



## CONSENSUS DECISION-MAKING

<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b>	<b>9/1/86</b>
<b>REVISION DATES:</b>	<b>2/26/09, 3/22/11</b>
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	
<b>TITLE:</b>	
<b>DATE:</b>	

### **POLICY:**

JRPC Coordinating Council shall strive to make decisions by using the consensus model to ensure equity and inclusiveness. Consensus decision-making is the expected norm. All Board and the Executive Director are included on consensus of all decisions with the exception of personnel decisions, which shall include discussion by all with a final decision being made solely by the Board. Consensus is defined as a yes vote to all four of the following questions by each Board member:

1. Did I share my opinion?
2. Did I listen to others?
3. Might I be wrong?
4. Will I support the decision of the group?

### **PROCEDURE:**

The goal of consensus decision-making is a decision that is consented to by all group members, full consent does not mean that everyone must be completely satisfied with the final outcome-in fact, total satisfaction is rare. The decision must be acceptable enough, however, that all will agree to support this group in choosing it.

We believe that the spirit of consensus decision-making is as important as the process. Specifically, that each of us should enter into the process in a spirit of openness, without having taken a position on an issue before hearing input from all those present. This suggests an attitude of listening to one another, of attempting to understand each other's thoughts and feelings, rather than becoming attached to a particular position.

If, after having participated in the consensus process, and asking if we all agree, anyone (he/she) cannot, for ethical or practical reasons, support the group's conclusions, the consensus process provides alternate ways of proceeding. The most common of these are to "stand aside" or to "block". In the first instance the person who stands aside does not agree with the group's decision but does not feel so strongly that he/she is willing to stand in the way of its implication.

He/she thus stands aside and may ask that this decision may be recorded in the minutes. If a person cannot in good conscience stand aside he/she may block the decision. When one or more people takes this position it is usually an indication that the group requires more time to reach consensus. Blocking protects the rights of the minority even if the minority is only one of many however, blocking should be used only with the recognition that the decision to block is a momentous one. One is morally obligated to participate fully in the group process before deciding to block the group's decision.

It is the responsibility of the facilitator to summarize the decision being considered and to confirm each participant's position when necessary. It is the responsibility of each person present to speak out about concerns or objections.

At the Jeannette Rankin Peace Resource Center, the consensus process includes board and staff members present during any discussion. Exceptions to this would include personal issues involving either board or staff members. In such instances the staff or board member would be included in the discussion of the issue but would not be part of the decision reached through consensus.