



*For a just, peaceful, and sustainable world*

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

For the Next Parliament of the World's Religions



Chicago,  
USA

1893



Chicago,  
USA

1993



Cape Town,  
South Africa

1999



Barcelona,  
Spain

2004



Melbourne,  
Australia

2009



Salt Lake City,  
USA

2015



Toronto,  
Canada

2018



Virtual

2021

## LOOKING FORWARD

Updated: November 2022

## Introduction

Introduction to the Parliament	3
Our History	4
Our Mission	5
Activities and Governance	6

## Overview

The Parliament Event	7 - 9
RFP Overview, Proposal Submission Process	10

## Hosting The Parliament

Evaluation Criteria	11
Financial Requirements	12
Meeting the Financial Requirements	13
Understanding the Collaborative Relationship	14

## Next Steps for Application

Site Selection Questionnaire	15 - 19
------------------------------	---------



## Introduction to the Parliament

The Parliament of the World's Religions (hereafter referred to as "PoWR") is an organization that works with religious and spiritual communities and other guiding institutions (government, labor, education, media, science, intergovernmental organizations and organizations of civil society) in efforts to achieve a more just, peaceful and sustainable world. For more than three decades, we have organized Parliaments – global Convenings that have drawn thousands of participants – in various cities around the world.

This Request for Proposals document (hereafter referred to as the "RFP") is an invitation for cities around the globe to explore opportunities – specifically to:

- Enhance local community well-being through greater interfaith cooperation in your city
- Host thousands of participants attending the Parliament of the World's Religions Convening (hereafter referred to as "the Parliament") in your city

Through this RFP process, we will select host cities committed to using the Parliament and its related activities to further the goals of the global interfaith movement, and to determine the capacity of these cities to host an international convening.



# INTRODUCTION TO THE PARLIAMENT<sup>3</sup>

**1893**

CHICAGO,  
USA



**1993**

CHICAGO,  
USA



**1999**

CAPE TOWN,  
SOUTH  
AFRICA



**2004**

BARCELONA,  
SPAIN



**2009**

MELBOURNE,  
AUSTRALIA



**2015**

SALT LAKE  
CITY, USA



**2018**

TORONTO,  
CANADA



**2021**

VIRTUALLY



**2023**

CHICAGO,  
USA



## Our History

In the spring of 1988, the Parliament of the World's Religions current organizational structure was formed to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Parliament Convening, which was held in Chicago in 1893. The 1993 Parliament was an extraordinary interfaith event: over 8,000 participants came together to celebrate the commonalities and diversities of the world's religious and spiritual traditions, and to explore responses to the critical issues facing the human community.

In the wake of this powerful gathering, the PoWR made a commitment to convene a new Parliament Convening every three to five years. Subsequent Parliaments have been held in Cape Town, South Africa; Barcelona, Spain; Melbourne, Australia; Salt Lake City, UT, USA; Toronto, Canada; and virtually, online.

In 2015, the Parliament returned to the United States after 22 years, with its highest attendance in history. Over 10,000 people from around the globe went to Salt Lake City to discuss three critical issues - Climate Change, Income Inequality, and War, Hate Speech, and Violence. For the first time, the Parliament began with a Women's Assembly, which addressed the responsibility of the world's religions to affirm women's dignity and human rights, and to support religious and spiritual inspiration for women's empowerment.

In 2018, the Parliament convened for the first time in its history in Canada. Marking its 125th anniversary, the Toronto Parliament reflected on the theme, "The Promise of Inclusion, the Power of Love: Pursuing Global Understanding, Reconciliation, and Change." The Fifth Directive of the Global Ethic, on Sustainability and Care for the Earth, was adopted.

In 2021, the Parliament once again made history by hosting the first virtual Parliament of the World's Religions on a theme of "Opening Our Hearts to the World: Compassion in Action." A declaration on the dual crises of climate change and COVID-19 was presented to the global audience.

In August of 2023, the 9th Parliament of the World's Religions returns home to Chicago after 30 years, convening international people of faith and goodwill to answer "A Call to Conscience: Defending Freedom & Human Rights."

# OUR HISTORY<sup>4</sup>





## Mission

- Promote understanding and cooperation among the world's religious and spiritual communities, their affiliated groups and institutions;
- Cultivate a spirit of harmony and celebrate, with openness and mutual respect, the rich diversity of the world's religious and spiritual communities and their traditions;
- Encourage the world's religious and spiritual communities to assess and renew their role of the world's religious and spiritual communities and their traditions in relation to personal spiritual growth and the challenges facing the global community;
- Promote and sponsor periodic parliaments, conferences, events, programs, projects, and other appropriate activities that further the mission of the Parliament; and
- Through interfaith dialogue, cooperation and solidarity, encourage the ending of war, hate and violence; the elimination of poverty and reduction of inequality; and the reversal of climate change and environmental degradation.

