



Fact Sheet: Salvation Army Organization and Structure

- The Salvation Army maintains a highly decentralized structure, emphasizing local control. Below is a brief explanation of The Salvation Army structure in the United States:
 - **Corps:** The basic service unit of The Salvation Army is the corps community center. Some cities may have several centers. They provide a variety of local programs, ranging from religious services to family counseling, day-care centers and youth activities.
 - **Divisions:** The corps community centers within defined geographical boundaries comprise a division, with 40 divisions in the United States responsible to their respective territorial headquarters. Specialized social work is conducted through adult rehabilitation centers within these divisional commands.
 - **Territories:** The United States is divided into four territories, with headquarters in Des Plaines, Illinois (Central); West Nyack, New York (Eastern); Atlanta, Georgia (Southern); and Long Beach, California (Western). Territorial headquarters oversee the work of their respective divisions.
 - **National:** The National Commander serves as the official leader of The Salvation Army at National Headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia. National Headquarters acts primarily as a coordinating body for Salvation Army resources from the corps level on up.
- The Salvation Army is organized internally as a paramilitary organization. The current ranking system is below:
 - **General**
 - **Commissioner**
 - **Colonel**
 - **Lieutenant Colonel**
 - **Major**
 - **Captain**
 - **Cadet**

History:

In 1865, William Booth, an ordained Methodist minister, aided by his wife Catherine, formed an evangelical group dedicated to preaching among the “unchurched” people living in the midst of appalling poverty in London’s East End. Booth’s ministry recognized the interdependence of material, emotional and spiritual needs. In addition to preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, Booth became involved in the feeding and shelter of the hungry and homeless and in rehabilitation of alcoholics.

Booth and his followers, originally known as The Christian Mission, became The Salvation Army in 1878, when that organization evolved on a quasi-military pattern. Booth became “the General” and officers’ ranks were given to his ministers.

The Salvation Army has functioned successfully within that unusual structure for more than a century. Today, its outreach has been expanded to include more than 120 countries and the Gospel is preached by its officers in more than 160 languages.

Services:

The basic social services developed by William Booth have remained an outward visible expression of the Army’s strong religious principles. In addition, new programs that address contemporary needs have been established. Among these are disaster relief services, day care centers, summer camps, holiday assistance, services for the aging, AIDS education and residential services, medical facilities, shelters for battered women and children, family and career counseling, vocational training, correction services and substance abuse rehabilitation. Nearly 30 million people a year are aided in some form by services provided by The Salvation Army.

Structure:

The General, with headquarters in London, is the international leader of The Salvation Army. In the United States, the functions of The Salvation Army are coordinated by the National Commander, whose office is at the National Headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia.

For administrative purposes, the nation is divided into four territories: the Central Territory with headquarters in Des Plaines, Illinois, the Eastern Territory with headquarters in West Nyack, New York, the Southern Territory with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, and the Western Territory with headquarters in Long Beach, California. Each territory is under leadership of a territorial commander.



Nationwide uniformity of policy is the responsibility of the Commissioners’ Conference, whose membership includes the National Commander and National President, the Territorial Commanders and the Territorial Presidents, the National Chief Secretary and the four Territorial Chief Secretaries. Standing commissions devise and evaluate strategic initiatives to further the Mission and ministry of The Salvation Army and then make recommendations to the Commissioners’ Conference.

Territories are made up of smaller units known as divisions. There are 40 divisions in the United States and each is headed by a divisional commander. Divisions consist of corps centers for worship and service, which are the basic units of The Salvation Army, and various specialized centers. The functions of each corps include religious and social services which are adapted to local needs. Each corps is under the supervision of a corps officer.

The Salvation Army is a participating member in various religious and human services associations, coalitions and conferences having similar principles and practices. Legally, each of the four Salvation Army territories in

the United States functions as a tax-exempt corporation with the National Commander as Chairperson of the Board.

Fundraising:

Salvation Army fundraising campaigns are conducted on a local and regional basis. There is no fundraising at the national level. The normal sources of funds are the traditional Christmas red kettle campaigns, direct-mail programs, corporate and foundation gifts, planned giving and government contracts. 82 cents of every dollar spent by The Salvation Army goes directly to client service – among the highest percentages of any major non-profit in the world.

Advisory Organizations:

Advisory organizations comprised of representative community, corporate and civic leaders perform a valuable service by providing advice and acting as liaison between The Salvation Army and the community. The advisory organizations interpret community needs to The Salvation Army and facilitate the development of resources, enabling The Salvation Army to respond to critical community needs. A national advisory board makes its recommendations to the Commissioners' Conference. There are nearly 60,000 advisory organization members in the United States.

The People:

The Salvation Army's membership consists of nearly 3,600 officers, 60,000 employees, 107,000 soldiers, 400,000 adherents, and 3.4 million volunteers. Adherents are people who have elected not to be enrolled as soldiers but consider The Salvation Army to be their place of worship. Soldiers are those who have signed a declaration of faith and practice known as "A Soldiers' Covenant" and worship and serve through a local corps. Employees are personnel hired to perform specialized duties in fields such as social services, youth service, accounting, development, law and property. Volunteers are those who give freely of their time, enabling The Salvation Army to meet far more community needs than otherwise possible.

Officers are the clergy of The Salvation Army. They have either completed training as cadets or auxiliary captains and have been ordained and commissioned to officership. All officers are engaged in continuing education. With its Christian heritage and motivation, The Salvation Army continues its unique service to all people in the name of Christ.