

Conflict Resolution Program | Graduate Assistantship

The Carter Center's Conflict Resolution Program is seeking a qualified graduate student for the 2026-27 session to conduct research and analysis related to the following research project.

Understanding Best Practices for Depolarization in Faith Communities in the U.S.

This project focuses on providing faith communities with the means to address polarization and division within and outside their congregations, including engaging young people aged 18-30 in community-level multifaith peacebuilding activities. The research aims to develop indicators and measures to assess what works to reduce division within faith communities, including, but not limited to, a focus on young people. Working with the Conflict Resolution Program senior project advisor and senior program associate, the GA will be expected to prepare two working papers, one that examines the unique role faith leaders and multifaith organizing play in promoting election integrity in the six to eight states that the Carter Center's Democracy Resilience programming is active and a second that highlights lessons learned from two cohorts of youth peacebuilding work conducted in Georgia by the Emerging Young Leaders for Community Change (ELCC) and other connected youth-focused programming. Depending on the GA's experience and interest, they may advise on network expansion strategies and support depolarization activities within and outside of faith communities, including developing outreach materials, facilitated dialogues, and training related to election integrity and promoting civility.

The graduate assistant will be expected to do the following:

- Produce one research paper that surveys existing activities and methodologies related to multifaith youth peacebuilding activities, extracting key approaches and lessons learned for effective programming.
- Produce a second paper that refines the methodology for evaluating impact of the ELCC peacebuilding cohort, documenting learnings from its formation, activities, and network building with youth-centric initiatives in the U.S. and Northern Ireland. At least one of the papers should be of sufficient quality to deliver at an academic conference or for presentation in an online seminar format.

Key benchmarks for review include the following tangible deliverables:

1. Paper 1. Build up an existing list of U.S.-focused programs, contacts, available training materials, and other evaluations or reports relating to faith-based depolarization and peacebuilding initiatives, with a sub-focus on election integrity protection and promotion, extracting best practices and lessons learned.



2. Paper 2. Examine and evaluate youth-focused and youth-led peacebuilding activities (both faith-based and non-faith-based) in Georgia, Wisconsin, and Florida.
3. Draft research proposals, including research design, data collection plan, survey tool design, and a high-level work plan articulating when the project is expected to move through its various stages.
4. Annotated outline for each proposed paper assessed through weekly meetings with Conflict Resolution Program senior project advisor.
5. Deliver one talk each semester sharing current research findings with the Conflict Resolution Program staff, other Peace program staff, and other interested stakeholders. Similar to an academic conference presentation, these talks will include a 20- to 40-minute presentation followed by Q&A.

Qualifications:

- Currently enrolled graduate who has completed at least two semesters of academic coursework.
- A weekly commitment, between 10 to 20 hours, for a period of 9-12 months.
- Strong research, writing, communication, and analytical skills.
- Selected candidates will need to be self-starters and should be able to work independently.
- An understanding of interfaith and cross-cultural dialogue approaches along with qualitative evaluation methodologies.
- May be called on to train or mentor interns on issues/skills that intersect with the GA's expertise and the program's ongoing initiatives.
- Demonstrated interest in faith, peacebuilding, and politics in the U.S., including awareness of different approaches to bridge-building, depolarization, and community conflict transformation.
- Familiarity with public debate on the intersections between church and state, including a demonstrated understanding of a range of positions on how faith leaders interact with politics and governance.
- Ideal candidates should have completed at least one graduate course focused on faith and politics or faith and peacebuilding and be familiar with key literature.
- Experience with training or engagement in facilitated dialogue processes is a plus.
- Perform other duties as required.