

**First Unitarian Church Of Alton
Board Policy on Direct Assistance**

Purpose: To clarify Church's desire and abilities to respond to individuals seeking Social Justice/Social Action assistance.

Presented and discussed at: 9/10/15 Board Meeting

Action taken: Approved at 10/27/15 Board Meeting

Policy: It is the policy of the Church Board to provide Social Justice/Social Action assistance to individuals in need by members organized into committees or working teams. This means that activities focus on services to groups and organizations and minimize the opportunity for individual assistance.

As a result of this policy and to minimize safety considerations, staff and members generally do not provide cash or cash substitutes (such as bus passes, gas cards, pre-paid credit cards) to individuals needing assistance. An exception is the ability of the Minister to use funds from their discretionary fund in this way if it is deemed safe and advisable. Instead, individuals are referred by anyone receiving an inquiry to other local organizations via the United Way Referral service at telephone number 211. In order to ensure general awareness of options, we prepare a brief handout explaining the availability of the nearby Salvation Army as well as the United Way Referral Service at 211.

It also means that we do not allow individuals who are currently homeless to take up residence on any bench on the grounds or the church front porch. We post these benches to indicate short-term use for respite and request assistance from the Alton Police to remove anyone known to be using our facilities for long-term living.

PROCEDURAL HANDOUT TO USE IN RESPONDING TO REQUESTS FOR DIRECT ASSISTANCE

If you need direct help in various areas of your life, help is available from two local sources:

- The Main Salvation Army Building at 525 Alby where you can explain what you need and ask how they could help you. You must visit during regular business hours (8-5 Monday through Friday) except that Mondays are exceptionally busy and Tuesday through Friday may be easier for everyone involved.

OR

- You can call the United Way referral Service by phoning 211 from any local phone. While this help line is staffed 24 hours a day, it is better to call after regular business hours (8-5 Monday through Friday) or on weekends to explain your needs to avoid a very long wait on the phone.

You can also use both resources by visiting the Salvation Army AND calling the United Way Referral Service phone number.