# SECULAR WEEK OF ACTION

APRIL 30TH – MAY 9TH 2021

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## What is Secular Week of Action (SWoA)?

Secular Week of Action (SWoA) harnesses the secular movement's commitment to making the world a better place by creating an opportunity to:

- **organize service events** based around shared values
- **connect new volunteers to impactful projects** in their own towns and neighborhoods
- **celebrate what human beings can achieve together** when we dedicate ourselves to ethical *action*

SWoA offers **a relevant alternative to the National Day of Prayer**, a day set aside in federal law for the people of the United States to "turn to God in prayer" on the first Thursday of May. A national day that calls for a specific religious practice as an expression of civic virtue rather than for a shared practice is divisive and discriminatory to secular people as well as to others who do not see prayer as an adequate response to national crises.

This year, Secular Week of Action takes place April 30 - May 9 and provides **a way for *all* Americans to participate in civic life through volunteerism** — rather than only those whose religious practice includes prayer. **Because of the dramatic increase in food insecurity and homelessness as a result of the pandemic, SWoA will have a special focus on these critical issues in 2021**, but service projects of all kinds are encouraged and will be promoted.

## Why participate?

Secular Week of Action is an opportunity for local secular organizations to:

- **learn more about food insecurity and homelessness** and how to have an impact on those issues locally
- **make change** in your local city or neighborhood
- **increase the visibility of your secular community** and **find new members and volunteers**
- **communicate secular values** to the public locally and across the country
- **amplify the work of the secular movement nationally**

## Key Points for 2021

- As a result of the COVID-19 public health crisis and accompanying economic downturn, by mid-2020, **food insecurity more than doubled** from 2019, affecting a quarter of all U.S. households.
- The pandemic-related recession is expected to cause **chronic homelessness to increase by 49%** nationwide over the next four years.
- Secular Week of Action gives people **fulfilling opportunities to contribute to the greater good** by addressing food insecurity and homelessness during this challenging, isolating time.
- While service opportunities must be modified for safety during COVID-19, we can participate in many other positive, impactful activities. Virtual volunteering, activism, mutual aid groups and service projects can often be coordinated online, and safety precautions can be taken for in-person events.

- The secular community knows that **it is our actions — not our thoughts and prayers — that matter during this crisis**.

## Additional Statistics on Food Insecurity and Homelessness

**Food insecurity** is defined as the disruption of food intake or eating patterns because of lack of money and other resources.

- Even before the pandemic hit the U.S., 10.5% of all U.S. households, 35 million Americans, experienced food insecurity.
    - 13.6% of all U.S. households with children
    - ⅓ of food insecure households had their eating patterns disrupted and food intake reduced
- As Covid-19 upended the economy, by mid-2020 **food insecurity more than doubled**, to 23% of all U.S. households.
    - 27.5% of all U.S. households with children
    - 19.1% of Black households
    - 15.6% of Hispanic households
    - 7.9% of White households
    - 10% of parents of young children reported that their kids did not have sufficient food and they lack the resources to purchase more
    - Adults with disabilities experience food insecurity at 2x the rate of able-bodied people

**Homelessness** is defined as living in a place not meant for human habitation, in emergency shelter, or in transitional housing — and also includes: people who are losing their primary nighttime residence within 14 days; people who are exiting an institution where they temporarily resided; families with children or unaccompanied minors who are unstably housed; and people who are attempting to flee domestic violence and have no other residence.

- Pre-pandemic studies estimate that 568,000 people in the U.S. experienced homelessness on any given night. Of those,
    - 30% were families with children
    - 37% were unsheltered (sleeping outside or other locations not meant for human habitation)
        - 84% of unsheltered individuals had a physical health condition
        - 80% of unsheltered women report trauma and abuse as the cause of their homelessness
    - 35,000 were unaccompanied youth
- As a result of the COVID-19-related recession and unemployment, **chronic homelessness is projected to increase by 49%** nationwide over the next four years
- Recession-related homelessness is projected to peak in 2023, with 603,000 adults *added* to the current numbers for people experiencing homessless.

