

**American Friends Service Committee –
Middle Atlantic Region
Agency History**



History

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) – Middle Atlantic Region is part of a nonprofit corporation founded in 1917 by members of the Religious Society of Friends. The initial impetus was to provide alternative, constructive service opportunities for those Quaker men who conscientiously opposed participation in World War I. The work of AFSC expanded rapidly in 1919 when it organized the feeding of five million malnourished German children. In the thirties, AFSC began working in the US. In 1947, the AFSC received the Nobel Peace Prize jointly with the (British) Friends Service Council on behalf of Quakers worldwide and in recognition of the 300 years that Quakers have worked to establish a more just and peaceful world. In 2008 AFSC work spanned 25 countries and has helped more than sixty million people.

At the time of its founding, AFSC was an organization which represented a variety of Quaker Meetings, including both liberal and conservative Friends. About 20 individuals, not Meetings, were invited be part of the founding. Until the mid twentieth century many Friends were involved in the work of AFSC by directly serving people. About the 1970's Friends began serving primarily as members of governance committees, rather than direct service providers.

AFSC is now organized into nine regional offices in the United States and four international divisions. This project focused on the Middle Atlantic Region (MAR), which has its main office in Baltimore and other offices in Syracuse, New York; Pittsburg, Pennsylvania; Charleston and Logan, West Virginia; and Washington, DC. MAR works in justice and peace-building. MAR works to involve Quakers in its work and to keep them informed. AFSC is probably the principal way in which Friends are involved in inter-faith work.

AFSC's mission is expressed as follows:

The American Friends Service Committee is a practical expression of the faith of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Committed to the principles of nonviolence and

justice, it seeks in its work and witness to draw on the transforming power of love, human and divine.

We recognize that the leadings of the Spirit and the principles of truth found through Friends' experience and practice are not the exclusive possession of any group. Thus, the AFSC draws into its work people of many faiths and backgrounds who share the values that animate its life and who bring to it a rich variety of experiences and spiritual insights.

This AFSC community works to transform conditions and relationships both in the world and in ourselves, which threaten to overwhelm what is precious in human beings. We nurture the faith that conflicts can be resolved nonviolently, that enmity can be transformed into friendship, strife into cooperation, poverty into well-being, and injustice into dignity and participation. We believe that ultimately goodness can prevail over evil, and oppression in all its many forms can give way.

The AFSC Corporation is legally responsible for AFSC. The Corporation consists of 120-180 members of the Religious Society of Friends. Of these, approximately one-half (60-90) are appointed by Yearly Meetings. The remaining members are appointed at-large. Governance of the organization is handled by the Board of Directors, whose members are appointed by the Corporation. AFSC's Executive Director has always been a Friend. Each region also has a Regional Executive Director who is hired jointly by the AFSC Executive Director and the Regional Executive Committee. Regional Directors are not always Friends.

Each region has a Regional Executive Committee, which is responsible for program and financial management within that geographic area and appointed by the AFSC Board. Some members of the MAR Executive Committee are members of the AFSC Board of Directors. MAR has a nominating committee which is responsible for nomination of both officers (except the Executive Committee Clerk) and members of the Executive Committee. The Clerk of the Executive committee is appointed by a Naming Committee which is formed by the Executive Committee and includes the clerk of the Nominating Committee. The Clerk of the Executive Committee is an ex-officio member of the AFSC Board of Directors. The Executive Committee is composed of a Clerk, Associate Clerk, and Treasurer; the clerks of the Administrative Subcommittees of the Executive Committee, representatives from three yearly meetings

(Baltimore Yearly Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting) and three to six at large members. The Regional Executive Committee of MAR is nearly all Quaker, and predominately over 60 years of age. Possibly only two or three its fourteen members are younger. This age is typical of other Regional Executive committees, as well and it has only become true in recent years.

