The Search for Religious Education Leadership

Best Practices for Unitarian Universalist Congregations

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Preface

The Search for Religious Education Leadership: Best Practices for Unitarian Universalist Congregations is meant not only to guide congregations in their search for a lay religious education professional, but also to lay the groundwork for a mutually enriching relationship between staff member and congregation that is consonant with our Unitarian Universalist values.

Within these pages is offered practical guidance on how to recruit, select and support a lay religious education professional. Included are sections on the role of a search committee, how to conduct a congregational needs assessment, an explanation of the financial responsibilities of the congregation in professional staffing, the process of conducting a search, including envisioning the religious educator position that will serve the needs of the congregation, and resources that will support the religious educator, religious education programming, and visioning for the future.

This resource was originally published in 2001. As such it was essentially distilled wisdom gathered from lay members of search committees, recently hired religious educators, religious educators in search, teachers, youth advisors and members of the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA). Appreciation goes to the professional religious educators, program consultants, and lay leaders who gathered to help chart the direction of the original resource. Particular thanks to Dr. Helen Bishop, Andrea Lerner, Rev. Tracey Robinson-Harris, Margaret Sanders, Laura Spencer, and the late Rev. Norma Veridan, who read and critiqued the first draft, and to Rev. Lena Breen who oversaw the project and contributed the original preface. Appreciation goes to Rev. Ralph Mero, in the Office of Church Staff Finances who reviewed the original section on Financial Responsibility. Large portions of this resource are based on the excellent work of Jeannellen Ryan in the *RE Staffing Guide* (edited by Jeannellen Ryan, UUA, 1996). Some information has been taken directly from other texts including *The Congregational Handbook, Third Edition* (edited by Lawrence X. Peers, UUA, 1995); *To Sustain the Living Tradition* (1993); *The Handbook for Professional Religious Educators* (Liberal Religious Educators Association, 1998).

The Search for Religious Education Leadership: Best Practices for Unitarian Universalist Congregations would not exist except for the efforts of Pat Ellenwood who researched, wrote, assembled and edited this resource in its original form. As Lena Breen has written, Pat "brings twenty years of seasoned wisdom to the task, as well as a commitment to the ministry of professional religious educators and her understanding of the gifts that the ministry of religious education offers to our congregations." This resource is only one example of the inspirational leadership in religious education with which Pat Ellenwood has served our Association. Thank you, Pat.

This most recent revision of this resource includes updated UUA contact, salary recommendation, program information, and revised staffing guidelines.

Rev. Beth Williams
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1. As You Begin

The Assumptions of This Guide

While every Unitarian Universalist congregation has its unique character and religious education leadership needs, you should be aware that this guide assumes you are looking for at least a half-time non-ordained religious education leader. This process should be adjusted if your leadership needs are less than half-time.

We assume that you see religious education as a ministry but may not be clear about the difference between a minister of religious education and a director of religious education. A minister of religious education is an ordained religious professional with special emphasis on lifespan religious education who is in fellowship with the UUA. S/he is able to assist with preaching, perform marriages, conduct memorial services, and provide pastoral counseling. A parish minister seeking a religious education leadership position would go through the same process as a non-ordained applicant. If you decide to call an assistant or associate minister who will have religious education leadership responsibilities or a minister of religious education, you should contact the ministerial settlement director in the UUA Ministry and Professional Leadership staff group.

Other assumptions are:

- A high-quality religious education program will be a major factor in congregational growth;
- A religious educator employed by a Unitarian Universalist congregation will be fairly compensated and treated as a professional staff member whether full-time or part-time;
- A religious educator who does not have all the necessary expertise and experience requires support for growth through on-the-job training, continuing education, leadership development, and sufficient funds to support these efforts;
- Lifespan religious growth and learning occur most when there is a clearly articulated vision of religious education based on the overall mission of the congregation.
- The parish minister's support for the religious education program and the religious educator is an asset.
- A religious educator will work collegially with the parish minister.

Support for the Search Process

It is important to acknowledge the importance of the process you are about to undertake. A search process is a time of transition, which is often stressful. For many of those involved it will be a first-time experience. For these reasons and more it is wise to consider obtaining guidance from a professional to assist your congregation. The most helpful person to contact would be the program consultant if your district has one. The program consultant has particular expertise in working with congregations around issues and questions in religious education. Please contact your district office for more information about available staff. The Office of Religious Education Credentialing can offer additional support, although it does not have a placement service.

Gathering Data

There are a variety of constituencies to consider in this process. The Religious Education Committee will have the most extensive role because of its intimate knowledge of the strengths, needs, and potential of the current program. In addition to the Religious Education Committee, consider contacting the following groups and individuals for their views on both the analysis and mission/vision work:

- paid church staff: parish minister, music director, administrator, youth advisor
- children
- youth
- young adults
- board members
- long-time, respected leaders of the congregation
- members who have recently become inactive

- members of other committees: adult education, social concerns, membership, finance, personnel, worship
- any others not mentioned above.

Collate and summarize the information you receive and share it with the congregation before proceeding.

Resources to Assist You

All resources and publications mentioned in the text of this document are listed in the Appendix along with information about how to acquire them. Do make use of as many as are needed by your congregation as you look for religious education leadership. It is an important step you are taking and one that requires guidance and resources.

Long-Range Financial Planning and Budget

For more specific information on this step, consult Section 3: Financial Responsibilities of the Congregation, and your district compensation consultant, who is available to assist you with compensation questions. The Board and the Finance Committee of your congregation should develop a long-range plan for fairly compensating the religious educator. In advance of naming or electing the search committee, the Board should also develop a budget for the search work, which will cover photocopying, mailing, costs for the meetings of the search committee, development of the packet, and expenses connected with focus group or congregational meetings.

Congregational Mission and a Vision for Religious Education

A mission statement articulates why your congregation exists. It may describe its purpose and may include a statement of what you would like to contribute to the larger community or the world. It is the foundation on which all programming and ministry rests. If your congregation needs to develop a mission statement, contact your district office for the name of a person who can assist with this important step.

If you already have a mission statement, review it before going forward:

- What does this statement say about our ministry to children, youth, young adults, adults?
- What does it say about the role of education in our congregational life?
- How does our mission statement speak to the needs of the larger community?
- Who do we hope will find and join our congregation?
- What are our religious education goals for our congregation including children, youth and adults?
- How do our goals connect with our mission?
- What are the strengths of our current program?
- What do we want to improve?
- What additions do we want?
- What is required to realize the dreams and improvements we envision?

The vision for religious education is the articulation of the kind of future you seek to create. It will reflect what you care about most and should be consistent with the larger mission. In Section 7: Useful Documents, there are questions and a sample process to guide you in the development of a vision for religious education. The vision for religious education based on the larger mission of your congregation will guide all subsequent steps in your search for religious education leadership. An additional resource for guiding mission/vision work is *Philosophy Making: A Process Guide.* Chapter 7 in *The Congregational Handbook* (Third Edition) contains a self-study and profile form containing specific sections on religious education.

Analysis of Current Situation

In addition to doing the foundation work of mission and vision for religious education, it is useful to do a general analysis of your congregation. A strong program of religious education contributes to growth so it is important to look to the future to get a perspective on all aspects of congregational life. This kind of analysis involves brainstorming and a bit of research to identify demographic changes that may

occur in your area. Pay attention to other changes in local, county, state, or national political situations that might affect your congregation. This is the time to be intentional about contacting key stakeholders from your congregation who may provide useful information about larger issues that may affect the search for religious education leadership.
S: Examine the *strength*s, both within the congregation and outside of the organization.
W: What are the *weaknesses* or gaps that might affect your ability to cope with a new circumstance?
O: What *opportunities* do you see? Do an environmental scan, inside and outside of the congregation looking for things about which you might be aware but have not acted upon.
T: Look for *threats* that might prevent you from reaching your maximum potential. Are there things about how your congregation is structured, internal operations or situations in the outside world that might affect your ability to bring your mission/vision to life?

If you would like assistance or more information about this process, contact your district office.

Search Timeline

Determine when you will want your new religious educator to begin and establish a timeline for the search with that date in mind. Consultation with the parish minister is key in this determination. It is wise to allow for some flexibility within the overall limits of the search and have a contingency plan if a suitable candidate cannot be found in the time allowed. Choosing religious education leadership is not a decision to be made in haste, so allow enough time for a thorough search. It may be that your congregation has already completed some of the following tasks related to finding a religious educator:

- Develop a mission statement for the congregation or review existing mission and goals.
- Develop a vision for religious education.
- Analyze all aspects of congregational life.
- Develop a long-range fair compensation plan for the religious educator.
- Develop a budget for the search process.
- Select the search committee.
- Collect data from groups – large, small, and focus.
- Update the congregation at regular intervals during the search.
- Develop a packet about your congregation.
- Advertise the position – job description and cover letter.
- Screen applicants.
- Do reference checks.
- Interview the most viable applicants.
- Choose the final candidate.
- Do a complete reference and background check.
- Adjust the job description.
- Draft a letter of agreement or contract.
- Introduce new religious educator to the congregation.

In some instances, despite a well-planned search, a suitable candidate is not found within the time frame allowed. It is important to develop a contingency plan. You may want to extend the contract of the interim or acting religious educator. This is the time to develop a plan to cover this eventuality.

Selecting the Members of the Search Committee

A Search Committee can be nominated by the Board and elected by the congregation or be an appointed committee of the Board. In some congregations, the Search Committee makes a hiring recommendation to the governing board, which in turn makes the appointment. A congregational vote would ensure full congregational support for the selection. In any case, it should be clear who has the final authority in the hiring process.

The Search Committee can reasonably consist of three to five persons who have the confidence of the congregation and who understand its religious education needs. It is best not to have any current staff members on the search committee.

2. Assessment

A New Position

It is critical to assess your present and projected needs to determine the nature of the religious education leadership your congregation needs now and expects to have in the future. Religious education leadership is too important and demanding to be left to one person. When a religious educator is hired that person will be working in partnership with other staff, volunteers, and particularly the religious education committee. Responsibilities must be carefully described and accountability made clear. Both religious educator and parish ministers work more effectively when other staff and volunteers complement their talents.

