

APPLICATION:

SOCIAL JUSTICE CONGREGATIONAL PROJECT

FAITH IN ACTION COUNCIL

FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF DENVER



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
First Unitarian Society of Denver Mission and Vision.....	3
Mission.....	3
Vision.....	3
Faith in Action Council Mission and Vision.....	4
Mission.....	4
Vision.....	4
UUA Social Justice Empowerment Program Handbook.....	5
Project Overview Instructions.....	6
Keys to Success.....	6
Project Overview.....	7
Project Name.....	7
Definition.....	7
Contacts.....	7
Meetings.....	7
Previous Accomplishments.....	8
Instruction for Goals and Action plans.....	9
Example Goal and Strategy Statements.....	10
Goals and Strategy Action Plans.....	11
First Goal.....	11
First Goal Continued.....	12
Second Goal.....	13
Second Goal Continued.....	14
Third Goal.....	15
Third Goal Continued.....	16
Fourth Goal.....	17
Fourth Goal Continued.....	18
Collaboration.....	19
FUSD Staff.....	19
Allied Community Organizations.....	19
Communication Plan.....	20
Budget.....	20
FIAC Expectations.....	21
Biennial Evaluation.....	22
Notes.....	23
Appendix.....	24
Writing SMART Objectives Supporting Goals.....	24
Specific.....	25
Measurable.....	25
Relevant.....	26
Time-bound.....	26

Introduction

This project application is provided by the Faith in Action Council (FIAC) of the First Unitarian Society of Denver.

Its purpose is to provide a process for a social justice initiative to become recognized as a formal congregational social justice project. New projects will be required to fill out this application and each existing project will use this form to re-apply every two years as a means of reevaluating goals and strategies. The application process takes place in the spring.

The process of filling out this application will help everyone involved—project members, FUSD staff, and the congregation at large—transform our Unitarian Universalist values into committed actions to make a positive impact in our community on our chosen justice issues.

Please contact any member of FIAC if you have questions during this process. The current roster of FIAC members can be found on the FUSD web site in the Justice Initiatives section.

Look for the “Keys to Success” sections that highlight points of emphasis FIAC will use for evaluating the application for approval. Also, keep in mind the mission and vision of both FUSD and FIAC in mind during the application process.

First Unitarian Society of Denver Mission and Vision

Mission

Joining hands and voices for justice and peace, we inspire lives of joy and spiritual integrity, growing an inclusive community of courage and caring.

Vision

Community is inspired. Justice is realized. Diversity is celebrated. Souls are grown in love and service.

Faith in Action Council Mission and Vision

Mission

The First Unitarian Society of Denver's Faith-in-Action Council calls, encourages, and empowers church members and friends to work towards effective social justice while supporting each other in accordance with the FUSD Mission and in the spirit of UU principles.

Vision

First Unitarian will be known as a community leader on justice issues. Our work will change the world through love. We will engage in charity (helping others) and work towards justice (building a more just world). Our work will give a voice and power to act to people who are "helping" and those who are "being helped."

UUA Social Justice Empowerment Program Handbook

Special Note: A rich source of wisdom for organizing social justice action around UU sensibilities can be found in the Social Justice Empowerment Program Handbook produced by the UUA.

Click on the following link to view the document (PDF), or type the address into your web browser.

http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/documents/aw/sje_handbook.pdf

(accessed: 01/15/2018)

You can also find in with a web search with the search terms “uua social justice empowerment handbook.”

The handbook is “...designed to help social justice leaders and advocates be more strategic, to develop collective decision-making, to make good use of congregational resources, and to put our UU faith into action.”

We highly recommended that project leadership teams review use the Handbook as a reference while completing this application.

—Faith in Action Council

Project Overview Instructions

The overview section gives the project team the chance to define the social justice issue they are working to address.

Briefly state and describe your social justice issue. Include in your discussion its emphasis on building community and its relation to Unitarian Universalist grounding, accountability, opportunity, and fit. These landmarks will be considerations in FIAC's evaluation of this project application.

- **Grounding:** Does the issue have authentic and deep UU roots? Does it link to our current identity?
- **Accountability:** Is the issue of concern to marginalized groups in the congregation and community?
- **Fit:** Is there a match between the congregation's resources, aspirations, and ability to make a real difference?
- **Opportunity:** Is there a likelihood that the congregation can be a respected participant in the public dialogue on this issue?

Next, list the members of your leadership team and committed members so prospective members know who to contact to express interest.

