

**2021 NCRAL MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT MINI-GRANT**  
*Champaign-Urbana Astronomical Society*



Pursuant to the requirements for transparency in all NCRAL approved mini grants, the Champaign-Urbana Astronomical Society (recipients of \$250) provided the following information about their grant:

**Please describe the proposed recruitment and retention activities.**

We plan to spread the word about the CU Astronomical Society and recruit new members (including younger members and those from underrepresented groups) by creating a flyer to be distributed initially through boosted social media posts and eventually through open house participants and passers-by to our farmer's market exhibit. We would also display the flier at the planetarium.

**Please explain the extent to which these activities would be replicable by other NCRAL affiliates.**

We would happily share the flier with interested groups and detail how it was used. We could submit the plan and results to the quarterly NCRAL newsletter.

**Describe benchmark and baseline data that you will use to determine if the proposed activities are successful.**

Given COVID protocols, we would attempt to drive people to our web site where their participation could be logged. We also allow guests to attend our Zoom meetings. We would document the number of guests and of course new memberships and attempt to ascertain how they became aware of the group. It is our hope to see a spike in memberships. Our memberships are prorated to January 1 so we could also advertise that, joining in June, they'd be getting a membership essentially for half price.

**Please explain in detail how you expect the mini-grant's funds to be spent given restriction to contractual and commodity expenses.**

The club has a membership brochure that includes a lot of words. The idea discussed at one of our monthly meetings is to develop a visual flier that would drive people to our web site. The flier would detail the benefits of membership, the observing facilities maintained by the club, plus include full-color images, including appropriate images of kids using our facilities. The idea is to hand parties two fliers, one for them and one to post somewhere or to pass to someone else. Ideally, we would like to get these into the schools

once they fully re-open, including the Parkland College astronomy classroom. The CU Astronomical Society would cover developing the flier with mini-grant funds used for duplication.

CUAS would cover time spent on the flier, acquiring permissions for images, and cover any expenses related to boosted posts on social media. Though we currently do not have advertising rates, the club would strongly consider including a smaller version of the flier on the following website (<https://www.chambanamoms.com>) directed at families and Smile Politely (<http://smilepolitely.com>), a local culture online magazine. CUAS would cover these costs.

**Feel free to address any of the other factors that you feel should be considered by proposal reviews that relate to the merit of the proposal (feasibility of activities, likelihood of success, and potential impact on the Region).**

As with many clubs in the region, CUAS is a diverse group of members "of advanced age." An influx of younger talent and younger ideas will help to steer the club in the appropriate direction. As has been pointed out in the NCRAL newsletter, younger minds aren't being drawn to clubs or hobbies, but the stars and planets are still appealing and events like Perseverance on Mars still draw interest. We believe we must try to instill the same sense of wonder that we all experienced in looking at a clear, dark sky.