In a congregation that is hiring its first religious educator, it is likely that existing staff and/or volunteers have been carrying out religious education leadership functions. Your assessment may suggest that at this point it would be best to hire clerical or support staff. Such positions are generally designed and compensated as clerical or administrative support positions. A modestly paid support position can often allow volunteer efforts in a small congregation to accomplish a great deal when it does not seem feasible to hire a professional religious educator or when you want more time to determine your needs. If you decide on clerical or administrative assistance, it is important to be clear about the position and distinguish it from that of the primary religious educator.

To plan for your religious education ministry and to determine how your volunteers and staff might work together, consider the following questions:

- Which tasks are currently being carried out by existing paid staff or volunteers?
- Which of these tasks could be better handled by paid clerical or administrative support staff?
- What leads you to conclude that a professional religious educator could assume these responsibilities?
- Do the number of children, youth, and their families require the attention of a paid religious educator?

There is a chart in Section 7: Useful Documents to help you with these questions.

Filling a Vacated Position

If your congregation is replacing a religious educator, it is important to arrange for an exit or transition interview with the former religious educator and the person or group to whom s/he was accountable. This is done routinely for clergy and is important for all church staff. No matter what the reason for the departure, this is an important step. The purpose of the interview is to give a perspective on the former relationship and practices and to inform the search committee as they seek to place a new religious educator. The program consultant or district executive may be available to conduct this interview.

Full-time or Part-time Service

One major decision to make is whether to search for a full or part-time religious educator. A sufficiently staffed religious education program can be critical to your program well-being, especially if you anticipate or desire congregational growth. While there are certainly other factors to take into account, the number of children and youth actively participating in your religious education program should help to guide you in your staffing decisions. For a staffing model that uses this factor in its recommendations, see *"Recommended RE Staffing Ratios"* in the Useful Documents section. In this document staffing recommendations are expressed in both hours and units. A complete explanation of units as a measure of service will be found in Section 3: Financial Responsibilities.

Prioritize the Qualities and Characteristics Required

Identify the skills, qualities, and characteristics you would most like to find in a religious educator. It is not likely that one person will possess all the characteristics you desire, so it may be valuable to prioritize the ones you see as most critical. Look for someone who possesses the most important ones along with the obvious potential to develop the others. For example, the ideal candidate might:

- demonstrate skill in interpersonal relations and group dynamics with children, youth, and adults

- demonstrate the ability to work collegially with other professional leaders in the congregation
- exhibit a solid sense of personal worth and identity
- handle criticism, disappointment, frustration, joy, and praise with equilibrium
- keep confidences and know when and to whom to make referrals
- show discernment in relations with congregational entities
- understand family and organizational systems, faith development, and human nature
- balance the necessity to work harmoniously with the ability to provide leadership and take initiative
- recognize and articulate the importance of continuing education and professional growth
- affirm and understand Unitarian Universalist Purposes, Principles and Sources
- show personal warmth and a pastoral presence
- display an obvious love for children and youth
- delegate responsibilities
- write and speak effectively
- listens attentively
- be energetic
- have an engaging sense of humor

Accountability

The question regarding the accountability of the religious educator is a sensitive one and requires careful thought and language. A religious educator hired by, responsible to, and reporting regularly to the Board has a different sense of relationship to the congregation than one who is responsible to the Religious Education Committee. An experienced religious educator will not require day-to-day supervision while a brand new religious educator benefits from guidance and mentoring. Since the relationship between a religious educator and the RE Committee is at best a collaborative one in which the roles are clearly defined, regularly reviewed, and modified as necessary, it is usually not in the best interests of the congregation to have the RE Committee supervise the religious educator. It is difficult for a religious educator to encourage, lead, request, enable, and challenge the RE Committee and then be accountable to the same group. There are several successful models employed in our congregations. The religious educator might report to:

- a subcommittee of the Board
- a small group drawn from the Board, Personnel Committee and Religious Education Committee
- a small group from the congregation appointed by the Board with nominees suggested by the religious educator
- the parish minister, particularly in the case of a religious educator new to the profession. If this is the plan, it is important to work at developing a relationship among the staff that is collegial. If you expect one paid staff member to supervise another, the language must reflect the kind of working model you wish to promote. The language of mentoring may be effective when a parish minister and new religious educator work in this way.

3. Financial Responsibilities of the Congregation

To Sustain the Living Tradition

In November 1993 the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Association appointed a Committee on Ministerial and Church Staff Compensation. Their final report, "To Sustain the Living Tradition," contains a clearly articulated rationale for fair compensation based on substantial research. In general, it revealed that compensation for Unitarian Universalist professionals was significantly lower than for professionals in comparable denominations; benefits coverage levels were about half. It was presented to the UUA Board, discussed, and passed by the General Assembly in 1995. These guidelines for compensating religious professionals, voted by the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist

Association, provide an opportunity for congregations to model our affirmation of justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. We hope that you will go forward openly and honestly. It is strongly recommended that you read the entire report so the rationale for the recommendations is clear. *To Sustain the Living Tradition* is available from the Office of Church Staff Finances. UUA Board recommendations based on *To Sustain The Living Tradition* can be found on the UUA website.

This report also includes compensation guidelines that establish a basis for quantifying amounts of part-time service rendered and prorating those amounts to the compensation levels recommended for full-time service. Cost-of-living adjustments as well as differences related to region and location are recognized as well. A mechanism is provided for adjusting the guidelines to each community and for fluctuations in cost-of-living figures from year to year. We have included a sample chart from the Pacific Central District in California that may help very small programs looking for religious education leadership to determine a fair hourly wage.

The guidelines are designed to help congregations set initial salaries and benefits for professional employees and to provide a basis for ongoing salary administration. Ultimately, each congregation – its lay and professional leaders, working with its membership – is responsible for determining levels of compensation and benefits for its staff. The guidelines facilitate the informed exercise of that responsibility.

The monetary cost of having religious education leadership in a congregation is composed of three elements: employment benefits, professional expense allowances, and salary. While these three elements are often lumped together as a "total package," they need to be separated. The first two elements do not constitute income to the religious professional, and most importantly, they should be considered basic to all employees.

A religious educator hired to serve a congregation is an employee and cannot by law be considered an independent contractor. A signed letter of agreement, which specifies accountability and responsibilities, ensures that the congregation has hired an employee and must take all the responsibilities required by law of an employer. We strongly recommend that you contact your district compensation consultant to assist you in this step.

Units: An Alternative to Hours

While many congregations design job descriptions based on hours, this system may detract from the professional nature of the work of a religious educator and fail to acknowledge the difficulty of determining time of service when dealing with people and relationships in a congregational setting. Another way to measure service is the unit-based system.

A unit is defined as a morning, afternoon, or evening devoted to a congregation's work. The unit system sets twelve units per week as the standard for full-time service. There may be weeks that require more than twelve units of service, and other weeks that require less. Units will by no means be consistent in terms of actual time elapsed. Some afternoons will be six hours long and some will be two; some two-hour evenings will require more presence than participation, others will require four hours of advance preparation. Some mornings will be spent with most of the membership, and some will be spent with one person. The unit system allows considerable flexibility on the part of the religious educator and is applicable to all professional positions. It should be applied reasonably, considering the subjective nature of working for a congregation.

Whether you choose to use hours or units, it is important to understand that, for religious educators as with clergy, professional associations and continuing education are vital parts of the work. Attendance at workshops, LREDA conferences, district meetings, General Assembly, study and continuing education time, or sabbatical should be identified as work time and not vacation. If these activities require absence from church on a Sunday, time should not have to be made up in subsequent weeks. It is helpful to identify in advance what these events may be during the year. Listed below are some the professional activities that might be included in this category for your religious educator:

- meetings of district religious education teams or clusters
- district or Religious Education Conferences
- workshops and seminars for continuing education

- Renaissance modules
- LREDA chapter meetings and retreats
- LREDA Fall Conference
- Meadville-Lombard Winter Institute
- General Assembly
- Intensive or other graduate courses at Meadville/Lombard Theological School, Starr King School for the Ministry, or other theological schools or universities.

Compensation Guidelines

Compensation is defined as salary and housing (for ordained clergy). Benefits encompass a basic protection plan, including health insurance, disability insurance, life insurance, and provision for retirement. Professional expenses are also recommended for your religious educator.

Salary: The basic salary ranges for religious educators have been revised. Check the Appendix for the average Compensation Guidelines effective January 2004. A complete set of Guidelines are available on the UUA website.

Minimum Level: Generally, this level is the hiring zone for those new to the profession. In determining salary, you should consider several factors. They include skills, experience, relationships among internal compensation levels, and current salary. If the person hired is new to the profession, it is reasonable to give a starting salary within the lowest third of the salary range. However, if the new hire has significant experience and skills, the starting salary may need to be within the middle third of the salary range.

Midpoint Level: The middle third of the salary range is used for employees who are performing in the job to its full requirements. Employees are expected to have all of the requisite skills and experience to master the job fully.

Maximum Level: This segment of the salary range is used for high-performing employees and/or employees who have been in the job for a long time. Employees' salaries may be and probably should be advanced beyond the maximum level of the range under special circumstances, as deemed appropriate by individual congregations.

Other factors to be considered are

- length of service in a congregation
- length of service in the denomination
- relevant work/life experience
- academic experience
- progress in mastering the requirements of the position
- participation in programs for professional development
- adjustments to reflect cost-of-living changes

The compensation guidelines are designed for full-time service. The majority of religious educators serve in part-time positions and their salaries and benefits need to be prorated. Those congregations for which immediate adoption of the guidelines is not financially feasible but that wish to move toward them, are encouraged to develop a three- to five-year process for annual increments. Your district compensation consultant can provide more detailed information on compensation.

Basic Benefits: A basic benefits package must be the first item agreed upon in any negotiation of financial arrangements. Benefits should never be "bartered away" for higher compensation. A basic benefits package including health, life, and disability insurance are the responsibility of the congregation. Employee and employer share equally the payment of Social Security taxes (FICA). Part-time staff members should be provided with a similar benefits package, prorated proportionally as their service compares to full-time.

