Employee Handbook

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames

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Welcome

Welcome to the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames (“UUFA”). We are glad to have you as a member of our staff and hope you will enjoy working for the congregation and contributing to our liberal religious community.

Working together, we will help to ensure that the administrative, operational and other needs of the congregation are met. Together, we will work to fulfill the UUFA mission and vision within the larger context of the Unitarian Universalist movement.

This handbook is not a contract and can be modified or changed at any time.

If you have any questions or suggestions concerning information in this handbook, please feel free to contact your supervisor or the minister, or a member of the Executive Leadership Team.

Again, welcome to the team!

Congregation Mission, Vision, Covenant and History

Our Mission:  
(adopted November 13, 2016)

Our Vision:  
(adopted December 10, 2017)
Growing spiritually.
- We will support each person’s journey of spiritual growth.
- We will meet the variety of spiritual needs and worship style preferences represented in our fellowship.
- We will live our lives to reflect the UU principles and the UUFA covenant.

Creating community.
- We will welcome all people, embrace diversity, and integrate everyone into our beloved community.
- We will build relationships across our fellowship.
- We will invest our time, talents, and money to the growth and vitality of the UUFA.
- We will join together with the larger community to accomplish our goals.

Striving for justice.
- We will build a climate for all types of justice within the UUFA.
- We will be catalysts for change on all justice issues.

Learning to love.
- We will practice listening to one another deeply and without judgment.
- We will learn to love ourselves, each other, and the world.
Our Covenant: (adopted May 6, 2012)

To deepen our connections with one another and to model compassionate and effective relationships for all those who seek our message of hope and commitment to justice, we adopt this covenant. We make this promise to live our Unitarian Universalist principles in our interactions with one another mindful of the larger mission and purpose of our religious community.

To value the inherent worth and dignity of every person, we strive to
   Listen deeply and check our understandings
   Make space for our diverse backgrounds, needs, gifts and passions

To enhance the possibilities of justice, equality and compassion in human relations, we strive to
   Speak from our best intentions and assume the good intentions of others
   Communicate directly with people when disagreements arise
   Voice our appreciation generously
   Speak compassionately to and about one another

To accept one another and encourage spiritual growth, we strive to
   Interact with others as they are, not as we imagine them to be
   Be patient and forgiving with one another and with ourselves
   Give help and ask for help as we need it
   Remember our principles whenever we gather together

To support the right of conscience and honor the democratic process, we strive to
   Bring our good ideas and generous spirits to our community
   Respect one another
   Honor our decision-making processes

Aware that our joy is more joyful, our tears more healing, our service more effective, our laughter more real and our interdependence more vivid when shared in loving community, we strive to honor the spirit of this covenant in our relationships within this religious community and with the wider world.
Our History

Beginning in 1946, our congregation met in borrowed space on the Iowa State University campus as a group of lay-led individuals with no minister or paid staff. Every other week, the Unitarian minister from Des Moines, the Rev. Grant Butler, came to lead a discussion with them. After listening to a rousing talk by Rev. Butler about the “fellowship concept” on November 7, 1948, that evening the members voted to become one of the first fellowships in the country. As their members dwindled, the group met one evening in 1959 to decide about their future and what to do with the $50 that remained in the treasury. A motion was made that the entire $50 be used to start a building fund to construct a permanent home for what was to be known as the Unitarian Fellowship of Ames. It took ten years before the group grew large enough and the fund grew robust enough to purchase land on Hyland Avenue and break ground in 1969. In 1970, our building, an iconic structure of concrete, circular walls and unusual angles at 1015 Hyland Avenue was dedicated. The building and has seen four new additions – a Fellowship Hall, an education wing with offices, a kitchen and utility area, and significant outside landscaping – as we attempted to keep up with congregational growth. Happily, several of these founding members are still actively involved in the congregation today, and community members can rent or use the facilities giving us a useful and congenial location for meetings and special occasions which we support.

While we retain the word “fellowship” in our name, our congregation recognized the benefit of professional ministry in the 1980s, called our first settled minister and added programming and office staff. Each of our ministers have embraced our value of shared ministry over the years by working closely with the Sunday service committee in developing engaging services that includes one lay-led service a month.

In May 1987, the Rev. Sydney Morris was formerly installed as we also celebrated our 40th anniversary. Rev. Morris’s musical gifts and challenging sermons led our Fellowship to a more complex understanding of ourselves as a beloved community.

In 1997, we called our second settled minister, the Rev. Brian Eslinger, who would stay our minister for the subsequent 13 years. Rev. Eslinger’s gifts brought great growth to our membership and religious education programming, strength to our relationship with our partner congregation in Tordâtfalva, Romania, and oversaw our congregation’s adoption of Welcoming Congregation practices.

In 2012, we welcomed the Rev. Kent McKusick as our third settled minister, who stayed nearly a decade with us. Rev. McKusick brought strength and deeper meaning to our Sunday services, and his calm presence carried the Fellowship through the two years of building closure in the COVID-19 pandemic and into the world of multi-platform programming.

As you, our new employee, join our staff, we hope that you too will find a way to make a lasting impact. We are a congregation that joyfully celebrates our history, and we are glad for our employee partners who share in the journey with us!
Unitarian Universalist Principles & Sources

Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote eight Principles, which we hold as strong values and moral guides. We live out these Principles within a “living tradition” of wisdom and spirituality, drawn from sources as diverse as science, poetry, scripture, and personal experience.

Together, we covenant to affirm and promote:

1) The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
2) Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
3) Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
4) A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
5) The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
6) The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
7) Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part;
8) Journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.

Sources of Our Living Tradition:

1) Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
2) Words and deeds of prophetic people which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
3) Wisdom from the world’s religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
4) Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God’s love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
5) Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;
6) Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.
About this Handbook

This handbook has been prepared to help you understand some of the policies and procedures of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames (referred to herein as "Employer," “Congregation,” or “UUFA”). You should familiarize yourself with the content of this handbook as it provides basic information about our expectations, policies, procedures and benefits. Nothing in this handbook is intended to create or creates an employment agreement, express or implied, or a contract that employment or any benefit will be continued for any period of time.

