



**FAIR TRADE  
TOWNS USA  
TOOLKIT**



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# FIRST THINGS FIRST!!

**BEFORE** you get underway, we want to make sure to connect you with the resources you'll need for your campaign.

So, **FIRST**, register with the Fair Trade Towns USA campaign. Once you have registered, we will send you a welcome packet with some suggestions and resources to get you started.

And, **SECOND**, don't set out on this journey alone! Don't be shy about getting friends and others to work with you. Share the journey, learn from others' experience, and celebrate your success together!

## QUESTIONS?



Fair Trade Towns USA National Organizer Courtney Lang is always up to answer questions and help you through any difficulties!

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# FAIR TRADE TOWNS CRITERIA



## Goal 1: Build Your Team

The Steering Committee provides direction for your campaign and is the way that volunteers and supporters can take leadership. The make-up of the committee should reflect the diversity of the community. Think about who in your personal network, and the community in general, would most help the campaign gain traction and be sustained.



## Goal 2: Reach Out to Retailers

Identifying opportunities for consumers to make a difference with their purchases is a crucial part of Fair Trade Towns. Based on the population size of your town, a certain number of retail locations must sell at least two Fair Trade Products (see below).



## Goal 3: Engage Your Town

Getting a commitment from community organizations like schools, places of worship and even offices to serve or use Fair Trade makes an impact in the community. Similar to the Retail criteria, your town will have a certain number of community organizations serving a Fair Trade product based on population size.



## Goal 4: Get Some Love from the Media

Gaining recognition in the media is an important way to raise awareness and support for your work. It allows you to broadcast how local action can deliver life changing benefits to farmers, artisans, workers and their communities to a large audience.



## Goal 5: Engage Your Local Government

By getting a commitment from your community's governing body (town or city council, etc) you are demonstrating to the entire community the importance of making a difference with your purchases. Community governments are often the largest institutional purchaser in town, and have ability to make a major difference with what they buy.

# BUILDING A FOUNDATION

## Introduction:

Organizing a Fair Trade Town provides a structure into which you can feed all of your enthusiasm and motivation. By completing just five fun and engaging steps, your town can join the national movement led by passionate organizers like you. As you proceed through the steps, not only will you be making new connections with various members of your community and becoming a leader, but you will also be organizing to improve the lives of farmers and workers around the world. Please note: the five criteria can be done in whatever order makes the most sense for you and your team. While we recommend starting with “Building Your Team”, feel free to proceed as you see fit and contact the **National Organizer** if you feel you need more support. Let’s get started!

## Build Your Team

Reach out to people in your personal and professional network who may have an interest in Fair Trade to start. In addition, consider groups that may share common values (e.g. social justice, buy local, anti-trafficking). Organize an initial meeting and make it fun! Watch a documentary and offer FT coffee, tea, and chocolate.

As you begin, think about:

- **Who** to include? Aim for a diverse representation of community interests who can bring new groups to the table! Think about people’s time – don’t get hung up on folks that you know are too busy.
- How to **organize** the team? Some groups assign each member a unique role (Team Chairperson, Community Outreach Coordinator, Retail Outreach Coordinator, Event & PR Coordinator, Social Media Coordinator, Government Relations Coordinator, etc.). Other campaigns choose to tackle each of the criteria together. Make sure to consider the key strengths, skill sets and interests of the people involved.
- Educate yourselves as much as possible! Do the members of your committee have a **basic understanding of Fair Trade?**



**For a list of best practices from other campaigns who have built successful committees, [CLICK HERE.](#)**



**For a Case Study on how Fair Trade Boston built a sustainable committee, [CLICK HERE.](#)**

## Reach Out to Retailers

Building an inventory of which retail locations in your community already offer two or more Fair Trade products allows you to immediately direct members of the community to locations where they can make a difference with their purchases. This “Where to Buy Fair Trade” catalogue also establishes a baseline and lets you see where you’re starting from. It’s a great way to chart your progress.

The number of stores you need to complete this criteria is based on the population size of your municipality. The following is the breakdown of the retail criteria for towns or cities of various sizes:

- 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 mil + : 1 location for every 40,000 residents

For a list of best practices, [CLICK HERE](#).