# OUR MISSION & OUR VISION

## Activities

Within the growing global interfaith movement, the Parliament's activities include:

- *Convening* events that serve as opportunities for encounter and dialogue;
- *Networking* with individuals, communities, organizations and institutions to foster engagements with each other, with the interfaith movement, and with the world;
- *Engaging* religious and spiritual communities in work for justice, peace and sustainability.



## Governance

An elected **Board of Trustees**, comprised of influential persons from diverse religious and spiritual communities and other guiding institutions, governs the PoWR. Board and committee meetings are held regularly in various locations and via telecommunications.

The **Chair of the Board** is Mr. Nitin Ajmera

The **Executive Director** is Rev. Stephen Avino.

The **Site Selection Chair** is Ven. Dr. Dhammadipa Sak.

The Parliament's **Site Selection Committee** is charged by the Board of Trustees with the responsibility to implement and oversee the site selection process.





**Date:** 4-7 day event, including a weekend, when the largest number of people (including students) can attend, and weather is moderate.

**Location:** Determined through a bid process, with special regard to:

- Capacity to hold a 7,000-10,000-person opening and closing ceremony and plenary sessions
- At least 30 concurrent breakout sessions (50 - 1000 capacity)
- Religious diversity in the surrounding community
- Capacity to hold a marketplace of 400+ exhibit booths
- Hotel capacity to accommodate 10,000 attendees

**Themes/Logo:**

To be determined in collaboration with host city/group.

**Goals:**

- Celebrate richness and diversity of the world's religions and spiritual traditions
- Enhance the networking and collaborative action of the interfaith movement globally
- Model a values-based approach to social cohesion and global transformation
- Enhance the visibility and stature of the host city in the national and international interfaith movement, and strengthen the interfaith movement locally in the host city
- Engage and empower individual interfaith activists and networks to achieve the above goals in their respective communities

# THE PARLIAMENT CONVENING

## Anticipated Impact on Host City:

- Over 15,000 people involved in the Parliament and pre-Parliament events will identify the host city as a major participant in the global interfaith community
- Over \$20 million in tourist/participant-related revenues for the local economy
- The name of the host city becomes an icon in the global interfaith movement

## Target:

- 7,000 - 10,000 (registered), with 60% from outside of the general area.
- 3-4 Nobel Prize Laureates and 30-40 top international religious leaders as speakers. Past speakers have included Nelson Mandela, Dr. Jane Goodall, Arun Gandhi, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and Karen Armstrong.

## Parliament Convening Structure:

- Opening Ceremony in a large venue (10,000 people) with major presenters including local government officials, religious leaders, musicians, and entertainment/sports figures
- 4-6 large Plenary events and a possible concert in the evening
- At least 30 workshops at any given time, with space needed for 50-1000 participants
- Marketplace with 400+ exhibit booths
- Linkages to other cultural locations and sub events throughout the host city including tours of sacred spaces and neighborhood public-interest locations.
- Strong inclusion of Indigenous groups
- Virtual aspect of the event (e.g., streaming, tweeting)







## Costs

The cost of producing a Parliament is approximately \$4 - \$7 million USD (depending on the length and complexity of the event, and the local economy). Once core funding is procured and committed, additional funds are sought by the PoWR for additional programming (visual arts, music, etc.).



## Collaborators

- **Organizing Collaborators (OC)** – convention and visitors' bureaus, city and country representatives, religious leaders, interfaith organizations, university representatives, corporate representatives, etc.
- **Parliament of the World's Religions (PoWR)** – responsible for recruiting Nobel Laureates, prominent religious leaders and speakers; organizing the workshops (except for those set aside for specifically local programming); planning the plenary programs, recruiting and marketing for international participation; and producing Parliament publications.



## Outreach/Marketing

The approach includes connecting with partner organizations and where possible, convention and visitors' bureaus.

- Local City gathering prior to the Convening
- international gathering prior to the Convening
- Mailings to 50,000 people
- Social media reach to 100,000 people



# THE PARLIAMENT CONVENING

## Proposal Submission Process and Timeline

The Parliaments are now scheduled every three years. Therefore, the site selection process is ongoing. A timeline is attached with relevant dates.

