



1—Project Name: Calling Out the Called

2—If this grant is being requested on behalf of an external organization, what is that organization's name and connection with Texas Baptists?

N/A

3—Please request the minimum amount needed—with a maximum of \$20,000 possible—in order to accomplish the project's goals.

\$15,000.00 (*budget attached*)

4—Overview: Give a one paragraph description of the project.

Texas Baptist churches, particularly smaller congregations, are facing a growing challenge: a shortage of qualified individuals to fill vital ministry roles. This trend is especially concerning as these smaller churches often serve as the initial training grounds for recent college and seminary graduates entering ministry. If left unaddressed, this issue poses a significant long-term threat to the vitality of Texas Baptists. This challenge isn't unique to our churches; many Baptist universities and seminaries are experiencing similar declines in enrollment for ministry-focused programs.

Calling Out the Called is a dedicated initiative designed to address this critical need. We aim to educate and encourage the next generation of church leaders to embrace God's call to full-time ministry. We achieve this by forming strategic partnerships with churches, universities, camps, and associations across Texas. Through these collaborations, we provide impactful retreats and one-day training sessions throughout the state, equipping aspiring ministers with the tools and encouragement they need to answer the call.

5—STRATEGIC: How will this project make Texas Baptists stronger?

In 2024–2025, we continued to see meaningful growth in Calling Out the Called efforts across Texas Baptist life. Building on the momentum of previously supported events, we launched a new Called Retreat in South Texas at Oakwood Baptist Church in New Braunfels. While the event itself was impactful, its greater significance lies in the model it provides for replication. By bringing together five local churches to collaboratively plan the retreat, this one-day event demonstrated how regional partnerships can mobilize and multiply leadership development efforts across the state.

Brandon Best, Youth Pastor at Oakwood, led this initiative and will be instrumental in helping us share this model with other churches. Our goal is for this event to serve as a blueprint, inspiring and equipping churches in other regions of Texas to develop similar gatherings. This

kind of strategic, reproducible ministry strengthens the fabric of Texas Baptist life—encouraging collaboration, empowering leaders, and cultivating a culture of calling that will shape the next generation of ministry leaders.

6—SIGNIFICANT: What is the anticipated long-term impact of this project?

The long-term impact of this project lies in identifying, equipping, and empowering the next generation of Texas Baptist church leaders. This is not just a short-term initiative—it is a foundational investment in the future of our churches and ministries. Recently, Cory Liebrum, Director of Discipleship & NextGen, shared a devotional in Texas Baptists' weekly chapel on the importance of "Calling Out the Called." As a direct result of that message, three new conversations have begun around potential collaborations within Texas Baptist life.

One particularly promising partnership is developing with the Center for Collegiate Ministry. This kind of cross-departmental collaboration extends the reach of Calling Out the Called and ensures that leadership development is being nurtured across age groups and ministry settings. By cultivating these strategic connections, this initiative will continue to shape a leadership pipeline that strengthens Texas Baptists for years to come.

7—SUSTAINABLE: How will the grant help this project become self-supporting?

The Dallas-area Called Retreat has successfully secured outside sponsorships from Baptist universities and Christian camps, which has helped offset event costs and allowed us to reallocate funding toward launching new retreats in other regions.

As more churches participate and begin hosting their own Called Retreats, we anticipate increased local ownership and support, helping to keep costs low for students while moving the initiative toward long-term sustainability. The funds requested for 2026 will serve as vital seed money to establish new Called Retreats in areas where this effort has not yet taken root.

Additionally, 2026 funds will support Texas Baptists' ability to respond to the growing number of leadership camps across the state requesting Called to Ministry breakouts or dedicated tracks as part of their summer programming. These partnerships allow us to engage hundreds of students in a focused, intentional way—often in locations where hosting a full retreat may not yet be feasible.

Our long-term goal is to develop scalable resources—centered around the Called Retreat model and our Following Your Call to Ministry book—that empower churches and associations to lead their own retreats and training events. This approach will allow us to expand the reach of Calling Out the Called across Texas, especially in areas where direct leadership support may be limited.

8—INNOVATIVE: How will this project break new ground?

HISPANIC EDUCATION CALLED RETREAT

On December 5–6, 2025, the Texas Baptist Hispanic Education Department, under the leadership of Dr. Gabriel Cortez, will host its first Called Retreat at Baptist University of the Americas in San Antonio. This inaugural event represents a significant step in expanding

Calling Out the Called efforts within the Hispanic community. The TBMF grant will play a vital role in launching and supporting this strategic gathering.

