

# Financial Resources for the Social Justice Program



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONS

A d v o c a c y   a n d   W i t n e s s   P r o g r a m s

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Congregational social justice leaders need financial resources to carry out their programs. Money is needed for printing, publicity, supplies, phone calls, staff people, and so on. Some congregations give sizable contributions to social change groups.

Below are suggestions for how social justice committees can obtain funding from the congregation's budget, from special fund-raising projects, from the Unitarian Universalist Funding and other sources.

## 1. Money for social justice in the congregation's budget

Try to get the congregation to appropriate a portion of its budget to support social justice programs. This is one way that the congregation can do something specific to support the values of liberal religion and the Principles and Purposes of our movement. It also ensures that social justice has the money needed to run its program.

Two percent of the congregation's overall budget is a reasonable amount to allocate for social justice programming. This should be seen as a minimum amount, since there are congregations that budget a higher percentage than this.

If the congregation has a \$100,000 budget, the Board should allocate \$2,000 for social justice programs. If the congregation has a \$200,000 budget, social justice should get \$4,000.

If the social justice program is not presently budgeted a fair share, work out a strategy for increasing the budgeted amount. But, do not simply go and ask the board for more money. Instead, determine the amount of monies needed to do specific projects. Then explain to the board why money is needed for these projects. If the board can't allocate two per cent, work out a strategy so that the social justice program can evolve to that amount over a two or three year period.

The program has a better chance of getting money for social justice programs when social justice activists support the congregation with generous pledges and take active roles in the annual fund-raising canvass.

## 2. Special fund-raising congregational practices

A number of our congregations have been very successful in raising money for social justice projects. There are many ways to raise money.

A monthly, bi-weekly or weekly "Share the Plate" collection has become a growing practice among many UU congregations. It is a collection held in addition to the regular Sunday worship collection and is used to fund the congregation's social justice activities as well as to make contributions to other social justice organizations and coalitions. Typically, the collection is accompanied by the introduction of a representative from the ally organization or news of a congregational social justice effort so that awareness and participation are raised as well.

The UU Church of Nashua, NH reports that it raises \$20,000 annually through this weekly collection and that it has had no impact on the collection for the church.

The Social Justice Coordinating Council at the UU Church of Bloomington, IN sells fair trade coffee and tea as one of the ways to fund their social justice projects. Over 500 UU congregations participate in the UU Service Committee's Equal Exchange Interfaith Coffee Program which includes bulk sales for fundraising. See <http://www.uusc.org/info/coffeeproject.html> for more information. This practice not only raises funds but supports independent growers and cooperatives in developing countries.

The annual pledge drive at River Road Unitarian Church, Bethesda, MD (650 members), enables members to make a separate pledge for the congregation's support of social justice organizations.

Friends and members receive two pledge cards each spring, one for the general canvass and one for social justice outreach. In the spring of 2001, they pledged \$685,000 to the annual canvass and another \$100,000 for social justice. Add another \$50,000 collected at other fundraisers and members gave more than 10 percent of all member contributions to social justice work last year. Social justice pledging at River Road has been going on in this manner since 1974.

Special Events that the congregation becomes known for are also a great way to raise funds and build the congregation's identity and outreach in the community. First Parish Brewster MA hosts an annual formal Valentine's Day dance for Cape Cod's GLBT community and friends, raising at least \$6,000 each year to support issues and programs important to that community.

In 1991-92, All Souls Church in New York raised \$170,000 through special fund-raising programs to support its social justice programs. The congregation had a special travel auction at which they raised \$105,000, a fair that brought in \$25,000, and a fundraiser for an AIDS project, which netted \$40,000.

The social justice committee in the Morristown, NJ church held a service auction hoping to raise \$8,000 to support their projects. Imagine the "problem" they had when they raised \$14,000. They ended up giving the board of their congregation \$6,000.

The UU Congregation of the Palisades in Englewood, NJ, with some neighboring UU congregations, raised \$10,000 with a concert to help homeless people. They invited the Jubilee Choir from All Souls Church in Washington, DC to sing at the concert.

