

CERTIFIED ADVOCATE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM UNITED STATES REGIONAL CONFERENCE FALL 2026 COURSE SYLLABUS

THE ADVOCACY TEAM

Note: For general questions, email advocacy@umcjustice.org.

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UNITED NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Rev. Dr. Liberato Bautista
Assistant General Secretary for United Nations and International Affairs
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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Certified Advocate Development Program is a cohort-based initiative to ensure that United Methodists are properly equipped to conduct faith-based legislative and policy advocacy in the public square. Advocate cohorts will be trained by GBCS staff through a 3-course asynchronous training, followed by on-going advocate development. Certified Advocates will work closely with the advocacy staff to communicate Social Principle concerns with policymakers and leaders around the world.

To become a Certified Advocate with GBCS, participants must:

- Complete all asynchronous sessions and attend 2 out of the 3 live trainings
- Lend themselves to ministry/issue-specific advocacy meetings with policymakers
- Participate in on-going GBCS-led advocate development

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After successfully completing this program, participants will have:

- Expertise in each of the 4 portfolio areas of GBCS, especially focused on the areas of concern to their own lives, communities, and congregations;

- An understanding of Wesleyan heritage of social holiness;
- Knowledge of how the U.S. Congress and United Nations operate;
- The tools to formulate an advocacy strategy to advocate on key issues in their communities;
- Concrete next steps on engaging on key issues nationally and in your communities.

REQUIRED RESOURCES

Digital course material for asynchronous learning will be uploaded to the Certified Advocates landing page on the GBCS website no later than one month prior to each session. [Click here to be directed to the Certified Advocate webpage.](#)

COURSE STRUCTURE

Note: All live sessions take place on the first Thursday of each month from 4:00pm to 5:30pm EST.

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|-----------------|--|
| 4:00pm – 4:30pm | Opening Presentation |
| 4:30pm – 5:00pm | Further Discussion in Breakout Groups |
| | <i>Note: Breakout Groups will alternate between jurisdiction/geographical location and preferred portfolio area.</i> |
| 5:00pm – 5:30pm | Closing Ritual and Next Steps |

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 3, 2026 | 4:00PM EST – ORIENTATION

Discussion Topic: An Introduction to The Certified Advocate Development Program

Required Viewing: None

Breakout Group Assignments: By Portfolio Area

Session Agenda:

- Opening Prayer
- Introduction of The Advocacy and UNIA Team
- Why the need for the Certified Advocate Development Program?
- Review of Course Syllabus
- Participant Introductions and Remaining Q & A in Breakout Groups
 - *What are participants hoping to get out of this program?*
 - UNIA – Rev. Dr. Liberato Bautista
 - Environmental Justice – Darina Regio
 - Civil and Human Rights – Rev. Kendal McBroom
 - Peace with Justice – Colleen Moore
 - Economic, Health, and Gender Justice – Rev. Camille Henderson-Edwards

- Closing Ritual and Review of Next Session

THURSDAY OCTOBER 1, 2026 | 4:00PM EST – SESSION #1

Discussion Topic: Developing Your Socio-Theological Framework

Required Viewing:

- Video: Our Wesleyan Heritage of Social Holiness
- Video: U.S. Congress 101
- Video: United Nations and International Affairs Ministry

Breakout Group Assignments: By Jurisdiction

Session Agenda:

- Opening Prayer
- Presentation: Developing Your Socio-Theological Framework; Becoming a “Glocal” Advocate
- Jurisdictional Breakout Groups:
 - Western – Rev. Dr. Liberato Bautista
 - North Central – Darina Regio
 - South Central – Rev. Kendal McBroom
 - Northeastern – Colleen Moore
 - Southeastern – Rev. Camille Henderson-Edwards
- Closing Ritual and Review of Next Session

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 5, 2026 | 4:00PM EST – SESSION #2

Discussion Topic: GBCS Legislative Portfolios and The Social Principles

Required Viewing:

- Video: The Economic, Health, and Gender Justice Portfolio
- Video: The Civil and Human Rights Portfolio
- Video: The Peace with Justice Portfolio
- Video: The Environmental Justice Portfolio

Breakout Group Assignments: By Portfolio Area

Session Agenda:

- Opening Prayer
- Presentation: An Overview of Advocacy’s Working Categories; Groupings; Priorities for the 120th U.S. Congress
- Portfolio Breakout Groups:
 - *How can we give leadership and set an agenda for our advocacy networks?*
 - UNIA – Rev. Dr. Liberato Bautista
 - Environmental Justice – Darina Regio

- Civil and Human Rights – Rev. Kendal McBroom
- Peace with Justice – Colleen Moore
- Economic, Health, and Gender Justice – Rev. Camille Henderson-Edwards
- Closing Ritual and Review of Next Session

THURSDAY DECEMBER 3, 2026 | 4:00PM EST – SESSION #3

Discussion Topic: Establishing Our Shared Network

Required Viewing:

- Video: Building an Advocacy Strategy

Breakout Group Assignments: By Jurisdiction

Session Agenda:

- Opening Prayer
- Presentation and Full Group Exercise: Visioning Statement and SMARTIE Goals Formulation
- Jurisdictional Breakout Groups:
 - *What are our vision statements, goals, and tactics for moving decision makers?*
 - Western – Rev. Dr. Liberato Bautista
 - North Central – Darina Regio
 - South Central – Rev. Kendal McBroom
 - Northeastern – Colleen Moore
 - Southeastern – Rev. Camille Henderson-Edwards
- Closing Ritual and Review of On-Going Participation

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Names/Pronouns and Self-Identifications:

The General Board of Church and Society is committed to fostering inclusive and equitable learning environments. We invite you to tell us how you want to be referred to in this cohort – both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). Please be sure to note this information by updating your name via your Zoom account. Additionally, it is your choice whether to disclose how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity (e.g., should it come up in cohort discussion about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed.