

# **GUIDELINES FOR CUSJ CHAPTERS**

Revised by Debra Mair, Frances Deverell and Bob Staveley October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010  
Further Revised, from 4 to 2 chapter options, 2012 01 06 – Frances Deverell

## **1. Purposes of Forming a CUSJ Chapter**

- 1.1 CUSJ Chapters across the country provide an opportunity for people to get involved in CUSJ at the local level.
- 1.2 Chapters encourage people to come together in social justice work. It is often easier to do such work with others than it is to work alone.
- 1.3 Chapters can promote the work of CUSJ in the local congregations and increase our ability to be seen and heard and promote our concerns.
- 1.4 Chapters can engage in educational activities to inform their local congregations and their communities on important issues.
- 1.5 Chapters can act and take positions in a timely way when congregations may not have the time or energy to go through the process of taking a position.
- 1.6 Chapters can participate in local alliances or coalitions on issues where we need to work together with other faith groups or organizations to achieve our objectives.

## **2. Formation of a Chapter**

- 2.1 A chapter of CUSJ may be formed by a group of CUSJ members (target of 7) that are associated with a CUC congregation or a group of CUC congregations under the following conditions:
  - 2.1.1 They agree to comply with the purposes of CUSJ and its By-laws, and agree to affirm and promote the principles of the CUC.
  - 2.1.2 They apply to CUSJ for recognition as a Chapter.
  - 2.1.3 Their application is accepted by the CUSJ Board.
  - 2.1.4 All members of a Chapter must be individual members of CUSJ.
  - 2.1.5 Non-members of CUSJ may participate in Chapter activities as "supporters" at the discretion of the Chapter members, and provided such supporters abide by these Guidelines.

## **3. Types of Chapters**

### **3.1 Option One: Congregational CUSJ Chapter**

In this instance, the Chapter has been established with the full cognizance and support of the Board of the Congregation/fellowship. As well as functioning as the social responsibility committee, the Chapter is publicly identified with UU Social activists across the country through membership in CUSJ. Depending on the issue, the group may act publicly in the name of the Congregation/Fellowship (when suitably empowered to do so), or in the name of the CUSJ chapter, or in the name of the CUSJ. (see below.)

### **3.2 Option Two: Regional CUSJ Chapter**

Several Congregations in one area or all the congregations in a province may

wish to form a chapter. The purpose of such a chapter would be to facilitate working together on regional issues of concern to all. The same rules apply as for an individual congregation to form a regional CUSJ chapter. (6+ members who agree with the purposes and by-laws and want to work with the national CUSJ in a cooperative manner.) Ideally congregational boards would be aware and supportive but no formal approval of congregations is required to establish a regional CUSJ chapter.

- 3.3 With respect to each model, the CUSJ strongly asserts that it wants to work in harmony with the local Congregation or Fellowships, and with the CUC.

#### **4. Relationship Between CUSJ Chapters and the CUSJ Board**

- 4.1 The goal of the CUSJ Board is to develop, encourage and maintain a vibrant network of Unitarian social action in Canada.
- 4.2 The ideal relationship is one where chapters are empowered but there is also a regular practice of communication with the Board, recognition of board policy, and respect for the larger whole.
- 4.3 To encourage empowerment of CUSJ Chapters, the board will use its website to make available support materials, backgrounders, and sample letters to make action at the local level easier.
- 4.4 Chapters may also provide information for the website. If chapters want material to appear on the CUSJ website they send the appropriate material to the board liason to the website. (currently [president@cusj.org](mailto:president@cusj.org))
- 4.5 The National CUSJ Board will take responsibility to maintain contact lists for national media (for press releases). Chapters will take responsibility to develop and maintain contacts with the local media for press releases. The National Board and local chapters can work together for maximum media coverage on issues that warrant that approach.

#### **5. Chapter Mandates**

- 5.1 The activity of Chapters must fall within the purposes and values of CUSJ and the Canadian Unitarian Council.
- 5.2 Before a chapter of CUSJ takes action or public position on an issue beyond local or provincial scope, it must investigate whether the National Board of the CUSJ has a formal policy or position on that subject.
  - 5.2.1 If there is no position, chapters are encouraged to develop their ideas and to propose a policy position for the national board.
  - 5.2.2 If there is no position, and the issue requires immediate action, chapters must act in the name of the chapter only, and not on behalf of all of CUSJ.
  - 5.2.3 If the Board disagrees with the chapter position, or if there are chapters taking opposite positions, a dialogue should be developed to study the issues in depth. If no consensus can be found, the Board reserves the right to declare that no position will be taken on behalf of CUSJ for that issue.
  - 5.2.4 If the proposed action of the chapter contradicts the existing policy of the CUSJ Board, the chapter must not act in the name of CUSJ. (See 5.2.3)

- 5.2.5 Chapters must make clear that they speak in the name of the Chapter, not CUSJ, unless their position is already CUSJ policy, or has received prior written approval (e-mail qualifies) from the Board. [CUSJ Constitution Article 16.4]
- 5.3 Chapters are free to pursue issues of local or provincial concern as long as there are no national or international implications. The national board would appreciate being informed through copies of letters or annual reports what stands the local chapter has taken. In these cases chapters must speak in the name of the CUSJ chapter, not the whole CUSJ.
- 5.4 When pursuing issues of a provincial or regional nature, Chapters are urged, where possible, to work with other CUSJ Chapters in the same province or region.

## **6. Maintenance of Chapter Standing**

- 6.1 To remain a Chapter in good standing, the following conditions should be met:
  - 6.1.1 Each Chapter of CUSJ will furnish a brief annual report in time to be published for distribution at the CUSJ Annual Meeting in May. This report will include issues worked on and actions taken that year.
  - 6.1.2 Each Chapter will provide to CUSJ the names and contact information of any elected officials of the Chapter with their annual report. Ideally they will provide a full membership list. At least one name with contact information is required, and that information should be kept up to date.
- 6.2 It shall be noted that, provided there are no extenuating circumstances, Chapters that have submitted annual reports for the Annual General Meeting of the membership and contact information of at least one person shall be accepted as Chapters in good standing for the coming year.

## **7. Disbandment**

- 7.1 A Chapter may disband by written notification to the CUSJ Board.
  - 7.2 A Chapter will be deemed to have disbanded if it fails to submit an annual report to the Annual General Meeting of membership for two successive years.
  - 7.3 The CUSJ Board may disband a Chapter if the Board decides a Chapter has failed to follow any of the Guidelines without providing a reasonable and satisfactory explanation to the CUSJ Board.
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## Existing Chapters

The following groups have submitted reports for the annual report as CUSJ Chapters:  
(This is the information I had in my files. If anyone has the annual reports in digital form, please send them to me and I can complete this chart.)

Name of Chapter	Years report submitted	Person Responsible
Toronto First	2011 2010; 2008; 2007; 2004; 2001;	Margaret Rao Margaret Rao Margaret Rao Margaret Rao Margaret Rao Margaret Rao
Ottawa First	2011 2008; 2007; 2004;	Bob Stevenson Bob Stevenson Bob Stevenson Bob Stevenson
Montreal Church	2008; 2007;	? ?
Edmonton	2008;	Rosemary Falconer
Kingston	2004;	Elaine Harvey
Calgary	2001	Adina Lyon
Saint John, N.B.	2004	Sharon Flatt
Atlantic Region	2001	Alan Chilton, Halifax
South Peel, Mississauga	2004; 2001	Norman McLeod Norman McLeod
Vancouver Church	2001;	John Taylor
Don Heights, TO	2011	Tom Brown

I have since talked with other churches or fellowships that considered themselves to be a chapter.