- Step #1:** Submit Letter of Intent and first draft of Site Selection Questionnaire (See end of this document.)
- Step #2:** Submit final formal written Proposal by answering the questions in Appendix A accompanied by your Parliament Bid Submission fee (\$5,000 USD). Should your city not be selected to host the Parliament, your Proposal Submission fee will be refunded.
- Step #3:** Selected cities host PoWR Site Selection Committee visits.
- Step #4:** Cities submit preliminary funding plans and initial funding commitments.
- Step #5:** PoWR selects Parliament Host City.
- Step #6:** Selected city completes funding of operational development requirements and securing guarantors for on-site event expenses. A Local Entity is created, and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is jointly drafted and signed by the PoWR and the Local Entity.
- Step #7:** Licensing agreement is signed, licensing fee and first payment of operational funds is made. The PoWR announces Parliament Host City.



## Evaluation Criteria and Financial Requirements

This Request for Proposals document (RFP) describes the partnership opportunities in the following section:

### SECTION ONE Hosting a Parliament

In this section we ask you to describe the capacity of your city to support this endeavor, in partnership with the PoWR.

### SECTION TWO Enhancing Interfaith Efforts

In this section we ask you to describe demographics and the religious and spiritual character and dynamics of your city, the current activities and accomplishments of your local interfaith groups, and your vision and aspirations for the future.

### SECTION ONE: Hosting a Parliament

Parliament events aim to significantly enhance local interfaith activities of the host city, to extend the networking of local interfaith groups, and to create partnerships between religious and spiritual communities with other guiding institutions to address critical global issues. One of the things that makes the Parliament distinct from other conferences is its devotion to a collaborative, symbiotic relationship with the host city - one that extends before, during, and long after the Parliament itself.

In this section, we ask you to describe your vision and plans for collaborating with the PoWR in hosting the Parliament of the World's Religions in the following categories:

- Assessing your capacity to host the Parliament
- Meeting the financial requirements of hosting the Parliament
- Contributing to the Parliament Program

Your answers to all of the questions in each of these categories will help us better evaluate your Proposal to host the Parliament and how you will support it locally.

# EVALUATION CRITERIA AND REQUIREMENTS

## Hosting a Parliament - Financial Requirements

In convening the six modern Parliament events since 1993, the PoWR has come to understand the resources needed to be a host of such an international gathering. This understanding has significantly shaped the financial requirements listed below:

### \$2,500 USD initial Application fee

- This Application fee is for reviewing your initial draft Proposal for partnership with the PoWR and the hosting of the Conference.
- The Application fee is nonrefundable.

### \$5,000 USD final submission fee

- This Submission fee is for reviewing the completed Proposal to host the next Parliament.
- This Submission fee is refundable if your city is not chosen to host the Parliament.

If, after our review of the Proposal, a city is selected for a site evaluation visit, the city will be financially responsible for 5 days of travel and accommodation expenses for the PoWR's Site Selection Committee (4 to 6 persons).

### Comprehensive Funding Strategy

*Final site selection* will depend on a positive assessment of a city's physical capacity to host a Parliament, and on a comprehensive and guaranteed funding strategy in line with expenditures as outlined in the Financial Requirements portion of Section Two of this RFP document, and negotiated with the PoWR's designated representatives.

The following two financial components are required *at the time the selected city is announced as the next Parliament site*:

- Operational development funding must be secured and available, and the licensing fee must be paid.
- A credible funding plan for on-site event expenses must be fully secured by one or more guarantors





## Meeting the Financial Requirements of Hosting the Parliament

While the PoWR's organizational budget supports our ongoing engagement with the global interfaith movement, as well as the professional staff needed to execute that work, each global convening of the Parliament must be self-supporting. Therefore, a thorough, realistic and fully supported plan to secure and provide the financial requirements for Parliament planning and hosting is a key element in the site evaluation and selection process. Based on past experience, we estimate that US\$4 - \$7 million dollars must be raised to cover the basic operational costs of producing an event of the size and scope of the Parliament.

We understand that there are bound to be significant economic and cultural differences among the various cities and countries that would be interested in hosting the Parliament. Therefore, the PoWR is committed to work with prospective host cities to find creative and feasible strategies to raise the necessary funds in a way that will be realistic for a particular city.