Professional Expenses: In most employment situations, reimbursable expenses include travel, equipment, books and periodicals, meetings with colleagues, workshop, course and conference registration and expenses, professional dues – in short, the costs of doing business. The employee is expected to pay

only his/her costs of personal living, not costs connected with employment. Religious educators are no exception. There is a correlation between performance as a religious educator and having adequate funds to do the job well.

Professional expenses should be included as a line item in the society's budget. They should be listed in such a way that they will not be considered salary or confused with salary. The professional expense budget should be determined prior to the establishment of a salary and should be updated annually. Professional expense requirements vary from congregation to congregation and region to region, with differing responsibilities, job descriptions, and other variables. It is necessary for religious professionals and congregations to establish a clear understanding of what professional activities will be covered by this line item.

Continuing professional education is essential for all religious education professionals to maintain and advance their skills and knowledge. They should be provided with at least one month per year (prorated for part-time) for continuing education that is not considered a part of vacation (taken in parts or as a whole). The continuing education program should be supported within the professional expense budget. This provision is especially vital when a congregation is hiring a person for a position that is expected to expand or there is an expectation that a level in the UUA Religious Education Credentialing Program. Be clear about what counts as work, vacation, and continuing education or professional development. See Useful Documents for a sample of how professional expenses can be itemized.

Retirement Plan: Employees working one thousand hours (including paid vacation) can be enrolled in the retirement plan after one year of employment. There is no waiting period for enrollment for previously employed religious educators who are already vested. All employees of a congregation must be enrolled at the same rate.

Vacation and Study Time: The UUA guidelines recommend that a minimum of one month of vacation time be provided annually for each full-time religious professional. Longer vacation periods are standard for religious professionals with intense schedules, those in multi-staff environments, and those who regularly work more than twelve units per week. The Committee recommends two months of vacation per year for religious professionals who take only one day off per week instead of the standard two days. We recommend that, on at least one Sunday a month, other staff or volunteers cover the responsibilities of the religious educator to allow the religious educator time for continuing education, professional development, or personal time.

Sabbatical: It is becoming more common practice to establish a sabbatical plan for all religious professionals, half-time or more. For full-time service, provide one month of sabbatical for each year of service, which can be prorated for part-time religious educators.

4. The Search

Confidentiality

It is important to be clear that information provided in the packets of applicants or during interviews, including the names of applicants, candidates who are interviewed, and any other information learned during the interviews must be held in the strictest confidence by the members of the search committee. At the same time, it is critical that the committee provide regular general progress reports and updates through the church newsletter; in special meetings; in inserts in the Sunday order of service or announcements to volunteers, children, and youth in the Sunday morning program; by personal contact; or by mail.

Interim or Acting Religious Educator

If there has been a previous religious educator, you may want to reflect on whether this new hire will be a temporary one until a permanent staff person can be found. The options most commonly considered are the interim or acting religious educator. While both have the same responsibilities during their service, we recommend that you not consider an interim religious educator for the permanent position. The role of an interim religious educator is much the same as that of an interim parish minister. An acting religious educator can usually be considered a candidate for the permanent position. Be aware that if you decide that the position is an interim position, you run the risk of losing a good candidate for the permanent position.

Applicants from within the Congregation

It is common practice for the congregation to hire someone from within the congregation as the religious educator. If the best candidate is a person who has been active in the religious education program, it is important that the prospective candidate, the search committee, and the parish minister discuss the potential changes that may occur if s/he becomes staff. Depending on the circumstances, there are advantages and disadvantages that should be carefully explored.

It may be an advantage because the person from within

- knows the congregation and the members of the staff
- understands the organizational system
- has some knowledge of Unitarian Universalism
- is familiar with the culture and structure of the religious education program
- knows the curriculum and the volunteers
- is likely to be more invested in the program and the people.

It may be a disadvantage if the person from within

- loses the benefits of church membership such as voting or serving on other committees
- is isolated from former peers in the congregation
- experiences changes in the relationship with the parish minister. For example, the parish minister may no longer be available to that person for pastoral care.
- experiences changes in personal relationships with members as a result of his/her new role as staff
- lacks objectivity about what needs to change or be improved
- experiences difficulty with being evaluated.

If the position is part-time, a discussion of how this person understands the new role is important. A clear distinction between paid staff time and what the staff person volunteers must be agreed to. It is best if the hired religious educator does not volunteer any time in the program of religious education.

Members of the Religious Education Committee and others in the congregation will need help in understanding the transition from the role and privileges of a member to the role and responsibilities of a staff member. A formal ceremony of some kind such as a service of installation or covenanting assists other members in accepting one of their peers as a professional staff member. As many of these agreements as seems feasible should be put in writing as part of the letter of agreement. After a careful processing of the

pros and cons, many who have been hired from within keep their membership status. Others choose to join the Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) or a nearby congregation if that is possible.

Advertise the Position

Design a job description for advertising the position that clearly and accurately reflects what your congregation is seeking in the religious educator and a plan for fairly compensating that person. See Section 5: Start as You Mean to Continue for more specific information about developing a job description. The job description should be accompanied by a cover letter that describes your congregation, its current staffing situation, and any other information that would increase the likelihood of interested people applying. Any unique or attractive aspect of the congregation such as support staff may be listed. Be sure you note the deadline for response, the name of the person from the Search Committee who will receive responses, answer questions, and accept candidates' packets. The final job description will be negotiated with the search committee and the final candidate at the end of the search process. See Useful Documents for help in developing a job description.

Design a Packet

The packet of information about your congregation should reflect as many dimensions of your congregational life as possible so applicants have a complete and accurate picture.
Here is a possible list of things to include:

- copies of the newsletter
- by-laws and the mission statement
- a letter from the parish minister
- a description of the vision for religious education
- description of the congregation's organizational structure
- current religious education program brochure
- other brochures or pamphlets
- descriptions of committees such as Membership, Adult Programs, Worship, or Social Justice
- orders of service from recent worship services
- sermons given on the theme of religious education and its role in spiritual growth
- photos of the staff, the building, and individuals at church events
- pamphlets, brochures, and maps of the local community

Carefully consider the pros and cons of inviting applications from within your own congregation and, if you believe there are possible candidates, begin by publishing a notice in your congregation's newsletter. Do not discount the possibility that there are educators in your congregation or larger community who could become *religious* educators. Since they already have many of the skills, abilities, and understandings, their development will be primarily in the skills required for working in a religious community and in learning about Unitarian Universalism. If hiring from within the congregation is not an option, take the following steps:

- Identify the geographic area from which a likely prospect might reasonably commute and make sure your advertising covers it.
- Send notices to nearby Unitarian Universalist churches, asking them to publicize your job offer to their membership.
- Publish a notice in your district or cluster newsletter.
- Send notices to nearby theological schools and their education departments.
- Send a notice to the District Office.
- Contact the District Religious Education Committee.
- Publicize your job opening on the UUA website and the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) website.
- Contact LREDA to distribute your notice to its mailing list.

- Publicize your job opening on the listserve of LREDA, lreda-l@uua.org; or the Lifespan Faith Development Staff Group, reach-l@uua.org.
- Contact the Office of Religious Education Credentialing which will forward it to the two electronic lists mentioned.

Screen the Applicants

It is the responsibility of the Search Committee to select the most viable candidates from the applications received. If applicants do not meet your qualifications, letters should be sent immediately expressing appreciation for the inquiries and indicating clearly that they will not be asked to interview. If a person from your congregation has applied but will not be interviewed, the chair of the Search Committee should plan to meet with or contact that person directly to thank her/him for applying.

Questions for the Candidates

You will learn a great deal about the candidate from the packet of materials submitted. The interview is an opportunity to see beyond the facts to style, personality, and ability to be responsive. We urge you to adapt questions so they are specific to your congregation. Some congregations have found it useful to ask candidates to submit their answers in writing prior to the interview. The following questions may elicit the most useful information:

- What is your understanding of the role of the religious educator in this congregation?
- What life experiences have been most helpful to you in religious education?
- What do you think is the optimal relationship between the parish minister and the religious educator?
- How have you supported families and intergenerational activities in your work?
- Describe how you manage to keep boundaries between your personal and professional lives?
- Describe a spiritual practice you engage in on a regular basis.
- What would you describe as the greatest strength you bring to this work?
- What would you identify as a challenge for you?
- What would you describe as your most creative effort in previous employment?
- Describe in general terms a difficult conflict you were able to resolve.
- Why do you want the job of religious educator in this congregation?
- What are your three main goals for your professional development?
- What plans do you have in place for accomplishing these goals?
- What hopes do you have for your future in religious education?

In addition to the questions above, it may be useful to develop some scenarios and do some role playing with the candidate. Developing your own based on experiences in your congregation or adapt the samples below.

Scenario 1. You have provided preliminary information about the upcoming Our Whole Lives program for junior youth in the newsletter and in a first-class mailing to all potential participants. In all communication you have indicated that the youth will not be able to participate unless a parent attends an orientation session. Two parent orientation sessions have been scheduled and were well attended. It is the first session of the class and the family whose youth has been a marginal participant in other activities and classes shows up at the first session and demands that the youth be allowed to attend the class. What do you do?

Scenario 2. The policy of the RE Committee is that the chair develops the agenda and mails it to the Committee and DRE a week before the meeting. For the last two meetings, the chair has been overwhelmed with other responsibilities and has not prepared the agenda. What do you do?

Some of the interview questions and the scenarios above were adapted from material provided by the First Unitarian Church of Orlando, Florida.

The Orange Coast UU Church of Costa Mesa, California, chose their top five questions from a longer list and used them when they interviewed their candidates. They chose from among the following:

- How do you plan to communicate with parents so that they feel informed and part of the program?
- What difference can you make?
- What strengths do you see in our program? Weaknesses?
- How do you handle a disruptive child or parent in the classroom?
- What do you see yourself doing in five years?
- What is your interest in adult RE?
- What are you most enthusiastic about?
- How would you describe your personal style?
- In what kind of supervisory situation do you work best?
- What is your experience with Unitarian Universalism?
- How do you define religious education?
- What is it about this job that interests you?
- Describe your strategy for recruiting volunteers.
- How would you integrate worship in the children's religious education experience?
- How would you take care of yourself as DRE to avoid burnout? What help would you need?
- What might get in the way of your doing a good job?
- What would you like to ask of us?
- Are there any things we didn't touch on that you would like to specifically bring to our attention?
- Why should we hire you?