Since every situation cannot be anticipated, this handbook provides a general overview only. In applying the policies and procedures in this handbook, the congregation will take into consideration the specific facts and circumstances of each situation.

All employees are hired on an at-will basis unless stated otherwise in a written individual employment agreement signed by the president of the congregation’s board of directors or prohibited by law. This means that the employee may terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without notice, and the congregation retains the same right.

As a progressive and evolving organization which must respond to operating needs and other circumstances, changes and modifications in policies, procedures, and benefits will be made from time to time. Such changes can be made with or without notice at any time. All policies contained in this handbook are subject to modification to the extent they are inconsistent with any given state statute, regulation and/or ordinance. This handbook replaces all previous personnel policy manuals or handbooks.

The policies outlined in this handbook must be understood in the order of legal and policy precedence as follows:

1. Federal, state, and local employment laws.
2. Rules governing Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) benefit plans in which the congregation participates.
3. Employment agreements with specific employees, such as a minister.
4. The policies in this handbook.
5. The UUA compensation guidelines, which are recommendations from the UUA to congregations on wages and benefits.

If you have any questions or comments about this handbook, or if you need more information, please ask your supervisor, the minister, or a member of the Executive Leadership Team. Your comments and suggestions are encouraged as we journey together.
Diversity and Inclusion

Equal Employment Opportunity

Unitarian Universalist principles affirm the inherent worth of each human being, and commit to working towards justice, equity and compassion in human relations. The congregation believes that policies advancing diversity, equity and inclusion are essential in creating social change which responds to historical and current societal practices of discrimination. Additionally, we believe that significant diversity among our staff makes for a richer, more dynamic organization. Our congregation is committed to addressing the systemic prejudices and biases found within all parts of society. We work to ensure that all staff are trained to understand, welcome, and better serve a multiracial, multiethnic, increasingly diverse community, and to enhance the ability of each individual to live our values of justice, equity, and interdependence.

The congregation affirms its commitment to inclusion and equal employment opportunity for all individuals. Decisions about recruiting, hiring, training, promotions, compensation, benefits, and all similar employment decisions will be made in compliance with all federal, state, and local laws and without regard to race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), citizenship status, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, military service, veteran status, or any other classification protected by law. Any discrimination in the workplace based upon any protected status/classification is illegal and against policy.

Retaliation against individuals who make a claim of discrimination or participate in the investigation of such a claim is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Prohibited retaliation includes:

- shunning and avoiding an individual who reports harassment, discrimination or retaliation;
- express or implied threats or intimidation intended to prevent or inhibit an individual from reporting harassment, discrimination, retaliation;
- or denying employment benefits because an applicant or employee reported harassment, discrimination or retaliation or participating in the reporting and investigation process.

Employees who have questions about discrimination, harassment or retaliation in the workplace, or who believe this policy has been violated, should report their concerns immediately to their supervisor, the minister, or a member of the Executive Leadership Team.

Anti-Harassment Policy

Harassment of a person because of their legally protected characteristic is a form of unlawful discrimination. Protected characteristics include race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), citizenship status, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, military service, veteran status, or any other classification protected by law.

Unlawful retaliation is harassment of a person because of that person’s legally protected activity, including opposing possibly unlawful actions by reporting discrimination or harassment, participating in an investigation of such a complaint, asserting a legal right, and being closely associated with anyone who engaged in these activities.

It is the strong policy of the congregation not to tolerate harassment and to not ignore reports of harassment. The congregation is dedicated to preventing harassment and promptly correcting harassment whenever it is found or where conditions may lead to it. The congregation prohibits
retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or who participates in an investigation of such reports.

Because the congregation aims to prevent unlawful harassment, we have adopted a definition of harassment that is stricter than the legal definition of unlawful harassment. For purposes of this policy, “harassment” is defined as any unwelcome conduct that is based on a protected characteristic, or on a protected activity, when such conduct explicitly or implicitly affects employment, unreasonably interferes with work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

The congregation will not tolerate harassment that violates this policy, even if such harassment does not rise to the level of being unlawful. When harassment is severe or pervasive, or if employment actions are conditioned upon submission to or rejection of such harassment, then both the policies of the congregation, and the law, are violated.

The following examples are not all-inclusive but provide guidance on some of the types of harassing behavior that are prohibited under this policy:

- Indirect or direct threatening to take adverse action against an employee if they refuse to carry out a directive or task that discriminates or harasses on the basis of a protected class status or on a protected activity;
- Indirect or direct promising an employee reward if they comply with a directive or task that discriminates or harasses on the basis of a protected class status or on a protected activity;
- Unwelcome or coerced physical proximity or contact;
- Body language directed toward an employee on the basis of a protected class status or on a protected activity, such as making an obscene gesture, prolonged/angry staring at someone who reported possible discrimination, blocking the path of an employee, or horseplay;
- Use of offensive or demeaning terms, or verbal conduct against a protected class status or on a protected activity, such as epithets, joking about pregnancy, questioning sexual orientation or gender identity, religious-based name-calling, or other commentary on a protected status or activity;
- Inappropriate remarks of a sexual nature;
- Repeated and unwelcome suggestions regarding, or invitations to, social engagements or events;
- Writings based on a protected status or activity, such as an anti-LGBTQ email, a text message making fun of veterans or those currently in the military, an instant message about an employee’s actual or perceived mental or physical disability, a sign mocking people of color, or a social media post criticizing citizenship status;
- Displaying objects based on a protected status or activity, such as a sign, photo, calendar, poster, cartoon, graffiti, screen saver, coffee cup, or other material thing.

As shown by the examples above, harassment can be physical, verbal, written, electronic, or psychological in nature. A single incident may not constitute illegal harassment unless it is particularly severe, and a group or series of incidents may not constitute illegal harassment unless they are unreasonably pervasive, but either may constitute a violation of this policy because this policy sets a standard that is stricter than the law for the purpose of preventing illegal harassment. Indeed, as long as harassment based on a protected status or protective activity has a sufficiently negative impact on an employee’s work performance or an employee’s work environment, it is against this policy.

