



EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW
TO LEAD A CHAPTER ON CAMPUS
OR IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

TCCA CHAPTER GUIDE



Version 2023 Fall

TZU CHI COLLEGIATE ASSOCIATION



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Dear Student Leaders,

We are excited to learn that you are interested in leading a Tzu Chi Collegiate Association (TCCA) chapter in your school or your city. It is the goal of Tzu Chi USA to empower collegiate youth with the resources and skills to become compassionate young leaders for good social change.

We hope that you will help us accomplish this mission by attracting other like-minded college and university students around your campus. It is Tzu Chi USA's goal to empower American youth to cultivate characters in gratitude, respect, and unconditional love, to take compassionate actions, and to become effective global citizens - thinking globally and acting locally.

This is a big responsibility!

This handbook will serve as a guide and provide the necessary tools in starting TCCA activities on your campus and in your local communities. Running a TCCA chapter is exciting and rewarding, but we understand that it isn't for everyone. So please take some time to carefully review the requirements and tips to ensure that you can fulfill your responsibilities as a student leader and make the best decisions.

Our founder, Dharma Master Cheng Yen, once said, "Great strength comes from unity of minds and efforts." The staff at Tzu Chi USA and our Tzu Chi Young Leaders National Task Force are eager to help you. If you have any questions or need additional information, please email us at yl.tcca@tzuchi.us or young_leaders@tzuchi.us.

Sincerely,

Tzu Chi Young Leaders
National Task Force





GETTING TO KNOW US

WHAT IS TZU CHI

In Chinese, "Tzu" means compassion and "Chi" means relief. Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation ("Tzu Chi") is an international humanitarian organization whose mission is to relieve the suffering of those in need while creating a better world for all through compassion, love and hope.

Tzu Chi was founded by Venerable Dharma Master Cheng Yen in 1966 in Hualien, an impoverished rural county of Taiwan. Its charity work began with the help of five female disciples, 30 housewives, and the spare change they collected in their bamboo banks over time. Now, Tzu Chi's relief efforts span the globe and include missions in medicine, education, humanistic culture, disaster relief, and more.

WHAT IS TZU CHI USA

Your chapter is affiliated with Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, USA ("Tzu Chi USA"). Founded In 1989, Tzu Chi USA is the first overseas organization and has been awarded a special consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Tzu Chi USA is headquartered in San Dimas California, operating with 9 regions and 65 offices in 25 states across the US.

WHAT IS TCCA

Tzu Chi Collegiate Association (TCCA) is a network of collegiate youth Tzu Chi volunteers who believe in Tzu Chi's values, promote and practice Tzu Chi missions in college communities. Members of TCCA are referred to as Tzu Ching and are honored to wear Tzu Ching uniform after meeting certain requirements.

TCCA is a global network with members in but not limit to United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, UK, South Africa, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, Myanmar, Thailand, Japan, Korea, and Sri Lanka.

WHAT DO OUR CHAPTERS DO?

Each activity of a TCCA chapter should fall into one of the following categories:

1 COMMUNITY SERVICES

Join Tzu Chi community service events or organize your own events to help your neighborhood and surrounding city. A community service event could be street cleaning, soup kitchen, winter distribution, after school tutoring and a lot more. Find opportunities to promote and integrate Tzu Chi values into your events to build a positive relationship with the people you encounter with.

2 ADVOCACY

Raise awareness among your peers and in your neighborhood about Tzu Chi climate actions such as promoting plant-based diet, reducing carbon footprint, and other sustainable life style.

3 NETWORKING

Host local networking events to connect with your new chapter members and strengthen the relationship with the existing members. The best chapters are the ones that create a sense of family or friendship among members.

4 FUNDRAISING

Plan and support Tzu Chi USA's fundraising efforts. You can incorporate fundraising into your chapter's activities like a film screening, bake sale or cultural event. All fundraisers for Tzu Chi are required to get approval from your associated region, and pre-register with us.