Format for the Interview

Now that you have framed the questions, it is time for interviews with the most viable candidates. If you wish to have responses in writing prior to the interview, you will need to adjust your timetable to allow time for the Search Committee to read and reflect on the responses before meeting the candidate.

First contact may be done by phone with a visit and interview as follow-up. Each interview, including those by phone should follow the same format with questions asked in the same order by the same interviewer. It is critical that there are complete notes of the questions and the applicant's responses. If the candidate is new to the area, it is important to provide a tour of the town. You may want to have one member of the search committee take responsibility for this as well as giving a tour of the church building, particularly office space, places of worship, and accommodations for children and youth. If a candidate is coming from out of town, make arrangements for housing and travel to interviews.

In order to make the best use of the time of the Search Committee, it is wise to schedule two or three interviews on the same day, leaving at the very least a half-hour break between the candidates. At the conclusion of the final interview for the day, the Search Committee should review the applicants, record observations and impressions, note any follow-up questions that may need to be asked and assign members to make follow-up calls.

Identify the Final Candidate

The parish minister should be consulted at this point for his/her opinion. Then, at the conclusion of all the interviews, rank the candidates and assign a person to call the references for each one. The same questions should be asked of each reference, with the answers noted in writing. After the references are called, the Search Committee should hear the results and deliberate until there is consensus on the final candidate. While it is natural for a candidate to list as references those people with whom s/he has had successful relationships, it is wise to go beyond this step. Before extending an offer, we believe that you should consider a complete reference and background check. Advice on this important procedure is available from the Settlement Office in the Ministry and Professional Leadership staff group. If the results

are positive, the Search Committee should report its decision to the Board and obtain the necessary approval. Arrange for a congregational vote if that is a part of the protocol of your congregation.

After the approval of the Board, offer the job to the final candidate by phone, confirm her/his willingness to accept the job, arrange for a meeting to adjust the job description, and draft a letter of agreement or contract. Before a public announcement is made, all other candidates should be contacted by telephone to thank them for their interest and to let them know that a candidate has been selected and will be announced to the congregation. A follow-up letter should be sent within one or two days. If candidates have submitted packets, these should be returned immediately.

The next steps are important to the congregation and the final candidate:

- Write a letter from the Board and Search Committee to the congregation introducing the new religious educator.
- Plan an event that will provide an opportunity for children, youth, and adults to meet the candidate.
- Inform the new religious educator of the schedule of any reception or event that s/he is expected to attend.
- Be sure to assign a host/hostess for the religious educator and make any necessary arrangements. See Section 7: Useful Documents for an adjusted job description and letter of agreement.

5. Start as You Mean To Continue!

Adjust the Job Description

The Search Committee, in cooperation with the Board or its representatives, can review and make adjustments to the job description so that the document is accepted by all involved. If this is part-time employment, it is particularly important that the responsibilities listed can be accommodated in the agreed-to time of service to which all have agreed. Do not hire for part-time work and expect more than part-time service. It is wiser to plan for growth and increase in services when the congregation can afford them rather than to expect a religious educator to work for more than the designated hours.

If your congregation intends or expects that a position will eventually grow into one of greater responsibility, that understanding ought to be included in the job description to avoid misunderstandings at a later date. Good practice dictates clear, written job descriptions that are widely understood and agreed to by all parties. Make sure you give as realistic a picture of the job as possible. Too few hours for the job description will result in burnout and stifle growth. An over-inflated, idealistic, or unrealistic job description for a religious educator correlates directly with a shortened tenure.

Establishing Priorities

It is important to determine an order of priority for all religious educators but particularly important if you have decided on a part-time religious educator. In this way it will be clear what will be attended to first and which responsibilities will be handled, as time is available. It is wise to determine who will handle responsibilities for which there is not sufficient time allotted for the religious educator. The priorities should be specified in the job description so that there is no question about what will be done by others or left until later if the time for which the religious educator has been hired is reached and there are still tasks to be completed.

Letter of Agreement/Contract

This is a binding document to which the job description should be attached. Both the congregation and the religious educator are ethically bound to abide by the conditions of this agreement. Depending on the congregation and its resources, the following elements should be included:

- person or group to whom the religious educator is accountable
- nature of evaluations
- starting salary as well as the timing and method of increments
- amount of professional expenses
- amount paid for medical insurance, retirement, and any other benefits

- length of time the agreement is in effect. If this is an acting position it must be written into the contract whether this person will be considered for the permanent position. Common practice is that an interim remains for one year and then the contract can be renewed for a second year.
- time off: Sundays, vacation, professional study, continuing education, and sabbatical
- procedures for voluntary and involuntary departure
- agreement to abide by LREDA guidelines if LREDA member is hired
- expectations for relations with other professional staff
- working conditions such as nature of office space, computer, phone, office assistance, etc.

Evaluations

An appropriate evaluation process is a forward-looking, positive effort to examine the planning and work of a congregation with the aim of identifying and praising areas of strength and developing strategies for improvement. Ideally, lay people and the professional staff collaborate in performing the work of the congregation. In an effort to deepen the mutuality of our relationships and strengthen our collaborative efforts, it is wise to examine the process and the partners including professional staff, congregational lay leaders, and the congregation's membership. It is useful for the religious educator to create professional, personal, and program goals for ministry to the congregation that can be assessed and reported to the Board.

This is also an important project for the RE Committee to undertake each year and likewise report to the Board. This model and philosophy are reflected in the work of the *Assessing Our Leadership: Promoting Effectiveness in Congregational Leadership*, which includes UUA staff, district field staff, representatives of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association and the Liberal Religious Educators' Association. This publication is available from the Office of Professional Development in the Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group. You may also want to examine "Reviewing Your Congregation's Ministry, Ministers and Staff" in *The Congregational Handbook.*

It is good to evaluate your religious education program when

- you haven't done so for a while
- you want to see how the program fits with the mission or strategic plans of the congregation
- you have completed looking at some other aspect of how your church functions
- an annual review of other congregational programs takes place
- a significant number of new members have joined
- you wish to fine tune a successful enterprise
- you want to be sure you are in touch with the larger purposes of Unitarian Universalism

Unfortunately, congregations sometimes attempt to initiate an evaluation process of a staff person when members are unhappy. This response only exacerbates existing conflict. In these circumstances, congregations should consult with their district program consultant, district executive, or a LREDA good officer before beginning an evaluation process.

Great caution should be exercised in proceeding with an evaluation when

- the religious educator has not been informed in a timely fashion of perceived weaknesses grievances have been stored over time
- blame has been assigned for things not in the control of or designated as the specific responsibility of the religious educator
- support, time, and resources needed to do the job have not been provided to the religious educator
- mutual expectations and accountability have not been established at time of hiring
- the religious educator is viewed as an outsider to the process.

Covenants

A covenant can be used to answer several important questions about the relationship of the religious educator, the congregation, the minister, and the Religious Education Committee. This may be a simple process of putting into words what everyone already agrees to, or it may illuminate difficult issues

that need a structured process of resolution. The importance of a covenant is the mutual commitment of those involved to a quality religious education program. Information about the UUA Covenanting for Excellence in Religious Education program is available on the UUA website.

Covenanted relationships are a core part of our religious tradition. Covenanting is a practical way to develop religious leadership consistent with congregational polity and the specific needs and desires of a given congregation. Most small and mid-size congregations secure and develop religious education leadership from within their own membership. In these cases, covenants are especially suited to developing growth and learning agreements for congregations and religious educators with identified resources, mutual commitments, and support systems for the religious educators' professional growth.

Covenanting helps the congregation and the religious educator to outline their mutual hopes for the future and to specify how they may be realized. An important aspect of the covenanting process is that religious educators will have an opportunity to evaluate their training and experience in light of the religious education program's goals as shared by the religious educator and the congregation.

Specifics that might be included in a religious education covenant are statements of mutual hopes and expectations for the religious education program; an outline of a leadership development plan with identified resources; a support system for the religious educator; and reference to the job description, the hiring agreement, and shared responsibilities.

The goals of covenanting would be

- to begin a conversation between the religious educator and representatives of the congregation regarding their relationship and the religious education ministry
- to acknowledge present expectations of the congregation, the minister, and the religious educator for the religious education program.

The following are central to the religious education covenanting process:

- **Reflection** on the visions and goals of the religious education program by the congregation, minister, and religious educator prior to covenanting. The results of the small group and individual gatherings at the beginning of the search process are a good place to begin.
- **Mutual acceptance** by the congregation, minister, and religious educator of those elements or actions upon which the covenant will be based.
- **Accountability** by the parties to follow through on commitments.
- **Periodic review** to assess an existing covenant or to re-covenant as needs evolve, and to discuss how to gracefully make changes in the covenant.

Questions to be considered as you enter the religious education covenanting process include:

- **In addition to the religious educator, who are other parties to the covenant?** Parish minister? Governing board or representative(s)? Religious Education Committee chair? By what authority do they represent the congregation? Who may speak for the congregation with authority?
- **What situation, purpose, or relationship calls for this covenant?** Participants can articulate a connection with the congregation's ministry, mission, or purpose and specify the relationship between that and the religious education effort.
- **What are the mutual agreements or promises of this covenant?** Specific agreements and commitments can be articulated in detail. What actions will be taken by whom? In what time frame? In essence, what do the parties want from one another? What previous agreements may already be in effect? What new promises are being made?
- **What are the benefits to the parties involved, or the results intended?** These follow from the mutual agreements as stated above. Excellence in religious education is the overall aim of this process. Covenantal language around the relationship of the staff is a significant step in securing a congregation whose religious professionals share in the ministry to and with the congregation.
- **What will show that the covenant has been fulfilled?** What will be concrete outcomes that the parties will recognize? How will they be made known to all?
- **How and at what future dates will the covenant be evaluated?** A covenant's length will vary according to the practice and needs of the parties. After the initial establishment of a covenant, a

check-in after the first four or six months could be helpful. A review of a covenant every one to three years is appropriate.

