



FAST FAQ'S

APRIL, 2012

History: The FAST Organization was founded in November 2004 when 700 members of local congregations came together to commit to work together on addressing justice issues in Pinellas County. FAST has a membership of 37 congregations and brought together over 2500 people in our most recent Nehemiah Action on March 19, 2012.

Who can be part of FAST? Any congregation in Pinellas County with over 20 members willing to work with other congregations. Those who are not members of congregations can work as part of a team affiliated with a congregation.

Who controls FAST? FAST is run by our member congregations. There is also a board of directors. The board is composed of the clergy and three lay representatives from each member congregation.

How does FAST decide what issues to work on? Members of FAST conduct over 1500 conversations within their congregations in order to identify the most pressing community concerns. For example, this past year a list of more than 20 areas of concern was compiled. Congregations then gathered to vote on specific areas to focus on for the year 2012. These areas were jobs, jail recidivism, and education. From there, action committees were formed to do research on the problems in these areas and identify winnable solutions. This Fall we will conduct another listening process and we will have a large assembly to vote on what areas to work on in 2013.

Who gets paid at FAST? The majority of the work of FAST is done by volunteers. However, there are currently four organizers on staff who spend most of their time training leaders in the community, and a part time administrative assistant.

What do funds raised go towards? The majority of the funding for FAST goes towards training un-paid leaders. FAST conducts 4 major trainings during the year and smaller trainings on an on-going basis throughout the year. The paid organizers on staff spend 80% of their time providing individual and small group coaching and trainings to the hundreds of volunteers who work with FAST. FAST sends leaders to regional and national trainings for the purpose of better executing skills in organizing large numbers of people who will address issues of injustice with local decision-makers. Less than 15% of funds are used to maintain two small offices and pay a part time administrative assistant.

Where did FAST get funds from in the past? In the past FAST raised all its funds through dues paid by congregations and seed money provided by grants from national religious bodies. FAST is now raising funds locally in order to build an independent base to take the place of seed money from distant grant-makers.

How does FAST achieve positive change in the community? FAST addresses root causes of community problems by pushing for systemic change. FAST accomplishes its goals through taking "direct action" on issues (gathering people to meet face-to-face with decision makers). **FAST is not a direct service organization. FAST is not a political organization and does not endorse political candidates.**