5 DHARMA LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Incorporate Dharma Master Cheng Yen's teaching into your leadership development events that promote personal or spiritual growth and professional development.





HOW TO START A TCCA CHAPTER

1 IDENTIFY A CORE TEAM

To start a new chapter, you would need to have at least 3 uniformed officers. We provide a 6 month probationary period to earn your uniform while starting your chapter. Find our uniform policy on page 7. If you have any questions please consult your local Tzu Chi offices or contact Tzu Chi Young Leaders National Task Force at yl.tcca@tzuchi.us or young_leaders@tzuchi.us.

A considerable amount of team effort is required to start and sustain a chapter. Team members need to be hardworking, committed and equally passionate about Tzu Chi's work to ensure the success of a chapter. Be proactive and include others in leadership roles early in the process. Reach out to potential students from different academic grades to ensure that all the leaders will not be graduating in the same year. This will make the transition smoother at the end of a term. For more information on how to identify a core team, visit **What Makes a Good Team** in the [Resource Center](#).

2 CHOOSE AN ADVISOR

All chapters are required to have an advisor who is a certified Tzu Chi commissioner or TCCA alumni pursuing to be a commissioner. Be prepared to share your chapter's goal and be honest about the level of support you think your chapter would need with your advisor to get your chapter rolling.

If you have trouble finding a local chapter advisor, please contact us at yl.tcca@tzuchi.us or young_leaders@tzuchi.us.

3 REGISTER WITH TZU CHI USA

To be an official TCCA chapter, you will need to register with us. By registering with Tzu Chi USA, you will receive a digital certificate and branding package for your chapter, badges for your members, and chances to receive yearly awards. Before registering do ensure you have at least three chapter leaders, an advisor, and their contact information. Register online [now](#).

4 EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT TZU CHI'S WORK

Now you are one step closer to being part of the Tzu Ching family. Read and learn more about what we do at youngleaders.tzuchi.us and tzuchi.us.

5 GET CONNECTED WITH OUR TCU CHI YOUNG LEADERS NATIONAL TASK FORCE

Our national task force will approach to you, your chapter advisor and regional advisor to get a better understanding about your team and your plan before giving out the approval.

6 RECRUIT MEMBERS AND PLAN YOUR ACADEMIC YEAR

Congratulations! Your chapter has been approved with a six month temporary status. Now, it is the time to recruit members for your chapter and plan your year. TCCA chapters normally hold events focused on Community Service, Advocacy, Networking, Fundraising, and Dharma Leadership Development. Members of your chapter will help execute events and spread Tzu Chi's message.



7 REGISTER WITH YOUR SCHOOL

Gaining recognition from your school can bring a variety of knowledge and resources to your chapter. Some can even receive funding from the school to help operate their chapter.

We encourage you to start a conversation with your school administrators early. Your school may also have its own guidelines to becoming a student club so it's extremely important to be aware of them and to stay in touch with your administrators.

Utilize your chapter advisor's knowledge and experience throughout the way.

8 RECEIVE YOUR CHAPTER CERTIFICATION

The Tzu Chi Young Leaders National Task Force will review your chapter's performance during the 6 month probationary period and give out the final approval if your chapter meets all the requirements. Now you are officially a TCCA chapter!



THINGS TO KNOW

UPHOLD THE MISSION AND NAME OF TZU CHI, TZU CHI USA AND TCCA

Protecting the names and reputations of Tzu Chi and Tzu Chi USA is the responsibility of every Tzu Ching member. Here's a friendly reminder for you to read, understand and abide by the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook.

YEARLY REQUIREMENTS

- Register your chapter every school year to maintain the active TCCA chapter status. You will receive notice before every Fall quarter/semester about the registration window.
- Provide new member information every quarter/semester to the National Task Force.
- Submit an event report after completing any non social events.
- To keep the chapter in good standing, the chapter must have at least 3 active members and organize a minimum of 4 events per year in at least 2 of the categories: Community Service, Advocacy, Networking, Fundraising, and Dharma Leadership Development.

Find the related online forms in the [Resource Center](#).

