

2026 Global Working Group Grant Competition Guide

The purpose of the Global Working Group competition is to fund Northwestern faculty members who wish to work on a significant global/international problem in an interdisciplinary, collaborative context. Previous projects have included both practitioners and scholars outside the university. We aim to create the conditions for new ways of thinking to emerge and for colleagues across different fields to consider, where appropriate, new forms of action.

This guide outlines the application requirements and grant structure for this year's Global Working Group competition. Proposals will be peer-reviewed by a multidisciplinary committee composed of three faculty members outside of Northwestern, one Northwestern faculty member and Michael Kelley, Executive Director of Northwestern's Office of Foundation Relations.

Application Timeline

Proposals must be submitted by noon on Friday, February 16, 2026. Proposals should be submitted in PDF format via the [online submission portal](#).

Award Description

Selected groups will receive up to \$200,000 spread over two to five years. Groups will be funded from September 1, 2026, through August 31 of their final year, and will be required to submit a report at the end of each academic year.

Group Composition

Groups must be co-led by two tenured Northwestern faculty (representing two different disciplines) and must include at least two additional Northwestern faculty. Group members from outside Northwestern are permitted but not required.

Application Elements

- A title page that includes a project abstract of 250 words and a list of group members with departmental and institutional affiliations
- A Project Narrative of 5–10 pages comprising the following sections:
 - Problem Description
 - Describe a challenge of global and international importance. Why is the issue that this group addresses truly a global problem that crosses national boundaries?
 - Research Question
 - Through what question or questions does this group attempt to address the problem described above?
 - Research Significance
 - Describe the existing body of knowledge on this topic and the project's proposed contribution.
 - Group Members
 - Why is the interdisciplinary group of scholars that this project convenes well positioned to address the challenge? What different disciplinary understandings and approaches do the members bring to the group?
 - Group Activities
 - What research work, events, or other activities does the group plan to undertake during its funding period, and how many years of funding is the group requesting?
 - Outcomes
 - What sorts of research products (e.g. articles, creative endeavors, policy papers, technologies, community-engaged activities, books, metrics, tools) does this group expect to produce as a result of this funding?
- A draft budget for the project using the provided template
 - This budget should align with the Activities and Outcomes sections of the Project Narrative.
 - Groups will be awarded up to \$200,000 over two to five years, but the amount does not need to be split evenly. To allow groups to deploy these funds most efficiently, we provide for flexibility in spending across the grant cycle.
 - Groups will be permitted to buy out up to two quarters of group member teaching or service time in total over the course of the grant, subject to written approval from the chair or dean for the faculty members receiving the buyouts.
 - Before each academic year, groups will be required to submit detailed budgets for review and approval.
- CVs for all group members

Questions

Please contact our Research Director Harrington Weihl if you would like to consult on group development or if you have any other questions:

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