Harassment prohibited by this policy may occur during or outside of working time/hours, on or off the assigned work site, at home or on business trips, and even at work-related social events. Harassment is
prohibited by this policy even if only non-supervisory employees are involved in it, even if it occurs among employees who share the same protected characteristic (for instance, women harassing women because they are women), and even if it occurs between an employee and a non-employee. Non-employees include clients, vendors, suppliers, independent contractors, and congregants.

All employees are responsible for helping to assure that we avoid harassment of any kind. Any applicant or employee who believes they have witnessed or been subjected to discrimination or harassment in violation of this policy, or who has been denied a reasonable accommodation, is encouraged to promptly report the matter to their supervisor, the minister, or a member of the Executive Leadership Team. If such persons are part of the perceived problem, then reports may be made to the board president. Reports of possible discrimination, harassment, or retaliation may be made verbally or in writing, formally or informally.

This policy does not establish a minimum reporting period, but recognizes that early reporting is the key to preventing and minimizing discrimination and harassment. Early reporting has been proven to be the most effective way to resolve actual and perceived discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. It prevents conduct from escalating to a violation of policy or law. Reporting delays can exacerbate matters and lead to irreparably strained relationships.

In accordance with guidelines of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, reports will be investigated, and any necessary corrective action will be taken. Complaints will be handled confidentially to the extent possible, except as necessary for investigation and resolution.

**Accommodations of Disability**

It is the policy of the congregation to comply with all federal and state laws concerning the employment of persons with disabilities and to act in accordance with regulations and guidance issued by the Iowa Civil Rights Commission and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. This includes the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act. Furthermore, it is our policy not to discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in regard to application procedures, hiring, advancement, termination, compensation, training or other terms, conditions and privileges of employment.

Upon request, the congregation will reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with a disability so that they can perform the essential functions of a job unless doing so causes a direct threat to these individuals or others in the workplace and the threat cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation and/or if the accommodation creates an undue hardship to the congregation. Any employee who may need a reasonable accommodation due to a mental or physical impairment should contact their supervisor to request such accommodation and explore needs and alternatives. The supervisor may request medical documentation to establish that the employee has a mental or physical impairment, whether such impairment constitutes a disability, and as support for the accommodation request. All such medical information will be confidentially maintained and used only for permissible business purposes.
Categories of Employment

**Full-Time:** An employee who regularly works 12 months of continuous full-time service at 40 hours per week is considered a full-time employee.

**Part-Time:** An employee who regularly works 12 months of continuous service at less than 40 hours per week is considered a part-time employee.

**Casual/Temporary Employee:** An employee who works full or part-time for a specific time period, including during peak or seasonal periods, for specific projects, to fill in for an absent regular employee, or for other reasons for a limited period of time is considered a casual/temporary employee. Regardless of whether an employee is scheduled to work for a limited period of time the employee will be considered “at-will.” Casual/Temporary employees are eligible for benefits according to the benefit plan descriptions in this handbook or as required by law.

Fair Labor Standards Act Definitions

Employees are also categorized as either **Non-Exempt** or **Exempt** for purposes of the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

**Non-Exempt Employees** are compensated based on the number of hours worked each workweek and are entitled to be paid the minimum wage and overtime for hours worked over 40 in a workweek.

**Exempt Employees**, who are employed in an executive, administrative, or professional position which meet certain requirements, are paid on a salary basis, and are exempt from the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the FLSA.

**Ministerial Exception:** Ministers, and other employees who perform “essential religious duties,” are exempt from FLSA requirements. Under this exemption, other employees, such as religious educators or music directors, might be classified as exempt depending upon their specific responsibilities. Unlike the FLSA exemptions, the ministerial exception is dependent only on responsibilities, not salary.

Work Schedules and Pay

**Orientation**

Supervisors or designated congregational leaders will introduce employees to their co-workers and orient them to work areas and job responsibilities. In some cases, a written job description has been prepared that contains a summary of duties and responsibilities, recognizing that, of course, it is impossible to list or describe all of the duties of a particular job. Moreover, from time to time, changes in jobs may occur to reflect temporary or long-term changes in staffing or operational needs. Employees should keep in mind that their supervisor has the authority to assign duties, responsibilities, or functions, even though the duties may not have been in the employee’s purview or included in their written job description previously.

**Employment Authorization**

Federal law requires that prospective employees show proof of eligibility to work in the United States by completing Form I-9 within 3 days of their start date. All employees must provide an original document or documents to their supervisor that establishes identity and employment eligibility from the date employment begins.
**Hours of Work**

Supervisors will establish consistent individual work schedules with employees, which may change from time to time based on the needs of the congregation. Attendance at meetings outside of established work schedules at the request of the employee’s supervisor will be considered time worked. Employees may occasionally be required to attend staff off-site events which are relevant to their positions.

Requests to work from home or an off-site location may be granted if job duties permit or conditions require it. Work from home arrangements may be occasional, temporary, or permanent and must be approved by the supervisor prior to implementation. In the case of the minister, for such requests, the Executive Leadership Team will serve as the supervisor.

**Meal and Break Periods**

Employees are encouraged to take a 10-minute break for each 4-hour work period. Such breaks are paid but may not be accumulated or added to the end of the day to shorten the work day. Employees working more than a 6-hour period are required to take a 30-minute unpaid meal break. The time of meal and break periods will be scheduled at the discretion of the employee’s supervisor. Employees should not perform any work during their meal period. For non-exempt employees, any time worked during meal breaks is compensable, including time they need to be available for work (e.g., to answer phone or door). As with breaks, the 30-minute unpaid meal period may not be accumulated or used to shorten the work day.

**Timekeeping and Overtime**

Non-exempt employees must submit a written record of their time worked at the end of each pay period, consistent with the recordkeeping provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (“FLSA”) and state law.