Previous Parliaments have been funded in a variety of ways:

- Some have received substantial public funding from governmental entities, whether at the municipal, state, provincial, and/or national levels.
- Some have been funded primarily from private sector grants and sponsorships provided by business corporations, financial entities, philanthropic organizations, religious bodies, academic institutions, etc.
- On-site event expenses are substantial, and include the program and venue costs and on-site production and services. Some expenses of the event may be covered by in-kind contributions. Expenses must be covered by a credible fundraising plan and guaranteed at the time the selected city is announced as the Parliament site.
- One was funded by an umbrella organization which raised funds from many different sources in order to produce a series of programs for a particular city.
- In addition, some substantial operational costs can be reduced if a city is able to provide certain budget items as in-kind donations.

## SECTION TWO: Enhancing Interfaith Efforts

A principal goal of the PoWR is to help local religious, spiritual and interfaith groups develop in ways that build the capacity of such diverse communities to engage with each other and with other sectors of the city in order to address critical issues in their own locale.

### Understanding the Collaborative Relationship

1. The Parliament of the World's Religions (PoWR) is the sole and exclusive producer of a Parliament Convening and is ultimately responsible for all aspects of the management of the Parliament. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Designing, planning, preparing and implementing all programmatic aspects such as selecting speakers, scheduling programming and events and designing and publishing the program book.
  - Retaining and supervising event staff both in the PoWR's home office and in the host city.
  - Being responsible for registration, management, insurance, marketing the Parliament, a website, all A/V and online facilities and activities and telecommunications, etc.
2. In collaboration with the PoWR, the host city will designate a "Local Entity" to be responsible to work with the PoWR to support the Parliament and to provide all administrative aspects of the Parliament, which will be undertaken by the host city.
3. The terms of the relationship between the PoWR and the host city will be negotiated in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the PoWR and the appropriate local administrative/and or governmental entity. The MOU will, among other things, specify the roles and responsibilities of each organizational entity, how the two organizations will communicate and how they will resolve conflicts (keeping in mind that the PoWR is the final authority with respect to event production).
4. Local interfaith groups will be invited to provide advice and support to the PoWR. These groups will not have a contractual relationship with either the PoWR or the Local Entity.

## Next Steps for Application

### ***SITE SELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE***

Please answer questions on a separate document, referencing the question number before you answers. Send your answers to the Executive Director and Site Selection Chair by email.


1. Describe the largest event(s) ever staged in your city.
2. What features of your municipal and national history, culture, and geography will be most significant in our joint efforts to draw a global audience to a Parliament convening?
3. How would you use these features in presenting your site as a candidate for the Parliament Convening Host City?
4. What is the international airport into your city?
5. How many airlines operate from the airport?
6. How many cities can you fly nonstop to from your airport (domestic and international)?
7. How many flights operate from your airport per day and per week?
8. What is the average round trip fare from your airport to the following major cities? Chicago, Los Angeles, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Toronto, New York, Buenos Aires, Guadalajara, London, Frankfurt, Berlin, Paris, Madrid, Rome, Mumbai, New Delhi, Singapore, Sydney, Taipei, Tokyo, Amman, Istanbul, Dubai, Cairo, Johannesburg
9. How far is the airport from the city center? How much does it cost to get to the city center in a taxi? Public transportation? (Please describe)
10. What are the visa requirements for citizens of other countries traveling to your country? If visas are required, from which countries? Are there any hindrances or challenges for citizens of specific countries to obtain visas? Please explain.
11. Please list all major congress/conference centers in your city. Please include the venue capacities, number of meeting rooms, room sizes, A/V capabilities, internet connectivity and catering information. Describe any unique features available. Indicate provision for disabled access, deaf signing, multiple language simultaneous translation, and other similar resources and aids, at each center.
12. Will there be any planned construction taking place in the year the Parliament Convening is scheduled to be held, both in terms of general city construction (major highways, major city streets) and specifically at the congress/conference centers themselves?

13. Are there any other large conferences your city is considering for the same time period as you propose for the Parliament Convening, or for the time periods either immediately preceding or following?
14. What open-air venues does your city have for outdoor performances and observances?
15. Does your venue have the capacity to host 30 concurrent workshops, ranging in size from 50 to 1000 participants, at any given time?
16. Please include the floor plan of your proposed venue.
17. What services do you offer conference organizers?
18. What type of registration processing do you offer?
19. Will the bureau contribute to the costs of housing and registration?
20. What can you offer the PoWR to bring the Parliament Convening to your city (e.g., hosting events, printing programs and collateral, providing housing/registration)?
21. What type of site inspections can you offer the Selection Team if your city is being considered for this event?
22. Describe the public transportation you have in your city that accesses the principal congress/convention venues.
23. What is the average cost? What are the hours of operation?
24. How many hotel rooms do you have in your city? (See grid below.)

