



We're ONA – Now What? – Part 1

Right after your study process, congregational vote and listing by the Open and Affirming Coalition...

Now What? The process continues! An ONA setting keeps its word of welcome by living out its commitment to fully include LGBTQ persons in its full life and ministries (membership, worship, leadership, sacraments, employment, rites, etc.).

Here are some suggested BASIC STEPS:

- 1. IDENTIFY AND ONA CONTACT PERSON(S)** – They are the vital liaison between your setting and The Coalition. *Be sure that their email address and snail mail address are sent to The Coalition office* so that you'll be informed about all that's happening: news, events, advocacy issues, etc.!
- 2. ORGANIZE TO MAKE ONA A VITAL PART** of your setting's life. Don't ask your ONA Contact(s) to do this alone. Involve a group of folks who will bring faith and energy to this aspect of your life in Christ. Form an ONA or Diversity...Ministry Team, Committee, Task Force, Bunch – you name it!
- 3. CONSULT WITH LGBTQ PERSONS and/or SUPPORTERS** in your setting about their needs and hopes for activities, events, witness, in which you might engage. Contact LGBTQ organizations and service providers in your community and ask for their view of how you might be of help in the wider community. Let them know what it means that you are ONA.
- 4. NETWORK WITH ONA LEADERS IN YOUR CONFERENCE.** Don't go it alone! Look for others who are making and encouraging this witness. Check with your ONA Consultant (person trained to help churches become and be ONA). Your Conference office or the Open and Affirming Coalition (openandaffirming.org) can tell you who your Conference ONA consultants and ONA Ministry Team are. Other possible connections: ONA/LGBTQ working groups in your Conference, local chapter of the ONA Coalition, other ONA and/or Welcoming Churches and settings.
- 5. LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE!** Include your ONA commitment on your church's website, in your Sunday bulletin and newsletter, on your church sign, in advertising, etc. **BE SPECIFIC** – Let it be known that "Open and Affirming (ONA)" means your are "LGBT-welcoming" or "welcome people of all sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions." Not everyone outside (or inside) the UCC knows what the letters O-N-A mean!
- 6. SUPPORT THE COALITION!** Though the Open and Affirming Coalition has been working for decades, many youth and adults still do not know we exist! Help get the word out to your setting and beyond. For Coalition information, call (216) 736-3228. And *please* help us to strengthen and expand our work by contributing financially. We do not get regular support from OCWM; we raise most of our income from individuals, churches, Conferences, grants, etc. Not all in the UCC value our ministries. We know that ONA settings do, and so we look to you to uphold them with your prayers and dollars. *Thank you!*

Contributions may be sent to:
Open and Affirming Coalition
United Church of Christ
700 Prospect Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44115
office@openandaffirming.org

We're ONA - Now What? - Part 1, Version Jan 2018, Mass Conference ONA Ministry Team