

## Finding the Sweet Spot Worksheet

You have an idea! Wonderful. This worksheet is the first step in making it happen.

This worksheet is for you if:

- You are not part of an existing group within the church
- You are part of an existing group leadership who would like to invite the broader congregation to your event.
- You are part of an existing group leadership with an idea that would take additional budget, volunteer power, or staff time.

The first step is to assess if your idea is in the Sweet Spot. Use the question below, and work with at least one other person, to discern how your idea or initiative fits in the sweet spot of our mission, mission, and community life. (This Sweet Spot is the assessment that Foothills Staff use to assess their own ideas and initiatives!)

Please keep in mind that there are many great ideas in a congregation as large as ours - so many that we need to say “no” more often than we say “yes.” While the questions below do not generate an automatic formula for “yesses” and “nos,” the hope is that these considerations will lead each of us in an intentional discernment about whether this idea is the right one to be pursuing at this time.

Once you complete the questions, you may find that the answer is a “no.” That does not mean it’s a bad idea. It just means the idea isn’t a good fit for right now. Please keep moving through this process with future ideas!

Happy Discerning. If you have questions, don’t hesitate to reach out to Foothills Staff at [help@foothillsuu.org](mailto:help@foothillsuu.org).

### The Sweet Spot Questions

#### **1. Mission: Does this idea fit within our mission?**

*Our mission is “To unleash courageous love in Northern Colorado and beyond by embracing our diversity, growing our faith, and awakening our spirits to the unfolding meaning of this life.”*

- Is the idea a particularly good manifestation of our congregation’s core purpose in our current time and place - does it serve what we are **uniquely** poised to do?
- Is there something specifically Unitarian Universalist about what you are considering?

- What makes it a fit to be offered at a **UU Church** - and **our** UU church specifically?

## **2. Leadership Capacity: Does our staff, the leadership team, and the church have the capacity and skills to do it well?**

- *Professional Staff:* Please note that in a large congregation, almost everything requires a degree of professional staff participation and leadership for it to be successful over the long run. The more complex the idea, the more coordination it requires. If this is to be staff-driven/led, does the staff team have the capacity (time/energy/skills) to execute the idea at a high enough level of excellence to maximize mission and impact?
- *Volunteer Staff:* If it is not to be staff-driven/led, is there a sufficient enough volunteer pool that can not only initiate the work but sustain it over the needed timeframe you have in mind?
- *Budget:* Do we have the financial resources? Is there a sufficient budget? (If you are unsure about the budget, be sure to connect with the staff person responsible for the area of the church for this idea.)

## **3. Participants Capacity: Is there capacity (interest, skills, time, and energy) within your participant pool to make it successful?**

- Will it take participants away from something else that is more a priority in our mission?
- Consider your target audience and ideal participants.
  - What is their age, length of time in the congregation, life stage, particular needs, and/or longings?
  - Do they have the time/energy/capacity/interest to show up and make it worth the effort?
    - How do you know?
- What are the barriers to participation? Do we have the capacity/desire to relieve these?

## **4. Impact: What meaningful impact will this have for those in our community and beyond?**

- How will it deepen people's commitment to his church and/or our faith?
- What is the probable impact of the idea - number of people, depth of need, duration, secondary gains....is it "worth it"?

**5. Will: Does someone actually want to do what will need to be done - is there enthusiasm, passion, excitement, desire?**

- How many people are excited/interested in this and willing to help make it successful?

**6. Timing: Is now the right time?**

- Does the idea match the church's seasons, energy, capacity, or developmental stage?
- What is going on in the wider world-- does this speak to it?
- Note: We suggest 90 days lead time for any new initiative.

## **After the Sweet Spot**

If your considerations lead you to believe that we should pursue this idea, your next step is to identify the area or areas of the church this idea fits in. Here are possible areas:

- Governance (Board of Trustees, Mission, Vision, Strategic Planning, Endowment, Nominating, Policies)
- Ministry (Worship, Justice, Service, Music, Newcomers, Campus Ministry, Stewardship and Fundraising, Building and Grounds, Community Partners, Leadership Development, Spiritual Deepening)

Once you have identified the lead area, identify the corresponding Staff Lead:

**Rev. Gretchen Haley:** worship, community presence & partnerships, leadership development, UUA connections

**Rev. Sean Neil-Barron:** adult classes and programs, spiritual deepening, small groups, ministry for older adults, newcomers, paths for engagement

**Katie Watkins:** fundraising, building and grounds, other operations

**Rev. Elaine Aron-Tenbrink:** pastoral care

**Rev. Christopher Watkins Lamb:** music

**Eleanor VanDeusen:** programs for children, teens, and parents

If you are representing a small group, please select the staff lead for your group. If you are unsure who is the appropriate staff contact, please email [help@foothillsuu.org](mailto:help@foothillsuu.org), and we will help you identify the appropriate staff member. After, head over to [foothillsuu.org/idea](http://foothillsuu.org/idea) and fill out the [Making It Happen at Foothills Form](#) and a staff member will respond within 12 days.