From time to time, employees may be required to work in excess of their regularly scheduled hours. Any time worked by a non-exempt employee in excess of 40 hours in a workweek will be overtime, which must be approved in advance. Paid holidays, sick days, vacation days, or any other paid time off does not count as time worked for purposes of calculating overtime. Non-exempt employees will be paid time and one half for all hours over 40 in a workweek. Exempt employees do not receive overtime pay when working in excess of 40 hours.

**Compensation and Payroll**

The congregation strives to offer its employees equitable and competitive wages and salaries commensurate with its ability, resources, and sound policy. Pay adjustments generally will be considered for all employees once a year, with any adjustments effective at the beginning of the fiscal year (January 1). There is no guarantee of an annual pay adjustment. Pay adjustments are usually based upon such factors as individual performance, job responsibilities, and other appropriate factors, such as increases in the cost-of-living as well as changes to UUA salary recommendations.

Deductions made from employees’ wages are reflected on a pay stub. Federal law requires deductions from pay for income tax, Social Security, and Medicare. Other deductions may include state and/or local taxes or wage garnishments, as required by law. Some deductions, such as voluntary retirement contributions, or medical or other benefit cost-sharing, are optional and are made only if the employee has authorized the deduction in writing. Paychecks and pay stubs should be reviewed when they are received. If an employee believes a mistake has occurred, or if there are any questions, the employee’s supervisor should be contacted immediately.
It is the congregation’s policy to comply with federal and state laws governing payment of wages, and the congregation makes every effort to ensure employees are paid correctly. Occasionally, however, mistakes may happen. When mistakes occur, employees should call them to their supervisor’s attention immediately. The supervisor will promptly investigate the issue and make any corrections necessary.

Employees are paid every 14 days (on Fridays). If the scheduled pay date falls on a holiday, payment is issued on the weekday before the holiday. Payment is made by electronic deposit into the employee’s checking account.

**Personnel Information and Files**

It is very important that employees keep up-to-date all the information provided to the Congregation at the time of hire and as requested from time to time. This information is essential for many purposes, including benefit administration, mailing information to the employee’s home, and contacting friends or family in case of emergency. Please notify the congregational administrator promptly of any changes in:

- Address and telephone number;
- Marital status (including legal separation);
- Legal change in employee’s name;
- Changes to hours or salary;
- Dependents;
- Changes in beneficiaries;
- Person to notify in case of emergency; and
- Any relevant changes in licensing or education.

The congregation maintains a personnel file for each employee that contains new hire paperwork, performance reviews, and other documents related to the employee’s employment. An employee is allowed to write their response to any document added to the file. Employees may review the contents of their file in the presence of their supervisor at a mutually agreed upon time.

**Policies Applicable to Employment**

**Absenteeism and Tardiness**

Each employee is expected to maintain good attendance and to report to work on time. Absence and lateness hinder the effectiveness of our work and should be kept to a minimum. Excessive absenteeism or repeated tardiness may result in discipline up to and including termination of employment.

Personal appointments should be scheduled before or after work hours, if possible. All scheduled absences must be approved in advance by the employee’s supervisor. Employees who are unable to report to work at their scheduled time must notify their supervisor as soon as possible to report the absence and the expected time of return to work. The supervisor must approve an employee’s absence or late arrival, however, the notification and approval of a particular absence by a supervisor does not insulate an employee from a review of the total number of absences or late arrivals in any given period of time.

Employees must call in each day they are absent, unless otherwise authorized by their supervisor. Employees may also be required to submit a doctor’s note to verify an illness or injury.

Unscheduled absences (such as returning late from lunch or leaving work before the end of the workday) must be approved by the employee’s supervisor. If the employee expects to be absent the
following day, they should inform their supervisor of that fact at the same time. Any employee who fails to report to scheduled work without notice for three or more consecutive days will be considered to have voluntarily terminated employment, effective immediately.

**Professional Attire and Conduct**

Employees should maintain a professional attitude and appearance that is appropriate to their position and the congregation. Name badges should be worn when employees are on duty on Sunday or at major congregational events.

Employees working with children should be attired in a manner that allows them to sit, bend, and kneel to help children with no restrictions.

Cell phone usage should not distract from the employee’s job responsibilities.

**Alcohol and Illegal Drugs**

The congregation requires all employees to report to work in appropriate mental and physical condition to perform their jobs in a satisfactory manner. To that end, the illegal use, sale, purchase, transfer, manufacture or possession of illegal drugs, controlled substances, narcotics or alcohol, or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, is strictly prohibited while on duty, while on congregation’s premises, or while performing UUFA business.

Employees should use both prescription and over-the-counter medications in the prescribed manner. Employees using medications that may cause side effects that interfere with their ability to perform their job must advise their supervisor of that fact before reporting to work. If a potential side effect could cause an unsafe condition in the workplace, the supervisor may determine that the employee cannot work. The legal use of prescribed drug or over-the-counter medication is permitted on the job only if it does not impair an employee’s ability to perform the essential functions of the job effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals in the workplace. The abuse of legal drugs will not be tolerated.

The congregation recognizes that responsible consumption of alcohol might be acceptable at occasional functions, but generally, the workplace is alcohol-free. On such an occasion, all employees are expected to uphold an atmosphere of professionalism and respect for those who choose not to participate. Any function at which alcohol is served must first be cleared with the employee’s supervisor. It is expected that employees consuming alcohol on the premises do so in moderation and in the spirit of maintaining a safe and comfortable environment for all.

**Confidentiality**

Employees may have access to confidential information about the congregation, including but not limited to information about members, friends, or other staff members. This includes any non-public financial information regarding members, contributions, or the UUFA. Such information must remain confidential and may not be released, removed from the congregation’s premises, copied, transmitted or in any other way used for any purpose by employees outside the scope of their employment. Employees have the right to use and share information about their personal wages and benefits. All requests for information concerning past or present employees received from organizations or individuals should be directed to the minister.
Computers, Internet, Email and Other Resources

The congregation provides a wide variety of communication tools and resources to employees for use in running day-to-day business activities. Whether it is the telephone, voice mail, scanner, internet, e-mail, text messaging, or any other congregation-provided technology, use should be reserved for legitimate business use and not for more than incidental personal use.