YEARLY AWARDS

Tzu Chi USA recognizes chapters that go above and beyond the yearly requirements. Our awards highlight outstanding chapters, chapter leaders, chapter advisors and events/activities that stand out in each of the five categories: Community Service, Advocacy, Networking, Fundraising, and Dharma Leadership Development.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP TRANSITION GUIDE

An ideal chapter should have a minimum of at least three officers but can choose to have more if desired:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Digital Engagement Officer

The transition of leadership typically occurs in late spring. Share your new leadership team with us via the annual chapter registration form. Look at the [Leadership Transition Guide](#) in the [Resource Center](#) for more tips.

FUNDRAISING FOR TZU CHI

- If you plan to have fundraising events to support Tzu Chi's charitable and relief work, be sure to report to your associated Tzu Chi office and region ahead of time. Get an approval from your associated region before hosting your fundraising events.
- In addition, please pre-register your fundraising events with us for data and reporting purpose.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Work with your chapter advisors to prepare a budget and manage your spending. Make sure you learn about your school's fundraising and budget policies. To apply funding from us, please read the **TCCA Chapter Grant Policy** in the [Resource Center](#).



LOGO USE

Using TCCA and Tzu Chi Young Leaders logo on promotional materials is a great way to advertise your chapter and its activities. All active chapters are encouraged to use our logo, but you are also responsible for protecting and treating it with respect.

All digital designs with TCCA or Tzu Chi Young Leaders logo must be reviewed by your chapter advisor and regional advisor before releasing.

Please be aware that TCCA logo cannot be used on any merchandise.

Email us at yl.tcca@tzuchi.us or young_leaders@tzuchi.us to request high resolution logo files or consult how to use logo effectively and properly.

POLICIES AND BEST PRACTICES

By joining as a uniformed member, you have agreed to follow the 10 Tzu Chi precepts:

- No killing
- No stealing
- No sexual misconduct
- No lying
- No drinking
- No smoking, using narcotics, or chewing betel nuts
- No gambling or speculation
- Practice filial piety and develop pleasant manners and speech
- Abide by traffic laws
- No participation in political events or demonstrations

You agree to a set of terms and conditions that will help Tzu Chi and Tzu Chi USA maintain its high standards of professionalism. Read the full terms and conditions in the **TCCA Policies and Best Practices** on the next page.

NON-DISCRIMINATION CLAIMS

It is the policy of Tzu Chi USA that there will be no discrimination or harassment in our programs, activities or employment based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or any other basis prohibited by law. We expect all chapters and members to uphold this policy.

TCCA POLICIES AND BEST PRACTICES

TO RECEIVE THE TZU CHING UNIFORM, A MEMBER MUST:

- Accomplish 20 volunteering hours in 3 different events in an academic year.
- Attend at least 4 hours of training camps or volunteer orientations.
- Follow the rules of wearing uniforms:
 - Wear the full set including white pants, white shoes, white socks, Tzu Ching belt and name tags together with the Tzu Ching polo shirt.
 - The uniform must be worn in its entirety. Partial wear is not permitted.
 - No excessive jewelry. (i.e. big earrings, bracelets, rings, necklaces)
 - Button all buttons on the shirt, shirt should be tucked inside the pants.
 - When wearing a uniform, eat vegetarian food only.
- Adhere to the 10 Tzu Chi precepts.

BEST PRACTICES FOR EVENTS

- Events must be related to the Tzu Chi missions and reinforce the spirits and the teachings from our founder. Check out the [Tzu Chi USA website](#) for more information.
- During Tzu Ching events, all the food served must be vegetarian. Events should not violate the 10 Tzu Chi Precepts.
- For events held in a Tzu Chi office, additional rules related to egg and milk, dress code, social events, and religious ceremonies may apply. Consult your advisor or the Tzu Chi Young Leaders National Task Force for details.
- Submit event reports on time. Quick access to the form [here](#).

