

**SHARING OUR FAITH
MANDATE & APPLICATION CRITERIA**

The Canadian Unitarian Council’s Sharing Our Faith (SOF) program funds initiatives by Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregations and communities which enhance ministry, and which contribute to growth and vitality for that congregation and for the UU faith community in Canada.

The SOF fund consists of monies collected by congregations at special Sharing Our Faith services held during the year, and from a Foundation Fund administered by the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto, and sent to the CUC. These funds are to be allocated in the form of grants to congregations applying for projects they may otherwise not afford to undertake, but which contribute to the enhancement of UUism in Canada. The amount of individual grants are up to $5,000.

Applications must be received by the Sharing Our Faith team at sharing-our-faith@cuc.ca, by March 31 each year, preferably in electronic form. Applicants will usually be either current member congregations, emerging groups, or UU communities. The CUC Board will consider new starts where funding is requested for the very early stages of group development and will consider the special circumstances of groups which have been in existence for a shorter time than three years when applying these criteria. Priority is given to applicants who have not received a Sharing Our Faith grant in the previous year.

Congregations are encouraged to think creatively about how these funds could be used to encourage growth in their congregation or emerging group. Examples of possible uses for funds include:

1. Enhancing salaries and compensation for church staff.
2. Supporting professional ministry for lay led and emerging groups.
3. Providing access for lay-led congregations to professional ministry.
4. Developing faith formation / lifespan learning programs in a multi-generational context.
5. Creative partnerships with groups and community organizations which promote UU principles
6. Other initiatives relevant to ministry, growth and sustainability.

**APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

The application for funds should be between 2 – 4 pages in length. Additional supporting documents should not exceed 7 pages. Applications should follow the guidelines below, and be submitted by **March 31** to sharing-our-faith@cuc.ca:

1. A description of the project the congregation wishes to undertake, indicating how it fits into the overall plan of the congregation, and how this might enhance national visibility;
2. Evidence of a commitment to growth:
	1. description of programs, events, or other activities recently undertaken to support growth, including visibility, advertising, community involvement;
	2. description of the ways in which new members are welcomed and integrated into the congregation. Provide, if available, retention rates of new members for the past 3 years;
	3. identification of particular initiatives (through demographic data or other background information) in which outreach is taking place;
	4. evidence of promotional and on-line presence under the categories of Unitarian, Unitarian Universalist, or Universalist Unitarian. The CUC Board will consider alternative evidence of public visibility such as signage, posters, etc.
3. Evidence of responsible stewardship and a commitment to our larger Unitarian and Universalist religious community in Canada:
	1. indication that the congregation has held or participated in a "Sharing Our Faith" service in the preceding year;
	2. evidence of commitment to full contribution of the Annual Program Contribution to the CUC;
	3. evidence of systematic, sustained and significant financial support of the group/congregation by its members (e.g. a regular every-member canvass, pledging of specific annual contributions by members, and budgets based on predictable support by the group. Please include a summary of member contributions, and the percentage of this amount in the operating budget, in the preceding 3 year period;
	4. financial statements for the previous 3 years. If less than three years old, for the years the congregation has been in existence;
	5. a specific budget for the proposed project showing a significant contribution of local funds from the congregation or group allocated for this project;
4. Reporting:
	1. a satisfactory report on the most Sharing Our Faith project receiving a grant from the CUC, if any;
	2. a declaration of all other grants received or pending from the CUC;
	3. a commitment to report on the proposed project, if successfully funded, no later than March 1 of the following year.

**DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

A sub-committee of the CUC Board reviews all and makes recommendations to the Board based on their merits. Depending on the total amount of funds available, individual grants awarded may be less than what was requested. The total amount granted to all congregations in any year will be equal to the amount donated to the CUC from congregational Sharing Our Faith services plus the amount transferred from the above-mentioned Foundation Fund in the past fiscal year. If sufficient acceptable applications to exhaust the funds are not received, the balance of funds will be held over to the following year.

Successful recipients will be informed at the CUC’s Annual General Meeting or National Conference in May. The full amount of each grant awarded will be paid out by the CUC to each recipient in June.

If awarded a grant, recipients must send a report on their project to the CUC, attention the Executive Director via sharing-our-faith@cuc.ca, by **March 1** of the following year, including a statement of what has been achieved to date, a financial statement indicating how the grant money was used, and the impact of the project on growth. The Vice-President will report to the May meeting of the Board on the success of these grantees.

Please send completed applications to sharing-our-faith@cuc.ca or the CUC office at 192 Spadina Ave, Suite 302, Toronto ON M5T 2C2.

**SHARING OUR FAITH APPLICATION**

Date: Congregation:

Mailing Address:

City: Prov: Postal:

Phone Number: Fax Number:

Website Address:

E-mail:

Contact Name:

Contact E-mail:

Contact Phone Number: # of members:

Summary of proposed project or program:

Amount requested: Total amount of project:

Previous SOF grant: ❑ Yes ❑ No Year:

Amount received: Report submitted: ❑ Yes ❑ No

If no report was submitted, please explain:

Please attach relevant financial statements and documentation.