The Unitarian Society of Germantown in Philadelphia raises over \$10,000 a year through special collections, which are taken once a month at the Sunday service. The church board does a survey of the congregation to determine the projects that can be funded. Projects include: United Nations Sunday, Guest at Your Table (UUSC), Justice Sunday, and so on. Either the whole service is focused on the project, as is the case with Justice Sunday, or a brief period of time in the service is used.

The Monterey Peninsula Unitarian Church in Carmel, CA encourages its members to "fast for friends." Once a month a community group makes a brief presentation at a Sunday Service. A special collection is taken after the presentation. People contribute with the idea of fasting during the month to provide the money.

The UU Church of Tampa, FL designates a charity a month, for which it takes a special collection.

### 3. The Unitarian Universalist grants panels

There are three different granting programs available through the Unitarian Universalist Funding Program (UUFP).

The funding cycle is twice yearly with deadlines of September 15th and March 15th. For more information, including information on past grantees, see <http://www25.uua.org/uufp>. Contact the UUFP at [uufp@aol.com](mailto:uufp@aol.com) or 617-971-9600.

#### A. Fund for Unitarian Universalist Social Responsibility

The Fund for Social Responsibility makes grants for projects that increase UU involvement in issues of social responsibility. Grants are made in support of social justice educational work, direct service projects, projects that enable Unitarian Universalists to witness about social issues, and projects organizing to change systems of oppression and injustice. Projects that seek to implement current or recent General Resolutions/Statements of Conscience will be welcomed. The maximum grant will be \$20,000; however, the typical grant will be smaller.

Members of congregations who are trying to get funding for projects sponsored by their church should apply to this fund.

#### B. Fund for a Just Society

The Fund for a Just Society makes grants to organizations addressing issues of social and economic injustice. Grants are given in support of specific projects focusing on "systematic" social change projects that challenge social, racial, political, and economic injustices and those that seek to transform the structures that create and maintain these injustices. Grants can be made up to \$20,000 and the average grant is \$6-9,000.

While the funds are not for UU congregations, UU social justice organizers who are working with local community groups should apply to this funding source.

#### C. Fund for Unitarian Universalism (formerly the Denominational Grants Panel)

The Fund for Unitarian Universalism supports projects that strengthen UU institutions, extend UU visibility and presence, enrich its community and worship life, or preserve and celebrate its religious heritage. Preference is given to the development of innovative, challenging, or experimental programs whose application or replication will have wide denominational impact. The maximum possible grant is \$20,000, and the average grant is \$7,000 and "challenge" or "matching" grants are often common.

#### D. Fund for International Unitarian Universalism

The Fund for International Unitarian Universalism makes grants to strengthen Unitarian Universalist organizations or projects working internationally. Grants are made to Unitarian/Universalist organizations or projects working internationally that:

- Promote the growth of religious institutions that are consistent with Unitarian/Universalist ideals and values.
- Strengthen Unitarian/Universalist institutions and community life.
- Nurture and celebrate our free faith.
  
- Encourage a generosity among Unitarian Universalists that is reflected in

commitments of time, money and energy.

Please Note: This fund has one funding cycle each year with a deadline of March 15th.

In 2005, the Funds distributed \$875,221 to 123 organizations. Application forms and guidelines are available from the Funding Program office. Organizations and projects that are considering applying are strongly encouraged to talk with the Grants Administrator prior to filling out the application.

#### E. Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation

The UUWF Grants Program supports innovative social justice projects that affect women and girls and contributes to positive social change.

The first grants cycle begins with an October deadline for proposals. \$15,000 has been allocated for this first cycle, with the average grant anticipated to be about \$5,000.

See <http://www.uuwf.org/grants.html> for more information.

#### 4. Resources

See *Raising Money for Social Action* by Michael Durall, Member of the First Church, UU, in Belmont, Massachusetts, and author of the book *Creating Congregations of Generous People*, (Alban Institute, 1999) at <http://www.uua.org/uuawo/new/article.php?id=63>.

See *Grants and Related Resources--National Grantmakers* at <http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/priv.htm>.

Raising Change holds an annual social justice fundraising conference and provides workshops and resources. See [http://www.grassrootsfundraising.org/raising\\_change/](http://www.grassrootsfundraising.org/raising_change/).