

Fund for UU Identity-Based Ministries

May 19, 2023

Name and Purpose:

The Unitarian Universalist Association (“UUA”) has created the *Fund for UU Identity-Based Ministries* (the “Fund”) to provide a foundation of support for the UUA’s annual grants and financial commitments to UU organizations external to the UUA which are focused on creating space and ministry for UUs with marginalized identities.

Distributions from the Fund shall be used to provide financial support to UU identity-based organizations that serve communities that have been historically marginalized in the UUA and in society at large. This includes UUs who are Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Nonbinary and Queer (LGBTQ+), disabled, and more. The groups that offer these ministries change over time. New groups start and others sunset over the years. Therefore, the Fund is created to help the UUA fulfill existing or future commitments that that UUA may make with identity-based ministry organizations.

Background and Context:

Recognizing the importance of identity-specific community to support Unitarian Universalists who have identities that have been historically marginalized or divested from in Unitarian Universalism, the UUA has spent the last several years building stronger relationships with UU identity-based ministries. This includes creating separate Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with multiple identity-based organizations. Historically, the UUA’s support for UU identity-based organizations, including grants, direct operating funding or staff support has been inconsistent, often due to budget fluctuations. With the work to put in place Memorandums of Understanding, the UUA is embarking on longer term, steady financial commitments to UU identity-based ministries. These agreements provide for a transparent and durable mutual commitment between the UUA and these communities. The UUA understands these investments and agreements as part of our commitment to live into the recommendations of the 2020 Commission on Institutional Change report *Widening the Circle of Concern*. The report’s recommendations regarding restoration and reparations specifically call on the UUA to ensure “continued funding for spaces that allow marginalized people to survive” within UUism.

Source of Funding:

In 2021, the UUA’s Beacon Press had a historic year in book sales, largely due to the success of *White Fragility* - success that also translated to larger sales for many Beacon books. As part of the 2021 financial agreement between the UUA and Beacon Press, the UUA received a portion of these record surpluses, with an understanding that these funds could not be used to fund basic operations of the UUA. This restriction was established to discourage undue UUA reliance on Beacon’s financial success and to

avoid pressure on Beacon to create surpluses. Additionally, the UUA feels it important to target these proceeds to reparative efforts within Unitarian Universalism. Therefore, the UUA Board of Trustees has allocated one million dollars from the UUA's FY2021 dividend from Beacon Press to the Fund.

Guidelines for Granting and Distribution

At the time of the establishment of this fund, annual distribution would be less than half of the UUA's current commitments to outside identity-based organizations. We do not anticipate that the Fund would provide 100% of the UUA's financial commitment to identity-based ministry organizations. The Fund is to ensure a basic level of income to support the UUA's commitments to outside organizations.

To receive ongoing multi-year funding, organizations must have a current memorandum of understanding or other funding agreement in place approved by UUA Executive Leadership. The UUA will not accept unsolicited grant applications for "Fund for UU Identity-Based Ministries" funds. Decisions regarding financial support for outside organizations are made through the UUA's regular budget process and are outside the purview of this document.

The UUA retains the right to make special distributions from the Fund aligned with the purposes of the Fund, and in accordance with procedures for normal UUA financial authorizations.

Fund Management Guidelines

Contributions to the Fund will purchase units in the Unitarian Universalist Common Endowment Fund and will be invested in keeping with the established policies of the UUA as adopted from time to time by the Board.

The Fund shall be classified as a UUA Board-restricted fund. The balance of the Fund may be reduced below the value of the amounts contributed to the Fund by market losses and by distributions, but under no circumstances may the value be reduced below 50% of the Fund's value on July 1 of any fiscal year, without explicit approval of the UUA Board of Trustees.

The UUA Board of Trustees may from time to time update this governing document as needed to align with the purposes and intent of the Fund. The UUA's administrative leadership may from time to time update this governing document to clarify administrative aspects of the document. Any updates from the administrative leadership must be reported to the UUA Board of Trustees.