



Guidelines for CUSJ Chapters¹

2016 11 18 version – Margaret, Leslie, Marlene

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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 and regional levels.
- 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 at the local and regional levels and increase our ability to be seen and heard and promote our concerns.
- 1.4 Chapters can engage in educational activities to inform Unitarians and their wider communities.
- 1.5 Chapters can act freely on political matters, matters of conscience, and the [principles of our faith](#) where congregations may be unable or reluctant to do so.
- 1.6 Chapters can form local alliances or coalitions on issues where we need to work together with other faith groups or organizations to achieve our objectives.

2. Forming a Chapter

- 2.1 A group of CUSJ members can form a chapter, providing:
 - 2.1.1 All proposed members of a chapter are individual members of CUSJ.
 - 2.1.2 They agree to affirm and promote the [principles of our faith](#) and comply with the purposes of CUSJ and its By-laws.
 - 2.1.3 They apply to CUSJ for recognition as a chapter.
 - 2.1.4 Their application is accepted by the CUSJ Board.
- 2.2 Chapters may be:
 - 2.2.1 Local (minimum of 3 members) or
 - 2.2.2 Regional (minimum of 5 members). Regional chapters allow members of various congregations to work together on issues of concern to all.
- 2.3 CUSJ members can belong to both local and regional chapters.

¹ In this document, the word *Unitarian* is used instead of *Unitarian Universalism*, for conciseness, but the intended meaning is all Canadian Unitarians, Universalists, and Unitarian Universalists.

3. Relations with Congregations

- 3.1 CUSJ chapters are answerable to the CUSJ, which is legally separate from local congregations or fellowships and the CUC.
- 3.2 Congregations are not responsible for programs, activities or finances of CUSJ chapters. CUSJ chapters may work with social justice and other groups in their congregations.
- 3.3 CUSJ chapters communicate clearly so that there will be no suggestion in print, word or deed that they speak or act on behalf of Unitarian Universalist congregations.
- 3.4 CUSJ chapters respect the Covenant between the CUC and the CUSJ.

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 activity of chapters must fall within the purposes and values of CUSJ.
- 4.3 CUSJ chapters are empowered to act reasonably autonomously provided that they recognize board policy, respect CUSJ as a whole and communicate appropriately with others.
- 4.4 The board will use the CUSJ.org website to provide support materials, backgrounders, and sample letters for action at the local level.
- 4.5 Chapters may also provide information for the website. Chapters may send the appropriate material to webeditor@cusj.org. The CUSJ Board also maintains a Facebook group to which any Unitarian can belong.
- 4.6 The CUSJ Board will be responsible for maintaining contact lists for national media. Chapters will be responsible for developing and maintaining contact with the local media. The CUSJ Board and local chapters can work together for maximum media coverage on issues that warrant that approach.
- 4.7 Chapters are free to pursue issues of local or provincial concern as long as there are no national or international implications.
 - 4.7.1 Please provide the CUSJ board with copies of Chapter letters and Annual Reports, so that the Board can track the stands the local chapters have taken.
 - 4.7.2 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.
- 4.8 Before taking action or a public position on an issue beyond local or provincial scope, Chapters must determine the CUSJ Board formal policy or position, if any, on that subject.
 - 4.8.1 The Board reserves the right to refuse to set out a formal CUSJ policy or position for a particular issue.
 - 4.8.2 If there is no policy or position:
 - Chapters are encouraged to develop their ideas and to propose a policy or position for the CUSJ Board.

- Chapters may take action or a public position, providing they have received prior written approval from the Board (e-mail approval qualifies).

5. Maintaining Chapter Status

- 5.1 CUSJ chapters must keep minutes tracking their decisions and activities.
- 5.2 To remain a Chapter in good standing, each chapter must:
 - 5.2.1 Furnish a brief annual report at least one week before the CUSJ Annual Meeting in May. This report will include issues worked on and actions taken that year.
 - 5.2.2 Provide at least one name with up-to-date contact information as a contact person.
 - 5.2.3 Provide the names and contact information of any elected officials of the chapter with their annual report. Ideally they will provide a full membership list.

6. Disbandment

- 6.1 To disband, a chapter must notify the CUSJ Board in writing.
- 6.2 A chapter will be deemed to have disbanded if it fails to submit an annual report to the Annual General Meeting for three successive years.
- 6.3 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 explanation to the CUSJ Board.