

Discover the Impact of Endowment Community Partner Grants for 2024-2025

As detailed in the May 24 edition of the UCE Newsletter, the Endowment Committee diligently reviewed eight grant applications for fiscal 2024-25. These applications were from the Community Partners that tirelessly support the ongoing work of the recipient organizations. UCE members, who are active volunteers with all Community Grant organizations, played a crucial role in this process. All grant applications were accepted because they met at least one purpose of Article 4, Section 2 of the UCE Endowment Fund bylaws (unanimous vote of Endowment Trustees).

Recommended for funding at the total amount requested (unanimous vote of the Endowment Trustees), the UCE Board approved the eight grants of Trustees. Each grantee will receive \$ 2,610 of unrestricted funding to use however they deem necessary.

The following are summaries of the four remaining grants in this category. Read about the other four Community Partner grants in the May 24 edition of the UCE Newsletter.

- **Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR)**

ICIRR is dedicated to promoting the rights and opportunities of all immigrants and refugees to full and equal participation in today's diverse society's economic, civic, cultural, social, and political life. ICIRR is a coalition of many member organizations that hold a series of community meetings each year with grassroots leaders and activists to determine and collectively ratify specific immigration policy goals for the upcoming year. Everything ICIRR does is directed against government policies and practices that oppress immigrants in the United States and those seeking to enter the country.

UCE Immigrant Solidarity Team (IST) members have worked with ICIRR by

- attending meetings, rallies, and celebrations.
- participating in voter registration efforts immediately following new citizen ceremonies.
- responding to information about policy issues from Interfaith Action and UCE's Local Response Network.

IST plans to work through UCE's Legislative Action Team to present ICIRR issues to Illinois state legislators in meetings in the coming year.

- **Interfaith Action of Evanston**

Inspired by diverse faiths and shared values, Interfaith Action of Evanston (IAE) brings people together to serve hungry and homeless people, pursue interfaith dialogue, and engage in advocacy that promotes social justice for those they serve.

IAE and the UCE Food and Shelter Team (FAST) have aligned over the years, as many UCE members helped out at the overnight shelter hosted at UCE and other locations. UCE members

have served as set-up people, greeters, overnight monitors, and morning clean-up staff at the church.

- **Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois (UUANI)**

UUANI works with UU congregations and individuals across Illinois to strengthen their capacity to engage in strategically effective legislative action in solidarity with those most impacted by injustice. UUANI partners with state advocacy organizations that are aligned with UU values and engages in effective action to increase the strength of the UU corporate voice for justice.

At UCE, UUANI serves as a primary arm of social justice outreach, such as Actions of the Week (with an enrollment of 100+ UCE members), Get Out the Vote postcard effort, and face-to-face meaningful dialogue between participants and their legislators to help change Illinois policies and practices for more significant equity and inclusion.

Several UCE members have been part of UUANI's community, including board members, issue team members, leaders, and legislator engagement teams. UCE has been involved with UUANI since its inception in 2013, but most notably since about 2017, with Actions of the Week and legislator relation teams.

UUANI is funded by contributions from individuals and congregations and a grant from the UU Funding Program.

- **Unitarian Universalist Prison Ministry of Illinois (UUPMI)**

As described in its mission, UUPMI equips UU's in Illinois to transform institutions and support people harmed by the prison industrial complex. This includes offering small group ministry inside Cook County Jail and Logan Correctional Center, advocating for more just prison conditions and the criminal legal system, and helping UU congregations in Illinois become more radically welcoming.

The executive director is a UU minister who provides pulpit service to raise awareness of UUPMI's work and its theological underpinnings. She also helps prison ministry volunteers get into carceral settings in different parts of the state. The organization's covenant affirms a commitment to anti-oppression. Several UCE members were founding members of UUPMI 10 years ago, and three are on the steering committee.

This grant funds the emergency grants to solidarity circle leaders and people returning from prison who need support to stay free.