

Continuing Education & Professional Expenses for Religious Educators

Guidelines for Congregations

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Dear Congregational Leader,

A primary factor in the strength of your religious education program is the stability of professional leadership – the length of tenure of your Religious Educator.

The two recurring things that influence a religious educator's success are their connections with colleagues and their ability to participate in professional development.

LREDA is committed to helping congregations achieve vibrant RE programs and successful relationships with their religious educators.

Why this booklet?

Many congregations ask about professional expenses for their Religious Educator. Why provide professional expenses? What benefit will accrue to the congregation? How much is appropriate? These guidelines were created to answer these questions and guide congregations in computing the right amount for their situation. Thank you for your continued support of religious education.

LREDA supports excellence in your Religious Education program by

- connecting religious educators with their colleagues in their chapter and beyond.
- supporting new religious educators with guidance and the cumulative wisdom of seasoned colleagues.
- encouraging religious educators in their ongoing professional development.
- advocating for best practices in relationships between congregations and their religious educator.

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Liberal Religious Educators Association

Guidelines for Professional Expenses Provided by Congregations

There is a correlation between performance as a religious educator and having adequate funds to do the job well.

The Benefits of Professional Development and Training for Religious Educators

Religious educators who receive ongoing professional development and training supported by their congregations:

- Apply the knowledge and experience they gain in their daily congregational work.
- Know where to find the most current RE program resources and curricula.
- Are part of a network of religious educators who share ideas and provide support.
- Identify as professionals and conduct themselves as such.
- Provide valuable leadership that stabilizes their programs and motivates participants.
- Feel more confident in their roles, which leads to satisfaction and longer tenure.

The Congregation's Responsibility

Professional Expenses should be the greater of \$5,000 (prorated for part-time) or 10% of salary.

A budget category separate from the religious educator's salary package should be established to cover conference, professional, and travel expenses.

Further information about [Professional Expenses from the UUA](#).

Professional Expenses include

- Professional conferences such as the LREDA Fall Conference, UU General Assembly, regional meetings, and summer RE conferences.
- training programs, retreats, and continuing education.

- periodic meetings of colleagues.
- registration, travel, room, and meals for above.
- dues for LREDA Continental, the local LREDA chapter, and other organizations as needed.
- books, periodicals, subscriptions.
- out-of-pocket costs connected with congregation-related meetings or events.
- all customary and usual business-related expenses. Note: Per the UUA guidance above, basics that a staff member needs in order to perform their job should not be classed as professional expenses. An employee should not need to pay for office supplies or furniture through their professional expenses.

The religious educator should account for expenditures according to the established procedures of the congregation.

Since participation in conferences and trainings is part of the religious educator's work in the congregation, it is viewed as study time, not vacation or time off. The contract/job description should provide study time and detail how the RE program will be managed during these absences.

Sample Professional Expenses Clause from a Religious Educator's Employment Contract

"In addition to Base Compensation, the congregation will budget for the Director of Religious Education's professional expenses, including conference travel, fees, room, and board; dues; journals, books, subscriptions; continuing education; and all normal and usual business-related expenses, payable directly or as reimbursement to the DRE. Payment will be made up to the amount budgeted for these purposes upon production of appropriate receipts.

Attendance at professional meetings, training programs, and conferences is part of the work schedule.

Scheduling of conference travel and continuing education are to be arranged in advance with the chair(s) of the RE Committee (or the Minister or other supervisor). The RE Committee (or supervisor) will arrange for a substitute for the Religious Educator on those Sundays. The Religious Educator will leave full instructions for their substitute."

Sample Expenditures for Professional Expenses Provided by Congregations

Quarter-Time Coordinator of Religious Education / RE Administrator

at least \$1,250 ($\frac{1}{4}$ of \$5,000) or 10% of salary if more

\$1,250 might be spent as follows:

LREDA Membership dues / year (Continental \$220, Chapter \$25)	\$245
Online Fall Conference (\$175) / Online LREDA Prof Day (\$50) (both with early registration)	\$225
Two online Renaissance Modules (\$300 each)	\$600
Professional Resources (books, equipment)	\$200
Total	\$1,270

Half-Time Director of Religious Education / RE Administrator

at least \$2,500 ($\frac{1}{2}$ of \$5,000) or 10% of salary if more

\$2,500 might be spent as follows:

