



# Guidelines for Participating in the Priorities Process

## Plan your gathering

We encourage your worship sharing and discernment in a manner that fits your community. Your gathering might be in person, online, or in a hybrid format. Some groups consider priorities in a committee, in an informal group, or as a First Day discussion topic. Some meetings or churches adopt a minute expressing their sense of priority issues, but this is not a requirement. The gathering could also take place outside of a meeting or church—at a retirement community or among young adult Friends. See more suggestions and how FCNL can support you to facilitate your gathering at [fcnl.org/quakers](https://fcnl.org/quakers).

We encourage you to include people of different ages, backgrounds, and experiences and people with lived experience on issues you want to prioritize. Also include your meeting or church's activities related to these issues. Please include at least one person who could submit your group's responses online. Especially if meeting virtually, please encourage attendees to share their contact information at [fcnl.org/prioritiesguestbook](https://fcnl.org/prioritiesguestbook) for updates on the policy process.

Many gatherings prepare for discernment by reading FCNL's Policy Statement, "The World We Seek," which details FCNL's values and goals. It is available online at [fcnl.org/legislativestatement](https://fcnl.org/legislativestatement) or by request.

## Discern priorities

After an opening period of waiting worship, the gathering might begin with a brief description of the priorities process and the purpose of the gathering. Participants might share their concerns related to national issues and policies. **Through your discussion, please identify up to five priorities to suggest for the lobbying work of FCNL.** You do not need to rank the priorities in order of importance to your group. The most important consideration for FCNL's Policy Committee is that your responses reflect your spiritual searching and discernment.

## Report your group's responses

**Online (preferred):** Submit responses electronically at [fcnl.org/priorities](https://fcnl.org/priorities).

**Other methods:** We can also accept responses by email (send to [priorities@fcnl.org](mailto:priorities@fcnl.org)) or postal mail (send to 245 2nd St, NE, Washington, DC 20002). Please see the other side of this sheet for the information to include if you send responses using these methods.

**PLEASE RESPOND BY APRIL 15, 2024**

## What information should you record?

No matter how you send the information, please include the following information:

- Who is responding? (The group or individual, and what Yearly Meeting you are part of)
- Who participated? (The number in the group and approximate ages)
- What kind of gathering? (Committee meeting, informal gathering, meeting for business, etc.)
- Who is the group's contact person?
- What are up to five priorities you recommend for FCNL's work? (You may list them in any order and include up to 30 words on each priority. Keep in mind that the final priorities will identify topics to be emphasized rather than the details of FCNL's concern on that issue. Please include the relevant part, number 1–4, of "The World We Seek.")
- What connections, if any, does your group have to the priorities that you have listed? This could include, but is not limited to, community members who have lived experience with the priorities or community members who have engaged in ministry, advocacy, or justice work with the priorities.
- Any comments on the process your group would like to share.

## What happens to the responses after FCNL receives them?

The FCNL Policy Committee, a working committee of the General Committee, reads all the responses and meets together to consider what meetings, churches, groups, and individuals are telling FCNL.

For each concern raised, the Committee considers how that area is supported in the FCNL Policy Statement and the historic leadings of Friends. The Committee also considers the capacity of staff, the financial resources of FCNL, and the potential role of FCNL and other groups working on the issues. Finally, the Committee considers whether a chosen issue is likely to come before the upcoming Congress. The Committee makes choices—difficult choices—among the many advances we would all like to make toward the world we seek, knowing that if we try to do everything, we will do nothing well.

The Policy Committee will bring its recommendation to the FCNL General Committee meeting for final discernment in November 2024, just after the general elections. The General Committee may choose to accept the recommended priorities or ask for further modifications. Throughout the discussion, however, the priorities discerned by Friends across the country remain at the center of the Committee's consideration.

## Where can you find more information?

See FCNL's website: [fcnl.org/priorities](https://fcnl.org/priorities). If you have additional questions, you can contact Policy Committee members Genie Stowers ([gstowers835@gmail.com](mailto:gstowers835@gmail.com), 510-734-3624) and Lois Yellowthunder ([lois@anthrolaw.com](mailto:lois@anthrolaw.com), 651-699-7392).

