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Request for Proposals – Curriculum Writer

Purpose

Appalachia Service Project, Inc. (ASP) seeks to contract with a curriculum development professional who will generate programming to accompany our short-term service trips.

ASP is a Christian ministry, open to all people, whose vision is to see substandard housing in Central Appalachia eradicated and everyone who comes into contact with our ministry transformed. ASP hosts roughly 12,000 high-school-age volunteers and 4,000 adult volunteers annually for week-long mission trips that repair the homes of low-income families in Central Appalachia.

As part of our core mission to offer a transformational experience to each volunteer, ASP seeks to create new programming to be delivered each day during the service experience. The programming will combine retrospective reflection on events of the week, connection to ecumenical Christian teachings about serving others, and challenges to increase future service and spiritual practice.

The selected consultant will develop four related sets of curricula, each adapting this core set of ideas to a different target audience: high-school students, college students, adults, and our college-age seasonal staff who works with ASP for 10 weeks during the summer. The developed materials will follow the guidelines listed below for each curriculum and will be developed in conjunction with the Program Director, the Chief Ministries Officer, the CEO, and others at ASP.

For complete details on how to be considered for this work, see the information under “How to Apply” provided below. This is an open and competitive process.

About ASP and this Initiative

ASP is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1969 by Rev. Glenn “Tex” Evans, a United Methodist minister. Evans was serving at the Henderson Settlement mission near Frakes, Kentucky when he saw the potential for young people to lead a physical and spiritual rebuilding of rural Appalachia. That first summer Evans recruited 50 Methodist youth from around the nation, housed them in vacant dormitory space at Union College in nearby Barbourville, and repaired four homes.

Today ASP recruits some 16,000 volunteers for one-week trips to 30 locations in Kentucky, West Virginia, Tennessee, Virginia and, beginning in 2012, North Carolina. Most volunteers serve as part of our 7-week summer season, but ASP maintains a year-round volunteer program in four locations. ASP is an ecumenical Christian

ministry, with volunteers coming from congregations that range from conservative Baptist to Roman Catholic to Unitarian Universalist. Each year ASP selects 140 college students to operate these locations as members of our summer field staff.

This is an exciting and pivotal time for ASP. Our Board of Directors has outlined an ambitious plan to grow to 26,000 volunteers per year and has reaffirmed ASP's commitment to providing a transformational experience to each volunteer. In November, ASP secured a major partnership with the Lilly Endowment, Inc. to develop ways in which our volunteers and field staff can hear and respond to a call to serve others. This curriculum will be a key element of these new directions.

The curricula to be developed will play a key role in boosting the transformational effect of a service experience with ASP. Much of the research on short-term mission and service trips suggests that, while they are viewed positively by those who attend, these trips result in little lasting change among participants. ASP hopes this curriculum will help our volunteers have more transformative results. Based on the idea that God calls everyone to serve others in some way, the curriculum will help participants see that both volunteering experiences and spiritual practices like prayer, Scripture reading, and participation in church activities are means through which participants can hear God's call to serve others. By encouraging participants to take small actions in these two areas within the first few weeks of returning from ASP, we believe we can move volunteers toward spiritual and vocational development.

Section 1: High School Students: On-Site Programming

Required Delivery Date for This Section: The curriculum for 2012 is due May 1, 2012; materials for future years may be provided by December 1, 2012

Roughly 10,000 high school students will participate in an ASP service trip this summer, along with 2,000 of their adult chaperones. Nearly all youth are members of congregation youth groups, representing more than 30 denominations. They divide into work teams, made up of five youth and two adults, with each team assigned to a separate project. Some congregations bring just one work team while others bring 12, enough to fill an entire center for the week. An average congregation brings three or four teams, meaning there is an average of three or four different congregations at each ASP center each week.

ASP has an existing slate of weekly programming based around three key events: Tuesday night the entire group has a cultural event such as a musical group or visit to a local museum, Thursday night the group hosts a picnic to which they invite the residents of the homes they're working on, and Friday night the group has a reflection circle where each person shares how they encountered God this week. Programming other nights has been created at the discretion of ASP's seasonal staff based at each center, with one night usually devoted to discussion of the local area and one night more focused on spirituality. ASP will provide copies of all current materials to the selected candidate. All activities have been loosely related to an annual theme that was unique each year, but you may choose to abandon this practice after summer 2012. For 2012, the theme is "all for One" based on a reading of 1 Corinthians 12: 4-6.

