

## **GUIDELINES RELATED TO STRATEGY AND TACTICS IN OUR COALITION WORK**

### **Non-violent Civil Disobedience Statement**

The Board of UUPLAN-UUPALM has been discussing some of the opportunities and challenges we face as a faith-based advocacy organization in today's context of heightened civic participation as well as a political context that in some ways is becoming increasingly hostile to dissent and protest. On the one hand, this is a great time to energize current and potential UUPLAN members and engage with them in a growing number of grassroots efforts for justice. We as UUs welcome this new mood of dissent, public participation and protest against unjust policies, practices and laws. On the other hand, there may be, particularly at the federal level, and in some cases the state level, of officials looking more critically at pressure from below.

We are called to work for justice as UUs and thus we are called to act as partners in broad coalitions with those who share our passion for positive changes in policies and programs. Given the increased interest in mobilizing for change, and given the intransigence of officials within centers of power, there will most likely be a growing number of instances where the coalitions within which we work see non-violent civil disobedience as the most important and effective tactic needed to gain public attention and move decision makers.

We would like UUPLAN-UUPALM Team Leaders and Members to use their UU values and their best strategic thinking in such instances and to feel free to agree or not agree to join in civil disobedience as the specific case may require.

We would also like you to be aware that there is a need to safeguard the legal standing of UUPLAN as a non-profit, and therefore to understand that choosing to engage in civil disobedience should be a freely-made individual choice and cannot be seen as an action endorsed or authorized by UUPLAN as a whole. This distinction protects UUPLAN from potential threats to our non-profit status, which in turn protects our ability to raise the resources to educate, advocate and provide staff support for our advocacy throughout Pennsylvania.

UUPLAN can and will support through leadership training the development of expertise in all advocacy tactics, including the most effective forms of non-violent civil disobedience. Such training is distinct from planning or authorizing specific actions. The decision to participate in an act of civil disobedience is ultimately a decision of an individual citizen and not under the authority of UUPLAN. UUPLAN as an organization will not engage in any overt planning of an act of civil disobedience nor pay fines, bail or legal fees of any UUPLAN members should they face arrest and possible legal action.

*Approved and Adopted by the UUPLAN Board of Trustees on July 11, 2017.*