### Some ideas:

- **Have fun with a scavenger hunt** after your first meeting—have your team track all of the places they can find Fair Trade in their weekly shopping at grocery and convenient stores, cafes, etc.
- **Meet with store managers** to find out if Fair Trade is on their radar. Let them know that you will be promoting their business in the community if they have two Fair Trade products. Some may want to join the team!
- **Calculate the potential sustainable impact** of having Fair Trade products in your town. (Remember: Every 1000 pounds of Fair Trade coffee purchased means \$200 in social development funds for farming communities!).

[Click here to learn what counts as a Fair Trade Product.](#)



For a Case Study on how the Mankato Area Fair Trade Towns Initiative worked with their local grocer, [CLICK HERE](#).

## Engage Your Town

By reaching out to community organizations, you can gain momentum and enthusiasm, all the while spreading the message about Fair Trade. Community Organizations are any non-retail location using or serving any Fair Trade product. Examples include places of worship, local schools, non-profits, community centers, even offices that provide coffee, tea or snacks to their employees. The goal is for people in the community to encounter Fair Trade outside of just the retail experience. It helps build the idea of living a “Fair Trade lifestyle”.

Just like the Retail criteria, **the number of community organizations that you need to complete this criteria is based on the population size of your municipality.** The following is the breakdown of the community organization criteria for towns or cities of various sizes:

- Population less than 10,000: 1 location for every 2,500 residents
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### Some ideas:

- **What organizations are already represented on your team?** Inevitably, members of your team are also members of local congregations, work at offices, have children in local schools or are on the Parent Teacher Associations, etc. Go around the team and brainstorm a list and use our Resources to strategize how to approach the group with the message of Fair Trade.

- **Meet with organizational leaders** to talk about Fair Trade and potentially get them involved. There are many ways for groups to get Fair Trade products in our Resources section on the website. Start the relationship off right and find a person who is interested and support one of their events before you ask them to commit to your campaign. Embrace the role of partnerships.

- **Give a Fair Trade presentation** to decision makers like those responsible for purchasing an office’s coffee, the social justice group of a local place of worship, local non-profits, etc. Get them excited about serving Fair Trade and being part of the local campaign!



**For a Case Study  
on how La Mesa  
Fair Trade engaged  
their town,  
[CLICK HERE.](#)**



**For a list of best practices, [CLICK HERE.](#)**



**For a Case Study  
on how Chicago  
Fair Trade engaged  
their local media,  
[CLICK HERE.](#)**

## Get Some Love from the Media

As you gather the support of a wide range of retailers and community organizations, you will no doubt generate a buzz. This is likely to draw the attention of local media, however actively seeking that interest is an important way to drive more awareness.

Community events are another way to do this and are your chance to reach out to the general public and let them know about all the great work you have been doing. Our campaigns usually seize the opportunities to build on the national buzz around Fair Trade Month (October) and World Fair Trade Day (May). These are opportune times to both hold events, and also capitalize on media opportunities.

## Some Ideas

As you begin, think about:

- **Who** to seek out? We recommend circulating a **press release** to local TV and radio stations, newspapers and more.
- Don't forget **social media!** Social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter are cheap and efficient tools to spread the word about your campaign and events. Build a **Facebook fan page** and invite not just friends, but local media to be a fan. Follow local reporters on Twitter and they will follow you back!
- Consider sending a Fair Trade fact sheet to local reporters who cover sustainability to get Fair Trade on their radar.

**For a list of best practices from other campaigns,  
[CLICK HERE.](#)**





## Engage Your Local Government

This criteria, in addition to serving the interest of driving local purchasing by governments, is also about getting a foot in the door with the community government and fostering that relationship; it is a process of citizen engagement. It is meant to build long-lasting relationships with your community government. As citizens, we can make a difference with our purchases. However, the larger the purchasing power, the larger the impact. Institutional purchasers, like municipal governments, can make a major impact in the lives of farmers, workers and artisans.