Your curriculum, to be instituted beginning in summer 2012, will maintain the three key events of the ASP week, while adding interpretive elements that make these events more meaningful. The curriculum will add new activities Sunday, Monday and Wednesday evenings (and perhaps at other times as well) that support our major goals of the initiative. It will add small-group discussions that allow congregation-specific adaptation of the themes presented in the evening programming. The curriculum will include three years' of programming, with activities, scripture readings, and other details changing between years even as the core messages remain the same. We expect complete text of the desired sessions, suitable for reading verbatim if necessary.

The curriculum would be delivered through the following approximate opportunities, though others may be added at your suggestion:

- A 20- to 25-minute introduction for the adult leaders Sunday afternoon
- A 30- to 45-minute presentation for everyone Sunday evening
- A 10-minute devotion to be delivered by an ASP seasonal staff member on Monday morning
- A 30- to 40-minute presentation for Monday night, followed by a small group discussion
- A 5- to 10-minute introduction to the cultural event on Tuesday night
- A 30- to 40-minute presentation for Wednesday night, followed by small group discussion
- A 5- to 10-minute introduction to the picnic on Thursday night
- A 5- to 10-minute introduction to the reflection on Friday night

The curriculum's desired outcomes are:

1. Short-term outcomes, measured at the end of the ASP trip
 - Increased satisfaction among volunteers with the opportunity ASP provides to deepen their Christian faith
 - Increased commitment among volunteers to seek opportunities to volunteer upon returning home from ASP
 - Increased belief among youth that God is calling them to serve others throughout their lives
 - Increased belief among youth that volunteering, prayer, Scripture reading, and participating in their church are ways to help hear God's call in their lives
 - Increased belief among youth that there are adults in their church they could go to for support
 - Youth and adults spent time this week considering how they will keep serving God after they return home
 - Youth and adults feel ASP's programming helped them better understand poverty and Central Appalachia
2. Intermediate-term outcomes, measured at 2, 8, and 12 months:
 - Youth still believe God is calling them to serve others throughout their lives
 - Youth still believe there are adults in their church they could go to for support
 - Increased number of hours spent volunteering after ASP
 - Increased number of hours spent in prayer after ASP
 - Increased number of hours spent reading the Bible after ASP

- Increased number of hours spent participating in their church after ASP

Each year of the curriculum must include:

- An introduction to the facility, daily schedule, and behavior expectations Sunday evening
- An activity that orients volunteers to poverty in the county (ASP will provide the data for each county)
- At least one age-appropriate vocational discernment activity
- An activity that connects the various duties on the work site to each volunteer's skills and motivations for volunteering
- Questions to guide a 15-minute discussion in small groups after each presentation
- One 5-minute block during the week that can be used for an ASP seasonal staff member to share his or her testimony
- A brief discussion with adult leaders about our expectations for them, and how they can better facilitate small group discussions
- A strategy to make the picnic meaningful, even if a volunteer's project family is not able to attend
- A strategy to put the cultural event Tuesday evening into a larger context
- Presentations should start and end with prayer, include songs from our list, and include two or more Bible readings

The curriculum might also include:

- Materials for parents who are not on the trip, for pre- and post-trip discussion with their child
- Materials for supporting adult leaders who are participating in the trip
- Having high school volunteers make some type of commitment to continue serving after ASP
- Post-trip emails to volunteers encouraging them to stick with their commitment to serve (We will have the technological capability to do this beginning in January 2013.)
- Activities that assist our largely middle-class volunteers to understand poverty
- Activities during breakfasts, lunches, and dinners
- Broader introductions to Appalachia
- Balanced discussions of current regional issues
- Activities that assist youth and adults in discerning their skills and talents
- Meditations for youth and adults to consider each day
- Guidance for church leaders in leveraging their participation in ASP to get the entire congregation more involved in service
- Ideas and insights found in emerging work in the field, especially the National Study of Youth and Religion, the Sticky Faith series, and some of the other work being funded by Lilly Endowment

