

CUF Gift Use Proposal Form

For use of funds bequeathed to CUF from the estates of Lois Hayward and Bill Rose

Instructions: *Deadline for submission is June 30, 2023; if approved as fulfilling the primary criteria, a more detailed description and budget will be required. *At least one of the leaders of the proposed plan must be a current CUF member, at least two of the endorsers must be CUF members.*

If you have any questions contact Gene Basanta at webasanta@gmail.com.

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01 / 13 / 2024

Proposal Lead Member* Name(s) & Contact Info: *

Bill Sasso	618-529-7808	bsasso62901@gmail.com
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Proposal Title: *

Solar Panels for CUF!

Type

Select One

Project

Investment/Savings

Both

Other

Category

Check all that apply

Building/Grounds Improvement

Community Partnership

Environmental/Conservation

Religious Education

Social/Economic Justice

Other

Summary Description with Estimated Timeline (Including approximate completion date) *

Installing a solar panel installation at CUF demonstrate environmental stewardship, encourage local adoption of clean energy technology, connect our congregation more closely to the climate-conscious community, and reduce CUF energy costs. While there was some exploration of this possibility a few years ago, several factors have changed since then, and this proposal process gives us an opportunity to consider this as a congregation. We have received formal proposals for installation of both roof-mounted and ground-mounted solar arrays, providing approximately 14kW in capacity, from Southern Illinois Solar, Advanced Energy Solutions, and StraightUp Solar. The lowest-priced of these was the roof-based system proposed by Southern Illinois Solar at about \$38,000.

Solar panel installations are eligible for incentive funding from the State of Illinois via the "Illinois Shines" State Renewable Energy Credit (SREC) program. The federal tax rebate program for solar energy has been adapted by the Inflation Reduction Act to allow non-profit organizations to receive direct reimbursements representing 40% of project costs. These two programs, together, will result in reimbursements reducing the project cost by an estimated \$28,000, resulting in a net cost to the Fellowship of \$10,000.

In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, CUF's annual electrical energy expenses totaled \$4,152; in that ending June 30., 2023, they were \$4,170; in the first six months of the current year, they are \$2,978. We estimate annual savings on electricity of at least \$1,300. Informal sources have suggested that a 5% increase for next year would be a good estimate for Egyptian Electric customers; as energy prices increase, these savings would increase proportionately.

"Solar Panels at CUF!" embodies our 7th UU Principle – respect for the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part – by generating clean energy for our own use, and by providing a highly visible example of environmental stewardship to our neighbors and all those who travel Sunset Drive and Parrish Lane. This public witness would be a direct statement of our commitment to environmental stewardship. By taking this action, we demonstrate to ourselves, our children, and the Carbondale community that we are indeed "walking our talk," and we encourage others to join us. The clean electricity we generate would help reduce fossil fuel use and its impact on climate change. By generating clean energy for our own use, and by providing a highly visible example of environmental stewardship to our neighbors and all those who travel Sunset Drive and Parrish Lane.

Beyond that, "Solar Panels at CUF!" will also support renewal of our "Green Sanctuary" status, and strengthen the credibility of any environmental advocacy CUF's Green Team and/or membership may undertake. Finally, it will reduce the cost of electricity as an element in our annual budget. In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, CUF's annual electrical energy expenses totaled \$4,152; in that ending June 30., 2023, they were \$4,170. The proposals estimate annual savings on electricity range from approximately \$1,300 to \$2,500.

The minimum initial outlay for this project is \$38,000; if this proposal is funded at a higher level, the congregation could consider more options, such as ground-based or roof-based systems, and different solar installation providers. With funding less than \$38,000, the project can request the balance of initial funding from the CUF Endowment Fund, and will investigate other possible loans that could be repaid after we receive the federal and state reimbursements.

After the Fellowship roof has been replaced, installation of the solar panels can begin; that may take up to two months. After physical installation is complete, the inspection and grid-connection process might take an additional month. Once the system is in operation, we can submit applications for state and federal reimbursements.

