

REGIONAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE: SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE COMMISSION POLICY

This policy outlines the purpose, accountability, authority, membership and responsibilities of the Social and Ecological Justice Commission and the relationship with the Executive, and with the Communities of Faith Commission, the Pastoral Relations Commission, and the Intercultural Diversity Commission.

Date Approved: July 24, 2019	Review date by the Regional Council: 2025
Amended: February 3, 2022	
Amended: February 6, 2024	

PURPOSE

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission will encourage, support, and initiate justice work within Shining Waters Regional Council, viewing and acting on issues through the lenses of racial, social, ecological justice and economic equality.

AUTHORITY

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission is established by the Shining Waters Regional Council Executive, in keeping with the proposals approved by the Regional Council on May 26, 2019 and November 13, 2021.

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission will be elected by the Regional; Council or the Executive to make decisions on behalf of the Region or its Executive. (The Manual 2019 C.3.3.1)

The decisions of the Social and Ecological Justice Commission are non-debatable. The Commission's decision is as effective as a decision of the governing body or executive that appointed it. (The Manual 2019 C.3.3.2) If the Commission wishes to create new policy not addressed broadly by United Church of Canada policy, or to create policy inconsistent with United Church of Canada policy, it must consult with and seek approval from the Regional Council or the Regional Council Executive.

The Commission will report its decisions to the Regional Council Executive and the Regional Council (The Manual 2019 C.3.3.3).

MEMBERSHIP

A Chair and 6 to 10 members to allow for some regional representation with a balance of ministry personnel and laity. Members should have experience and passion for this work.

TERMS OF OFFICE

The term will be three years with a renewal for one term. After a one-year hiatus, an individual may be elected again.

MEETINGS

The Commission will meet by electronic or other means.

QUORUM

Quorum will be 50% plus one of the members with at least one ordered minister and one lay member.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Social and Ecological Justice Commission will encourage, support and animate social justice networks, and grassroots justice initiatives by communities of faith, in cooperation with the Communities of Faith Commission.
2. The Commission will offer occasional gatherings/workshops on particular issues/themes for interested persons in the Region.
3. The Commission will provide educational materials and relevant information resources on justice-related issues to communities of faith and networks.
4. The Commission will build on existing relationships, within the UCC and ecumenical/interfaith relationships, and with other justice-seeking coalitions and networks.
5. In cooperation with the Executive and the other commissions, the commission will help to identify regional social justice priorities.
6. In cooperation with the Executive and other commissions, the Commission will advocate and support campaigns around regional priority issues (e.g. anti-racism, being an intercultural church).
7. In keeping with the Communication Policy, the Commission may suggest statements to be made on behalf of Shining Waters Regional Council by the President.
8. In cooperation with the Executive and the other Commissions, the Commission will support right relations with indigenous peoples, and with other marginalized people such as racialized people and ethnic minorities.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMISSIONS

Regional Council justice priorities are typically fall within the shared responsibilities of several or all parts of the Regional Council structure, so collaboration is of paramount importance. Communication among affected bodies (e.g. commissions) will primarily be done by staff, but may involve other means (e.g. joint meetings, joint working groups, etc.).

STAFF SUPPORT

Staff support will be provided by the Minister for Justice and Faith Formation, and coordinated by the Staff Lead: Regional and Congregation Support.