Section 2: High School Students: Pre- and Post-Trip Materials

Required Delivery Date for This Section: December 1, 2012

Each year ASP offers a collection of pre-trip and post-trip group activities for those participating in our summer service trips. These materials are written by adult trip

leaders who have served with ASP for many years, designed to be used by youth group leaders as they prepare their groups. The 2012 materials are available at:
http://asphome.org/plan_your_trip/plan_youth_trip/sessions

There is wide variation in how groups prepare for their ASP trip. Some groups meet regularly beginning in the fall to prepare and raise money, while other groups may have little interaction before the trip. This results in significant variation in how the pre- and post-trip materials are utilized, with some groups relying on materials from ASP and some ignoring them entirely.

You are asked to develop an approach, along with the materials required to carry out that approach, which effectively prepares high school volunteers and their adult leaders for their trip with ASP and supports them after the trip. The approach, which will be offered to volunteers registering for summer 2013 and beyond, may range from an updated version of our current materials designed for group preparation to an online series designed for individual preparation, or elements of each. The approach must support the same outcomes listed in Section 1.

Section 3: Adult Volunteers

Required Delivery Date for This Section: August 1, 2012

About 2,000 adults will spend a week with ASP between September 2012 and May 2013 as part of our year-round program. The three centers in our year-round program are spread throughout our service area and are staffed by one permanent staff member and four Lilly Fellows making a one-year commitment to service and personal vocational discernment. Volunteers range in age from 18 to 82, with most being around 40 years old. These individuals are theologically sophisticated, highly engaged in their congregations, and come from a broad range of denominations. In a typical week, one of our year-round centers will have volunteers from two or three congregations.

Your curriculum, which will be instituted in September 2012, has the goals of promoting increased volunteering, personal prayer, and Scripture reading in the two months immediately following the ASP experience. Like the youth program, this curriculum will provide a three-year rotation of activities so volunteers don't have an identical experience year after year. Unlike the youth program, these discussions are shorter, occurring in a 15-minute period before dinner.

In total, you will provide the following materials appropriate to middle-age adults:

- A presentation that introduces poverty in the county and discusses how moving a home out of a substandard condition has ripple effects in family members' health, educational attainment, and overall quality of life (ASP will provide the poverty data and research about the impact of housing interventions.)
- 3 presentations of 10 to 15 minutes that use vocational discernment techniques to challenge volunteers to continue serving others after their time with ASP
- 9 presentations (three each on three different themes) of 10 to 15 minutes that help volunteers to process the week that include:

- Lengthy excerpts of teachings about service from the New Testament or from significant Christian thinkers appropriate to an ecumenical audience
- Ideas and stories from ASP's founder, Tex Evans
- Theologically sophisticated application of these teachings to common volunteer experiences during the week
- Questions for further discussion during dinner or for individual reflection the next day
- An event at the end of the week that helps volunteers process their experiences and prepare for the transition home

Section 4: College Students

Required Delivery Date for This Section: September 1, 2012

About 600 college students will spend a week with ASP's year-round program this year as part of an alternative spring or fall break. This demographic includes both Christian and non-religious groups from a wide variety of university settings. For college student volunteers, ASP provides reflection activities focused on social justice themes, without a strong religious appeal.

Your curriculum, which will be instituted in September 2012, has the goals of promoting increased volunteering and additional vocational discernment work after returning from ASP. It must offer volunteers several tools for vocational discernment and a lens of social justice concepts through which volunteers can view their work. Like the adult programming described in Section 3, these discussions occur in a 10- to 15-minute period before dinner.

In total, you will provide the following materials appropriate to college-age students:

- A presentation that introduces poverty in the county and discusses how moving a home out of a substandard condition has ripple effects in family members' health, educational attainment, and overall quality of life (ASP will provide the poverty data and research about the impact of housing interventions.)
- 6 presentations of 10 to 15 minutes that use vocational discernment techniques to challenge volunteers to continue serving others after their time with ASP
- 6 presentations (three each on two different themes) of 10 to 15 minutes that help volunteers to process the week that include:
 - An introduction to social justice concepts
 - Ideas and stories from ASP's founder, Tex Evans
 - Application of these teachings to common volunteer experiences during the week
 - Questions for further discussion during dinner or for individual reflection the next day
- An event at the end of the week that helps volunteers process their experiences and prepare for the transition home

Section 5: ASP's Seasonal Staff

Preferred Delivery Date for This Section: May 1, 2012 is preferred, but could be completed as late as December 1, 2012.