Finally, describe your meeting frequency, regular times, and meeting communication plan. FIAC encourages regular meetings of project teams to maintain the engagement and interest of committed and prospective members.

This section is designed to be a contact sheet for your project, so we encourage applicants to keep its length to one page only! It will be a convenient, detachable handout to give to interested members when pitching your group during coffee hour or other events.

Keys to Success

- Look for ways to link your project to UU grounding, accountability, fit, and opportunity
- Keep contact list of leadership and committed members up-to-date
- Hold regular planning meetings or events to keep the team engaged
- When completed, use the 'project overview' page of this application as a printable quick contact sheet to help spread the word about your project

Project Overview

Project Name

Definition

Statement of the social justice issue; and its grounding, accountability, opportunity, or fit with UU values.

Contacts

List up to three members of the leadership team (Name—Phone—Email)

List up to five other active members (Name—Phone—Email)

Meetings

Does the project team meet regularly? Where? When? How are the meeting details communicated?

Previous Accomplishments

Is this an existing social justice project that is re-applying? (Yes or No)

If yes, share some accomplishments from the past two years.

What were some challenges and lessons learned that can be applied toward the next two years?

Instruction for Goals and Action plans

This important section will represent the foundation for your project's activities for next two years. The major solution will be to develop goals and strategies to address your chosen social justice issue.

FIAC's hope is that the strategies of each project will take a balanced approach. By that we mean a variety of tactics will be chosen from the domains of **service, advocacy, witnessing, education, and community organization** whenever possible.

We also encourage project teams to include as many church groups and age ranges as possible, including Religious Exploration.

Finally, in order to ensure high rates of success, we encourage applicants to use the SMART approach in developing goal strategies (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely). More resources about the SMART system can be found in the Appendix.

Begin each goal by describing the goal at the top of each page, then describe the strategy items in support of that goal by answering the questions below.

It is not necessary to complete all four goals or all three strategy items for each goal. The form was designed as a suggested framework. You may only have one or two action items that support each goal.

Keys to Success:

- Include activities in support of your goals that are balanced among **service, advocacy, witnessing, education, and community organization**
- Involve various other church groups and age ranges from the congregation at large
- Increase the probability of success for your goals by using the SMART system
- Utilize your FIAC liaison as a resource

Example Goal and Strategy Statements

Taken from the Social Justice Empowerment Handbook, chapter 6, page 111.

Problem (issue, opportunity):

“Our city does not provide enough low-income housing for its people.”

Goal:

“To gain 250 affordable housing units for low-income members of the community over the next two years.”

Plan(s):

Domain: Education

Strategy

“Educate ourselves and the community about the problem.”

Tactic

“Meet with six housing advocates and book four speakers for educating the congregation and community about housing in the local community; sponsor Town Hall Forum.”

Domain: Community Organization

Strategy

“Coordinate with other groups, including the interfaith community, to mobilize the local community.”

Tactic

“Sponsor petition drive on housing to collect 50 clergy and 2,000 general public signatures.”

Goals and Strategy Action Plans

Fill out the following for each project goal according to the instructions.

First Goal

First Strategy for First Goal

Tactic(s) supporting this strategy; if known at this time, include person(s) responsible and due date(s)

Second Strategy for First Goal

Tactic(s) support this strategy; if known at this time, include person(s) responsible and due date(s)

First Goal Continued

Third Strategy for First Goal

Tactic(s) supporting this strategy; if known at this time, include person(s) responsible and due date(s)

Summary for First Goal

Select the categories that apply to the various strategies for this goal (check all that apply)

Service Education Witness Advocacy Community Organization

What is the scope of church involvement? (List church groups and ages that will be involved)

What is the expected outcome?

Second Goal

First Strategy for Second Goal

Tactic(s) supporting this strategy; if known at this time, include person(s) responsible and due date(s)

Second Strategy for Second Goal

Tactic(s) support this strategy; if known at this time, include person(s) responsible and due date(s)

Second Goal Continued

Third Strategy for Second Goal

Tactic(s) supporting this strategy; if known at this time, include person(s) responsible and due date(s)

Summary for Second Goal

Select the categories that apply to the various strategies for this goal (check all that apply)

Service Education Witness Advocacy Community Organization

What is the scope of church involvement? (List church groups and ages that will be involved)

What is the expected outcome?

