

What is a “sliding scale” you ask?

from Underground Alchemy, Albany, NY

It is a tool for building economic justice, and it requires your active participation. If a sliding scale is implemented effectively, everyone pays a similar percentage of their income for the same products or services. A wide spectrum across the scale promotes broader accessibility, while ensuring fair compensation to the producer. Paying according to one's available resources creates a more equitable, diverse and sustainable community we all benefit from.

Sliding scales are often based on individual income levels, with people of higher incomes paying more. However, many factors complicate and affect our financial status. Some groups of people have specific costs that the larger population does not. And others have access to resources that are not always reflected in their lifestyle choices and income levels. Please consider both your class background and earning power when choosing your share payment. Practice economic solidarity!

For a general baseline of what to pay please start with your annual income. If you don't know your annual income, take your monthly income and multiply by 12. Many people's budgets are linked to those of a household partner. If you share finances with another adult, determine your household income and divide by two.

Here is a short list of guidelines that we're hoping will be helpful as you navigate the question of how much you can afford.

Consider paying less on the scale if you...

...are supporting children or have other dependents

...have significant debt

...have medical expenses not covered by insurance

...have tuition/educational expenses

...receive public assistance

...have immigration related expenses

...are a senior citizen

Consider paying more on the scale if you...

...own the home you live in

...have investments, retirement accounts, inherited money

...travel recreationally

...have access to family money and resources in times of need

...work part time, by choice

...have a relatively high degree of earning power due to level of education (or gender and racial privilege, class background, etc.) Even if you are not currently exercising your earning power, we ask you to recognize this as a choice.

The scale is intended to be a map, inviting each of us to take inventory of our financial resources and look deeper at our levels of privilege. It is a way to challenge the classist and capitalist society we live in and work towards economic justice on a local level. While we ask you to look inward please don't stress about it. Pay what feels right.

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