Proposed Timeline

May, 2024: Congregational Approval of the Project in Principle

August, 2024: Physical Installation Complete

September, 2024: Inspections Complete and Solar Installation Operational

October, 2024: Application(s) Submitted for Cost Reimbursement(s)

??? Reimbursement(s) Received

Estimated Budget (Include major categories such as labor, materials, overhead, etc.) *

To date, we have received formal proposals for installation of both roof-mounted and ground-mounted solar arrays, providing approximately 13kW in capacity, from Southern Illinois Solar, Advanced Energy Solutions, and StraightUp Solar.

	Initial Cost	(Incentives)	Net Cost
SI Solar Roof-based	\$37,992	(\$28,256)	\$9,736
SI Solar Ground	\$39,997	(\$29,279)	\$10,718
AES Roof-based	\$53,968*	(\$39,727)	\$14,241
AES Ground	\$52,859*	(\$39,149)	\$13,710

*AES has included an interconnection charge of \$7,250 in both system proposals; they are checking to determine whether this charge will apply to the CUF solar panel connection.

StraightUp Solar Roof-based	\$43,710	(\$33,007)**	\$10,803
StraightUp Solar Ground	\$50,440	(\$36,203)**	\$14,237

** StraightUp Solar used a 40% federal incentive rate; the other proposals used 30%. It currently appears that we qualify for a 40% federal incentive for any of these proposals, so the Incentives amounts provided above are all calculated at 40%.

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****Will you seek matching or supplemental funds? If so, from what sources? ***

Solar panel installations are eligible for incentive funding from the State of Illinois via the "Illinois Shines" State Renewable Energy Credit (SREC) program. The federal tax rebate program for solar energy has been adapted by the Inflation Reduction Act to allow non-profit organizations to receive direct reimbursements. The projected incentive funding shown in the "Estimated Budget" section for the SI Solar and AES proposals are calculated at 30% of the cost of system installation; more recent information suggests that we may qualify for a 40% incentive, which would further decrease the project's net cost to CUF. The StraightUp Solar proposals include federal incentives at 40%.

Amount Requested *

A minimum of \$38,000 in initial funding, funding the lowest-cost roof-based proposal. If a larger amount is made available, the congregation would have more choice regarding the particular solar installation and contractor selected. If less than \$38,000 is available, we will gladly explore the possibility of additional funding from the CUF Endowment Fund and/or solar installation loan programs, anticipating the ability to repay any loans with the anticipated \$28,000 CUF should receive as federal and state incentive funding.

Primary Criteria *

How does the proposed use of the gift funds:

Fit with/fulfil CUF's mission?

"Our mission is to foster Unitarian Universalism which nurtures deep respect and caring for each other and champions social justice and environmental stewardship in our world."

"Solar Panels at CUF!" embodies our 7th UU Principle – respect for the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part – by generating clean energy for our own use, and by providing a highly visible example of environmental stewardship to our neighbors and all those who travel Sunset Drive and Parrish Lane. This public witness would be a direct statement of our commitment to environmental stewardship. By taking this action, we demonstrate to ourselves, our children, and the Carbondale community that we are indeed "walking our talk," and we encourage others to join us. The clean electricity we generate would help reduce fossil fuel use and its impact on climate change.

The impacts of climate change are widely understood to affect historically disadvantaged populations most severely. With that in mind, taking action to reduce climate change and encouraging others to do so also relates to CUF's commitment to champion social justice.

Strengthen bonds with the Carbondale? SI community? *

It provides an opportunity for us to offer Solar Panel Information sessions, encouraging greater community adoption of this technology and learning from the experiences of others who are part of the solar energy community. If we were (at some later date) to add a storage battery component to the system, it would enable us to serve as a community respite and assistance center in the event of a widespread power failure, such as that caused by the May, 2009, derecho. Battery technology is expected to develop significantly in the next few years, bringing down prices and increasing functionality.

Impact the Fellowship? *

As noted above, this project embodies our 7th UU Principle – respect for the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part – by generating clean energy for our own use, and by providing a highly visible example of environmental stewardship to our neighbors and all those who travel Sunset Drive and Parrish Lane.

