

The Role of District Staff in the Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth

What is the Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth?

The Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth will revision and revitalize our Association's ministry to and with youth. It will solicit the input and commitment of the widest possible spectrum of stakeholders in Unitarian Universalist youth ministry. Conversations within congregations, districts, and stakeholder organizations will focus on what they can do to support youth ministry at their level, and what the Association can do to support youth ministry as a whole. In this way, the process will build from the ideas and needs of youth and adults at the grassroots level.

Why are district staff important in the Consultation?

District staff are important resource people for district and congregational youth programs. You play a key role in supporting youth ministry on the district level, and connecting with congregations within your district about their ministry to and with youth. The taskforce needs your help in ensuring the involvement not only of your district, but also of as many congregations as possible within your district. The Consultation is an opportunity to have your unique needs and visions for youth ministry listened to and discussed on all levels of the Association.

District staff can engage in the process in multiple ways:

✓ Survey

In January and February 2006 a survey will be administered to UU youth. Youth with all levels and types of involvement should complete this survey, including YRUU youth, local/congregationally involved youth, and youth who chose not to participate in youth ministry after junior high. The survey data will shape the subsequent conversations in congregations, districts, and organizations. District staff can play a key role in seeking out youth to complete this survey by contacting religious educators and ministers in congregations to get contact information for the youth who are or have been involved. If you pass this information along to the Youth Office staff, they will make sure that these youth get access to the survey.

✓ Congregations

All congregations will receive a process guide in January 2006 advising them on how to organize a congregational conversation about their youth ministry. We encourage you to advocate for these conversations and get commitments from congregations in your district agreeing to hold a conversation. We also encourage you to actively participate in the conversation in your own congregation. Congregational conversations will be informed by the survey data, and should take place during April and May 2006.

✓ Districts

The outcome of the survey and congregational conversations will guide and focus the district conversations, which will happen during the 2006-2007 church year. We ask that you schedule time – an extra day if possible – at your annual meeting to bring together a diversity of youth and adults to discuss youth ministry at congregational, district, and continental levels with a focus on supporting congregational programs. These gatherings will be facilitated by youth and adult members of the Taskforce on Ministry to and with Youth.

✓ Stakeholder Organizations

As a core stakeholder group, district staff members will work with the taskforce at the Big Complex Meeting in December 2005 to begin designing a process to discuss your role in ministry to and with youth. This is an opportunity to dialogue with other district staff and convey your unique needs to the Association.

Questions or Feedback? – Contact Beth Dana, UUA Youth Ministry Associate at (617) 948-4352 or Jesse Jaeger, UUA Youth Programs Director at (617) 948-4359. For more information go to: www.uua.org/trus/youth.