While **the goal of the criteria is to pass a resolution**, local politics are different everywhere, and there may be instances where passing something is not immediately possible. In the event that you cannot pass a resolution through your city council, the following options can lead to Fair Trade Town designation without a resolution by:

- Documenting at least 2 meetings with city officials
- Obtaining written endorsements from city department officials, such as sustainability offices or directors
- Obtaining written endorsements from other community organizations
- Meeting with the City or Town Manager
- Introducing the resolution to the governing body
- Requesting a proclamation or similar document from the Mayor if the Mayor is supportive
- Attempting the passage of a resolution/procurement policy again upon the election of new community government officials

### As you begin, think about:

- **Who** to seek out? Look into what types of resolutions or initiatives council members have championed in the past. Target those who seem to support sustainability initiatives.
- **Who knows Who?** Very often, someone on your team will either know, or have a connection with someone in city hall or on the council. Those relationships can help open the door to a conversation
- **Don't forget** the city or town manager. Since this person is responsible for the actual purchasing, they need to be in the loop. Their support can be crucial!



**For a list of best practices from other campaigns, [CLICK HERE.](#)**



**For a Case Study on how Fair Trade Claremont passed their resolution, [CLICK HERE.](#)**

# MAINTAINING MOMENTUM

This next section provides some helpful hints and addresses some obstacles that may challenge you, as well as where to go once your town is a Fair Trade Town. The main goal of meeting the five criteria is to have constructed a platform in the community to continually advocate from. Remember: Personal initiative lies at the heart of advocacy--take ownership of your responsibilities and work diligently to inspire others to do the same.

## Mission Statements

This exercise can be useful whether you are just getting started or moving into the post-declaration phase of your campaign. Developing, and even revising a mission statement is a great way to keep yourself and the team focused and motivated. [Click here](#) for a worksheet on how to develop a mission statement.

## Getting Public Attention

How can you make sure your efforts and accomplishments get noticed? Think of how you can attract attention to your campaign. One great way to get started is by finding places where you can reach the community easily. Look for low-effort ways at the beginning to engage a large number of people. Tabling at a pre-organized event or at a weekly farmer's market are examples of how you can do this. Reach out to community publications and organize on social media outlets like Facebook and Twitter. Be bold and share your vision with as wide an audience as possible.

## Audio-Visual Resources

Movies and documentaries are an effective way to generate interest and frame the Fair Trade movement. Organize a movie night to educate and help build community around Fair Trade. When paired with a short presentation or info session, some delicious Fair Trade coffee, tea and snacks, you can really leave an impression on the attendees.

[Check Out Video Resources Here](#)

## Speakers/Producer Visits

Invite speakers to town to speak about Fair Trade—academics, industry representatives, and Fair Trade farmers or workers can inspire an audience and get more supporters on board. Keep in mind that you may need a budget for this type of activity. Fair Trade Towns USA has

[small grants](#), as well as other [fundraising resources](#).



## Expanding Your Reach

Once you have completed the initial phase of meeting the five criteria and making your community a Fair Trade Town, there is a growing list of deeper outreach efforts that you and your team can engage in. The following list is growing every year and we encourage you to both engage in any of the following activities, and also create new ones. Also, let us know about them so we can add them for other campaigns to take advantage of!

- Reach out to a College or University in your community. Our **Fair Trade Colleges & Universities** campaign is growing rapidly and is an exciting way to engage students in making a huge difference on their campus. Visit the Fair Trade Colleges & Universities website to learn more.
- Build a Regional Coalition – many campaigns connect with others in their region as they move through the criteria. Forming a coalition can really amplify your ability to hold incredibly dynamic events.
- Reach out to a neighboring community and mentor them to become a Fair Trade Town.
- Continue holding community-facing events
- Build your town's Fair Trade portfolio. Take a look at what specific Fair Trade products are currently available and work with your retailers to add more. Is there Fair Trade produce available? Artisan crafts? Keep track of what products are available in the US market at these links: **Fair Trade USA**; **Fair for Life**; **Fair Trade Federation**; **Fair Trade America** and follow the example of Mankato, MN on how to engage your store managers.