LREDA Membership dues / year (Continental \$220, Chapter \$25)	\$245
Regular Chapter Meetings (estimated travel costs)	\$100
Online LREDA Professional Day	\$50
Online GA Attendance	\$250
In person attendance at LREDA Fall Conference (early registration \$450, flights \$300, Hotel 4 nights, shared room \$400, Meals 5 days at \$64 per day)	\$1,470
One online Renaissance Module	\$300
Professional Resources (books, equipment)	\$200
Total	\$2,615

Three Quarter - Time Director of Religious Education / RE Administrator

at least \$3,750 (3/4 of \$5,000) or 10% of salary if more

\$3,750 might be spent as follows:

LREDA Membership dues / year (Continental \$220, Chapter \$25)	\$245
Regular Chapter Meetings (estimated travel costs)	\$100
In person LREDA Professional Day	\$125
GA Attendance (early registration \$400, flights \$300, hotel 5 nights shared room \$500, meals 5* \$65)	\$1,525
In person attendance at LREDA Fall Conference (early registration \$450, flights \$300, hotel 4 nights, shared room \$400, meals \$250)	\$1,400
One online Renaissance Module	\$300
Professional Resources (books, equipment)	\$200
Total	\$3,895

Full Time Director of Religious Education / RE Administrator

at least \$5,000 or 10% of salary if more

\$5,000 might be spent as follows:

LREDA Membership dues / year (Continental \$220, Chapter \$25)	\$245
Regular Chapter Meetings (estimated travel costs)	\$100
In person LREDA Professional Day	\$125
GA attendance (early registration \$400, flights \$300, hotel 5 nights shared room \$500, meals 5* \$65)	\$1,525
In person attendance at LREDA Fall Conference (early registration \$450, flights \$300, hotel 4 nights, shared room \$400, meals \$250)	\$1,400
In Person Renaissance Module at Fall Con (registration \$300, extra night in hotel \$200, meals	\$630

2*65)	
Chapter Retreat* (registration \$350, travel \$300, meals & sundry expenses \$200)	\$850
Professional Resources (books, equipment)	\$200
Total	\$5,075

*based on cost of a recent Southwest Chapter Retreat

Professional Development Opportunities for Religious Educators:

Renaissance Modules

The Renaissance Program provides Unitarian Universalist religious educators with a learning community where they can easily access applicable skills and tools. The program offers 14 differently-themed modules, both online and in-person. Find out more [HERE](#).

Religious Education Credentialing

Religious Education Credentialing is a [UUA program](#) that recognizes religious education as a profession and supports religious educators. By documenting education and work experience, a religious educator is awarded a credential in one of three levels: Skilled, Advanced and Leadership.

This program provides a comprehensive path towards professionalism and a deeper understanding of our UU values. Those receiving a credential realize and accept leadership in religious education and an understanding of professional standards. For more information about the program (including how to get started) visit the [UUA's website](#).

LREDA Fall Conference

[LREDA hosts an annual conference](#) in the fall with over three days of special programming, including a keynote speaker, worship, a variety of workshops, and special interest meetings, with the goal of educating, networking, and connecting religious educators from across the continent both in person and online.

LREDA Professional Days

On the Tuesday and Wednesday before the UUA's General Assembly in June, LREDA members gather for connection and learning in person and online. [Find out more.](#)

Summer Programs

There are several professional development opportunities offered over the summer, such as [Ferry Beach](#), [Star Island](#) [RE at the Mountain](#)

These provide excellent opportunities for your religious educator to refresh, learn, energize, and connect with colleagues.

Finding Our Way Home Retreat for Religious Professionals of Color

An annual spring retreat hosted by the UUA for UU religious professionals of color. Offering community building, spiritual reflection, and collegial support while connecting participants with local community organizations as partners in service, witness, and advocacy. [Find out more.](#)

Appropriated Discretionary Fund

If your religious educator performs work outside of your congregation for pay, it is recommended that they have an appropriated discretionary fund established at the congregation. Monies earned through work for the UUA and other entities but on the congregation's time, such as OWL trainings, curricular consultations, and rites of passage, go into this fund and then are spent on the good works and ministries of the congregation.