

1st Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit
Request for Proposals

Lease or Ownership of Church Buildings

February 2011

Issued By 1st Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit
4605 Cass Ave,
Detroit, MI 48201

Proposals Due April 9th, 2011
Submissions should be sent via email to Info@1stUU.org

1st Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit Request for Proposals for Lease or Ownership of Church Buildings

Opportunity for Lease or Ownership of Church Buildings:

1st Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit (1st UU) is requesting proposals (RFP) from qualified entities that are interested in leasing or owning the 1st UU buildings at Cass and Forest in Midtown Detroit. A lease agreement would be arranged between a qualified entity and the 1st UU Congregation. A transfer of ownership would be by sale or through donation of the buildings by the 1st UU congregation to a qualified entity. The three buildings that make up 1st UU are: a sanctuary; a church house with offices, small meeting space, and a kitchen; McCollester Hall, which is a 3-story building with a theater in the basement, a large meeting hall on the ground floor, and classrooms on the 2nd story. In total, these three, connected buildings are 42,000 square feet. There is also a small parking lot on the premises.

Background:

1st UU Detroit has been in existence in its present location for 95 years. An important and active hub for many human rights and social justice endeavors for decades, 1st UU has garnered a reputation for its dedication to the community, as well as its liberal and open-minded religious values. However, due to a shrinking congregation, 1st UU no longer requires the amount of space it currently holds. Due to the cost of maintaining and heating such an old, large building, 1st UU, with its current membership level, can no longer afford to stay on the corner it's occupied since 1916.

Therefore, the congregation and board of 1st UU are searching for one of three possible outcomes. We are looking either to sell our buildings to the right buyer ("Option A"), donate our buildings to the right cause ("Option B"), or negotiate a long-term lease with a compatible and responsible entity ("Option C").

This RFP seeks proposals from organizations whose principles and practice are in line with 1st UU's progressive values and its mission as an urban center for spiritual renewal and social justice in the city of Detroit. More broadly, this RFP seeks to provide an opportunity for organizations doing work to improve quality of life, promote social justice, and/or contribute to the cultural abundance of Midtown through use and ownership or leasing of 4605 Cass Avenue. This is the vision 1st UU has for the future of its space.

Beyond transfer of use, a key goal of this RFP is to promote the efforts of appropriate applicants who can best utilize 1st UU's excellent location and historical site. 1st UU will select the best responsive proposal, taking into consideration certain criteria, which includes, but is not limited to, community impact, financial stability, ability to upkeep the buildings, and alignment with 1st UU values. By design, there is no definitive consensus on Unitarian Universalist beliefs, but the following 7 principles encapsulate UU values:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

The primary objective of ownership/leasing opportunities via this RFP is to identify organizations that will meet the following criteria:

Option A: Selling of the Buildings

- The selling price is negotiable, as bidders will not necessarily be chosen solely based on the amount of their bid, but also in consideration of other factors, such as proposed use and proven long-term financial stability.
- 1st UU would like a right of first refusal if buyer decides to sell the property.

Option B: Donation of the Buildings

- Demonstrated financial stability in order to maintain and improve upon the buildings that currently make up 1st UU.
- Allowance of 1st UU's congregation to continue using the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings (and reasonable support spaces) for at least 25 years, with the option to renew this agreement, as well as use of other parts of the building for special events when pre-arranged.
- Considering the historic nature and state historic designation, guarantees that the buildings will not be torn down or significantly altered in external appearance are required.
- Prospective owner must furnish a plan for immediate and longer-term upgrades to 1st UU buildings. Please discuss the scope of improvements that you expect to make over the coming years and provide an estimated price range if possible.
- In evaluation, weight will be given to organizations and proposals that are consistent with UU values.
- 1st UU would like a right of first refusal if buyer decides to sell the property.

Option C: Long-term Leasing of the Buildings

- A minimum of a 25-year lease is required.
- In exchange for rent-free space, lessee would be responsible for *all* utility, insurance, property taxes, and maintenance costs. The lessee must also assume facility staffing obligations, including daily inside and outside custodian and maintenance (including snow and ice care), as well as facility rental, usage, security, reception, and other administrative tasks.
- Demonstrated financial stability in order to maintain and improve upon the buildings that currently make up 1st UU.
- Prospective lessee must furnish a plan for immediate and longer-term upgrades to 1st UU buildings and understand that maintenance and reasonable upgrades are the responsibility of lessee. Please discuss the scope of improvements that you expect to make over the coming years and provide an estimated price range if possible.
- Allowance of 1st UU's congregation to continue using the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings (and reasonable support spaces), as well as use of other parts of the building for special events when pre-arranged.

Proposal Content:

Proposals submitted in response to this RFP must follow the format described below. Please label your responses in correspondence with each question and respond fully and accurately to all questions/requests.

Information Requested

1. Prospective Owner/Lessee Identification:

Please provide full identification of the person(s) responsible for the proposal submitted: name(s), address(es), telephone number(s), and e-mail address(es). Also, please provide a brief statement of your organization's purpose, mission and proven track record of success. In addition, please supply the name(s), address(es), and phone number(s) of two personal and two professional references who can corroborate your success.

2. Please check which option in which you are interested.

Option A: Purchase of the Buildings _____

At what amount will you offer to purchase the buildings? _____

Option B: Donation of the Buildings _____

Option C: Long-term Leasing of the Buildings _____

3. Proposed Uses:

Please describe your proposed use or uses of the 1st UU buildings and explain why your plans are compatible with 1st UU's values and mission, as well as its vision for future building use. Include information about how your efforts will impact the surrounding neighborhood/community.

4. Experience:

Please explain in detail and document (free form no longer than 5 typed pages, please) how your experience qualifies you and your organization as capable of satisfactorily performing the duties required to manage and upkeep 4605 Cass Avenue. In addition, please supply the name(s), address(es), and phone number(s) of two personal and two professional references who can corroborate this experience. In the case of Options B and C, prospective owner/lessee must furnish a plan for immediate and longer-term upgrades to 1st UU buildings and demonstrate an understanding that maintenance and reasonable upgrades are their responsibility.

5. Finances:

- Respondents must furnish information indicating financial stability, for example audited financials, Dun and Bradstreet reports, bank statements, etc. **All financial statements will be kept confidential to the 1st UU Board of Trustees.**

The 1st UU Board will not be making this decision based on expected revenue generated by the sale or gifting of our buildings, but instead, by what Board Members think is best for the historic nature of 4605 Cass Avenue, our surrounding neighborhood, and our congregation, as well as adherence to the Request for Proposal. Strong proposals that are requesting the donation of our building will be fairly weighed with proposals that would garner financial resources for 1st UU. All recommendations by the board about sale, gift, or long-term lease options are subject to congregational approval.

Tours of 1st UU will be given during two open house events on March 17th from 10-2 pm and April 1st from 3-6 pm. To attend an open house for a tour, please RSVP to info@1stuu.org.

Please address your proposal to the 1st UU Board of Trustees. Proposals are due April 9th, 2011 via email to info@1stUU.org. All questions should be sent to the same address and will be answered as promptly as possible. Directly following the April 9th deadline, the 1st UU Board of Trustees will review proposals, call top contenders for interviews, and make a decision within 1 month. All submissions will receive a response.

Thank you in advance for your ideas and cooperation,

-The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Detroit Board of Trustees