Beyond that, “Solar Panels at CUF!” will also support renewal of our “Green Sanctuary” status, and strengthen the credibility of any environmental advocacy CUF’s Green Team and/or membership may undertake.

Finally, it will reduce the cost of electricity as an element in our annual budget. In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, CUF’s annual electrical energy expenses totaled \$4,152; in that ending June 30., 2023, they were \$4,170; in the first six months of the current year, they are \$2,978. We estimate annual savings on electricity of at least \$1,300. Informal sources have suggest that a 5% increase for next year would be a good estimate for Egyptian Electric customers; as energy prices increase, these savings would increase proportionately.

Contribute to the sustainability of the congregation for future generations? *

“Solar Panels at CUF!” contributes to the sustainability of the congregation by generating clean energy for Fellowship use, making a visible statement concerning our commitment to environmental stewardship, by connecting us to people who share those concerns, and by reducing CUF’s electric utility costs significantly. In a larger sense, this project contributes (quite modestly) to the sustainability of our climate, and to the social and physical structures that assume a generally stable climate.

By submitting a proposal, you are expected to be directly involved in its implementation and completion if your proposal is selected. How will you personally be involved in the planned activities throughout its implementation? *

Bill Sasso and Laura Basanta will manage (or collaborate in managing) the CUF end of the installation process, will coordinate CUF's application for incentive reimbursements, and will ensure that we report regularly to the congregation on the amount of electricity generated and its financial impact on the CUF budget. Laura will serve as project liaison to the Green Team and Social Action Committee; Bill will serve as project liaison the the Finance Team.

List other CUF members* and friends who endorse this proposal, and describe their involvement in its implementation and completion. *

- Joni Beth Bailey will assist by monitoring federal, state, and local regulations that relate to this project.
- Janet Harris will assist with engaging CUF youth in this proposal.
- Kathy O'Laughlin is willing to serve as project liason to the Board.
- Charles Ruffner will provide background information regarding previous CUF explorations of solar panel feasibility.
- Elena Sasso will help brainstorm how the project can create opportunities for youth and young adult engagement.
- Al Babbitt, Jeletta Brant, Alan Donatz, and Jennifer Mandaville also endorse this proposal and will assist as may be helpful.

Secondary Criteria

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Does your proposal honor the memory/interests of Bill Rose or Lois Hayward who made the gifts? If so, please explain:

Yes – while they were very different people, both Bill Rose and Lois Hayward were both committed to environmental stewardship.

Bill Rose installed a solar panel tree at his home, and some of his life experiences he described as most significant were wilderness explorations of northern Ontario and Sapphire Canyon in Colorado.

Lois Hayward (and her husband Jack) were among the first members of the Fellowship to purchase a hybrid vehicle. Several of Lois' poems included in the Image Spinners collections express her deep, perhaps mystical, sense of connection with Nature – the same Nature currently under threat from climate change.

This proposal clearly honors the lives and values of both Bill Rose and Lois Hayward.

How might youth/young adults/ those under 50 be involved in carrying out the plan? *

For obvious reasons, the installation itself will be done by professional electricians and solar panel installation technicians.

We look forward to working with youth/young adults/those under 50 within the Fellowship to determine how they might best engage in this project. They might help with “putting the word out on social media,” and/or with monitoring and reporting the climate-related impact of the solar panel installation to the congregation and larger community.

Another form of participation might be helping with presentations about the solar panels to interested visitors, especially their peers or younger children.

We would be glad to receive suggestions about other ways in which this proposal can engage youth, young adults, and the “under-50” CUF constituency!

Additional comments:

This proposal and the "Electric Vehicle Charging at CUF!" proposal, if both selected, offer a potential synergy. For example, the use of solar-generated electricity would further reduce the operational cost of EV charging, while installation of an EV charging station would increase CUF's electrical usage significantly, possibly making a larger solar panel installation advantageous. In the event that both proposals are approved, it would be advisable to consider how they can be most effectively planned and implemented.

Signature(s): *

Bill Sasso and Laura Basanta

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