

COHEN PEACE STUDIES GRANT PROGRAM GUIDE



Benjamin V. Cohen (1894-1983)

Born in Muncie, Indiana on September 23, 1894, Benjamin Victor Cohen graduated from the University of Chicago Law School in 1915. He then attended Harvard Law School where he attracted the attention of Felix Frankfurter. In 1933, Franklin Roosevelt summoned Cohen from private practice in New York to public service.

Cohen became a major legal architect of much of the New Deal legislation including the Securities Act and the plan for Lend-Lease and economic stability during World War II. A shy man, Cohen worked behind the scenes where his brilliance as a legal draftsman was widely recognized.

Following World War II, Cohen turned his talents to the problems of world peace and became one of the architects of the United Nations, serving on the U.S. delegation to the UN and on the United Nations Disarmament Commission. His abiding interest in world peace and his outstanding legal ability influenced American Presidents and world leaders until his death in 1983.

The mission of the Benjamin V. Cohen Memorial Endowment Fund is to provide a lasting memorial to Benjamin Cohen by fostering new approaches to the problems of peacemaking. This fund supports the Cohen Peace Studies Grant.

Awards from the fund shall be used to memorialize Mr. Cohen's commitment to the attainment of world peace by focusing on study, research and other activities with a special emphasis on innovative approaches to reducing hostilities among groups.

Basic or applied research projects may be submitted for consideration.

- 1) **Basic research.** Involves investigation driven by a researcher's *curiosity* or interest in a fundamental question. The main motivation is to *expand knowledge* about issues that inform innovative approaches to reducing hostilities among groups and the attainment of world peace. Studies must employ statistical, analytical, or qualitative tools; findings from the research typically are used by scholars, policy analysts, policy makers, practitioners, the media, and/or the public; Practical applications of the findings must be identified.
- 2) **Applied research.** Designed to solve *practical problems* associated with implementing innovative approaches to reducing hostilities among groups and the attainment of world peace, rather than to acquire knowledge about those issues. The goal of the applied researcher is to *improve the human condition*, to translate research into good works for the public good. A practical application, useful strategy, policy, procedure, or educational program or strategy must be implemented in such a project.

The successful research project should have potential for national and/or international impact and may include lectures, symposia, conferences, and the publishing of documents. The Cohen awardee will present his/her findings at the annual Ball State University Cohen Peace Studies lecture.

Cohen Peace Studies Grant proposals will be evaluated on the likelihood that the project, upon completion, will be implemented in ways that will have a substantive impact on contributing to the achievement of the Cohen Fund Program goals.

Proposals must contain a clear, concrete, and concise discussion of how the project will inform and/or implement innovative approaches to reducing hostilities among groups in the attainment of world peace.

AWARD TYPES

There are two types of awards available:

The Cohen Peace Faculty Award provides support for Ball State University tenure/tenure track faculty to conduct activities as described above. Funds may be used for salary, supplies, expenses, and/or travel. Neither BSU Contract Faculty or Professional Staff are eligible to serve as PIs or Co-PIs.

The Cohen Peace Graduate Award provides support for Ball State University graduate students to conduct activities as described above. Funds may be used for assistantship stipend, supplies, expenses, and/or travel. Tuition remission will not be covered by this award. NOTE: Sponsored Projects Administration requires that a faculty mentor be included on all student proposals. Please include that person, even if they are not contributing to the project activities.

AWARDS

Each year, if appropriate and based on the availability of funding, two proposals will be funded. Proposals that are most closely aligned with the goals of the Program and that will have the greatest impact on the goals of the Program will be selected. Proposals may include a principal investigator (PI) and co-principal investigator(s) (Co-PI). Additionally, professionals not affiliated with Ball State University may serve as a Co-PI. In such cases, however, the PI must be a Ball State University tenure/tenure track faculty member or graduate student.

An award of up to \$35,000 is available to support a one-year or a multiple year project. The review committee will determine the number, type, and level of project funding.

FUND ADMINISTRATION

The Center for Peace and Conflict Studies administers the Cohen Peace Studies Grant Program on behalf of the Benjamin V. Cohen Memorial Endowment Fund.