REQUIREMENTS FOR TZU CHING OFFICERS

- Follow membership requirements, uniform policy and best practices for events and activities.
- Attend at least 50% of Tzu Ching events/activities and meetings per semester/quarter.
- Proactively stay informed with the latest news and updates from Tzu Chi Young Leaders National Task Force and Tzu Chi USA.

DRESS CODE

- All volunteers should have Tzu Chi or Tzu Ching identification while performing their duties.
- Uniformed members representing TCCA are expected to dress appropriately for the volunteer environment, maintain good grooming and personal cleanliness. A neat and professional appearance is expected at all times.
- Uniform is required at all membership events except for pure social events hosted outside of a Tzu Chi venue and other special occasions that are pre-approved by advisors.
- Volunteer vests will be provided to non-uniformed members and volunteers. We ask non-uniformed members and volunteers not to wear any of the following:
 - Tight or revealing garments such as shorts and tank tops
 - Flip flops or other footwear that is unsafe or inappropriate to a position
 - Clothing with political or controversial messages

POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

The standards of safety, integrity, respect, and civility are extremely important to us, and these core values are key components of the TCCA experience. Tzu Chi USA upholds every member's rights to participate in an inclusive community that fosters character and integrity by supporting and challenging students to reflect and act upon their individual conduct and community standards. Members are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful, civil, and honest manner.

Consistent with these principles, Tzu Chi USA maintains policies governing violent and disruptive behavior, endangerment of others (including animals), property theft and damage, sexual harassment, illegal drugs, smoking, and alcohol consumption, as well as other types of organizational policy and legal violations. When conflict occurs within the community, Tzu Chi USA aspires to resolve it in a pedagogical and restorative fashion. Our approach is to guide member behavior for the common good while respecting the rights and responsibilities of all members of our volunteer community.

INVESTIGATION PROCESS:

An investigation hearing is the opportunity to discuss with a full-time staff member the alleged behavior or conduct violation and clarify information. At the conference, you will be provided an opportunity to discuss the incident as well as receive feedback on what sanctions may be assigned as a result of policy violations, including what efforts on your part can restore the harm from the incident.



POSSIBLE OUTCOMES:

Sanctions may result from finding that a member was responsible for misbehavior or conduct violation, consistent with our educational purposes, in order to rebuild trust in our community.

Tzu Chi USA may utilize the following member status sanctions, depending on the severity of the misconduct:

- **Warning**
- **Reprimand**
- **Probation, which may include denial of specified member privileges and participation restrictions**
- **Membership suspension**
- **Permanent expulsion**

MEMBER RIGHTS:

When a member is involved in the misconduct process, each member is entitled to the following rights:

- **Be notified of the allegations in question**
- **Have an opportunity to share their perspective on the incident**
- **Be notified of the findings of the investigation**
- **Have an accompanying support person during any conference or hearing**



HELPFUL TIPS FOR YOUR ADVISOR

TCCA is a youth-led initiative and the role of the advisor is to be a mentor. A chapter advisor helps guide the chapter leaders through decision making processes, helps brainstorm through challenges, provides consultation on finances and legal matters, and serves as the bridge between the TCCA chapter and the local Tzu Chi branch office.

Every chapter is unique, and we encourage each chapter advisor to adjust your roles and responsibilities according to the real needs. It is important to have an honest conversation between chapter leaders and chapter advisors at the beginning of the school year to discuss the capacity of a chapter advisor, the type of help needed from the chapter, and the expectation from each other.

Being an advisor is not to lead the chapter directly but to empower the student leaders to succeed. Below are some tips to chapter advisors to have a successful relationship with chapter leaders:

MAKE YOURSELF AVAILABLE

The most successful chapters are the ones that have active chapter advisors. Advisors can help recruit members, bring valuable input in the chapter meetings, and help the team stay accountable to your goals. Make sure to allocate enough time to attend chapter meetings, events, and other engagement opportunities.

EMPOWER THE CHAPTER LEADERS BY OFFERING VALUABLE FEEDBACK

You should keep yourself up to date with the chapter, establish the ways in effective communication: in writing, through meetings, via text or phone calls, and offer constructive feedback to chapter leaders to help them grow.

