



## **General Counsel for the Unitarian Universalist Association**

### **Request for Proposals for Legal Services – May 2023**

*The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) is in search of legal representation through outside counsel to act as General Counsel.*

The UUA is the central organization for the Unitarian Universalist (UU) religious movement in the United States. Our faith is diverse and inclusive. The UUA's 1000+ member congregations are committed to principles that hold as sacred the worth and dignity of each person, the need for justice and compassion, the right of conscience, and respect for the interdependent nature of all existence. Individual member congregations are legally independent, call or hire their own ministers and staff, and own their own property.

The UUA's mission is to:

- Equip congregations for vital ministry;
- Support and train leaders, both lay and professional; and
- Advance UU values in the world

In addition to its direct work to resource, support and partner with UU congregations and organizations, the UUA is engaged in the following industries and areas of work:

- Professional credentialing
- Conference and meeting planning
- Publishing
- Curriculum development
- Advocacy and justice organizing
- Health insurance and benefits systems
- Investment management
- Philanthropy

The UUA is incorporated in Massachusetts and holds 501(c)3 status as a religious nonprofit. Under the UUA's governance system, the UUA's Common Endowment and Employee Benefits Trust (Health Plan) hold status as separate legal entities. The CEO of the UUA is the President, elected for a six-year term by delegates of member congregations.

#### **Role**

The UUA's General Counsel is appointed by the President and works directly with the Executive Vice President. Appointment is expected to take place in July 2023.

## **Scope of Services**

The following services may be required, as directed by the Executive Vice President:

- Provide general legal advice to senior UUA leadership, including reviewing any legal actions in which the UUA is named as a party
- Review legal and corporate agreements, prepare and execute corporate local filings, and engage and negotiate with other entities with whom the UUA may make legal agreements
- Review and assist in drafting amendments to the UUA Bylaws; render opinions interpreting the UUA Bylaws
- Attend the UUA General Assembly annually during the third week of June
- Review contracts for services
- Review amicus curiae briefs the UUA seeks or is asked to join
- Make referrals to appropriate local attorneys as needed when the UUA must file in another state, or requires localized representation for staff or volunteers
- Act as a liaison to congregations and other UU entities on legal issues

The UUA also uses legal services in the following practice areas: labor/employment, securities, intellectual property, real estate, trusts and estates, taxation and insurance. Some of these services may be provided by the General Counsel's firm, some by other firms with whom the General Counsel is expected to work collaboratively. The General Counsel will review any new legal representation agreements.

## **The Mission and Values of the Association**

The Unitarian Universalist Association is a progressive and historic religious denomination. UUA staff members and legal representatives are expected to perform their duties in accordance with the UUA's values, principles and mission. In particular the following points, drawn from the Seven UU Principles, are of particular importance for the UUA's organizational culture:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every human being: We affirm the need for a human-centered workplace that allows our diverse staff to flourish. We also understand that our wider culture and society oppresses and denies human dignity, and we seek to counter the effects of that oppression in our hiring and workplace culture so that each person feels whole and valued.
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations, and the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all: We speak openly and publicly of our support for social and political issues, including LGBTQ equity, racial justice, climate justice, gender equity, and reproductive justice.
- The interdependent web of existence: We recognize that the liberation of all people is interwoven, and we work to counter patriarchy, white supremacy, colonialism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, environmental exploitation, and other interrelated systems of marginalization.

## Requirements

- Must be admitted to the Massachusetts Bar.
- At least 7-10 years of professional experience; experience with nonprofit corporation law is preferred.
- Familiarity with state and federal laws around religious practice and freedom, constitutional protections, tax status of religious entities, and civil rights; broad legal experience is of particular value, since the UUA encounters a range of legal considerations.
- Prior professional experience with and/or personal connection to Unitarian Universalism is valuable. Must be supportive of the mission, vision and values of the UUA, including its commitments to anti-racism, anti-oppression, multiculturalism, gender and LGBTQ equity.
- Understanding of issues around anti-racism, anti-oppression, and multiculturalism; work or lived experience with Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) and disabled communities is valuable.

The UUA operates in a range of industries and jurisdictions, and is often engaged in current values-based social and cultural issues which may be at the forefront of the dynamic legal landscape. We seek a General Counsel who can help the UUA navigate these challenges faithfully, addressing appropriate risk to the institution while also exploring new or emerging legal perspectives that align with the UUA's closely held beliefs.

### **To submit a proposal for legal services:**

Proposals can be emailed to [evp@uua.org](mailto:evp@uua.org). Proposals are requested by May 31, 2023.

Submit a proposal that includes the following elements:

- Cover letter
- Description of relevant legal experience and licensure for lead attorney(s) and any other attorneys expected to provide legal services
- Description of the attorney's firm and practice
- Cost of services (hourly rates and whether a retainer will be required)