



**FAIR TRADE  
CAMPAIGNS**

# Fair Trade Towns

## Frequently Asked Questions

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR A TOWN OR CITY TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A FAIR TRADE TOWN?

A town or city needs to meet the five goals set forth by Fair Trade Campaigns as follows:

- A local Fair Trade Steering Committee is formed that meets on a regular basis. The aim of the committee is to increase awareness of and demand for Fair Trade products, through education, outreach and events.
- A range of Fair Trade products is available in local stores, cafés and other venues. These include products certified by Fair Trade USA, Fair Trade America, or IMO- Fair for Life and products sold by retailers that are members of the Fair Trade Federation
- Fair Trade products are used by a number of local organizations, such as places of worship, schools, hospitals and offices.
- The local campaign attracts media attention and visible public support, including press and radio.
- The town or city council passes a resolution supporting Fair Trade and the local campaign.

### WILL ALL BUSINESSES BE REQUIRED TO OFFER FAIR TRADE PRODUCTS?

In short, no. This is not a requirement. The criteria for achieving Fair Trade status requires that a certain number of stores carry **two or more** Fair Trade certified products. For Fair Trade Campaigns criteria fulfillment Fair Trade products must be certified or verified by one of these **third party** certifying or verifying bodies:

- Fair Trade USA
- Fair For Life
- Fairtrade America
- Fair Trade Federation

Further information and label graphics can be found here: [fairtradecampaigns.org/about/faq](http://fairtradecampaigns.org/about/faq).

The number of stores depends on the population of your town, as follows:

- Population less than 10,000: 1 location for every 2,500 residents
- Population 10,000 – 100,000: 1 location for every 5,000 residents
- Population 100,000 – 200,000: 1 location for every 7,500 residents
- Population 200,000 – 500,000: 1 location for every 10,000 residents
- Population 500,000 – 2,000,000: 1 location for every 25,000 residents
- Population 2,000,000+ : 1 location for every 40,000 residents

Of course, the goal is to maximize the availability of Fair Trade products in as many places as possible, so surpassing the minimum requirement is encouraged!

### WILL IT COST THE TOWN MONEY?

It doesn't have to. Towns can commit to Fair Trade and pass a resolution in support of Fair Trade without spending any money. If they so choose, Towns can commit to purchasing Fair Trade products whenever possible by instituting a Fair Trade procurement policy.

### WHAT DOES A RETAILER HAVE TO DO TO GET INVOLVED?

To count towards the retail goal of achieving Fair Trade Town status, a retailer must carry at least two Fair Trade products. Any retailer that carries at least one Fair Trade product can be listed on your "where to buy Fair Trade" guide and map.

Ask your local retailers to sign a statement of support for your campaign that you can present to your city government. Ideally you will be able to recruit some retailers to join your Fair Trade Town Committee. Retailers can also get involved in Fair Trade events, like a Fair Trade Festival or a Fair Trade Fashion Show.

### WHAT ABOUT LOCALLY PRODUCED GOODS? ISN'T FAIR TRADE COMPETITION FOR OUR FARMERS?

Fair Trade products like coffee, tea, cocoa and bananas are not produced in the US (except in minor volumes in Hawaii) and do not represent any sort of competition with local farmers who grow different crops. Some may also be concerned that Fair Trade products travel long distances (thereby accumulating 'food miles'). We support the approach of many members of [BALLE](#) (Business Alliance for Local Living Economies), who say "Buy local, and buy Fair Trade" for those products which are not grown locally, supporting sustainable models of production at all levels.

### DO FAIR TRADE TOWN CAMPAIGNS WORK WITH ANY OTHER SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY INITIATIVES LIKE BUY LOCAL, BUY ORGANIC, LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGNS OR SWEATSHOP-FREE?

The guidelines for becoming a Fair Trade Town do not include criteria such as forming partnerships with the campaigns mentioned above. However, it is strongly suggested that organizers seek these groups out in an effort to work in synergy with these movements and explore where your respective campaigns may overlap or work in partnership. Many local Fair Trade advocates are also involved in other sustainable community initiatives, and at the local level, you will likely find many opportunities to work together. We fully support collaboration, however we also recommend being careful not to spread yourselves too thin by trying to accomplish too much at once! Fair Trade is a great way to introduce people of all backgrounds to the concept of sustainability and fairness, and develop links with other campaigners.

### THERE AREN'T MANY FAIR TRADE PRODUCTS AVAILABLE WHERE I LIVE. WHAT DO I DO?

Ask your favorite cafes, restaurants and retailers to start carrying Fair Trade products! You can use Fair Trade Campaigns' product request cards ([coffee and tea](#) or [fruits and vegetables](#)) to share your requests with store, restaurant and café managers. Fair Trade products are becoming more and more common, even in larger supermarkets. Check out our [Fair Trade Product List](#) for examples of the wide range of products that are now on the market.

Even if there aren't any stores selling Fair Trade products in your community, chances are that there are others who are interested in learning more and increasing awareness. There are many ways to get the momentum started, such as a film screening and discussion, a festival or a Fair Trade wine or chocolate tasting.

