

UUCA Share the Plate (STP) Draft for 2020/2021

Proposed by the UUCA Social Justice Ministries Team, January 2020

The Importance of Social Justice Ministries at UUCA

Doing Social Justice is a fundamental expression of our faith and values as Unitarian Universalists. The goal of the Social Justice Ministries Team (SJMT) to facilitate and promote that justice work is collaborative and covenantal between staff and the congregation.

UUCA has a long history of Social Justice activism. Our *congregational* commitment takes many forms and is central to the faith which calls us to make the world a better, more just place. In addition to specific actions which include Service, Education, Witness, Advocacy and Community Engagement (SEWAC), we dedicate volunteer and staff time, physical space and financial resources to put our faith into action.

In developing and implementing social justice policies and practices, the intention is always to do so in the spirit of respectful partnership, equity and transparency.

Background of STP

UUCA has allocated all or part of the Plate offering for Social Action groups/projects/partners since the FY2007 year. Various models have been used, but all have been grounded in the belief that using the plate offering to support social justice

1. is integral to the expression of our faith as individuals and a congregation;
2. is a tangible way to be in relationship with those who call on us for support and solidarity;
3. supports the work of partnerships that we as a faith community value and respect, and that reflect our principles and priorities;
4. deepens the congregation's understanding of both societal problems and the solutions that are being used to address those problems;
5. nurtures a culture of generosity within the congregation.

How Should Share the Plate be Implemented?

It is recommended that

1. UUCA continue to **share on a 70/30% basis** the **non-pledge** Plate offerings collected during Sunday worship (and donated online the week following the service) with identified recipients and the church operating budget;
2. **The group featured will receive 70% of all non-pledge donations during that week.**
Disbursements will be made each quarter to recipients.
3. There be an application process during Spring 2020 **for all** projects/groups/organizations that want to be a Partner for Share the Plate (STP); **the Application will be completed and submitted by the UUCA liaison for the Partner.**
4. the SJMT, with input from staff and congregation, will name a 3-person STP Review Task Force to accept and review STP applications and make recommendations to SJMT.
5. SJMT selects up to 12 STP recipients and sets a schedule for the Fiscal Year.
6. Each recipient will be featured for one week each quarter;
7. Once each quarter, the offering will be dedicated to the creation of a contingency fund to support causes such as emergency relief or reimburse internal UUCA Social Justice project costs that lack budgetary support.
8. Offerings collected on Christmas Eve will be used for a ministers' pastoral care discretionary fund to support special cases of individual congregant needs within our community.

Eligibility to become a Share the Plate Partner Recipient

- Applicant organizations/groups must be either a recognized Social Justice group within UUCA or a 501 (c)(3) partner organization;
- SJ Groups or organizations with full funding in the UUCA *Operating* Budget (currently there are none) or with a contract for services may apply for STP to support ***new initiatives/activities not included in their Budget funding.***

Criteria for Selection (each of which will be addressed in the application form)

Priority consideration is given to applicants that

- 1 demonstrate a commitment to specified priority UU Principles. **For FY2021 support, Principles 1, 7 and 8** – human worth and dignity for LGBTQI individuals and communities, environmental justice/climate crisis and anti-racism/anti-oppression - were identified as priorities in the Spring congregational survey;
- 2 work actively to involve UUCA volunteers. This involvement can take many forms, but goes beyond **solely** being financial contributors to the organization or group; there should be at least 8 UUCA congregants (1%) actively involved with the partner organization/partner;
- 3 have a working coordinating team at UUCA that meets regularly and designates a UUCA member as the contact person to serve liaison between the partner and the congregation; **the liaison submits the application for Share the Plate.**
- 4 rely on the financial resources provided by UUCA to have a significant impact on their work, or to fund a particular activity that resonates with UUCA's

Responsibilities of Recipients Selected

- 1 prior to the week it is the featured recipient of the offering, prepare a written piece for Connections and the Order of Service describing its programs, activities and the impact that STP donations have on its work;
- 2 compose/deliver a Statement to be shared during the Invitation to the Offering;
- 3 provide information to the congregation by way of a session after the service, visual displays, informational table in Fellowship Hall or other means;
- 4 have at least one additional activity or event each quarter to inform and engage the congregation in its work. Where possible, intergenerational efforts should be made to provide our younger congregants with meaningful relevant experiences;
- 5 submit a brief end-of-year report to SJMT on how money was spent, its impact and the quarterly activities held.

Application and Selection Process

For FY 20/21, the **UUCA liaison** for **every group** wanting to be considered for STP must **submit an application by April 10** to SJMT, to be **reviewed by the Selection Task Force by April 25**. Applications may be filled out in hard copy and brought to UUCA or completed online. The Task Force has the option of interviewing applicants before making its recommendations to the SJMT.

NOTE: Changes to the list of recipients, the weekly schedule or disbursements of funds are approved by the SJMT, with appropriate advance notice given to the recipients.

Timeline

February/March:

- Hold listening sessions with current recipients and the congregation to receive input and feedback on recommendations (Feb. 9, 16; Mar. 1);
- Publicize the process under consideration widely;
- SJMT finalizes Guidelines at its March 24th meeting;
- SJMT names a 3-person Selection Task Force to review applications

April 10: STP applications submitted to SJMT

April 10-25: Selection Task Force reviews applications and recommends STP recipients to SJMT;

April 28: SJMT finalizes its STP recipient recommendations for FY2021;

By May 10: SJMT notifies all applicants of its recommendations and develops schedule for STP for FY2021

May ____: SJMT submits STP recommendations to Board as information item

Annual Meeting: Announce STP Recipients and Schedule to congregation

Draft Guidelines prepared by MJ Schmelzer, McGennis Williams and Chris Sutton; reviewed by SJMT on January 28.