DRE Relations Committee or a Committee on Ministry

There are differing models and names for this group, but the intention is to act as a support group for the religious educator. Possible responsibilities include

- Acting as a sounding board so that the DRE can discuss problems and frustrations candidly and in confidence
- Working on plans for continuing education and professional development
- Advocating for funding for professional development
- Providing an additional communication channel between the religious educator and the congregation
- Conveying feedback on performance and consulting on an appropriate response by the religious educator
- Acting as mediating body in the event of conflict involving staff and/or the congregation.
- Attending meetings of a group whose members represent support groups for all staff.

Be mindful that, if you have separate groups for each staff person, you should provide regular opportunities for all the groups to meet. No matter what name you give to the group, under no circumstances should it substitute for direct discussions between the DRE and other staff or members; or between the religious educator and children, youth, or adults of the congregation. Members of the congregation and staff are encouraged to speak directly with each other to pass on a concern, an idea, or a compliment.

The length of service on either of these groups should be long enough so members to get to know the religious educator. A general guide is to select two or three members from the congregation. That group could include a person chosen by the religious educator, one chosen by the Board from a list provided by the religious educator, and/or one person chosen by the DRE from a list of names suggested by the Board.

Public Ceremonies

It is becoming increasingly common for congregations to install newly hired directors of religious education, whether full-time or part-time. It is an opportunity to articulate the promise of new relationships and responsibilities. To involve the entire congregation in this ceremony can help support the notion that religious education is a ministry of the congregation and an inherently important part of the life of a congregation that is or seeks to become vital, healthy, and growing.

Religious educators have very generously shared what they have planned for services of installation and covenanting ceremonies. Contact settled religious educators in your district or check with the district executive or program consultant, or the Office of Religious Education Credentialing.

Liberal Religious Educators' Association

Encourage your religious educator to join LREDA, the Liberal Religious Educators' Association, which is an affiliate organization of the UUA. The categories of membership include Student/New DRE, Supportive, and Active. Members, whether full-time or part-time, are seen as engaging in ministry in the fullest sense, including inspiration, care, and service. Members are held to the highest standards and are bound to accept and abide by the by-laws, the Code of Professional Practices, and the guidelines. These are designed to provide guidance to liberal religious educators and the congregations they serve.

LREDA members are also entitled to the services of good officers who

- have received training in conflict management
- inform their local members of LREDA about good offices services
- welcome new religious educators and orient them to good offices services
- provide referrals when counseling is needed

- assist in a problem situations by gathering information, raising questions for consideration, sympathetic listening and counsel, developing communication processes, helping to identify causes and solutions
- Guide the grievance procedure if it is invoked.

It is wise to contact a good officer

- before an issue gets out of hand – when talking things over may resolve the situation
- when there are conflicts over contracts, lines of authority, unfulfilled agreements
- in matters of difficulty in collegial relationships
- when serious polarization has occurred and the grievance procedure needs to be invoked

Professional Development

Religious education professionals come to serve congregations from a wide variety of theological, educational, and life experiences. The Office of Religious Education Credentialing in the UUA Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group is available to work with individuals and congregations that are considering continuing education, professional credentialing, and vocational counseling. Referrals to workshops, seminars, and on-line learning experiences are possible for those religious educators seeking to deepen their own professional development. The Office of Religious Education Credentialing provides modest financial assistance for ongoing training. It is hoped that a congregation will provide adequate opportunities and financial support for the continuing education of its entire professional staff. The Office of Religious Education Credentialing and LREDA are resources for information about professional standards and recognition for various kinds of training and development. An important program of professional development and standards is the UUA Religious Education Credentialing Program. Participation in covenanting, the Renaissance Program, the Religious Education Credentialing Program and continuing education will provide incentives for achieving excellence in religious education. Congregations can then judge the growth of their religious educators and provide compensation that reflects that development.

As soon as you have hired a religious educator, be in touch with the Office of Religious Education Credentialing so that information about the person you have hired can be entered in the database. The database serves to identify religious educators new to the field and lets the Staff Group know where experienced religious educators have been hired. If your religious educator is new to the field, encourage him/her to become integrated into existing district support and resource systems as early as possible. Encourage participation in district- or cluster-sponsored workshops such as the "New DRE" workshops. These experiences will provide early, realistic understandings of the scope of religious education leadership, including attitudes, skills, and experiences.

The Renaissance Program consists of nine fifteen-hour experiential training workshops on basic religious education topics. The current topics are: Philosophy of Religious Education, Administration, Curriculum Planning, Worship for All Ages, Unitarian Universalist History, Unitarian Universalist Identity, Training Teachers, Ministry with Youth, and Multicultural Education. It also recognizes and gives credit for participation in Unitarian Universalist leadership schools and Jr. High Level Owl Training. Renaissance pins and letters of recognition have become an accepted form of religious education leadership currency and these achievements are often recognized at district events. The Renaissance Program is housed at Meadville Lombard Theological School. It is a recognized component of the Religious Education Credentialing Program. Contact information can be found in the Appendix.

The Religious Education Credentialing Program is a program administered by the UUA that is the outgrowth of the plan articulated in the June 2002 Report for the UUA Board from the Liberal Religious Educators' Association (LREDA) and Unitarian Universalist Association Joint Task Force on Professional Standards for Lay Religious Education Professionals. The Religious Education Credentialing Program is primarily designed for lay religious educators who are committed to Unitarian Universalist

religious education as a career, and desire professional development, recognition and adherence to standards, but do not feel called to the professional ministry. Participants can achieve status in the program at three different levels, based on academic achievement, integration of knowledge of lifespan religious education, length of professional experience, and personal and professional needs of the religious educator and his/her congregation. A participant may enter the program at any level. Requirements of a particular level do not need to be met on program entry, but rather on program completion at that level. Although they may do so, it is not expected that religious educators would progressively achieve all levels. Each level is meant to stand alone as a credential.

- Achieving **Level One Religious Educator** status will be appropriate for those in the beginning or middle stages of a career in religious education in a paid position of at least ¼ time (or equivalent) with a basic knowledge of and training in religious education.

- Achieving **Level Two Religious Educator** status will be appropriate for those in the beginning or advanced stages of a career in religious education in a paid position of at least ½ time (or equivalent) with a working knowledge of and training in religious education, and with at least a Bachelor's degree or equivalent.

- **Credentialed Religious Educator** status will be appropriate for those in a more advanced stage of a career in religious education in a paid position of at least ½ time (or equivalent) with a comprehensive knowledge of and training in religious education, and with at least a Master's degree or equivalent, and graduate-level academic credit (or equivalent) in specific subject areas pertinent to UU religious education leadership.

- **Program requirements:**
  To apply to the program, a religious educator will submit a Statement of Intent, including a short statement of professional aspirations, a resume, and a set of endorsements attesting to the applicant's suitability to a career in religious education.

  To qualify for achievement of a program status, a participant will submit documentation of academic and professional experience and completing the requirements of a reading list, a portfolio that reflects understanding and accomplishment in the many areas of religious education leadership, a brief statement that demonstrates the ability to articulate a personal religious philosophy, and recommendations from persons familiar with the participant's professional achievement. Also, a participant must establish a relationship with a mentor through the LREDA Mentoring Program. To achieve and retain their program status, all participants must adhere to the rules and policies established by the Religious Education Credentialing Committee. Contact information for this program can be found in the Appendix.

A **minister of religious education** meets the educational standards as established and evaluated by the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee. S/he is required to have a master of divinity degree or equivalent, specific graduate work in areas of education and religious education; complete a clinical pastoral education program; and fulfill a ministerial internship or its equivalent. Contact the Office of Ministerial Credentialing in the Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group.

Summary

1. As You Begin

This guide makes the **assumption** that you are looking for a non-ordained religious educator to work half-time or more. If you seek a Minister of Religious Education, contact the Settlement Director in the Ministry and Professional Leadership staff group.

Support for the search process is available from program consultants, the Office of Religious Education Credentialing, district executives and compensation consultants through your district office.

In order to **gather data,** it is wise to contact a range of individuals and random and focus groups from among the members of your congregation. Their views should be solicited both in the analysis and mission/vision work.

All **resources** mentioned in the text are available to assist congregations.

The Board should prepare a **long-range financial plan** for fairly compensating a religious educator along with an operating **budget** to support the work of the Search Committee, which may include costs of photocopying, mailing, travel, room and board for candidates, congregational meetings, etc.

The congregation should first develop a **mission statement** followed by a **vision for religious education** that will inform all subsequent steps in the search. If these statements are already developed, review them before going forward.

Conduct an **analysis of the current situation** in order to identify factors both within the congregation and without that may influence your future.

Determine when you want the religious educator to begin, and **establish a flexible timeline** for all the steps required in the search process. Develop a contingency plan in case a suitable candidate is not found in the original time frame.

Members of the **Search Committee** can be appointed by the Board or elected by the congregation after nomination by the Board. Be sure there is clarity about who has **final hiring authority.**

2. Assessment

If this is the **first religious educator** to be hired by your congregation, it is important for lay leadership and current staff to identify their own responsibilities and those that would more reasonably be taken on by a paid religious educator.

In **filling a vacated position,** it is useful to arrange for an exit or transition interview for the previous employee and the group to whom s/he was accountable.

A congregation must determine whether to hire for **full-time or part-time service** by identifying the religious education leadership needs and assuring that it can fairly compensate the religious educator for the time established. Too few hours for the responsibilities causes burnout and stifles growth.

Identify and prioritize the qualities and **characteristics of the religious educator** that your congregation believes will best meet the needs of your congregation. No one candidate is likely to possess all of these, but knowing the top priorities is important for the purpose of interviewing candidates.

The question of accountability is a sensitive one and requires careful thought and language. Several successful models of **accountability** are suggested.

3. Financial Responsibilities of the Congregation

To Sustain the Living Tradition provides the philosophy behind the strong recommendation of the UUA Board and a vote at the 1995 General Assembly for fair and just compensation of all church staff, including religious educators. Compensation consultants are available in all districts.

Units are an alternative to hours in measuring the service of a religious educator. Be sure to include professional development and continuing education when measuring service.

Compensation guidelines recommend that salary, benefits, partial payment of Social Security, enrollment in the UUA retirement plan after one year at one thousand hours per year (including vacation), and professional expenses are the responsibility of the congregation.