ASP hires 140 college-age individuals each year to serve as members of our field staff. These individuals work for 10 weeks in teams of four to run each of our 30 summer centers. Roughly half these individuals have served at least one prior summer as part of the field staff, with about 25% in their third or fourth summer with ASP.

You are asked to develop a curriculum for the summer field staff that supports reflection and processing of their experience along with vocational discernment activities that prepare them for a return to college life in the fall. The curriculum must include both an approach and the materials required to carry out that approach. The desired outcomes for this curriculum are:

- increase in the number of staff members who report their faith was changed or challenged during the summer
- increase in the number of staff members who report they've changed their college co-curricular or curricular activities as a result of serving with ASP
- increase in hours spent volunteering after ASP
- increase in hours spent in prayer, Bible study, or church activities after ASP

The curriculum should be a guided program that teaches vocational discernment strategies, provides deep Scriptural context for vocational consideration, and structures guided reflection activities into the weekly rhythm of our field staff's time with ASP.

The curriculum must include:

- up to three hours of activities during ASP's annual 15-day training for field staff, held in late May
- weekly activities or reflections, to be completed either alone or in their four-member staff team, that encourage staff members to consider their calling in light of their experiences with ASP
- up to two hours of activities during ASP's annual wrap-up event for staff held at the close of field staff service in August
- up to five hours of activities to be completed during staff reunion events, held in regional locations in October
- a role for ASP's four summer chaplains, ministry students who meet one-on-one with each staff member twice during the summer
- an approach to identify and provide additional support for field staff members who may be considering ministry
- Bible readings and teachings of prominent Christian thinkers appropriate to an ecumenical audience

Budget

ASP has set aside a budget of \$15,000 for this project. Beyond this budgeted amount, ASP will cover transportation, meals and lodging for three visits to our headquarters this spring: an initial three-day consultation, a three-day meeting to discuss preliminary drafts, and a four-day visit to train seasonal staff in curriculum delivery.

How to Apply

ASP welcomes interested individuals and firms to submit a brief letter outlining their qualifications, similar experience, ability to meet the deadlines mentioned, insights on

the project, and a sketch of what would be provided. Such letters must be received by email or package delivery on or before Wednesday, February 22, 2012 at the following address:

Charles Oberweiser
Program Director
Appalachia Service Project
4523 Bristol Highway
Johnson City, TN 37601
423.854.4430
Charles.Oberweiser@ASPHome.org

You are encouraged to call or email with any questions during the preparation of your letter. Candidates will be evaluated immediately after the February 22 deadline. During the evaluation period, we may request clarification from you via phone or email. After reviewing letters, we will identify at least two finalists. We will conduct a telephone interview with each of the finalists to better understand their approaches and insights in this process, including requesting an understanding of the approaches each finalist would take for the open-ended requests of Sections 2 and 5. The finalist interviews will be conducted by February 27. All candidates will be notified by March 1.

Negotiations must be completed with the selected candidate no later than March 10, with all contracts being subject to review by ASP's corporate counsel. ASP reserves the option to make adjustments and clarifications to the descriptions above before a contract is signed. Work is expected to begin immediately upon securing the contract, with an initial visit to ASP scheduled as quickly as possible thereafter.

We will evaluate all candidates using the following rubric:

- Suitability – The candidate demonstrates an understanding of ASP's objectives in this endeavor and the proposed activities meet those objectives
- Candidate Qualifications – Candidate possesses the qualifications necessary to undertake this project.
- Timeline – Candidate has the resources to complete the proposed elements by the dates mentioned.
- Insight – The candidate demonstrates one or more insights regarding the development of this curriculum and / or how ASP can better accomplish the objectives it identifies.
- Candidate Experience – Candidate has successfully completed similar projects.
- Value – The proposed price is commensurate with the value offered by the proposer.