Questions about the Cohen Peace Studies Grant Program are welcome, and should be addressed to Lawrence H. Gerstein, Ph.D. (Director, Center for Peace and Conflict Studies; peacecenter@bsu.edu).

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Prior to submitting a proposal, applicants must first submit a Letter of Intent (LOI).

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact their SPA Proposal Manager to assist with their LOI development.

Completed Letters of Intent are due by **5:00 PM (EST) on November 7, 2025** and should be emailed as a **word document** to peacecenter@bsu.edu. These will be reviewed by the Cohen Proposal Review Committee.

Applicants who are invited to submit a full proposal are highly encouraged to discuss their LOI feedback with the Director of the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, Dr Lawrence Gerstein, peacecenter@bsu.edu, no later than two working weeks prior to the proposal deadline. Those applicants are also **required** to work with their Department or Unit's SPA Proposal Manager and follow the University [Proposal Submission Policy](#). SPA will provide guidance on the proposal narrative and assistance developing the project budget. They will also assist in obtaining necessary university approvals for the project via [Cayuse SP](#).

All final, full proposal materials are due via the [InfoReady online portal](#) by **5:00 PM (EST) on January 30, 2026**. The Cohen Proposal Evaluation Committee will review proposals according to the criteria below.

LETTER OF INTENT (LOI)

Regardless of discipline, all proposals must be written in clear, non-technical language readily understood by an educated layperson. Material must be organized in such a way that a clear objective of the project is readily discernable and is supported in the text.

The LOI **must include** the following **concise, concrete, and compelling** information (emailed as a word document to peacecenter@bsu.edu, other formats will not be accepted):

- Description of how this project aligns with the mission of the Cohen Program: "Fostering new approaches to the problems of peacemaking." Provide a detailed and descriptive rationale for this alignment. (250 words)
- A definition of peace grounded in scholarly literature that will be used in the Full proposal. The project should support this definition. (250 words)
- Description of how the project will inform/implement approaches to reduce hostilities or attain peace through conflict prevention and resolution. (250 words)
- Overview of proposed methods and analyses (250 words)
- Location of project
- Estimated Budget Request
- Qualifications and expertise (150 words per investigator)

Note. LOIs that do not **sufficiently and appropriately** address any of the content presented above will no longer be considered for funding.

FULL PROPOSAL

Only proposals that have been invited through the LOI process will be considered for review by the Cohen Proposal Evaluation Committee

Project periods are **July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027** following application submission. Multi-year projects also will be accepted, with a July 1, 2026 start date as well.

The full proposal **must be** submitted via the [InfoReady online portal](#).

Upload the following documents as word files, double-space the text (Except Where Noted) using no smaller than a size-11 font. Paginate the document starting with the applicant information section. Utilize 1" margins.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (650 words) **(May be Single Spaced)**

Describe the proposed project, **how it specifically fits with the goals and objectives** of the Cohen Peace Studies Grant, and how the project specifically addresses the implementation of innovative approaches to reducing hostilities among groups in the attainment of “peace.” Basic research proposals should also identify practical applications of the proposed work. *This section must be suitable for dissemination to the public.*

2. APPLICANT INFORMATION (2 page maximum)

- a. Experience as it relates to this proposal – Highlight qualifications of the applicant(s) in reference to the currently proposed project. Include the following information:
- Academic background
 - Research or other experience related to the proposal including a description of the similarities between this proposal and others currently funded and/or pending.
 - A discussion of the relationship between this proposal and other current internal or external proposals, funded or pending.
 - Related publications, presentations, reported results within the last 5 years.