Third Goal

First Strategy for Third Goal

Tactic(s) supporting this strategy; if known at this time, include person(s) responsible and due date(s)

Second Strategy for Third Goal

Tactic(s) support this strategy; if known at this time, include person(s) responsible and due date(s)

Third Goal Continued

Third Strategy for Third Goal

Tactic(s) supporting this strategy; if known at this time, include person(s) responsible and due date(s)

Summary for Third Goal

Select the categories that apply to the various strategies for this goal (check all that apply)

Service Education Witness Advocacy Community Organization

What is the scope of church involvement? (List church groups and ages that will be involved)

What is the expected outcome?

Fourth Goal

First Strategy for Fourth Goal

Tactic(s) supporting this strategy; if known at this time, include person(s) responsible and due date(s)

Second Strategy for Fourth Goal

Tactic(s) support this strategy; if known at this time, include person(s) responsible and due date(s)

Fourth Goal Continued

Third Strategy for Fourth Goal

Tactic(s) supporting this strategy; if known at this time, include person(s) responsible and due date(s)

Summary for Fourth Goal

Select the categories that apply to the various strategies for this goal (check all that apply)

Service Education Witness Advocacy Community Organization

What is the scope of church involvement? (List church groups and ages that will be involved)

What is the expected outcome?

Collaboration

It takes the efforts of many people at FUSD, other allied groups, careful planning, and communication to make any social justice project successful. This section is designed to help elaborate on those plans.

FUSD Staff

Identify the staff you require to assist your project, describe the involvement needed, and why.

Allied Community Organizations

If applicable, list up to three community organizations you plan to ally with and briefly describe how you plan to cooperate with them.

Communication Plan

Elaborate on your communication plan for events and milestones in support of your goals, including due dates.

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Budget

Identify monetary needs, if any, by year and purpose for your project during the application period.

First Year

Purpose	Date Needed	Amount
Total:		

Second Year

Purpose	Date Needed	Amount
Total:		

Which project team member will be responsible for tracking expenditures? (Name | Phone | Email)

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FIAC Expectations

In addition to the strategies laid out for your chosen social justice issues, each Faith in Action Project will be asked to participate in the following accountability items each year to maximize engagement between FIAC, the Project, and the congregation at-large.

1. Identify a champion or point person to lead each initiative.
2. Invite involvement from all sectors of the congregation, including all age-groups and Religious Exploration. Communicate and coordinate with these groups to get their involvement.
3. Gather, communicate, and act as needed to advance the Faith-in-Action plan approved by the Congregation for their respective issue areas.
4. Coordinate with other religious denominations or congregations and with other issue-leading institutions as needed to implement the FIA plan.
5. Periodically report on progress or obstacles to the FIAC.
6. Participate in annual workshop leadership training(s) provided by FIAC or Leadership Development.
7. Help prevent burnout of leadership of the project by identifying and training co-leaders and future leaders-in-training.
8. Participate in the annual Justice Fair, occurring sometime in the fall.
9. Submit an annual expense report and proposed budget to FIAC in March.
10. Write occasional Ploughshare articles to keep congregation informed of project activities.
11. Submit a written summary of year-in-review achievements in April for FIAC's annual report.

Biennial Evaluation

Every other year (the years opposite of your application or re-application) FIAC will work with the project to evaluate how the project's work is going as a mid-cycle check-in.

This will not be as formal as the application itself and will be coordinated by the FIAC liaison and the project leader.

Suggested questions for the evaluation are shown below. These will be good to keep in mind during the entire project life cycle to help stay on track.

- What were the goals the social justice project set for the current two-year cycle?
- What activities have been completed?—are in progress? What accomplishments have been made?
- What activities are currently in progress?
- Have any problems occurred? How can FIAC help overcome these?
- What has the group learned?
- Are there any future concerns?
- How can FIAC, or the congregation at large, support the work of this group in the future?
- Is this project still needed, or will the work continue? What are some ideas for future activities?

Notes

Use this space to provide additional information if necessary.

Appendix

Note: Much of the literature on SMART uses the terminology “objectives,” whereas the Social Justice Empowerment Handbook uses the terms strategies (and tactics).