Dr. Cortez was inspired to develop this retreat after attending the DFW Called Retreat in January 2025, where he observed the format and recognized its potential to serve Hispanic churches and students across Texas. With TBMF's support, this new initiative will help raise up future ministry leaders and extend the reach of this important movement.

SUPER SUMMER PURPLE SCHOOL RELAUNCH

In the summer of 2025, Texas Baptists relaunched Super Summer, reinvigorating its original purpose as the premier leadership development experience for teenagers across the state. Over the years, the program had gradually drifted from its core mission—but this relaunch marks a strategic and visionary shift. A key innovation planned for future years is the revival of the Purple School, a specialized track originally developed in the mid-1990s as an intensive training ground for high school students sensing a call to ministry.

The Purple School was once a formative environment for emerging leaders and even inspired the creation of the book *Following Your Call to Ministry* to serve students unable to attend. However, in recent years, the program lacked adequate support and saw minimal participation. Our vision is to bring it back as a vibrant, purposeful part of Super Summer—offering focused theological and leadership training to students discerning a call to ministry.

This initiative will break new ground by restoring and reimagining a proven model for next-generation leadership development, now infused with updated resources, intentional mentorship, and strategic collaboration. TBMF funding would help bring in experienced ministry leaders to teach and guide students in this revitalized effort—ensuring that those who are called are also equipped. Relaunching the Purple School not only honors our legacy, but boldly steps into the future with innovation, clarity, and purpose.

9—INVOLVING: How will the churches served by Texas Baptists be included in this project?

Church involvement is absolutely central to every Calling Out the Called retreat. We make sure that youth leaders or pastors from local churches are on the planning team. This helps us create events that truly fit the unique needs and context of the churches participating. We believe it's vital that every church involved has a voice in shaping these retreats.

This initiative isn't meant to be a solo act; instead, it truly thrives on strong partnerships with local churches. We completely depend on the leadership, resources, and ownership of pastors and ministry leaders to make these events happen. By putting churches in the driver's seat, we ensure that Calling Out the Called isn't just sustainable, but also deeply connected to the mission and life of the local church.

How many churches will be involved? 45 Churches involved in 2024-2025; 31 Churches - Summer 2024 Leadership Camps, 9 churches - DFW Called Retreat, 6 churches - S. Texas Called Retreat

10—INTERESTING: How will this project produce helpful stories and encourage donor engagement for future ministry support?

We're seeing a clear decline in the number of young people pursuing ministry roles in Texas Baptist churches. While this project may not reverse that trend immediately, it plays a vital role in encouraging teenagers to grow as Christian leaders in their schools, communities, and churches—some of whom will one day become pastors.

At Lead Camp, Pastor Chris Seay shared how his own call to ministry began as a 7th grader at Super Summer. It was there he connected with peers like Chris Tomlin and was shaped by leaders who believed in his potential. He was excited to invest in the next generation through our efforts because he knows firsthand the lifelong impact these experiences can have.

Stories like Chris's illustrate how early investment bears long-term fruit. By sharing these testimonies, we will help donors see the tangible impact of their giving—and inspire continued support for developing the next generation of Texas Baptist leaders.

11—Has this project received previous TBMF grants? If YES, list years and amounts.

2025 - \$15000

2024 - \$15000 (not all funds used and returned to TBMF)

2023 - \$5000

2022 - \$4250

2021 - \$1000

12—Is this request for an ongoing project with a new name? If YES, what was the former name of the project?

N/A

Calling Out the Called Budget 2026

Show how and when money will be spent and over what period of time.

*Dallas Area Called Retreat – FBC Frisco - Lead Sponsor: \$3000 (will be paid Nov/Dec 2025)

*South Texas Called Retreat - Oakwood BC, New Braunfels - Lead Sponsor \$3000 (Paid Spring of 2026)

*Lead Camp – Highland Lakes Camp – Books & sponsor Called track - \$2000 (paid Summer 2026)

*Follow Lead Serve Camp – HPU – Books & sponsor Called track - \$2000 (paid Summer 2026)

Super Summer 2026 – Sponsor the Purple School (Call to Ministry) – \$2000 (paid Summer 2026) **(NEW EVENT in 2026)**

Houston Area Retreat – Houston area – Lead Sponsor: \$3000 (paid Fall 2026)

TOTAL: \$15,000

*Existing Called/Leadership events

Include the amount and source of any other funds you currently have or expect to have:

Currently Calling out the Called does not have Cooperative Programming funds or any other designated funds for 2026.