All communication with congregants and for congregation-related business must be made through systems provided by the congregation, without exception. Communication should be handled in a professional and respectful manner. Inappropriate use includes, but is not limited to:

- using personal systems to communicate with congregants or for congregation-related business;
- transmitting obscene, harassing, offensive or unprofessional messages;
- accessing, displaying, downloading, “liking” or distributing any offensive or inappropriate messages including those containing racial slurs, sexual connotations or offensive comments about race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability or any other classification protected by law;
- transmitting any of the congregation’s confidential or proprietary information, including member/friend data or other materials covered by the congregation's confidentiality policy.

The congregation reserves the right to monitor and review the content of employee e-mails, text messages, and voicemail messages, or the use of the Internet on the congregation’s systems at any time. Employees should not consider their Internet usage or e-mail communications to be private. Personal passwords are not an assurance of confidentiality, and the Internet itself is not secure.

All materials, information and software created, transmitted, downloaded or stored on the congregation’s computer system are the property of the congregation and may be reviewed and inspected at the board’s discretion.

Any software or other material downloaded onto the congregation's computers may be used only in ways consistent with the licenses and copyrights of the vendors, authors or owners of the material. Prior authorization from the employee’s supervisor is required before introducing any software into the congregation’s computer system.

Only authorized staff members may communicate on the Internet on behalf of the congregation. Employees may not express opinions or personal views that could be construed as being those of the congregation.

Any account established on behalf of the congregation must be authorized with all access information, including passwords, communicated to the office.

With prior authorization, employees may use their own personal electronic devices (computers, tablets, phones, etc.) for work-related purposes provided the devices have appropriate security software and the employee agrees to follow appropriate data protection and backup practices. Any files or software belonging to the congregation may only be downloaded and used for congregation-related work, provided the employee is given express written permission from the congregation, and proper documentation is maintained regarding the files downloaded in the event that future retrieval is required. In addition, upon employment termination for any reason, the employee agrees to give the congregation access to any personal electronic devices and passwords, to allow the congregation to retrieve and/or delete all congregation files and documents from them. In the event that the congregation does not request such access, then the employee agrees to promptly return, to the extent
practicable, and to delete any and all congregation-related documents and copies thereof from any such devices or backups.

The employee is responsible for any maintenance, repair, or replacement of a personal device required or used, irrespective of the amount of work usage or the cause of the damage unless agreed to in writing by the congregation. However, the employee must provide their supervisor with immediate notice should a personal device containing congregation software or files be lost or stolen.

**Conflict of Interest/Outside Employment**

Employees shall not engage in any other employment or business activity that is incompatible or in conflict with their duties, functions, or responsibilities as an employee of the UUFA. Activities that may constitute a conflict include use of the congregation’s time, facilities, equipment or supplies, or the use of the title, prestige, or influence of the congregation for private gain or advantage. An employee must obtain the prior approval of their supervisor before engaging in any other such employment or activity.

An employee shall not engage in any outside activity which, by its nature, hours, or physical demands, would impair the employee’s performance of congregation duties; reflect negatively on the congregation; or tend to increase the congregation’s obligations or costs for benefits such as sick leave or long-term disability benefits.

If the congregation and the employee disagree that outside employment creates a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest, the congregation retains the right to make the final determination.

**Employment of Relatives and Members**

Members of an employee’s family may be considered for employment; however, relatives may not supervise one another. “Relative” means a spouse, domestic partner, parent, sibling, child, grandparent, grandchild, or person in a close personal relationship with the employee.

As a general policy, employment of members of the congregation will be avoided because a member who becomes staff will necessarily forfeit certain benefits of membership to appropriately perform the staff role. For some positions, hiring a member may add significant enough value to counteract the potential risks associated with employment of a member. Positions open to members of the congregation are so designated by the board of directors.

**Vehicle Usage and Expense Reimbursement**

Employees using their own cars for congregation-related business may be paid mileage at the current business rate per mile as established by the Internal Revenue Service. Mileage will be reimbursed monthly upon request by the employee and approval by their supervisor. Trips must be authorized by the employee’s supervisor. Employees must have a current and valid driver’s license and proof of insurance. Employees may not take unauthorized passengers on such trips. All tickets for parking and traffic violations are the responsibility of the employee.

Other approved expenses incurred by an employee on behalf of the congregation will be reimbursed according to the congregation’s expense reimbursement procedure.
Safety and Accidents
The safety of employees, as well as members and visitors, is of paramount concern. All employees are expected to abide by accepted safety standards and any other congregation policy regarding safety of children and youth, disruptive conduct or any other safety-related policies at all times. They should know the whereabouts of fire extinguishers, first aid kits, defibrillators, and emergency exit/shelter routes. Instruction as to these locations must be given by the supervisor at the time of employment and immediately upon changes.

Any unsafe condition, equipment or practice observed by an employee should be reported immediately to the supervisor. All on-the-job accidents or injuries to employees, no matter how minor, should be reported immediately to the supervisor and workers compensation insurance carrier. In the event of a fire or other emergency, the fire department and/or other emergency services should be called immediately, and all employees should alert others (e.g., employees, volunteers, or other people in the building) and assist in an orderly evacuation of the premises.

Workplace Threats and Violence
Threats, threatening behavior, or acts of violence against persons by anyone on congregation property will not be tolerated. The possession or use of weapons, firearms, ammunition, etc. is prohibited on the property of the congregation except for authorized law enforcement or security personnel.

Anyone who verbally or physically threatens another, exhibits threatening behavior or engages in violent acts on congregation property may be removed and must remain off congregation property pending the outcome of an investigation. If the congregation determines that a staff member has violated this policy, the congregation may take appropriate disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension and/or termination of employment, and/or legal action as appropriate.