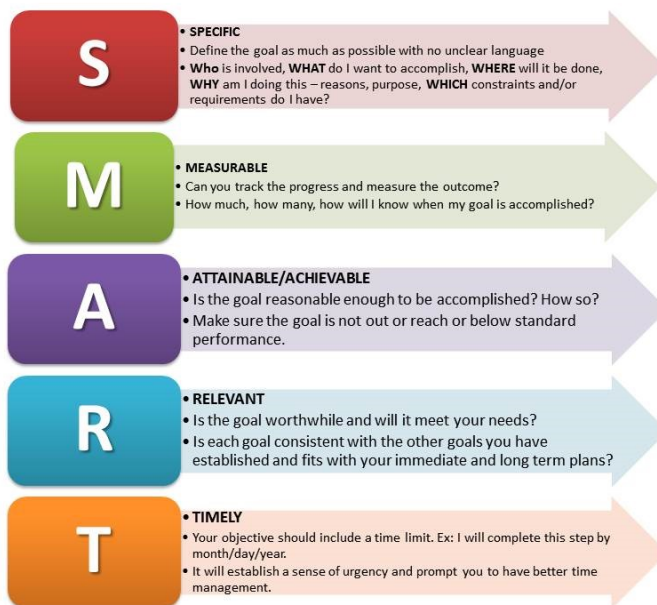
Writing SMART Objectives Supporting Goals

Goal and objectives are used in project planning to describe expectations. Goals are broad statements describing what will be accomplished, while objectives are the building blocks, or steps, taken toward achieving those goals.

Creating an objective requires careful thinking and a clear picture of the expected results. Well-formed objectives can be written using the SMART approach.

There are two types of objectives, process objectives and outcome objectives. Process objectives focus on the activities that will be completed within a specific time period, while outcome objectives focus on the results.

There is no one correct way to write a SMART objective statement, but testing it by comparing it to the typical SMART criteria is a good litmus test.



Not all authors use the same criteria for each letter in the mnemonic. For example, the first known use of the acronym in 1981, the ‘A’ stood for ‘Assignable’ (who will do it) and the ‘R’ stood for ‘Realistic’ (what can be achieved with available resources).

Continue reading for more information on each criteria:

Specific

The criterion stresses the need for a specific goal rather than a more general one. This means the goal is clear and unambiguous; without vagaries and platitudes. To make goals specific, they must tell a team exactly what's expected, why it's important, who's involved, where it's going to happen and which attributes are important.

A specific goal will usually answer the five 'W' questions:

- What: What do I want to accomplish?
- Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.
- Who: Who is involved?
- Where: Identify a location.
- Which: Identify requirements and constraints.

Measurable

The second criterion stresses the need for concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of the goal. The thought behind this is that if a goal is not measurable it is not possible to know whether a team is making progress toward successful completion. Measuring progress is supposed to help a team stay on track, reach its target dates and experience the exhilaration of achievement that spurs it on to continued effort required to reach the ultimate goal.

Indicators should be quantifiable. A measurable goal will usually answer questions such as:

- How much?
- How many?
- How will I know when it is accomplished?

Attainable/Achievable

The third criterion stresses the importance of goals that are realistic and also attainable. Whilst an attainable goal may stretch a team in order to achieve it, the goal is not extreme. That is, the goals are neither out of reach nor below standard performance, since these may be considered meaningless. When you identify goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills and financial capacity to reach them. The theory states that an attainable goal may cause goal-setters to identify previously overlooked opportunities to bring themselves closer to the achievement of their goals.

An achievable goal will usually answer the question 'How?'

- How can the goal be accomplished?
- How realistic is the goal based on other constraints?

Relevant

The fourth criterion stresses the importance of choosing goals that matter. A bank manager's goal to "Make 50 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches by 3pm" may be specific, measurable, attainable and time-bound but lacks relevance. Many times you will need support to accomplish a goal: resources, a champion voice, someone to knock down obstacles. Goals that are relevant to your boss, your team, your organization will receive that needed support.

Relevant goals (when met) drive the team, department and organization forward. A goal that supports or is in alignment with other goals would be considered a relevant goal.

A relevant goal can answer yes to these questions:

- Does this seem worthwhile?
- Is this the right time?
- Does this match our other efforts and needs?
- Are you the right person?
- Is it applicable in the current socio-economic environment?

Time-bound

The fifth criterion stresses the importance of grounding goals within a time-frame, giving them a target date. A commitment to a deadline helps a team focus their efforts on completion of the goal on or before the due date. This part of the SMART goal criteria is intended to prevent goals from being overtaken by the day-to-day crises that invariably arise in an organization. A time-bound goal is intended to establish a sense of urgency.

A time-bound goal will usually answer the questions:

- When?
- What can we do six months from now?
- What can we do six weeks from now?
- What can we do today?