

ENDOWMENT POLICY OVERVIEW

Every grant giving organization needs to have some policy or guidelines as to its grants, giving guidance as to what it is looking for and what it can or will consider. The NTUUC Endowment has been in operation for over ten years and certain policies have evolved.

First and foremost the Endowment is limited by its operating rules to giving grants to the member congregations of NTUUC. It cannot make grants outside of this limited group.

Other policies have evolved. One basic policy that the committee has always followed is that, for several reasons, it does not consider grants to cover budget shortfalls. First of all, every member congregation has a budget shortfall of some amount. Every congregation has programs that they would like to pursue if they had more revenue and must limit what they can do. It would be unfair to single out one congregation to cover their budget shortfall and not all the others. And there is not enough money to cover the deficits for all the congregations. Moreover, covering a budget deficit would just postpone dealing with the problem. The same problem would show up the following year if not dealt with and the endowment cannot be expected to keep covering ongoing deficits.

The Endowment has always looked for definable projects within the framework of promoting growth of the congregation or Unitarian Universalism in North Texas. Grants have gone to buy audiovisual equipment, install new air conditioning, renovate restrooms to be handicapped accessible, etc. In each case the committee looks for a clearly defined project, a fixed price, a time frame, and any matching contribution from the congregation. While not required, a matching payment of some amount shows commitment of the congregation to this project.

The Endowment has also given grants to cover salaries, but always for a new hire to be added to the staff, with the salary and other costs laid out in the proposal, together with any matching money from the congregation. And, above all, a plan to take over the full cost by the congregation in future years. It is unfair to hire a person and then fire them at the end of the year because the congregation cannot get another grant, and the benefit of that one year would then be lost. The Endowment looks for the grantee to put up part of the cost the first year, take a much larger part the second year, and cover all no later than the end the third year.

The Endowment has also adopted a policy of asking for a report from the grantee as to the outcome and results. This helps the committee to analyze what works and what doesn't in evaluating future grants.

The Endowment also looks to past grants to assure that each congregation is getting a fair share over time.