3. PROJECT DESIGN (8 pages maximum)

- a. Background information (1 page) – The history of the idea, the current status of the research and literature in this area, and a definition of terms needed to facilitate a lay reader’s understanding of the project. ***A definition of peace derived from the scholarly literature must be included.***
- b. Specific goals and objectives (1 page) – An expanded and extensive discussion of the scope of the project, focusing on the goals and/or objectives of the research and the *specific relevant connection* of this project to the goals of the Cohen Peace Studies Grant. If this requirement is not fulfilled, the project will no longer be considered for funding.
- c. Significance of problem or impact of goal addressed (1 page) – A discussion of the significance/impact of the project on the following: the discipline, other disciplines, faculty, students, the university, and the world. While your particular project may not impact or have significance for all of these entities, the discussion must focus on the value or consequence of having carried out the project, in terms of basic or applied research as it relates to peace. Basic research proposals should also identify practical applications of the proposed work. If these requirements are not fulfilled, the project will no longer be considered for funding.
- d. Basic Research projects (3 pages): Include specific details regarding research methods (e.g., including participants if appropriate, design, procedures, proposed data analysis techniques, IRB status) to be used. If this requirement is not fulfilled, the project will no longer be considered for funding.
- or-
- e. Applied Research projects (3 pages): Include details on the target community, the number of participants involved, design, methods, and procedures, the strategy to be used and implemented, an evaluation/analysis plan, and IRB status. If this requirement is not fulfilled, the project will no longer be considered for funding.
- f. Extrinsic merits – A discussion of the merits of the project in terms of impact on scholarship in any field as well as the impact on teaching and learning, particularly as regards to Ball State students. **(recommend 4 sentences)**
- g. Means of dissemination or expected outcome – Plans for disseminating the expected results of the information generated by the project, in addition to the Benjamin V. Cohen Peace Studies Grant Lecture. **(recommend 4 sentences)**
- h. Work plan & timetable (1 page) – A work plan for the project. Include project timetable and analysis of feasibility of project completion during the award period.
- i. Sustainability - Describe the plans to sustain the project/research after the award period ends. **(recommend 4-6 sentences)**

4. BUDGET NARRATIVE & DETAILS (2 page maximum)

- a. Itemization of costs in table form
- b. Brief narrative description of budgetary items
- c. Funds may be used for assistantship salary, supplies, expenses, and/or travel
- d. Your SPA Proposal Manager will assist in the development and internal approval of your project budget via Cayuse SP.

5. LITERATURE REFERENCES (1 page maximum)
Use the format that is standard for publishing in your field.

6. LETTER OF SUPPORT

A letter of support should be included addressing the project in relation to priorities of the department.

- a. **Faculty:** from your department chair
- b. **Students:** from your faculty mentor

7. CURRICULUM VITAE (2 page pdf maximum for each investigator)

Optional Materials (may be single spaced if appropriate)

8. GLOSSARY OF TERMS (one-page maximum).
 - a. It is recommended that, even though your proposal must be written for the educated layperson, it may be beneficial to the reviewer to refer to a glossary of terms used in the narrative or scope of work.
 - b. **The applicant's definition of peace grounded in the scholarly literature *must* be included in the background information section of the proposal, not in the Glossary of Terms.**
9. APPENDIX of related materials (e.g., assessment tools, curricula, educational strategies)
10. ADDITIONAL LETTER(S) OF SUPPORT
 - a. Faculty collaborators
 - b. Other agencies. It is recommended that a letter of support be obtained if an outside agency is involved in any capacity.

REVIEW CRITERIA

The proposals will be reviewed by a committee comprised of members of the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies Advisory Board, members of the Cohen Advisory Committee, the Chair of the Research Committee, and other University representatives. The following section describes the review criteria to be used by the committee when evaluating Cohen Peace Studies Grant Proposals. The specific language related to these criteria can be found at the end of these guidelines. **Proposals must contain a clear, concrete, and concise discussion of how the project will inform and/or implement innovative approaches to reducing hostilities among groups in the attainment of world peace.**

Applicant's Qualifications Productivity (e.g., publications, service, performances, exhibits, presentations, etc.) Experience of the applicant Potential of the applicant Relevance of background to the project Funding History	Adherence to Format Text is lucid and written in non-technical language Proposal narrative adheres to the format described in this guide Accuracy in grammar and spelling Clear and concise definition of peace linked with the scholarly literature
Significance and Merits Goal of proposal Consistent with, and contributes <u>to informing and/or implementing innovative approaches to reducing hostilities among groups in the attainment of world peace</u> Benefit to discipline & practice Impact of the project on peace Impact on the scholarship or creative work of other faculty Impact on teaching and learning Impact on targeted community and beyond	Proposal Background Literature review Origin of the idea or project History of the idea Scholarly definition of peace