Please complete the grid below:

Hotel Type	Number of Hotels (used for large congresses)	Number of Rooms	Price Range (USD)	Maximum Distance to Conference / Congress Center
Luxury (5 star)				
Business (4 star)				
Standard (3 star)				
Budget (2 star)				
Hostels				
Dormitories				
Home Stays				



- 
25. How many hotel rooms are within walking distance to the principal congress/conference centers (10-15 minutes)?
26. What arrangements can be made for home stays for Parliament participants?  
Describe the experience with this kind of arrangement for recent conferences.
27. 'Please discuss any safety concerns for international delegates.
28. Please describe special security provisions/experience for heads of state.
29. What levels of security do your congress/conference centers offer? Please give a detailed explanation of security procedures.
30. Do you have indications of interest in financial support from any of the following?
- Religious and spiritual communities and their affiliated organizations
  - Civic and governmental organizations and agencies
  - Corporations
  - Businesses or business groups
  - Universities or other educational institutions
  - Foundations
  - Individuals
  - Other sources
31. What in-kind contributions or donations of facilities and services have been secured or are available to offset on-site event expenses? Consider the following:
- Venues and facilities
  - Security
  - Publicity and public relations
  - Event infra-structure (registration, hospitality, ushers)
  - Event production (technical support, printing, translation)
  - Personnel, including volunteers before and during the event

32. What other assets and fundraising prospects are possible?
33. How could your Proposal Development Team help to secure committed funds to support participation by persons with limited financial means, including Indigenous and Aboriginal peoples, students, and other underrepresented groups?
34. The basic operating budget might need to be expanded due to additional hospitality and security expenses incurred for high profile speakers and heads of state. As these expenses can be extensive, please describe how your Proposal Development Team will secure committed funds/services for these requirements. In the past, special sponsors or sharing the costs of a speaker have helped to reduce these costs.
35. How will your local interfaith community-building efforts leading up to the Parliament affect the event program in the overall theme of the Parliament and design for the program offerings?
36. What kinds of Parliament programs (lectures, symposia, workshops, dialogues, performances, exhibits, meditations, observances and celebrations) are likely to emerge from your local community?
37. What kinds of presentations would you like to see in major plenary sessions that reflect your local context?
38. How will the global issues of greatest concern to the people in your metropolitan region and nation contribute to the Parliament experience for local and international participants?
39. How might you highlight the character of your city at the Parliament? How might the character and resources of your city attract Parliament attendees?

Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Describe the demographics of your city, your region and your nation with particular reference to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious and spiritual diversity</li> <li>• Ethnic and cultural diversity</li> <li>• Economic diversity</li> <li>• Political diversity</li> </ul> </li> <li>o What changes are likely in the near future?</li> <li>o Provide general information about your city, including a map, and a description of the climate, geography, population and commonly spoken languages.</li> </ul>
--------------	---

Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Describe the dynamics – interactions, tensions, issues and opportunities – at work in your locality, region and nation with particular reference to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious and spiritual diversity</li> <li>• Ethnic and cultural diversity</li> <li>• Economic diversity</li> <li>• Political diversity</li> </ul> </li> <li>o What significant local initiatives engage and address these dynamics?</li> <li>o How are religion and spirituality viewed and valued in your community?</li> </ul>
Current Religious and Interfaith Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Who are the leading voices, the key people involved in the interfaith movement in your city?</li> <li>o Describe any formal interfaith organizations or projects currently active within in your local community.</li> <li>o What resources currently support your local interfaith process? Where do they come from?</li> </ul>

40. What else would you like us to know about you and your local / regional / national character that would help us understand your Proposal in its proper context?
41. In general, what kind of local organization do you propose to form to aid the Parliament with governance and management?
42. What can you tell us about the particularities and sensitivities of your city and your national culture that would promote a deeper understanding of our collaboration, based on what you have learned from the beginning of your Proposal development?
43. How might religious, spiritual and cultural communities in your region contribute to the effort to secure the participation of their communities around the world in attendance and in financial support?
44. How might local leaders of other guiding institutions – including business, government, education, arts and communications media, science and medicine, intergovernmental organizations and the organizations of civil society – help to secure the support of their global counterparts for a Parliament in your city?
45. How will you help ensure the broadest possible participation of underrepresented groups at the Parliament?