# BACKGROUND

## Fair Trade Background:

Fair Trade is a market-based approach to alleviating poverty in ways that improve lives, strengthen communities, and protect the environment. Fair Trade offers fair prices and wages to farmers, workers, and artisans; improved terms of trade, and community development funds to invest in education, health care, and other projects to improve their quality of life.

## About us:

**Fair Trade Towns USA** began in 2006 as a group of passionate Fair Trade advocates in Media, PA sought to build on the Fair Trade Towns movement that was rapidly growing across Europe. This movement recognizes and awards Fair Trade Status to municipalities of all sizes that reach across the sectors of their community to drive awareness and purchases of Fair Trade. Fair Trade Towns achieve five basic criteria (see below) and work to deepen their commitment to Fair Trade year after year.

## Our mission:

The mission of Fair Trade Towns USA is to inspire our fellow consumers to support the Fair Trade movement in its efforts to seek equity in trade and promote sustainable development. Fair Trade Towns harness the power of consumers and institutions in the United States to both raise awareness of the benefits of Fair Trade, and leverage their significant buying power to purchase Fair Trade products, thus extending real opportunities of empowerment the enable communities around the world to lift themselves out of poverty.



# FAIR TRADE TOWNS USA - FAQs

## 1. What do I need to get a campaign started in my community?

Getting started simply requires commitment and energy. Reach out to those who share your passion for social justice, organize a group and embark on the adventure! Register your campaign to access the support of our staff and our resources.

## 2. Have other communities earned Fair Trade College or University status?

Since 2006 over 100 communities have started the process of becoming a Fair Trade Town with almost a third having met all five criteria. Meanwhile many more, representing all regions of the US, are well on their way. Visit our [page](#) for a list of Fair Trade Town campaigns.

## 3. Who created and oversees the Fair Trade Towns USA program?

Fair Trade Towns began in 2006 in the US when the borough of Media, PA followed the example of Garstang in the UK. Today, a **Steering Committee of organizers and Fair Trade advocates** manage and guide the program. Fair Trade USA has raised funds to sponsor the program, and dedicated staff are housed at Fair Trade USA's headquarters in Oakland, CA and Philadelphia, PA.

## 4. How is FTT funded?

Fair Trade Towns USA is entirely grant funded. Grants have been raised by the resource development staff at Fair Trade USA and managed by the National Coordinator.

## 5. How will my community benefit from Fair Trade designation?

Earning Fair Trade status demonstrates your community's commitment to social and eco-



conomic justice. Many towns are looking for ways to differentiate themselves as sustainable. From LEED certified buildings to Transition Town campaigns, municipalities recognize the allure of sustainability. Tourists and potential residents are looking to spend their resources in a conscientious way. Fair Trade Town status is an excellent way for your town to market itself to this growing consumer demographic.

## **6. What are the costs associated with a Fair Trade program?**

While there are no program fees, switching to some Fair Trade products may result in increased costs. Experience has shown that any increase in the cost of Fair Trade products is very modest.

## **7. Is funding available to town campaigns?**

The Fair Trade Towns USA small grant program allows campaigns to get funding for internships, promotional signage, materials, etc.

## **8. What resources are available?**

Fair Trade Towns USA partners with organizations across the US to provide guidance and support. Our website provides event ideas, media packets, examples from previous campaigns and more. Plus, the program's Steering Committee and dedicated staff are available to offer advice and work with campaigns when needed.

## **9. How do you keep the momentum going after achieving Fair Trade Status?**

Towns earning Fair Trade status have the responsibility to fulfill and uphold the commitments outlined in their Fair Trade Resolution. Advocates periodically check with town officials to ensure agreements are fulfilled, host educational events and help spread the Fair Trade movement to other communities.



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Click Below for Links**

**Resources by Criteria**

**Trips abroad**

**Grant Opportunities**

Contact National Organizer Courtney Lang for more information

**Registration**

**Questions?** Contact National Organizer Courtney Lang at (510)-844-1640 or email her at [clang@fairtradeusa.org](mailto:clang@fairtradeusa.org)