Plans for dissemination, publication, or presentation on a national scale	
<p>Scope of Work</p> <p>Time frame of project</p> <p>Project plan (e.g., design, procedure, data collection, statistical analysis, evaluation)</p> <p>Feasibility of conducting the project</p> <p>Feasibility of promoting peace</p> <p>Feasibility to sustain the project post-award</p> <p>Use of resources and budget</p> <p><i>If basic research:</i> Designed to <i>expand knowledge</i> about issues that inform innovative approaches to reducing hostilities among groups and the attainment of world peace; Practical applications of the findings must be identified.</p> <p><i>If applied research:</i> Designed to implement innovative approaches to reduce hostilities among groups and the attainment of world peace.</p>	

Committee Decisions

Applicants can expect to receive substantive feedback about their proposals and one of three decisions: Approve for Funding, Revise and Resubmit the Proposal, or No Longer Being Considered for Funding. In the case of Revise and Resubmit, applicants will have 3-4 weeks to resubmit their proposals for review. They may consult the Director of the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies about the feedback they received. Applicants will have only one opportunity to satisfactorily address significant revisions to their proposal. Applicants requested to make minor revisions may be given more than one opportunity to revise and resubmit their proposals.

Examples of Proposal Weaknesses

- Failure to provide a compelling scholarly definition of peace.
- Failure to include a compelling and elaborate link to the goals of the Cohen Fund.
- Failure to provide a detailed and thorough methodology and/or data analysis plan.
- Failure to demonstrate how the project will inform and/or implement innovative approaches to reducing hostilities among groups and the attainment of world peace.
- Failure to include a clear and detailed work plan.
- Lack of approval letter from research site(s) or book publisher.
- Failure to demonstrate how the project findings will make a unique and significant contribution to the literature.
- Low probability that the project will fulfill its intended goals.
- Weak link between project rationale, methodology, and proposed data analysis.
- Failure to provide a compelling justification for a course buyout.
- Lack of literature support for statements made in the proposal.
- Failure to include current literature on the targeted topic.
- Budget narrative does not clearly articulate how the funds will be used.
- Limited discussion about the qualifications of the applicant(s).
- Vague sustainability plan.

POST AWARD GUIDELINES

Funding Arrangements

Upon the receipt of an award letter from the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, SPA will set up a restricted grant account and manage fund disbursement.

Reports & Recognition Lecture

During the course of the entire project, award recipients are **required to submit a six-month progress report form** to the Director, Center for Peace and Conflict Studies. This report must detail the project activities to date, any outcomes, a list of tasks to be completed, timeline for completing the project, and an analysis of the current project status in relation to the proposed planned timeline. In the case of multi-year projects, award recipients are **required to submit progress report every six-months**.

In addition, Cohen Peace Fellows will **meet** by telephone (if in-person is not practical) with the **Director** of the

Center for Peace and Conflict Studies **quarterly** during the project period to discuss the progress on the project and plans to complete the project.

At the **conclusion** of the project, recipients must complete and **submit a report form** obtained from the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies. Recipients also must, at the completion of their project, **present** their **work** in a scholarly paper and a lecture on campus as part of a recognition program that includes an explanation of how the work relates to peace. The scholarly paper is due **December 15** of the semester following the project period. The lecture will take place during the Academic Year following the project period.

The scholarly paper must contain the following information:

- Brief overview of the project
- Review of project activities
- Present the outcome of the study including:
 - The results of the project
 - Goals achieved
 - How the results were disseminated
 - How the work completed relates to peace
 - Number of people/communities impacted by the project
 - Future plans to continue pursuing the plan of work beyond the award funding period

The final report and paper must be submitted to the Director, Center for Peace and Conflict Studies.

Finally, Cohen Peace Fellows are requested to provide annual updates to the Director of the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies on additional impacts of the project as well as dissemination of the project's outcomes.