## How to Participate

- Plan a service project (see Planning Resources for ideas)
- Register your event on the Secular Week of Action website
- Post your event on Facebook and add Secular Week of Action as a co-host

- Follow Secular Week of Action on Facebook
- Post pictures of events and event planning on social media, and use hashtags #SWoA #SecularAction #SecularValues #WeekOfAction
- Share information about what you are planning so we can help promote in regional press; email updates to serah@foundationbeyondbelief.org.
- Remember, your national organizations are here to help! If you have any questions or need help getting started, reach out to any of the national secular organizations participating in SWoA. You can also email Foundation Beyond Belief's Programs Director for support: wendy@foundationbeyondbelief.org.

## Planning Resources

**Fundraising Guides**

**Secular Week of Action Craft-A-Thon**
Virtual Concert
Online Gala
Online Auction or Raffle
Virtual "A-Thon"
Online Pub Quiz
Virtual Game Night
Webinar or Talk
Virtual Contest or Talent Show
T-shirt Design Contest
Virtual scavenger hunt
Virtual Flying Spaghetti Monster Dinner
Approaching Businesses for Fundraising

**Service Event Guides**

Blood Donation (including Advocacy for Anti-Discrimination)
Park Clean Up
Plant A Tree
Disaster Preparedness at Home
In-Kind Collection
Start a Community Garden
Bare Minimum Event Ideas

**Activism and Advocacy Webinars**

#AtheistsENGAGE: Using Social Media to Fight for Separation of Religion and Government
Artivism: Using Art to Create Social Change
How Groups Can Be #HereForClimate
Secular Invocations
State Legislative Advocacy

**Organizing and Promotion Tools**

Making a Media Splash
Online Meeting Platforms: A Crash Course in Social Distancing

Social Media Skills
Taking Good Photos

## Suggested Planning Timeline

- **Friday, March 19** (six weeks from start of Secular Week of Action): Start discussing with leadership what kinds of events you want to plan and how many.
- **Friday, April 2** (one month from start of Secular Week of Action): Start planning your event(s). If you are working with partners or volunteering with another organization confirm dates and times.
- **Friday, April 9** (three weeks from start of Secular Week of Action): Make sure your event(s) is posted to your social media and on calendars (including on the Secular Week of Action website) and you are promoting it to your members and potential volunteers.
- **Week before your event(s)**: final push for volunteers and making sure key volunteers and details are confirmed
- **Day of event(s)**: Post pictures, go live, have fun!
- **Within a week of your event(s)**: Post a wrap up with pictures and impact information to your blog, facebook. Talk with your leadership to debrief what went well and what can be improved.

## Logos and Fonts

**Use these files, colors, and fonts to create your own SWoA promotional materials!**
Logo files
Logo Fonts:
- Biff Bam Boom (Paid: Adobe)
- Crimefighter BB (Free: 1001 Fonts)

Print Media Fonts:
- Crimefighter BB (Free: 1001 Fonts)
- Knewave Regular (Free: 1001 Fonts)

SWoA Color Codes
- Red: #ff1e39
- Orange: #fe7e39
- Green: #12ef4b
- Yellow: #fada57

## Social Media Tips

- **Share memes and other media ahead of Week of Action**
  Need some graphics or suggested posts? Check out our **SWoA memes**!
- **Like the Secular Week of Action Facebook Page**
  We'll be posting project ideas, memes, and other fun stuff you can share to let your friends and followers know about Week of Action.
- **Share the Week of Action website**
  Help raise the visibility of the secular community and the work we are all doing to make positive change.

- **Post pictures**
  Whether you're participating in a virtual group activity or as an individual, find creative ways to photograph your servicework and share online to inspire others.
- **Learn about other ways to host online events**
  Check Out American Atheists' **Online Events Platforms: Crash Course in Social Distancing**
- **Go live**
  Live stream on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, or other platforms. Are you working on a creative project? Interact with your audience while you work. Take suggestions from viewers as you go, or auction off creative choices! Make sure to talk about your activity regularly in advance so people know to tune in.
- **Network with other groups**
  Like, follow, and share the posts of other volunteer groups across the country to support one another's work!
- **Post your event online to help advertise your activity**
  Use Facebook events, Meetup, Eventbrite, Yelp, or others to let people know what you're doing for Week of Action. Also check your local newspaper online to see if they have an event calendar that allows submissions.
- **Be sure to use the hashtags #SWoA #SecularAction #SecularValues #WeekOfAction**

## Sample Social Media Posts

**General**

The secular community is once again coming together united in compassion for #SecularWeekofAction and we're proud to be a part of it! Stay tuned for more details, and check out weekofaction.org to learn more!