All employees shall inform their supervisor of any behavior which they have witnessed or experienced at the UUFA or otherwise during UUFA-sponsored activities, which they regard as threatening or violent.

Inspection Rights
The congregation provides storage facilities such as desks, file cabinets, closets and storage areas for the use of employees, but can make no assurances that storage areas will always be secure. The storage of any weapons, explosives, illegal drugs, drug-related paraphernalia, or unauthorized alcohol is prohibited on congregation premises. Therefore, the congregation reserves the right to open and inspect any desk, file cabinet, storage closet, or storage area at any time and without prior notice or consent. Employees may not use personal locks on congregation owned desks, cabinets, closets, or storage areas.

Media Inquiries
All requests for information about the congregation from the media should be carefully considered. If an interview moves beyond routine questions about a particular employee’s area of expertise, that employee should direct reporters to the appropriate person. If in doubt, referrals should be directed to the minister or board president and contact information provided. If such a referral is not possible, an appropriate response to media inquiry would be, “What’s the deadline? Can I get back to you?”

All media communications should be reported to the employee’s supervisor.
Performance and Conduct Expectations

Introductory Period
Your first ninety (90) days of employment are considered your Introductory Period. The introductory period does not represent a guarantee or contract of employment for ninety (90) days or any other period of time. The congregation reserves the right to terminate your employment, for any reason not prohibited by law, at any time during the employment relationship, including during this introductory period.

Employees are entitled to insurance benefits during the introductory period, but other benefits (such as retirement contributions and vacation accrual) are only credited after satisfactory transition to regular status.

At the end of the introductory period, the employee’s supervisor will complete a review of the employee’s performance. If performance is found to be unsatisfactory, the supervisor will work with the employee to develop a Personal Improvement Plan (“PIP”). The PIP shall include clear goals and timelines for improved success, as well as guidelines for continued underperformance, which may lead to termination (if deemed necessary).

Performance Evaluations
Employee performance will be evaluated by the employee’s supervisor at least annually. Employees will be given at least two weeks’ notice of this meeting, so they can prepare for self-evaluation and goal-setting, both aspects of the review. The employee will sign a copy of the performance review and it will be retained in their personnel file.

If performance is found to be unsatisfactory, the supervisor will work with the employee to develop a Personal Improvement Plan (“PIP”). The PIP shall include clear goals and timelines for improved success, as well as guidelines for continued underperformance.

Difficulties on the Job
The congregation seeks to resolve performance and conduct problems in the most positive and constructive manner possible. The congregation will strive to help employees succeed in their work. However, continued employment depends on the congregation’s needs and the employee’s ability to satisfy performance and conduct standards. When situations arise that warrant disciplinary action, we will work to treat all employees fairly and consistently. Improper conduct or improper work performance, whether or not covered by the specific rules of conduct above, may be grounds for disciplinary action in the judgment of the congregation. Disciplinary action may range from counseling, verbal, written or final warnings to suspension or immediate termination, depending upon the facts of the particular case and the employment history of the employee involved.
Work and Disciplinary Guidelines

Certain guidelines must be observed by all employees to protect the integrity of the congregation. Violations may result in disciplinary measures including verbal warnings, written warnings, suspension or termination.

Engaging in any of the following examples of unacceptable conduct may result in disciplinary actions. These examples are intended only as a guide and are not all-inclusive.

- Failure to perform work in a manner acceptable to the congregation.
- Absenteeism or tardiness.
- Leaving work without permission.
- Failure to report absences as required.
- Discrimination, harassment, or retaliation described in this handbook.
- Unauthorized possession of weapons.
- Disclosure of confidential information.
- Smoking in unauthorized areas.
- Failure to report-on-the job injuries.
- Working hours that conflict with current schedule/job requirements
- Any outside work activity adversely affecting job performance or creating an adverse impact on the congregation.
- Failure to accurately complete or permitting another person to complete the employee’s timecard.
- Theft or dishonesty.
- Falsifying records or information (or misuse or unauthorized manipulation of any computer or electronic data processing equipment or system).
- Treating others in an unprofessional or discourteous manner, including using inappropriate or profane language.
- Taking congregation property without paying for it or without written permission.
- Reckless, careless or unauthorized use of congregation property, equipment or materials.
- Violation of any other congregation policy or the standards of conduct generally applicable to a professional and respectful workplace.

Before engaging in any activity, transaction, or relationship that might give rise to a conflict of interest, employees must seek review from their supervisor. When in doubt, talk it out!

Separation from Employment

Severance Pay

At the termination of employment, monetary compensation will be limited to no more than one workweek of accumulated, unused vacation leave. Employees should use any accrued vacation leave prior to terminating their employment. Separation from employment shall cancel unused holiday, sick, professional development and personal leaves.

Severance pay is not generally provided upon termination of employment, but may be considered on a case by case basis at the discretion of the board.

If an employee is dismissed for unacceptable conduct, severance pay is not available and all benefits cease at the time of dismissal.
**Upon Separation**

Resignations and Retirements are voluntary terminations of employment initiated by the employee. Employees resigning from the congregation are requested to provide at least one month’s notice to allow for adequate planning and a smooth transition without undue strain on other staff.

Notice to the congregation of an employee’s resignation/retirement/termination should only be made by the minister or board president. Employees announcing their departure on their own risk the voiding of any potential severance agreement.

If covered by health benefits, resigning staff members may be eligible to continue their health insurance under the provisions of State Continuation Coverage. Up to one week of accrued, but unused vacation time is paid at the end of employment. Sick leave and personal time are not subject to payment at the end of employment.

When an employment relationship is severed, the employee is no longer eligible to make or receive new contributions toward their retirement account held through the employer.

Whenever practical, an exit interview will be conducted by the personnel committee or designee. A written report of the interview will be provided to the Executive Leadership Team and any relevant committees and/or the board.

Upon separation from employment, the employee must turn in receipts for reimbursement within five working days of the employee’s last day of work. The board secretary-treasurer will verify final payment arrangements. Keys, employee credit cards (and receipts), and any other UUFA property must be returned to the office administrator or designee on or before the last day of work.