There are three **salary** ranges identified in addition to provisions made for merit increases. Actual figures are based on the size of the congregation, and the credentials and/or experience of the religious educator employed full-time and can be prorated for part-time service

A basic **benefits** package should not be considered compensation. A retirement plan is recommended for those new to the profession. Previously employed religious educators may already be vested in the plan. All employees enrolled in your congregation should be enrolled at the same percentage. All religious professionals require a professional expense budget that is considered a cost of doing business. One month of vacation per year is recommended with time for continuing education considered separate from vacation. We recommend that you establish a sabbatical plan for full-time and some part-time religious educators at the time of hiring.

4. The Search

The Search Committee must conduct its work with strict **confidentiality** while at the same time providing general progress reports and updates to the congregation.

Decide whether to hire an **interim or acting** religious educator. We do not recommend considering an interim for the permanent position, but an acting religious educator may apply for the permanent position.

There may be an applicant from **within the congregation**. Consider carefully the possible advantages and disadvantages both for the congregation and the candidate.

Develop a realistic job description and cover letter to **advertise the position** so that you have the widest choice of applicants. Take advantage of district networks, the UUA and LREDA websites, LREDA mailing list, and the electronic listserves of the Lifespan Faith Development Staff Group and LREDA. The Office of Religious Education Credentialing can also provide assistance although it does not have placement services for non-ordained religious educators.

Design a packet of information that reflects as many elements and as much information about your congregation as possible.

Screen the applicants and choose the most viable ones for an on-site interview.

Develop questions for the candidates that go beyond the facts to such things as personal style, personality, and responsiveness. Some congregations find it useful to have the candidates submit answers in writing prior to the interview.

The **format for the interview** should be the same for each of the candidates and include careful notes taken during each one. Interviewing candidates requires the strictest confidence so that names of applicants are not revealed to the congregation.

When the Search Committee has identified the **final candidate**, conduct a complete background and reference check, get any necessary approval from the Board, and then introduce the new religious educator to the congregation.

5. Start as You Mean to Continue!

In consultation with your new religious educator, **adjust the job description** so that it is mutually agreeable to all involved. If this is a part-time position, make sure the responsibilities agreed to can be handled in the time allotted.

Whether the position is full-time or part-time, be sure to establish an **order of priority** for any tasks or responsibilities listed in the job description.

The **letter of agreement** or **contract** should be written so that there is no ambiguity about any of the elements.

Ideally the congregation and staff collaborate in the ministry of religious education. Determine a plan for **evaluation** that examines the process and the partners: professional staff, congregational lay leaders and committees, the congregation's membership, and its multiple ministries and programs.

Covenanting involves statements of mutual hopes and expectations. It is not a job description but a document for relational promises between professional staff and the congregation. In some congregations, religious professionals develop covenants around their working relationships. A program of Covenanting for Excellence in Religious Education is available through the UUA.

A support group, sometimes called a **DRE Relations Committee** or a **Committee on Ministry**, should be appointed to meet regularly with the religious educator.

An effective way to mark the beginning of the new relationship between your religious educator and the congregation is to arrange for a **public ceremony.** This can take the form of a covenanting ceremony or a ceremony of installation.

Encourage your religious educator to become a member of the **Liberal Religious Educators' Association (LREDA).** If s/he already belongs, it is important for the congregation to be familiar with and follow the LREDA guidelines.

It is imperative, both for the personal competence of the religious educator and the effectiveness of the program, that there be ongoing opportunities, time, and financial assistance available for the religious educator's continuing education and **professional development.** Information about the UUA program of Religious Education Credentialing can be found on the UUA website and through the Office of Religious Education Credentialing.

Useful Documents

Survey or Questionnaire for Analysis
You may want to begin with a survey using some of the questions below followed by a series of meetings using any one of the models suggested. Use the questions that seem most appropriate for your situation or develop ones that are more suitable for your specific situation.

Creating a Vision/Mission for Religious Education Based on the Overall Mission of the Congregation

Large Groups
1. Post four large pieces of newsprint with each of the questions found below posted on a separate sheet.
2. Have several markers in different colors for individual group responses. Use a dark color for group recording.
3. Post the congregation's mission statement prominently in the room or have a copy for each person.
4. Break the group into triads. This part is not a conversation but a series of questions and short answers written down by the recorder exactly as the person answers.
    One person is an interviewer and asks the question exactly as it is written below.
    One is interviewed and briefly answers each question
    One is the recorder, who writes down exactly what each person says in response.
5. Rotate the roles so that each person interviews, is interviewed, and records.
6. The Interviewer asks:
    What do you want from the religious education program?
    What talents do you want to give to religious education?
    What do you want religious education to mean to the church?
    How does religious education fit in to the larger mission of our congregation?
7. Each triad reads in turn the responses of their group and decides on a best answer, which is then written on the newsprint in the assigned color.
8. Using the newsprint material as raw material for the vision statements, each individual then writes a one-sentence vision/mission statement that expresses his/her view on the reason for the existence for religious education in the congregation.
9. People pair up and, using what they have just written, create one unified vision statement.
10. Each pair joins another pair, and the four-person group creates a unified statement.
11. Each group of four joins another group, and the eight-person group writes a final statement.
12. Everyone looks at the final statement and using a different colored marker, each person underlines what they like and adds what is not there.
13. Using the final statements of the previous groups as the basis, write a final statement.
14. One Final Look!
    Is our vision related to our mission?
    Does our vision for religious education reflect who we are as a congregation?
    Have we identified who is included in our vision?

Small Groups

This process involves meeting in small groups of ten to twelve. These may be homogeneous based on committee affiliation, age, longevity in the congregation, or those identified by a particular area of interest. All meetings should begin with a reading of your mission statement and follow a format like the large group format, which employs pairs and whole group discussion with results recorded on newsprint.
Use the following questions:

- What do you see as the purpose of RE?
- How does the RE vision/mission fit in with the mission of our church as a whole?
- What are the strengths of our program?

- What do we want to add and improve upon?
- What would you like to read in the paper about our religious education program?
- Is Sunday morning the only time for religious education? What other possibilities are there?

Or:

- How would you define religious education?
- What attracts you most about the current program of religious education?
- What insights do you have as a result of your experiences with children, youth, and adults?
- Reflect on what you know about the history of the RE program in this congregation.
- What is your view of the optimal relationship between/among the professional staff?
- What role does religious education have in fulfilling the mission of our congregation?
- What contributions can you make to fulfill the congregation's mission?
- What changes do you think would strengthen the program of religious education?
- What would it take to realize the dreams and improvements you envision?
- Taking into consideration your responses to the questions above, what would be your vision for religious education in this congregation?

Questions for Focus Groups

Religious Education Committee

- What do you think is the scope of religious education in our congregation?
- In what ways do you see your RE Committee work as a ministry of the congregation?
- Reflect on what you know about the history of the RE program in this congregation.
- Describe your relationship with the parish minister or other staff as it relates to the RE Committee.
- Where does religious education fit in the mission of our congregation?
- What can you do to accomplish the mission of the congregation?
- Taking into consideration your responses to the questions above, how would you articulate your vision for religious education in this congregation?
- What would it take to realize the dreams and improvements you envision?

Professional Staff: Parish Minister, Music Director, Youth Director or Minister

- How does your ministry in this congregation relate to religious education?
- How does it support or complement your work?
- What insights do you have as a result of your experiences with children, youth, and adults?
- Reflect on what you know about the history of the RE program in this congregation.
- Describe your hopes for a professional relationship with the religious educator of your congregation.
- Where does religious education fit in the mission of our congregation?
- What contributions can you make to accomplish the mission of our congregation?
- Taking into consideration your responses to the questions above, how would you articulate your vision for religious education in this congregation?

Youth

- How long have you been a part of this congregation?
- How often do you participate in the program of religious education?
- Are you an active participant in the youth group?
- What do you like best about being part of the religious education program?
- What contributions do you make to the program of religious education?
- How would you describe your understanding of a religious educator's position?

- What would you like to add to the program?
- Describe the ways this congregation values children and youth.
- What changes do you think would strengthen the ministry of religious education?
- What would it take to realize the dreams and improvements you envision?

Children

- What do you look forward to when you come to our society or fellowship?
- Describe ways in which the adults and older youth show that they think you are important to the congregation.
- Describe the ways in which you contribute to this congregation.
- What opportunities are there for you to participate in worship services?
- Name a few important things you have learned about being a Unitarian Universalist.
- What are some things that you do that show that you have learned important things from your congregation?
- What changes would you like to make to strengthen religious education in your congregation?
- Describe how your family supports your congregation.

Sharing Responsibility

Each participant checks the tasks s/he thinks are the primary responsibility of the religious educator and which such as the Religious Education Committee, the parish minister, or other volunteers, would act as support. Feel free to create a list that reflects the specific tasks that need to be accomplished in your setting. After all have participated, develop a master sheet and tally all responses. Review and negotiate areas of controversy. Check for understanding and agreement among all parties. A general rule is that a full-time religious educator will have responsibility for overseeing most of the areas, which does not mean s/he will actually carry out all of them.

P: Primary Responsibility **S**: Support

Areas of Responsibility	**Religious Educator**	**Parish Minister**	**RE Committee**	**Other Volunteer/ Staff**
Philosophy				
• Formulate program goals				
• Design the program				
• Create a welcoming and nurturing learning environment				
• Review and obtain curriculum resources				
• Evaluate the program				
Communication				
• Write weekly newsletter material				
• Greet and welcome newcomers and visitors				
• Publicize the program				
• Develop the yearly brochure				
• Design yearly publicity calendar for groups				
• Provide counseling and pastoral care				
Volunteers				
• Recruit group leaders for program				
• Select a youth advisor				
• Orient volunteers to teaching				
• Provide ongoing support for volunteers				
Worship and Special Events				
• Oversee children's chapel				
• Oversee youth worship				
• Oversee intergenerational Worship				
• Oversee adult Worship				
• Plan special events and celebrations				
Administration				
• Purchase and maintain supplies and equipment				
• Keep registration records up-to-date				
• Manage the religious education database				
• Keep financial records for the RE Committee				
• Keep up-to-date attendance information				

- **Others?**

Prioritizing Responsibilities

Directions:
1. Rank all areas of responsibility in order of importance to your program.
2. Mark the units/hours required for each expectation on a monthly basis.