Connect with secular people in the community and join our service event during #SecularWeekOfAction! [insert your event link here].

Secular groups and individuals all over the country are making positive change in their communities for #SecularWeekOfAction April 30 - May 9! Join us in being a part of the movement for compassionate action and secular values! [insert your event link here]

Social distancing can't stop social change! We'll be safely participating in #SecularWeekofAction, April 30 - May 9 to improve our community and put #SecularValues into action. Join us! [insert your event link here]

#SecularWeekOfAction is a great opportunity to meet new people, make new friends, and change the world! We're proud to participate and hope you'll participate too! [insert your event link here]

Still stuck at home waiting for that vaccine? You can participate in #SecularWeekOfAction virtually! Check out weekofaction.org to find individual virtual opportunities including citizen science, advocacy, and online volunteering.

**Food Insecurity and Homelessness Events**
Food insecurity more than doubled as a result of the pandemic, with millions of people across the country facing hunger. For #SecularWeekOfAction, join us in working with local food banks to help get vulnerable communities the nutrition they need. [insert your event link here]

In many communities, kids are still home from school, and for families who depend on free and low-cost meals for their daily nutrition, this means increased food insecurity. Help our community fight hunger for #SecularWeekOfAction. [insert your event link here]

As a result of the COVID-19-related recession, chronic homelessness is projected to increase by 49% nationwide over the next four years. Secular people are taking action NOW for #SecularWeekofAction. Join us: [insert your event link here]

On any given night in the U.S., some 568,000 people have nowhere to call home. The secular community is uniting to support people experiencing homelessness and the organizations that serve them for #SecularWeekOfAction. You can help: [insert your event link here]

**Secular Week of Action as an Alternative to A Day of Prayer**
As secular people, we demonstrate our values by performing acts of service, education, and solidarity rather than by praying. That's what Secular #WeekOfAction is about. Join us! [insert your event link here]

It isn't enough to say "no" to religion. We have to say "yes" to good works! While the Religious Right gets on its knees for National Day of Prayer, we'll be on our feet for #SecularWeekOfAction. Check it out: [insert your event link here]

National Day of Prayer excludes people who don't use prayer to solve problems, but #SecularWeekOfAction is a call to action for everybody! Whether you believe in a higher power or just human power, #SWoA is an opportunity to demonstrate that compassionate work unites us all. Join us: [insert your event link here]

#SecularWeekOfAction April 30 - May 9 overlaps with the federally-recognized National Day of Prayer. Rather than observing a day of thoughts and prayers, the secular community focuses its efforts on a full week of inclusive action! This year's theme: a compassionate response to hunger and homelessness. Are you in? [insert your event link here]

"The hands that help are better far than lips that pray," wrote Robert Ingersoll. What better way to demonstrate this than participating in #SecularWeekOfAction? Learn more at weekofaction.org, and join our event here: [insert your event link here]

## Media Tips

**Put out a Press Release**
You'll want to **send this out before May 6** so that reporters can cover Secular Week of Action events in conjunction with the National Day of Prayer. Check out this sample press release from a local group's SWoA event as a guide.

Not sure where to send it? You can usually find reporter, editor, and assignment desk email addresses on the staff pages of your local newspaper and television websites. If you enjoy a good debate, don't forget to include religious news sources!

If you're affiliated with a national secular organization, contact them for help using their PR software to build a custom press list for your region. You can also email Foundation Beyond Belief's Communications Director for assistance: serah@foundationbeyondbelief.org.

**Tweet at Influencers!**
If your group has a Twitter account, you can tweet about your event @ local news sources, reporters, secular organizations, and atheist thought leaders. Make sure to use the hashtags #SWoA #SecularAction #SecularValues #WeekOfAction.

**Follow Up**
After you've completed your event, share pictures, fundraising numbers, and other markers of success on social media and in follow-up emails to reporters. Don't forget to tag Secular Week of Action on Facebook so we can help celebrate your accomplishments and brag on your efforts. And use those hashtags! #SWoA #SecularAction #SecularValues #WeekOfAction

**Need more promotion ideas?** Check out these helpful media guides from CodePink and Move On.

## *Sample Emails to Send Your Members*

### Email 1: All About Secular Week of Action

Subject: Join us for Secular Week of Action!