### I'D LIKE WHERE I LIVE TO BE A FAIR TRADE TOWN. WHERE DO I BEGIN?

Ask yourself a few questions before you start recruiting others to work with you. What is motivating you? Who do you know in the community who could help? Are you clear on what it means to be a Fair Trade Town? Be prepared to answer lots of questions about what it means to you to be part of a Fair Trade Community. Some find that the best way to get started is by planning an event, such as a Fair Trade Holiday Sale, or to collaborate with an existing event, such as tabling at a Farmer's Market to start talking to people about Fair Trade Towns. Check out our [Fair Trade Events Guide](#) for more suggestions.

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FOR ME?

Most committee work is volunteer-based, and the wealth of resources lies within shared knowledge, energy, and experiences. Many people who are passionate about Fair Trade find that working toward building awareness within one's own community is extremely fulfilling and filled with 'ah-ha!' moments. Towns and cities that have fulfilled the five main goals set forth by Fair Trade Campaigns are recognized on a national level. Be prepared to meet like-minded people involved in the campaign from around the country and sometimes the world. Generally individuals within the local committee or coalition share and rotate responsibilities and roles and therefore you are able to participate in all aspects of the process. Perhaps you will be contributing to helping make history!

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FOR MY TOWN?

There is broad public support for promoting products that benefit workers and the environment. Many towns want to be recognized as leaders in this move towards sustainability, and earning Fair Trade status is a tangible way to do so. They can get media attention and be recognized as a sustainable town or city with a commitment on the part of public officials, and serve as role models for other communities.

### WHO'S BEHIND THE FAIR TRADE CAMPAIGNS INITIATIVE?

Fair Trade Campaigns is a movement organized by local and national Fair Trade advocates and grassroots groups whose mission is to support and grow the Fair Trade movement in the US. Our work is guided by a steering committee which includes representatives from national Fair Trade organizations and local organizers from across the country.

### WHO DECIDES WHICH TOWNS ACHIEVE FAIR TRADE TOWN STATUS?

A campaign submits documentation online at [fairtradecampaign.org](http://fairtradecampaign.org) as each criteria is met. When all five goals are completed, Fair Trade Campaigns recognizes the campaign's declaration as a Fair Trade Town and presents them with a certificate recognizing their achievement.

### ARE THERE ANY FAIR TRADE TOWNS IN THE US? HOW MANY?

Yes. As of 2015, 44 towns have declared since the Fair Trade Campaigns first launched in July of 2006. The list of declared Fair Trade Towns includes Media, PA; Brattleboro, VT; Milwaukee, WI; Taos, NM; San Francisco, CA; Bluffton, OH; Burlington, VT; Norman, OK; Boston, MA; Berkeley, CA; Teaneck, NJ; Chicago, IL; Alexandria, VA; and Philadelphia, PA. There are many more active campaigns across the country with new ones popping up every day. To see a map of all the active Fair Trade Town Campaigns, visit: [fairtradecampaigns.org/campaign-type/towns](http://fairtradecampaigns.org/campaign-type/towns). For an up to date list of declared Fair Trade Towns, visit: [fairtradecampaigns.org/about/our-campaigns](http://fairtradecampaigns.org/about/our-campaigns).

### IS THERE A LOGO OR IMAGE FOR “FAIR TRADE FRIENDLY” THAT CAFÉS, CONGREGATIONS OR STORES CAN DISPLAY?

The Fair Trade Campaigns logo can be used on signs, flyers and other materials to show support for the Fair Trade Town campaign in your community. Some campaigns have chosen to have window decals made that retailers and other locations can display to show their support for Fair Trade. Each campaign is responsible for producing its own materials.

### THE CRITERIA SEEM EASY TO ACCOMPLISH. WHY NOT MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO BECOME A FAIR TRADE TOWN?

The Fair Trade Towns criteria are target goals to help support local Fair Trade advocates with a meaningful and proven method for organizing their efforts. The goals are the first step towards building a lasting campaign for Fair Trade in your community, and we encourage you to set new goals for your campaign as you complete the declaration process. As a next step you could mentor a Fair Trade Schools campaign or a Fair Trade Town campaign in a neighboring town.

### IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BECOMING A FAIR TRADE TOWN AND PASSING A TOWN- OR CITY -WIDE FAIR TRADE RESOLUTION?

Yes, a Fair Trade Town designation demonstrates a broad commitment to Fair Trade across a town or city community. This includes local businesses, community organizations, schools and faith based organizations, as well as city or town government. Passing a Fair Trade resolution is one piece of becoming a Fair Trade Town, and should be seen as a means to continue to raise awareness and commitment to Fair Trade in your community, not an end unto itself.

### WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A TOWN ACHIEVES DECLARATION AS A FAIR TRADE TOWN?

Becoming a Fair Trade Town is a commitment to continue campaigning and to raising awareness and sales of Fair Trade products in your community. There are many ways of deepening this commitment. These may include: developing local tools catered to your community such as a Where to Buy Fair Trade Guide, setting up partnerships with local schools to teach about Fair Trade, and increasing the target numbers of cafés, supermarkets and other retailers that offer Fair Trade products. Achieving the goal of becoming a Fair Trade Town is certainly not the end of Fair Trade campaigning in your community!

### IS THERE SOMEONE I CAN TALK TO ABOUT STARTING A FAIR TRADE TOWN CAMPAIGN?

Yes! Contact National Organizer Suzi Hiza at [suzi@fairtradecampaigns.org](mailto:suzi@fairtradecampaigns.org). Or get started right now by visiting [fairtradecampaigns.org](http://fairtradecampaigns.org) and choosing “Start a Campaign.”