References for future employment should be directed to the UUFA office for verification of employment and *not* to congregants or other staff members. If a more substantive reference (i.e. conversations about what it was like to work with the employee) is needed, employees are asked to either obtain a letter of reference from their supervisor or other congregational leader *before* terminating the employment relationship or, if needed after, coordinate such requests through the office.

Upon separation from employment, former employees support their successors by leaving room for them to establish their own identity and leadership in the congregation. Former employees must refrain from accepting positions on policy-making bodies in the congregation or accepting/volunteering for roles in their former programs for at least two years. They should encourage congregants to speak to their successors and refrain from discussing congregational matters with congregants for at least two years, including on social media.
Benefits

Paid Time Off Policies

**Holidays**
Employees regularly scheduled to work at least 20 hours or more per week are entitled to **seven** floating paid holidays per fiscal year having personal, cultural, or religious significance. Employees are paid for the number of hours they are normally scheduled to work that day.

**Vacation Time**
The congregation grants paid vacation to regular employees scheduled to work at least 10 hours per week at their regular rate of pay based on their length of service with the congregation according to the schedule below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Service</th>
<th>Annual Amount of Vacation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4 years</td>
<td>2 x employee’s regularly scheduled weekly hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9 years</td>
<td>3 x employee’s regularly scheduled weekly hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 + years</td>
<td>4 x employee’s regularly scheduled weekly hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vacation accrues each pay period and employees may not use more than the amount accrued without approval of their supervisor. Increases in vacation accrual rate will be made on the first day of the month following the anniversary date of the year in which an employee completes their 5th or 10th year of employment.

Vacation time must be requested in advance and can only be taken with the approval of the employee’s supervisor. In the event of conflicting vacations requests, vacation generally will be granted in the order the requests are received, in accordance with length of service and consistent with workload requirements.

Employees may carry over from one fiscal year to the next no more than 50 percent of the employee’s annual accrual amount.

**Sick Time**
Employees accrue sick leave at the rate of one day for each full month of employment. Up to one year’s worth of sick leave (12 days) may be carried forward into the next year, with a maximum accrual of 24 days. Employees who exhaust sick leave may use accumulated vacation leave to extend their paid leave.

Employees may be required to provide physician’s statement regarding their medical condition, including why the employee was not able to work. The Fellowship reserves the right to request employees who are repeatedly absent for illness or injury be examined by a physician chosen by the UUFA, and at the expense of the UUFA.

Routine medical, dental, and optical appointments should be scheduled **outside** working hours. When impractical, occasional absences for such reasons may be charged to sick leave.

Employees may use sick leave for emergencies including death in an employee’s immediate family; service as pallbearer at the funeral of a person not a member of the employee’s immediate family; and the care of and necessary attention to ill or injured members of the employee’s immediate family. For
the purpose of emergency leave, immediate family is defined as and limited to the employee’s partner or spouse, children, grandchildren, foster children, step children, legal wards, parents, grandparents, foster parents, step parents, brothers, foster brothers, step brothers, sons-in-law, brothers-in-law, sisters, foster sisters, step sisters, sisters-in-law, daughters-in-law, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, first cousins, corresponding relatives of the employee’s partner and other persons who are members of the employee’s household.

**Professional Development**

Employees who work a minimum of 20 hours per week are encouraged to enhance their professional capabilities by arranging with their supervisor to take paid professional development leave.

**Personal Time**

The congregation recognizes that many circumstances can draw employees away for brief periods of time. From civic obligations like jury duty to funeral/bereavement time to critical personal, house/apartment and family matters, the UUFA is committed to supporting its employees with flexibility and compassion in scheduling work while handling these issues. To that end, paid personal leave can be arranged on a case by case basis with an employee’s supervisor. Personal leave is not an entitlement, cannot be accrued or carried over, and is not paid out at termination of employment; it is available to employees only when the reason justifies its use. Employees are expected to take care of personal business on their own time whenever possible.

**Extended Leaves of Absence**

From time to time, employees may need to have extended time away from work in order to address certain urgent issues. During such leaves, an employee must first use their accrued sick/vacation and personal time and any applicable insurance coverage. When possible, such leave must be requested in advance in writing and requires the approval of the employee’s supervisor and the minister. The exact nature of the leave and its anticipated length must be included in the written request. Employees are expected to return to work upon the expiration of the leave as granted. If prevented from returning as expected, the employee must immediately notify their supervisor.

**Unpaid Family and Medical Leave**

As an employer of less than 50 employees, the UUFA is not covered under the Family and Medical Leave Act (“FMLA”).

However, in remaining consistent with UU Values, the congregation voluntarily provides certain aspects of FMLA, which allows an employee after 12 months of employment to take up to 12 weeks per fiscal year of unpaid leave due to the employee’s own serious health condition or to care for a family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition. Up to the conclusion of this leave period, an employee generally has the right to return to the same position. This leave may be taken all at once or intermittently, depending on the circumstances. Medical certification is required.

All employees who take family and medical leave must give thirty days’ notice, or in case of unforeseen circumstances, as much notice as possible to their supervisor.

During family and medical leave, no paid time off will accrue, but UUFA contributions will continue to any insurance plans.
**Paid Parental Leave**

After 12 months of employment, employees who work 30 or more hours per week and who become natural or adoptive parents are eligible for up to 12 weeks of paid parental leave at a rate of 25%. Parental leave must begin within six weeks of the birth or adoption. The rate of pay for weeks of paid parental leave is based on wages for the employee’s regularly-scheduled workweek. Rather than taking twelve consecutive weeks of leave, the equivalent number of days may be spread out over up to a year, at the discretion of the supervisor. Such intermittent parental leave must be used within one year of birth, placement, or whenever the leave begins, whichever is first. Parental Leave benefits apply only to adoptions in which the child is new to the parent(s).

Employees who know they will be taking Parental Leave are asked to give their supervisor as much notice as possible, but at least 30 days’ notice of the anticipated departure date and whether they intend to return to employment.

