

# Mutual Aid Outreach

## *Mission Statement*

Mutual Aid is a long-standing act of resistance, it aims to create networks of shared responsibility of care and support among community members, towards and for one another. We realize that when shared, individual efforts make us better equipped to protect and provide for each other. It is through this collaboration that we can develop self-sufficiency and establish support systems; by which, individuals can access necessary resources that are not easily attainable due to methods of oppression including, but not limited to, historical prejudice and institutionalized racism. Through mutual aid efforts, we hope to dismantle and rebuild a future reality in which race, income, sex, and ability do not determine one's access to their innate right of existence. We also recognize and respect that the definition of mutual aid is specific to individual communities, thus we strive to support communities that meet their self-described needs. Freedom Fighters DC believes that mutual aid is the foundation towards liberation; we stand in solidarity with the communities we serve and look forward to working with you throughout this journey.

## **Objectives**

1. Solidify and support already existing mutual aid efforts in the DC community.
2. Assist communities where they have identified concerns or needs through the organization of mutual aid events as well as engagement with community institutions to strengthen their impact.
  - a. Collaboration with places of worship in the community to support their mutual aid events
  - b. Organize mutual aid events for BIPOC queer/youth homeless shelters
  - c. Fundraising BIPOC-centered events
3. Address food apartheid in communities we collaborate with through the offering and establishment of urban gardens to increase access to fresh produce, in addition to community interventions such as community fridges and collaboration with preexisting mutual networks' to support their programs.
4. Establish working relationships with schools and youth groups through the collaboration between FFDC Mutual Aid and FFDC Youth Outreach.
5. Facilitate community education through collaboration with FFDC Mutual Aid, FFDC Education and Outreach, FFDC Youth Outreach, and community members.
  - a. For example, supporting community libraries where need be, organize book drives, installations if agreed upon by the community libraries
    - i. Book sharing (variation of community libraries) via Little Free Libraries  
<https://littlefreelibrary.org/start/>

## **What is Mutual Aid?**

Dean Spade's, Shit's Totally FUCKED! What Can We Do?: A Mutual Aid Explainer

<https://youtu.be/PopmGAvsggg>

The Radical Past and Present of Mutual Aid: <https://foundationbeyondbelief.org/news/mutual-aid>

What is Mutual Aid? (Anarchist Perspective):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRvX0abNWvg>

What is Mutual Aid? (examples+descriptions) <https://bigdoorbrigade.com/what-is-mutual-aid/>

## **Mutual Aid is Liberation.**

Mutual aid alleviates and reduces community dependency on the governing body, “the state”, that already neglects and criminalizes people who do not abide or fit into the mold of hegemonic white-supremacy that permeates American society. Because of this oppression, these BIPOC and Queer BIPOC individuals alike do not have equitable access to resources, as compared to those with socially accepted identities, and are penalized for it. This decrease in dependence combats and bypasses all methods of social control the state imposes on BIPOC and Queer BIPOC to access the resources they need for survival.

Example methods of social control specific to BIPOC

- Housing Segregation and Redlining in America: A Short History | NPR  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5FBjyqfoLM>
  - Food Deserts in D.C. | Let's Talk | NPR  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kQeorPkPLmU>
  - Gentrification of Barry Farms <https://youtu.be/vz5wovUggCI>

## **Mutual Aid is Abolition.**

It is through the development of mutual aid networks, in which BIPOC and Queer BIPOC no longer have to rely on the state for survival. Mutual aid is an act of resistance that abolishes the existence of methods of social control, replacing these institutions with community-run and specified programs. Mutual aid caters to and directly addresses the needs of individual community members, as well as the community as a whole.

- NYC Immigrant Communities Fight Hunger, Exploitation & Invisibility Through Mutual Aid  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0J60\\_M0KqVg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0J60_M0KqVg)

## **Mutual Aid is Imagination.**

Mutual aid does not look the same in every community. Different communities have different needs, through which mutual aid can be tailored to fit. There are no bounds to what Mutual Aid is and can be, this includes the way we respond to emergencies, violence and justice.

- Mutual Aid Justice: Beyond Survival

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mJCVWKaTtc>

## **Mutual Aid Framework**

(From/in reference to Harsha Walia's *Undoing Border Imperialism*, abridged by Dean Spade)

### 5 Tenets of Direct Services Work

- 1) Direct support work for basic needs is necessary to the struggle.
- 2) People who are surviving the systems (immigration, criminalization, poverty, etc.), already got through or never had the problem, should take responsibility for doing tangible work to help people struggling now.
- 3) Solidarity NOT charity.
- 4) Direct support work can help us name and confront political systems and break the isolation and stigma those systems create.
- 5) Explicitly political direct support work can help build movements, change consciousness.

### Question to consider in regard to Mutual Aid efforts

- 1) How do we keep direct services work political?
- 2) How do we avoid direct support work becoming paralegal or other services work that offloads responsibility from the government? (We don't want to end up helping the prisons run, helping the deportation system be slightly less unfair, being the unpaid frontline workers of the benefits system.)
- 3) How do we avoid professionals (health workers, lawyers) having more power/voice in our organizations because of the legitimacy/authority they have in these systems?
- 4) How do we choose which cases/campaigns to take when there is an overwhelming need?  
(How do we avoid the dynamic where people often take the "winnable" cases, which often mean people with less vulnerability in the system: e.g. people who don't have a felony, who could pay back rent, etc)
- 5) How to manage burnout?