Areas of Responsibility	Full-time 12 units	Half-time 6 units	Less than Half-time Approx.3 units
___ Reviewing, planning and preparing curricula			
___ Recruiting, developing, and supporting volunteers			
___ Keeping the religious education budget, expenses, files, and records current			
___ Meeting with the minister, staff, religious education committee, governing board, etc.			
___ Developing and presenting worship for children and youth			
___ Planning celebrations and intergenerational events			
___ Attending district and area religious education conferences and workshops			
___ Maintaining resources, supplies, and equipment			
___ Supporting and assisting youth programming			
___ Offering parent education and support			
___ Advocating for and publicizing the religious education program through the newsletter and other means			
___ Providing leadership for goal-setting and the development of a philosophy of religious growth and learning			
___ Preaching			
___ Leading adult education courses			
___ Designing and pursuing a program of professional growth			

Elements of the Job Description for Advertising

Name and Address of Congregation

Size of Congregation
Size of Religious Education Program

Title of Position: Make it descriptive of the functions and role within the congregation. Titles commonly used include coordinator of religious education, director of religious education, director of religious growth and learning.

Time Frame: Will it be a full-, half-, or less than half-time position? Units are now the standard terminology recommended for describing time frames. You may wish to use both units and hours.

Goal: Briefly state the overall purpose of the position as it relates to your congregation's mission.

Statement of Accountability: In the organizational structure, to whom does the employee ultimately answer? Will there be a supervisory body or person? How frequently and in what manner will the employee report?

Responsibilities: Describe the categories and population for which the person in this position will have responsibility. Be sure to include only what can be accomplished realistically within the time frame of the position as you have designed it and for the compensation that has been designated.

Experience, Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities: State the kinds of experiences, academic background, knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to do the job you want done. This is especially important when advertising the position. Be as clear as you can about what you are seeking.

Compensation:

Salary: If you do not wish to state a specific figure, indicate a range and whether it meets the guidelines of the UUA.

Benefits: Optional benefits may be vacation, insurance, and retirement. Specific information on benefits is usually written in the hiring agreement.

Professional Expenses: These are non-taxable funds to be used by the religious educator for such things as continuing education workshops or courses, professional organization conferences, General Assembly, travel, and books and periodicals.

Vacation

Study Time

Sample Job Description for Advertising

Name and Address of Congregation: First Unitarian Universalist Society, 15 Maple Avenue, Pleasantville

Size of Congregation: 275

Size of Religious Education Program: 95 children and youth

Title: Director of Religious Education

Time Frame: Half-time position: 6 units per week, including Sunday morning

Goal: To provide professional leadership for a religious education program for children and youth.

Statement of Accountability: The director of religious education is responsible to the Board of Trustees

Responsibilities
With the support of the Religious Education Committee,

- recruit, orient, and support volunteers.
- coordinate curriculum.
- provide leadership for goal setting and development of philosophy of religious growth and learning.
- advocate for and publicize the religious education program through the newsletter and other means of communication.
- maintain resources, supplies, and equipment.
- keep religious education budget, expenses, files, and records current, with support of office staff.
- plan special and intergenerational events with the parish minister.
- attend district and area religious education conferences and workshops.
- attend meetings of the Religious Education Committee, governing board, and church staff.

Experience, Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- experience or degree in a field related to education, human services, etc.
- knowledge of religious education philosophy and Unitarian Universalist curricula
- relational, organizational, administrative, communication, and volunteer management skills
- comfort with a wide variety of religious views, initiative, ability to encourage others

Compensation

Salary: $15,000 - $19,000, depending on skills and experience
Benefits: Medical insurance and retirement at 14%

Professional Expenses: $1500

Vacation: 14 days

Study Time: 10 days

Worksheet
Job Description for Advertising the Position

Name and Address of Congregation: _____

Size of Congregation: _____

Size of Religious Education Program: _____

Title: _____

Time Frame and Scope of Job (quarter time, half time or full time), number of children and youth

_____

Goal: _____

Statement of Accountability: _____

Responsibilities: (Use results of worksheet on priorities.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Experience, Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Needed:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Compensation

Salary or Salary Range: (Indicate whether it meets UUA Guidelines and what criteria will be used for range)
$_____ to $ _____

Benefits Offered:

$ _____ Health Insurance $ _____ Medical Insurance $ _____ Retirement at _____%

Professional Expenses: $_____

Vacation: _____days

Study Time: _____days

Job Description Adjusted for Specific Religious Educator

Director of Religious Education
6 units per week/52 weeks per year

PRIORITIES

Area of Concentration

Develop a series of parent education programs.

Sunday Mornings – 1 unit/3-4 hours

Present chapel service.
Greet visitors, parents before chapel.
Make additional contact during social hour.
Supervise and support child care and teaching teams as needed.

Weekdays/Evenings - 4 days/2 units or 4-6 hours per day

Attend staff meetings.
Meet with ministerial intern on a regular basis.
Plan children's worship.
Communicate with families, children, youth, RE Committee members.
Attend Board meetings.
Meet or speak regularly with RE Committee chair.

DISCRETIONARY – 4-5 units / 26 HOURS PER MONTH

Professional Growth and Continuing Education

Reading and reflection
Renaissance Modules
district Religious Education Committee and conferences
Liberal Religious Educators' Association (LREDA) Fall Conference
LREDA chapter meetings

Administration

In cooperation with RE Committee, chair develop agenda for RE Committee meetings.
Update brochure and current program calendar.
Keep church school records up-to-date.
Coordinate Teacher Recruitment.
Budget:
- Monitor line items.
- Provide financial statement to RE Committee.
- In cooperation with RE Committee chair, draft proposed budget.

Maintain library of resources for parents.

Worship

With parish minister and Worship Committee, plan intergenerational services.

Employment Agreement for a Full-Time Religious Educator

Agreement made between_____
(congregation)

and

_____
(religious educator)

1. The congregation, acting through its governing body, employs _____ as religious educator under the terms set forth in this agreement, who accepts such employment under the stated terms.
2. The religious educator will carry out the mutually agreed upon tasks as stated in the attached job
3. description. ***[NOTE:*** *This agreement should be made after the Religious Education Committee and the designated religious educator have agreed upon the specified responsibilities listed in the attached job description.]*
4. The religious educator is accountable to the Board of Trustees.
5. The religious educator will work in cooperation with the Religious Education Committee in matters of religious education program policy.
6. The congregation agrees to pay the religious educator a salary of $ _____per month, with the appropriate FICA deductions to be matched by the congregation.
7. The congregation agrees to pay the medical insurance for the religious educator in the amount of $ _____ monthly. Reasonable sick leave for short-term illness does not affect compensation. In the event of a long-term disability, the church agrees to continue compensation for 90 days, after which it is anticipated that long-term disability insurance benefits would become payable.
8. The religious educator is employed on an annual basis for 6 units per week.
9. The religious educator will have 8 Sundays off over the course of the year, inclusive of personal and professional responsibilities, 20 days of vacation per year, and 10 days for professional growth and continuing education. For long-term service, a sabbatical leave will be granted based on one month per year of service after five years.
10. Either party may terminate the employment agreement without cause by giving 90 days notice in writing.
11. The director of religious education will be responsible for administering the religious education program and the professional expense budgets. All budgeted expenditures submitted in writing, based on actual receipts, will be reimbursed promptly.
12. This agreement will be reviewed annually and will be in effect until amended or retired by the mutual consent of the parties to it.
13. The congregation and the DRE agree to abide by the code of professional conduct and guidelines set forth by the Liberal Religious Educators Association in the *Handbook for Professional Religious Educator*s.
14. Evaluations of personnel and programs based on mutually established goals will be conducted yearly through the personnel committee.

Signature of president of the congregation date

_____ _____

Signature of religious educator date

_____ _____

Compensation Guidelines for Non-Ordained Religious Educators

Ranges effective January 1, 2004

***To Sustain the Living Tradition* provides the background and the rationale for the compensation guidelines. Report recommendations can be found at**
www.uua.org/programs/ministry/finances/comp.html.

Notes for ranges effective January 1, 2004:
These ranges assume full-time service. They include salaries for non-ordained religious education professionals, but not benefits such as insurance premiums or retirement plan contributions. They also do not include professional expense allowances, or the employer's portion of social security or other payroll taxes.

These salary ranges are designed to be used in conjunction with the appropriate Geo Index for the community or city in which the congregation is located. The Geo Index information is the work of an independent economic research organization that ranks cities in the US based on cost-of-living and wage rate data. In the UUA salary recommendations, Geo Index 3 represents the national average. It is Geo Index 3 that is reported below. Geo Index 1 is twelve percent below the average, and Geo Index 2 is six percent below the average. Geo Index 4 is six percent above the average, and Geo Index 5 is twelve percent above. More information about the 2004 Salary recommendations can be found at www.uua.org/programs/ministry/2004salary.html.

GEO INDEX 3 – SALARY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NON-ORDAINED RELIGIOUS EDUCATORS

Number of Members	**Small (<150)**	**Mid Sized I (150-249)**	**Mid Sized II (250-499)**	**Large I (500-749)**	**Large II (750+)**
Religious Education	**Min Mid Max**	**Min Mid Max**	**Min Mid Max**	**Min Mid Max**	**Min Mid Max**
Credentialed Religious Educator	30,100 35,400 40,600	33,100 38,000 42,900	40,800 44,900 49,000	50,300 55,400 60,400	63,800 70,200 76,500
Level 2 Religious Educator	28,100 33,000 37,900	30,900 35,500 42,900	40,800 44,900 49,000	50,300 55,400 60,400	63,800 70,200 76,500
Level 1 Religious Educator	26,800 31,500 36,100	29,400 33,800 38,200	37,000 40,700 44,400	44,000 48,400 52,800	46,000 54,200 62,400
Religious Educator	25,500 30,000 34,400	28,000 32,900 37,800	32,500 38,200 43,900	38,000 44,700 51,300	46,000 54,200 62,400
Assistant DRE	N/A N/A N/A	22,100 27,700 33,300	25,000 31,200 37,400	27,100 33,800 40,600	31,200 39,000 46,800

Key: The Minimum is the amount that might be offered to a fully qualified employee.
The Midpoint is an arithmetic average of the Minimum and the Maximum.
The Maximum amount is understood as the goal for an exceptional employee whose outstanding performance over a number of years is recognized.