During parental leave, no paid time off will accrue, but UUFA contributions will continue to any retirement or insurance plans.

**Military Leave**

Employees who are members of the uniformed services of the United States (including the National Guard or other reserve unit) will be granted paid and unpaid leaves of absence in accordance with state or federal law to perform military duties on a voluntary or involuntary basis. Requests for military leave of absence must be made in writing and should include verification of the duty call from military authority, the date the leave is to commence, and the expected date of return.

Employees may choose to use any accumulated vacation time or professional development time for all or part of the period of military service. Leaves of absence in excess of any available vacation or professional development time will be without pay. In accordance with applicable law, eligible employees will be reinstated to the same job upon returning from an authorized military leave of absence.

**Sabbatical Leave**

The congregation believes that employees in certain positions benefit from time spent in study, reflection, spiritual renewal, continuing education, or community service. This program is a privilege applicable to only certain positions, is completely discretionary, and may be suspended, terminated, or altered at any time.

To be eligible to apply for paid sabbatical leave, the employee must be full-time and have demonstrated a good work record of at least four years of continuous employment, and currently be in good standing with the congregation. Normally, sabbatical leave accrues at one month for each year of service completed and may not exceed six months. Other requirements and conditions may also apply.
**Insurance and Retirement Benefits**

The benefits outlined in this handbook represent significant additional compensation to eligible employees. Outlined below is a brief summary of the types of employee benefits currently available through the congregation. These benefits are subject to change at any time at the discretion of the congregation. In the event of any discrepancy between the benefits outlined below and the Summary Plan Description ("SPD") or Plan documents, those documents will govern. Any questions about employee benefits should be directed to the congregational administrator.

The benefits election process will take place within the first three days of employment and subsequently each November, during the UUA’s open enrollment period. Election Agreements will detail any contribution made by the UUFA to Group Insurance and/or Retirement Plans elected by employees.

**Health Insurance**

Employees who work at least 750 hours per year may enroll in the group health insurance plan sponsored by the congregation. Dependent enrollment is also available.

For full-time employees, the congregation currently pays 80% of the employee’s premium for the standard PPO plan offered by the UUA. For part-time, eligible employees, the congregation pays a pro-rated percentage of the employee’s premium, according to the schedule below. Payment of dependent coverage is generally not available, but can be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours Worked</th>
<th>Percentage of Premium Paid by Congregation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1820 hours per year (35 per week) or more</td>
<td>80% of employee premium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1560 - 1819 hours per year (30 - 34 per week)</td>
<td>65% of employee premium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1040 - 1559 hours per year (20 - 29 per week)</td>
<td>50% of employee premium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employees must make their required contributions by payroll deduction.

Consistent with federal law, if an employee has health insurance through another qualified group plan (i.e. spouse’s employer plan), the congregation will reimburse the incremental cost of the employee’s coverage up to the value of the health benefit the employee qualifies for in the above chart. The reimbursed amount is calculated as the difference between the cost of individual coverage and the cost of employee + spouse coverage in the other plan.

Further information concerning the UUA health plan may be obtained by going to [https://www.uua.org/finance/compensation/health](https://www.uua.org/finance/compensation/health).

**Group Dental, Term Life, and Long-Term Disability Insurance**

Employees who work 750 hours per year are eligible for group long-term disability, term life, and dental insurance coverage through the UUA. Employees must make all their required contributions by payroll deduction.

Employees working a minimum of 20 hours per week will be enrolled in long-term disability insurance. The congregation pays 100% of the cost of this coverage.

The congregation pays the employee’s premium cost for group dental insurance for employees working a minimum of 20 hours per week according to the same schedule as health insurance.

Employees enrolling in term life insurance pay 100% of the cost of this coverage.
Further information concerning these policies is available from your supervisor or by going to https://www.uua.org/finance/compensation/uua-insurance-plans.

Workers’ Compensation Insurance
The congregation carries workers’ compensation insurance that pays for certain medical expenses and provides partial income protection in the event of illness or injury arising out of or in the course of employment.

All on-the-job injuries or illnesses, regardless of severity, should be reported immediately to the employee's supervisor. Employees will be required to provide a written report on the illness or accident and a physician’s statement in order to receive worker’s compensation benefits, or to return to work.

Retirement Benefits
Our congregation has adopted the Unitarian Universalist Organizations Retirement Plan (UUORP). The plan is an IRS qualified, defined contribution, 401(a)/(k) multiple employer, Church retirement plan designed to help ensure employees of UUA-related organizations have an opportunity to accumulate savings for their retirement years. Every employee has the option to enroll and authorize elective contributions (pre-tax salary reduction contributions) immediately upon employment, irrespective of hours worked or scheduled.

In addition, in keeping with the Employer’s Participation Agreement on file with the UUA Office of Church Staff Finances our congregation contributes 10 percent of the employee’s gross wages for each of our employees who have met the Plan’s qualifications.

To be eligible for Employer contributions, the employee must satisfy the Plan’s Year of Eligibility Service provision: an individual must have a) worked a minimum of 1,000 hours during a twelve consecutive month period defined in the Plan, or b) have successfully completed a UU ministerial Internship.

If an employee is employed at more than one participating UU congregation, concurrently or consecutively, their hours of service must be combined to make the initial determination of eligibility to receive Employer’s contributions.

Per the governing Plan’s provisions, employees who previously received Employer contributions at another UU participating congregation or employer are immediately eligible for Employer contributions at our congregation.

The congregation provides an enrollment form, a description of the plan, including investment options, to the employee at the start of employment. Each employee should review this material carefully and discuss any questions they may have with their supervisor, with the Retirement Plan staff at the UUA, and/or with a trusted personal financial advisor.

More information can be found at: https://www.uua.org/finance/compensation/retirement.
Acknowledgement

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Employee Handbook of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames. I understand that it is my responsibility to read the handbook and to comply with the policies, practices and rules of the congregation as outlined therein.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Print Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>