

## **UUTC SOCIAL ACTION OPERATING GUIDELINES**

(2019-2020)

**FUNCTION:** The function of the Social Action Team is to provide leadership within the congregation for spiritually nourishing and impactful engagement in social, economic, and environmental justice endeavors that are aligned with UUTC goals and UU values.

**MEMBERSHIP:** The Social Action Team may include members, Friends, or Visitors, and any person affiliated with UUTC may participate in activities sponsored by the Team. The Team actively seeks collaboration with other Unitarian Universalists and faith-based or secular justice-seeking organizations to promote social, economic, and environmental justice in our local and global communities.

**LEADERSHIP:** The Social Action Team leader or co-leader must be a Member or Friend of UUTC and is either directly chosen by the Team or appointed by the Minister. Leadership term is for a maximum of three years. After a full term, a leader becomes inactive from the Team for one year and may again accept the leadership role after two years absence from this role.

Responsibilities of the Team Leader(s) include:

- (1) Prepare and organize Team meetings, programs, and retreats.
- (2) Ensure that the Team schedule, team meeting minutes, and other critical information are shared electronically with the UUTC Administrator.
- (3) Keep the Social Action Team Tracker current.
- (4) Accept social action proposals and bring the proposals to the Team for discussion and vote.
- (5) Oversee Team correspondence and finances.
- (6) Organize charitable giving.
- (7) Facilitate communication with the congregation about social justice opportunities and issues through the newsletter, bulletin board, and social media.
- (8) Oversee and be accountable for Team endeavors.
- (9) Ensure that the Team operating guidelines are updated annually.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TEAM:**

- (1) Facilitate the involvement of as many Members, Friends, and Visitors as possible in direct actions related to social, economic, and environmental justice.
- (2) Coordinate with other Teams, Committees, and groups at UUTC to provide educational programming and activities that help increase understanding of and involvement with justice issues.
- (3) Create and/or maintain partnerships with other justice-seeking organizations and faith communities.
- (4) Maintain UUTC-specific Social Action projects that help alleviate the symptoms of injustices, such as charitable giving, the Dignity Project, 5<sup>th</sup> Thursday at Bread of Life, and the Haven food donations.
- (5) Working with other individuals, groups, and organizations both within UUTC and in the larger community, seek to change systems that cause injustices through both participation in and creation of endeavors that focus on systemic change.

### **PROCEDURES:**

- (1) Meetings and Business

The Social Action Team operates on a different meeting schedule than other Teams at UUTC, combining field trips and programs in the following manner as per the schedule that can be found in the Team Tracker:

Field Trips: The purpose of field trips is to strengthen personal relationships with our partners and gain a better understanding of justice needs. Because of privacy and space concerns, most

of these field trips include only members of the Team. When possible, these field trips are taken on the same day as Team meeting night, but the time is sometimes changed due to the schedules of the organizations. These field trips are organized by the Team Leader(s).

Programs: The purpose of programs is to further knowledge and understanding related to justice issues of focus. For this reason, all individuals of the congregation may be invited to programs along with the Social Action Team members. These programs take place on a night that no other activity is occurring at UUTC so that everyone can attend. The programs are organized by individual Team members on a rotating basis and usually last approximately one hour.

Team Business (Nuts and Bolts): Social Action Team business is conducted primarily through the [socialjustice@uutc.org](mailto:socialjustice@uutc.org) email. When needed, 30 minutes is added after field trips or programs for nuts and bolts issues, but this is held to a minimum. If larger periods of time are needed for planning, it is built into the Team schedule as a retreat. Retreats replace Team meetings for that month.

## 2. Monthly Charitable Giving

Each month a community organization is the recipient of UUTC charitable giving, and donations for that organization are collected throughout the month in special envelopes. Several months of the year are reserved for raising funds for the Minister's Discretionary Fund, UUSC, and the Dignity Project, but the congregation determines the remaining recipients of charitable giving. In March of each year the congregation is surveyed to determine ideas for recipient organizations, and in April UUTC members vote on their top choices. The selected organizations begin receiving donations in the new fiscal year beginning on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Team Leadership provides the Minister and Administrator with a brief summary of the mission of each selected recipient of monthly charitable giving, and this summary appears in the weekly Order of Service and the UUTC newsletter. Team Leadership ensures that each month envelopes bearing the name of the targeted monthly organization are provided to the Worship Team for use in collecting donations during Sunday morning worship services. Contributions are applied weekly to the Charitable Donation Fund by the bookkeeper; and at the end of the month, a check is issued to the selected agency. When names are associated with these donations, the bookkeeper credits them as tax-exempt donations to the Member's or Friend's personal record of financial support.

## 3. Areas of Focus

While some activities of the Social Action Team seek to relieve symptoms of injustices, the Team also selects one-to-three goals to focus on at the systemic level and as a congregation. Focus Groups are created by the Team and are open to the entire congregation, and these groups allow individuals to put their energies towards issues they are passionate about in the name of UUTC. At least one of the Focus Groups is the main responsibility of the Social Action Team as a group while other Focus Groups may be led by individuals or other groups within UUTC. Focus group information can be found on the Social Action Team Tracker on the UUTC website.

## 4. Social Action Project Requests

If someone is interested in UUTC becoming involved in an activity or project related to social, economic, or environmental justice, the procedure is to download the Project Request Form from the Social Action Team section on the UUTC website, complete it, and send it to the Team leader(s). The request is discussed and voted on by Team members as a group, and the Team decision is communicated to the person submitting the Request