



September 1, 2016

Dear Friends,

We need your financial help!

The Wilmette Institute is an agency of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States. Our mission is to facilitate study and dialogue on the teachings and principles of the Faith in order to help individuals and communities apply learning and advance human civilization.

Since our inception more than 21 years ago, more than 10,000 learners from 116 countries around the world have enrolled in our courses. Many learners require financial assistance to enroll in our courses. In the past year, the Wilmette Institute provided \$29,000 in the form of scholarships and discounts to about 200 learners registered in 48 courses.

- Our courses are designed to help learners acquire the knowledge and understanding to carry out meaningful conversations with others. Most courses are facilitated by individuals with doctoral or Masters degrees from regionally accredited colleges or universities recognized by the United States Department of Education.
- Course participants engage with like-minded souls in the courses' discussion forums and often keep in touch after the courses are over to accompany each other in their efforts.
- We offer free Web talks, publish monthly newsletters, student projects, personal accounts of how people have become Bahá'í, short bios of memorable figures, and accounts of local Bahá'í communities.
- We have started offering courses designed for youth and year of service volunteers.
- We want to create courses for members of the community of interest.
- We have joined **Quality Matters** in order to raise the quality of our online courses to national standards.
- We have started to seek articulation agreements with one or more colleges or universities that will allow specific courses taken at the Wilmette Institute to be accepted for academic credit.

Last year's fund raising goal of \$45,000 was successfully reached and exceeded by a thousand dollars. In order to continue to meet our goals as they relate to the Five Year Plan, we hope to raise \$55,000 in the coming year. For the last 21 years we have remained independent of the National Bahá'í Fund and rely on the financial generosity of friends such as you.

For your convenience, we have included a Contribution form that you may use to send us a donation. You can also follow the enclosed instructions if you prefer to make your contribution electronically.

With warm Bahá'í greetings,

Robert Stockman, Director

**Wilmette Institute Board**

Nesreen Akhtar Khavari  
Jeffrey Albert  
Nicola Daniels  
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**Director**

Robert H. Stockman

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## Contribution Form

*O God, my God! Illumine the brows of Thy true lovers, and support them with angelic hosts of certain triumph. Set firm their feet on Thy straight path, and out of Thine ancient bounty open before them the portals of Thy blessings; for they are expending on Thy pathway what Thou hast bestowed upon them.*

— 'Abdu'l-Bahá

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### **Our goal is to offer \$55,000 in scholarships**

These contributions will be used to provide full and partial scholarships, discounts, and other course subsidies to interested individuals in the United States and other countries, especially developing countries.

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#### **Please provide the following information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Total amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please make checks payable to Bahá'í Services Fund: Wilmette Institute, and send to the address below.***

Wilmette Institute  
Bahá'í National Center  
1233 Central Street.  
Evanston, IL 60201-2886

*Your charitable contributions may be tax deductible.*

It is now possible to contribute to the Wilmette Institute online, if you are a Bahá'í residing in the lower forty-eight United States. Here are the simple steps:

- Type in <https://ocs.bahai.us/ocs/>.
- On "Online Contribution Page," type in your User ID and Password. Then click on "Sign In."
- On the next screen, click on "Enter Contribution."
- On the following screen, click on "One-Time Contribution" or "Continuing Contribution." Now you are five steps away from completing your contribution to the Wilmette Institute. For a one-time contribution, follow the steps below (steps for a continuing contribution are very similar):
  - 1. Select Fund and Donor:
    - A. Click on first blue square with white down-pointing arrow.
    - B. Choose "Wilmette Institute – Contribution."
    - C. Enter amount you wish to contribute (include household members if you wish).
  - 2. Confirm Amount: View fund selected and amount.
  - 3. Select Payment Method:
    - A. Select payment date.
    - B. Select method of payment (bank account, credit card).
  - 4. Authorize Contribution.
  - 5. Contribution Complete.

# Wilmette Institute

## Fact Sheet

The Wilmette Institute, an educational agency of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, was founded in January 1995 to contribute to the development of human resources within the Bahá'í community, its friends, and supporters. It delivers flexible, well-organized, formally conducted academic, professional, and service-oriented courses that are designed according to standards of excellence and the Bahá'í standard of the independent investigation of truth.

The Institute began offering summer classes in 1996 and online courses in 1998. The online courses, available for individual or group enrollment, involve a series of units that require the learner to read and post comments and complete a final integrative assignment. Local groups of learners who take courses together may enroll at a discount.

While only two courses were offered online in 1998, the number increased to fifty-four in 2016. More than eighty courses have been developed and offered, some as many as nine times. Over 10,000 students, residing in over 116 countries, have participated in our courses. In a typical year, about a third of our students either request scholarship assistance, benefit from needs-based discounts, or take advantage of discounts necessary to make the courses affordable to non-Bahá'ís or large numbers of Bahá'ís.

In January 2008 a new course-management system using Moodle software went live, greatly improving the quality of our courses. In November 2009 a new registration system using Cvent, a commercial-event registration system, was inaugurated. Its registration and marketing capabilities more than doubled the Wilmette Institute's enrollments overnight. In November 2012 the Institute upgraded its course software and added video conferencing; in 2013 it upgraded the Moodle course-management system twice. In 2015 it inaugurated a series of free Web Talks.

Over the next five years, the Institute aims to develop services for youth and the community of interest, establish partnerships with institutions of higher education that will allow some of its courses to be offered for credit, expand its use of social media, steadily improve course quality, begin to publish student projects and faculty research on the web, and train its faculty. The Wilmette Institute seeks to be a major center of study for Bahá'ís, their friends, and supporters as the need to study and apply the principles of the Bahá'í revelation continues to increase.