing. Please note the formatting instructions for each form.

**It is your responsibility to ensure the application is complete. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed and are not eligible for funding. A checklist has been provided to help verify everything that is required.**

## **VI. Special Requests**

### **Groups over 15**

Proposals for groups with over fifteen people are strongly encouraged to consider the following:

- Make sure each applicant is serious about the experience. Group members with strong proposals may receive more funding than members with weak proposals. Some groups have found the following to be helpful with large group experiences:
  - Require attendance at planning meetings
  - Require help with fundraising efforts
  - Set deadlines for application materials and hold members to them
  - Determine a small steering committee who will review all individual applications for consistency before submitting as a whole. Request revisions from applications that are not as strong as others by having the individual work with a writing tutor.
- Fundraise. Plan fundraisers and/or set personal contribution levels for participants. The sheer size of large group requests can overwhelm our allotted budget. Diversify your funding strategy as much as possible.

**We look forward to receiving your Parsonage Fund proposal!**