

Opportunity to CONECT: FAQ'S

What is CONECT?

- CONECT is an organized group of over 25 member-congregations in Southern CT – Christian, Muslim, Jewish, and Sikh – that works to create a more just world.
- As an affiliate of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), the nation's longest-standing network of local faith- and community-based organizations, CONECT raises a powerful voice to negotiate with business and government leaders on issues that affect all of us.

What does it mean to be a CONECT member?

- It means working directly with a multi-faith and racially diverse group of congregations on immigration, anti-racism, economic equality, health care and education issues.
- Joining CONECT is an opportunity to get beyond our walls and widen our beloved community.
- It means we are part of a unified, organized, and informed group with a track record of achieving change.

What are the benefits of CONECT membership?

- Leadership development and training; tools for building and strengthening relationships within our own community and beyond
- Training in One-on-One discussions that enable each of us to voice our concerns
- As part of a larger, organized collaborative, our voice for change is stronger and our impact greater.

What is CONECT's structure?

- CONECT is a democratic organization whose member congregations determine the overall agenda and strategy.
- Delegates from each congregation attend Delegate Assemblies 2-4 times a year to consider major issues and strategy decisions.

What has CONECT accomplished?

Among other successes, CONECT:

- Brought about the suspension of the liquor license of Slyce Pizza, a Hamden restaurant that was associated with drug trafficking and violence in Hamden including the shooting death of an innocent bystander who was the son of a member of a CONECT congregation. Slyce has since closed.
- Won legislation in 2013 that allows all CT residents, regardless of immigration status, to obtain a driver's license.

- Negotiated a compromise in 2011 between the Department of Insurance and the state Healthcare Advocate allowing public hearings any time an insurance company requests a rate hike of 15% or more. A 2015 hearing led to reductions in 3 companies.
- Worked with the state Child Advocate and others to pass Senate Bill 927, which limits the use of restraint and seclusion tactics in CT schools. (Studies documented the use of these tactics 30,000 times, disproportionately with autistic and minority children).

How much are the membership dues for CONECT?

- Dues are paid on a sliding scale. For USNH, the amount is \$7,000.

Does USNH have a financial plan for joining CONECT?

- Yes! We have already been awarded a UUA matching funds grant for \$3,500. We have received an anonymous donation of \$1000. The USNH Social Justice Task Forces have set aside \$550 from their budgets. The Christmas Eve Service collection plate of \$867 has been dedicated to the CONECT initiative. The remaining money needed will come from individual donations, the minister's discretionary fund, and the Social Justice Council.