Hi [Name],

Every year, the secular movement comes together to create change in our local communities and provide a relevant alternative to the National Day of Prayer (May 6, 2021). Secular groups spend a whole week organizing service projects and volunteering as individuals — increasing the visibility of secular people and helping improve our world.

We're excited to participate this year with our service event, [Service Event Name Here]. We hope you'll join us [Date] to make change in our community — and celebrate our secular values! Learn more here: [Link to event].

And make sure to follow Secular Week of Action on Facebook to stay connected to the national event.

Thanks for helping us out our values into action1

Sincerely,
[Name]

## Email 2: Promoting the SWoA Webinar

Subject: Join the Secular Week of Action Webinar

Hi [Name],

As we gear up for Secular Week of Action, the secular community is hosting a SWoA webinar to showcase several experienced secular volunteer teams who have exciting plans for SWoA — and lots of tips for how to participate! This is a great opportunity for us to connect with other teams, generate ideas for our own group, and learn more about the movement.

Join us for this special Secular Week of Action webinar hosted by Foundation Beyond Belief, Secular Student Alliance, American Atheists, and the American Humanist Association on Zoom, Friday March 26 at 7PM Eastern.

[insert Zoom and Facebook event link here -
those links will be available by March 12
on Secular Week of Action FB page]

See you there!

Sincerely,
[Name]

## Email 3: RSVP for Our Event and Share on Social Media!

Subject: Help us Make SWoA Go Viral!

Hi [Name],

Secular Week of Action is an important, relevant alternative for the National Day of Prayer. It's a way for *all* Americans to express our shared civic values of service and volunteerism — in contrast to a day that excludes all of us who don't believe prayer will solve the problems we face as a country. We want to make sure that people who share our values know about this important week — and you can help us get the word out! Here's how:

- **RSVP for our local service event here:** [insert link to your event]
- **Share memes and other media ahead of Secular Week of Action**
  Want to share some fun Secular Week of Action posts? Check out these **SWoA memes**!
- **Like the Secular Week of Action Facebook Page**
  They'll be posting project ideas, memes, and other fun stuff you can share to let your friends know about Week of Action.
- **Share the Week of Action website** and **our event** [link to event]
  This will help potential volunteers find us — or other events near thereby if they're not in our community. It will also raise the visibility of the secular community as we work to make positive change.
- **Be sure to use the hashtags #SWoA #SecularAction #SecularValues #WeekOfAction**

Thanks for helping us make Secular Week of Action a success!

Sincerely,
[Name]

## Email 4: Encouragement

Subject: We're Part of a Movement!

Dear [Name],

All over the country, secular groups like ours are organizing volunteer projects as an expression of our secular civic values — and we couldn't be more proud to be a part of this ethical movement. Secular people work hard every day to ensure this one life is a good one both for ourselves and our neighbors, and Secular Week of Action highlights this compassion and commitment. Let's make it a great one!

If you haven't had any opportunity RSVP for our service event, do it now! Check it out here [insert event link]. You can also see all the great events that are lining up on the national calendar by visiting weekofaction.org. Now is a great time to brag about our amazing community on your social media, and use hashtags #SWoA #SecularAction #SecularValues #WeekOfAction.

Thanks for putting secular values into action!

Sincerely,
[Name]

## Email 5: Reminder to Attend and Promote

Subject: It's Here! Let's Shout About SWoA

Dear [Name],

Wow, what a year! There has been a groundswell of secular action all across the country, and we're so proud to be a part of it. Are you signed up to join us? Make sure to RSVP here: [insert event link]. And don't forget to wear your secular swag!

If you aren't able to join us in person, head over to the Secular Week of Action website to take the pledge for action — you'll find a bunch of individual and virtual volunteer activities you can participate from anywhere on your own time.

Thank you for helping amplify secular values, and for making an impact in our community. We appreciate you!

Sincerely,
[Name]

# THANK YOU TO NATIONAL PARTNERS:

FOUNDATION BEYOND BELIEF
humanism at work

AMERICAN ATHEISTS
atheists.org

American Ethical Union
Inspiring Ethical Communities

AMERICAN HUMANIST ASSOCIATION
GOOD WITHOUT A GOD

ATHEIST ALLIANCE OF AMERICA

BN
BLACK NONBELIEVERS
www.blacknonbelievers.org

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INSTITUTE for HUMANIST STUDIES

MAAF
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Society for Humanistic Judaism
www.SHJ.org

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