Projects or programs of AFSC are run by committees made up of individuals interested in the work. Many of these committees have few, if any, Friends as members. Even so, they are expected to understand Quaker process and not to act in contradiction with it. The projects do not serve Quakers, but rather those of society in need in some way. The Regional Executive Committee members may have some experience in a program, but many do not. The Executive Committee receives written quarterly program reports, with annual brief presentations by staff.

One on-going concern for the Middle Atlantic Region is that it incorporates the area of the national AFSC office, which is in Philadelphia. Philadelphia is also probably the most densely populated Quaker area in the country, and many Friends there identify with AFSC, but their work, knowledge, and interest is in the national organization rather than regional or local work. This problem has been ameliorated by moving the regional office to Baltimore, but AFSC work in Philadelphia continues to be episodic work sponsored by the national office rather than serious programs supported by the region. On the other hand, the region now does real work in a number of other area locations. From time to time, it sponsors projects in eastern Pennsylvania, as well.

The region has an orientation handbook for volunteers in the region which not only explains the organization, but also provides a significant introduction to Quakerism. This is particularly important for members of local project committees, most of whom are not Friends.

Regional AFSC staff present programs and reports at at least three of the Yearly Meetings in the area: Philadelphia, Baltimore and New York. And, as has been said, these Yearly Meetings appoint individuals to the regional Executive Committee. Offices in the area keep some links to local Friends Meetings, but connection between Meetings and AFSC work varies considerably. Generally it is individual Friends who are involved in AFSC, although many Meetings make small annual contributions. It appears that Meetings in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting have not

participated in making annual contributions to the regional budget, although Meetings in the other Yearly Meetings have. Nowhere in the Middle Atlantic Region is AFSC housed in property owned by Friends Meetings, although there are numerous examples of this in other regions.

Milestones

1948? MAR founded.

1967 MAR moves from Philadelphia to Baltimore.

1978 Founding of Affirmative Action Plan to diversify the organization through active engagement of women, people of color, gay/lesbian and people with disabilities.

1995 Friends Meeting of Washington initiates new regional program providing peace making schools to affect local high schools. Program becomes community focused training in conflict resolution, prejudice and violence reduction. Program is established with Quaker staff who are later replaced with others. Region goes through a period of difficulty with the retirement of long-time Executive Director. Several short-lived, non Friend, EDs replace him.

2005 Clinton Pettus, a Friend, becomes Regional Executive Director. Begins a period of re-orienting staff to Quakerism, and evaluating and improving program work.

2008 AFSC appoints a staff person to handle relationships with Friends.

Financials

This budget reflected 123% of predicted income and only 91% of expenses, so MAR did very well in 2008. The majority of AFSC income is from individuals who are not Friends. Some small percentage of income from individuals comes from Quakers (maybe as much as 15%) and also some proportion of the grants. The Middle Atlantic Region faces the challenge that the national office and a large majority of Friends live in the region. Many, if not most of them associate with the National Office and not with regional programs; thus contributing directly to the National Office and not to the region.

2008 Programs	Income	Expense
Baltimore Urban Peace	\$7,818	\$95,314
Counter Recruitment	600	8,878
DC Peace & Economic Justice	39,550	152,503

Harlem Park/ETA		7,922
MD Peace with Justice	71,561	101,414
New+	93,816	195,807
Pennsylvania Program	48,053	73,193
Project Voice	343	106,602
UNYSA	8,080	205,904
W Philadelphia Listening		2,849
W Virginia Economic Justice	36,227	79,205
Youth Empowerment Thr CR	14,675	66,996
Committees, & Spec Projects	25	14,888
Development and MAR STAR	12,240	92,986
Regional Administration	14	339,460

TOTAL	\$333,002	\$1,543,922
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Non Transfer Income by Source

Individual Restricted Contributions	\$125,708	(38%)
Grants	\$166,858	(50%)
Investment/Rental Income	\$5,500	(2%)
Other income	\$34,936	(10%)



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