PROVIDE A SENSE OF FAMILY

In Tzu Chi we build a volunteer group that feels like a family. We hope chapter advisors could help to foster this core value in TCCA chapters.

KEEP IT GOING

Chapter Advisors play an important role in chapter leadership selection and transition. Make sure to have a practical leadership election procedure and sound transition plan.

BE A ROLE MODEL

Oftentimes, Tzu Ching look up to their chapter advisors on how to behave in a Tzu Chi environment, interact with people, or when making difficult decisions. We encourage chapter advisors to be a good role model to provide positive influences to the chapter members.

STAY CONNECTED WITH TZU CHI USA

Remember to serve as the bridge between your chapter and Tzu Chi. Having a good relationship with the local Tzu Chi office will benefit your chapter in a tremendous way.

PARTICIPATE IN THE ADVISOR NETWORK

Please stay connected with the national TCCA advisor network. Exchange ideas, support each other and grow together. Contact us to obtain the monthly advisor virtual meeting link.





KNOW YOUR RESOURCES

Whether you are starting a chapter for the first time or trying to maintain your chapter's momentum, we are here to help YOU succeed.

HAVE THE RIGHT PEOPLE ON YOUR SIDE

You are not alone! We have a diverse team and a great system to help you every step of the way.

• YOUR CHAPTER ADVISOR

If you need any help or have any questions, do not forget that your chapter advisor is one of the best resources around you.

• REGIONAL ADVISORS

We have regional advisors across nine regions in the United States who can support you every step of the way!

• TZU CHI YOUNG LEADERS NATIONAL TASK FORCE

Experienced Tzu Chi Ching alumni and student leaders are here to help. Explore the [TCCA Resource Center](#) as we continue to make different resources available online. If you have a specific need, please do not hesitate to email us at yl.tcca@tzuchi.us or young_leaders@tzuchi.us. Follow our [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#) @TzuChiYL.

• TZU CHI STAFF AT HEADQUARTERS

Talk to an officer from Tzu Chi USA Headquarters for any TCCA related questions at yihan_bao@tzuchi.us.

• FELLOWSHIP

Every month, our Tzu Chi Young Leaders National Task Force hosts online peer learning sessions for all TCCA chapter officers and members to connect and collaborate. Please keep an eye on the event invitations in the new school year.

STAY TUNED FOR NATIONL EVENTS!

1. US TCCA Leadership Conference

August

Attending the annual national leadership conference is a great way to strengthen your knowledge of Tzu Chi and Dharma, enhance your personal and professional leadership skills, and share your experiences with other chapters. You will meet hundreds of other student leaders and recent graduates in the Tzu Chi Young Leaders network.

2. Tzu Chi Young Leaders Annual Community Weekend

October

Once a year, all TCCA chapters and Tzu Ching Alumni nationwide will organize local community service events to **unite and serve together** on the same weekend, no matter how far apart our physical location is. This is an annual collaboration among all Tzu Chi Young Leaders to demonstrate the spirit of Youth in Action!

3. Tzu Chi Youth Innovation Prize Challenge

Starting in January

We believe that young people are the future leaders of the world. Every year, we will choose a theme related to a global issue, invite young people to propose their innovative ideas and solutions, and empower them to implement their projects. Participating teams have a chance to earn program funding and monetary reward.

INTERESTED IN JOINING US?

The Tzu Chi Young Leaders National Task Force welcomes all talented youth leaders and continues to provide leadership opportunities to those who show passion in US TCCA strategic development, national event planning, chapter empowerment, and Tzu Ching alumni engagement. Fill out the [interest form](#) if you are interested in joining the National Task Force!

ACT NOW!

You've read this handbook and it is time to start your journey. We encourage you to check out our Tzu Chi Young Leaders website for the latest news and additional resources. We wish you all the best!





“

Great strength
comes from unity
of minds and
efforts.

”

— — Dharma Master Cheng Yen