Capsule Job Descriptions for Non-Ordained Religious Educators

Credentialed Religious Educator
A lay person who will have completed the credentialing program requirements which include a

master's degree or equivalent, graduate work in UU history and polity, UU religious education history and philosophy, and learning theories and teaching methods; completed the reading list for this level; has at least three years' experience in paid RE leadership at least half-time or equivalent; and demonstrated competency in directing all aspects of UU lifespan religious education in and beyond the congregation.

Level 2 Religious Educator
A lay person who will have completed the program requirements which include a bachelor's degree or equivalent, learning experiences beyond 75 hours of training; completed the reading list for this level; has at least two years' experience in paid RE leadership at least half-time or equivalent; and demonstrated competency in directing most aspects of a UU lifespan religious education program.

Level 1 Religious Educator
A lay person who will have completed the program requirements which include at least 75 hours of training; completed the reading list for this level; has at least two years' experience in paid RE leadership at least quarter time or equivalent; and demonstrated competency in directing many aspects of a UU lifespan religious education program.

Religious Educator
A lay person who plans and administers a comprehensive religious education program, including recruitment, training and coordination of volunteers, and who serves as a resource in using UU religious education curricula and programs. For purposes of these salary recommendations, a Religious Educator is a person who is not participating in the Religious Educator Credentialing Program, but who is already employed in the leadership of a UU RE program. In establishing the appropriate salary, especially in this time of transition of the RE credentialing program, consideration should be given to years of experience as a RE Director, relevant academic achievement, and a demonstrated mastery of curriculum and program administration.

Assistant DRE
Assists in planning and implementing a religious education program under the supervision of a Director of Religious Education. May be a teacher or program facilitator.

A Message from the Office of Church Staff Finances

It is important that local societies recognize the value of their present Directors of Religious Education, even as they learn about this new continuing education and credentialing program. As religious educators and congregations discern whether they will participate in the program, congregations should continue to reward the contributions of the many strong DREs who are already in place, and pay them appropriately for their experience, dedication, and service.

We encourage governing boards to carefully assess the contributions being made by their religious educators. We hope you will commit to salaries and benefits that will attract exceptional individuals to religious education leadership and retain them for many years, as part of the larger effort to fairly compensate all church staff.

Contact the Office of Church Staff Finances for more details about compensation and salary recommendations.

Pacific Central District
Religious Educator Compensation Guidelines
for Small Congregations

15 hours per week is considered the minimum needed to direct even the smallest program.

September 2000

Religious Educator Professional Level	**Beginning Professional** Level	**Intermediate Professional** Level	**Experienced Professional** Level
Hourly pay (Less than 15 hrs.)	**$12-$15/hour***	**$15-$20/hour***	**$20-$25/hour***
Salary for 15 hours/week, 12 months/year**	**$9,360-$11,700**	**$11,700-$15,600**	**$15,600-$19,500**
Salary for 30 hours/week 12 months/year**	**$18,720-$23,400**	**$23,400-$31,200**	**$31,200-$39,000**
Professional Expenses	**$300 minimum for :** 2 Renaissance modules and LREDA dues	**$750 minimum for:** 2 Ren. modules, LREDA dues, District Assembly, partial payment of LREDA fall conference	**$1,000 minimum for:** LREDA dues and some of the following: Ren. modules, LREDA fall conference, District Assembly, GA
Benefits		**<u>For all religious educators:</u>** **1 Sunday off/month** **1 month paid vacation (2 weeks for 10-mo. position)** **<u>For 20-hour or more positions:</u>** **1 Sunday off/month** **1 month paid vacation (2 weeks for 10 mo. positions)** **health insurance** **disability insurance** **pension plan**	

*** To be adjusted for local cost of living. (Begin this research by contacting your local chamber of commerce).**
**** For a 10-month position, multiply salary figures by 0.83.**

RECOMMENDED RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STAFFING RATIOS

Compiled by Laurel Amabile, Lifespan Program Consultant and
Beth Williams, UUA RE Credentialing Director

January 29, 2004

According to Roy Oswald, author and Alban Institute consultant, the guidelines for congregation staffing breaks out in the following categories:

Staffing for Growth	=	One full-time program person for every 100 active members.
Staffing for Maintenance	=	Slightly less than one full-time program person for every 100 active members.
Staffing for Decline	=	Significantly less than one full-time program person for every 100 active members.

Active member refers to the average number of adults and children who attend worship or a religious education program throughout the year.

The above recommendations can be a guide in assessing religious education program staffing needs based on numbers of participants in the religious education program. Program size and scope, as well as ranges of ages served, must also be considered in order to adequately plan for staffing needs. A congregational mission of religious education program growth in size and deepening in content is assumed in the following recommendations.

Number of Children & Youth (Average Attendance)	**Staffing for Growth** (Weekly, assumes religious educator unless otherwise stated)
Fewer than 30	12 hours (3.5 units)
Between 30-59	24 hours (7 units)
Between 60-89	36 hours (10 units)
Between 90-149	40 hours (12 units) + 20 hours (6 units) Assistant
Between 150-200	40 hours (12 units) + 40 hours (12 units) Assistant
Over 200	40 hours (12 units) + 40 hours (12 units) Assistant + multiple part-time support staff

Add at least one unit per week each if religious education responsibilities include the following (at least 3.5 hours for each additional responsibility): curriculum development, child-care coordination, coming of age program, youth program coordination, strategic planning, intergenerational worship, small group ministry, campus ministry/young adult ministry, family ministry, adult education, pastoral care/counseling, interfaith or social justice activities, community-building activities, and any other responsibility, beyond routine religious education program administration, intended to support the growth and maintenance of a healthy congregation. **Total units may be adjusted up or down depending on the absence or presence of a strong pool of religious education volunteers.**

Part-time support staff positions may include: youth program/campus or young adult ministry coordinators/directors, administrative, resource, or clerical assistants. **Resources used for these recommendations**: Making Your Church More Inviting, by Roy Oswald, Alban Institute, 1992; The In-Between Church, by Alice Mann, 1998, Alban Institute; and RE Road Map, 2nd edition, by Cindy Leitner. 2003.

APPENDIX

Contact Information accurate as of January, 2004

UUA - All Staff Groups and Offices
Unitarian Universalist Association
25 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: 617/742-2100
Directory of extensions is available when this number is reached.
Website: www.uua.org
Links to all UUA departments, offices, and organizations, are available from the UUA website.

UUA Congregational Services
•To get assistance in developing a mission statement for your congregation
•To get the latest information about the covenanting process
Rev. Tracey Robinson-Harris, Director x462
trobinson@uua.org
www.uua.org/cde/

UUA District Services
•To identify your district program consultant and/or district executive:
Rev. Peter Morales, Director
pmorales@uua.org
Claudia Hull, Administrator of Congregational Services x370
chull@uua.org

UUA Lifespan Faith Development

- To find out about curricula and program resources, about the Reach listserve, and accessing the Lending Library:
  Judith Frediani, Director x373
  jfrediani@uua.org
  Adrianne Ross, Assistant to the Director x361
  aross@uua.org
  Barbara Gifford, Curriculum Development Assistant, Loan Librarian x371
  bgifford@uua.org

Ministry and Professional Leadership

- To contact the Office of RE Credentialing to find out more about Religious Education Credentialing Process, and financial assistance for professional development and the search process for lay professional religious educators:
  Rev. Beth Williams, RE Credentialing Director x417
  bethwilliams@uua.org
  Emily Farbman, RE Credentialing Assistant x418
  efarbman@uua.org
  www.uua.org/programs/ministry/reco/

- To contact the Settlement Office to find out about the search process for a minister of religious education:

Rev. John Weston, Settlement Director x409
Nancy Hezlitt, Settlement Assistant x408
settlement@uua.org
www.uua.org/programs/ministry/settlement/

- To contact the Professional Development Office to receive *Assessing Our Leadership:Promoting Effectiveness in Congregational Leadership* and *Congregational Self-Assessment Packet* (2001):
  Jean Hartman, Professional Development Assistant x437
  jhartman@uua.org

- To contact the Office of Church Staff Finances:
  Rev. Ralph Mero, Director x404
  rmero@uua.org
  Joyce Stewart, Retirement Plan Specialist x421
  jstewart@uua.org
  Tracy Withy, Insurance Plan Assistant x401
  twithy@uua.org

  The following resources are available at www.uua.org/programs/ministry/finances

  •Copies of the January, 2004 Compensation Guidelines for Unitarian Universalist congregations
  •Details of the benefit packages available, including pension plan, disability, life and dental insurance
  •District compensation consultants who are available to work with congregations at no charge
  •UUA Board recommendations based on *To Sustain the Living Tradition*
  •A long-range plan for fair compensation, contact your District Compensation Consultant

If you are a congregation of 150 or fewer, contact
Pacific Central District Office
6536 Telegraph Ave., #C-102
Oakland, California 94609
(510) 601-1437
pcd@pcd-uua.org

Renaissance Program
Rev. Frances Manly, Program Director
renprogram@aol.com
716/837-9230
www.uua.org

Liberal Religious Educators' Association (LREDA)
- To find information about membership, resources, and services of this professional organization:

Shannon Hawkins, LREDA Administrator
PO Box 691254
San Antonio, TX 78269
lreda@uua.org
www.uua.org/lreda
.

Resources

The Handbook for Professional Religious Educators

Available through Liberal Religious Educators' Association and
through LREDA website: www.uua.org/lreda

The Congregational Handbook, Third Edition
Edited by Lawrence X. Peers, UUA 1995
Available through UUA website: www.uua.org/cde/handbook/

To Sustain the Living Tradition
Available through Office of Church Staff Finances, Ministry and Professional Leadership

Philosophy Making: A Process Guide
Elizabeth Anastos and David Marshak
Available through RE Loan Library, Lifespan Faith Development

Assessing Our Leadership (2001)
Available through Office of Professional Development, Ministry and Professional Leadership