

# Funding and Faith: Research about Faith-Based Organizations and Initiatives

Presented to the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation retained OpenSource Leadership Strategies, Inc. to conduct research about the federal Faith-Based Initiative to help inform its grantmaking to faith-based organizations. This report provides an overview of the history and structure of so-called “faith-based initiatives,” the distinct characteristics of faith-based organizations, a chart summarizing intermediaries and capacity builders, and examples from other states and other funders.

“Charitable Choice” is the general name for several laws that President Clinton approved as part of federal welfare reform from 1996 to 2000 to encourage government agencies to involve faith-based organizations in providing federally funded services to the poor. Charitable Choice is designed to protect both (1) the religious character of FBOs that accept federal funds to provide social services and (2) the religious freedom of the recipients of federally funded social services.

In 2001, President Bush expanded Charitable Choice by creating the White House Office for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and Centers for the Initiative in seven federal agencies. Nonetheless, no federal funds are specifically designated for faith-based organizations, and, aside from the Compassion Capital Fund, no new funds have been appropriated for the Initiative. Rather, the Initiative aims to “level the playing field” by allowing – indeed, even encouraging – FBOs to compete against secular organizations for federal support. No pending federal legislation includes expansion of Charitable Choice.

The White House reports an overall increase in the amount of federal dollars flowing to FBOs providing social services – more than \$1.1 billion went to FBOs in fiscal year 2003. Since the overall dollars for grants to social service providers have not increased, a logical corollary to the increased funding of FBOs would be *decreased* funding to secular groups.

State and local governments in North Carolina have always partnered with faith-based organizations. The federal Initiative has not significantly changed the relationship. The state has no central mechanism for tracking support of FBOs and also does not provide technical assistance targeted to FBOs. A handful of NC communities have Faith Coordinators either as part of the County Division of Social Services or through a partnership with a local organization.

Faith-based organizations have distinct assets – they tend to be well organized, trusted by the community, and able to leverage grant dollars with their high proportion of volunteers. They also have distinct needs for capacity building – on topics ranging from board development to fundraising – that reflects their particular assets and culture. Additionally, further research is needed to eliminate the notion of one monolithic “faith-based organization” and replace it with a more sophisticated analysis to understand the nuances that cut across the universe of faiths and their social services programs. Specific questions include:

- How can communities of faith contribute their assets and resources to foster more just and equitable communities?
- What are the unique assets of FBOs? What are their unique needs?
- Are FBOs filling a need that’s not being met in another way? What’s unique about their approach?

- How do FBOs measure the effectiveness of their efforts?

In some ways, FBOs need capacity building just like secular organizations. And yet, delivery of that capacity building may take very different forms. To have credibility and work effectively with FBOs, intermediaries must possess both (1) technical expertise on organizational management and (2) a cultural understanding about the assets and needs particular to FBOs.

Given the diversity of faiths, organizational structures and developmental stages, and missions embodied in FBOs across the state, perhaps no one intermediary can – or should – provide appropriate technical assistance to all in need. A range of intermediaries could be tapped for this purpose.

Examples from New Jersey and Louisiana provide helpful lessons for North Carolina, especially if the state seeks to increase or formalize its relationship with faith-based organizations. Other funders around the state and country also offer models that can be adapted and applied by the Foundation.

## ACRONYMS AND VOCABULARY

### FBO(s)

- Faith-Based Organization(s)
- This report uses the definition of the Working Group on Human Needs and Faith-Based and Community Initiatives: “any entity that is self-identified as motivated by or founded on religious conviction... to include corporations, unincorporated associations, churches, trusts, foundations, and educational institutions.”

### CC

- Charitable Choice
- The general name for several laws related to the inclusion of faith-based organizations in federal funding of social services.

### Social Services

- President Bush’s definition broadly encompasses “Any program that provides services directed at reducing poverty, improving opportunities for low-income children, revitalizing low-income communities, empowering low-income families and low-income individuals to become self-sufficient, or otherwise helping people in need.”
- Includes programs related to children, seniors, people with disabilities, housing, food preparation and delivery, health support, transportation, job training and employment services, counseling, juvenile delinquency and substance abuse prevention and treatment, crime prevention, victim assistance, and domestic violence prevention.

### Federal Funding

- Includes grants, contracts, loans, loan guarantees, property, direct appropriations, etc.
- Does not include tax credits, deductions, or exemptions.
- Vouchers are payments to individuals who use them at their own discretion to access various social services.

### Interfaith

- Relationships spanning multiple faith traditions.
- Broader than “ecumenical,” which spans various denominations within one tradition.

### WHO

- White House Office of Faith-Based Community and Initiatives

### CCF

- Compassion Capital Fund

### Federal Agency Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives:

#### AID

- U.S. Agency for International Development

#### DOL

- U.S. Department of Labor

#### DOA

- U.S. Department of Agriculture

#### HHS

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

#### DOE

- U.S. Department of Education

#### HUD

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

#### DOJ

- U.S. Department of Justice

## METHODOLOGY

The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation retained OpenSource Leadership Strategies, Inc. to conduct research about the federal Faith-Based Initiative to inform its grantmaking to faith-based organizations. The Foundation initially outlined the following research questions as a guide:

- What funds are faith-based organizations now eligible to apply for? What is the source/department? How much has been set aside? Are these new dollars or simply reallocated funds?
- How will the Charitable Choice Act change current practices if at all? Does it include the Faith-Based Initiative? How it is designed to work?
- What is the established mechanism through which faith-based organizations can apply for funds? What is the mechanism for distributing the funds? Is it different from the protocol that has been established for general nonprofits?
- Up to this point are designated “Faith-Based Initiative” dollars making their way into North Carolina? How much? From what sources? Received by whom? Did any NC organization provide support and assistance to the groups that received funds?
- What support and assistance do faith-based organizations need to successfully apply for, receive and administer federal faith-based funding?
- How are other national and NC funders responding to the Faith-Based Initiative?
- Are there effective models of statewide nonprofit responses to the Faith-Based Initiative?

As the research unfolded, particularly through interviews with other funders, experts in the field, and faith-based organizations themselves, additional questions emerged. While this report addresses all the questions originally posed, it emphasizes an understanding of the history and structure of so-called “faith-based initiatives,” the distinct characteristics of faith-based organizations, a chart of intermediaries and capacity builders, and examples from other states and other funders.

In preparing this report, OpenSource reviewed 32 publications and websites and interviewed 36 individuals. The following report synthesizes findings from these 68 sources.

### The Federal Story

“Charitable Choice” is the general name for several laws that President Clinton approved as part of federal welfare reform from 1996 to 2000 and applied to four federal programs: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and Welfare-to-Work. These CC laws encourage government agencies to involve faith-based organizations in providing federally funded services to the poor.

CC is designed to protect both (1) the religious character of FBOs that accept federal funds to provide social services and (2) the religious freedom of the recipients of federally funded social services. CC encompasses several principles to accomplish these dual protections:

1. The federal government can now provide money directly to sectarian religious congregations – that is, they do not have to set up a separate 501(c)(3) entity – for their social services program. Further, faith-based organizations receiving federal funds can continue to carry out their religious missions, display religious scripture and symbols in their social services facilities, and select board members based on religion. (See below for more recent provisions about hiring.)
2. However, FBOs cannot use the federal funds to support inherently religious activities, such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization.
3. Recipients of federal assistance may not discriminate against program beneficiaries on the basis of religion. Further, religious activities must be conducted separately in time or location from any federally funded programs or services, and participation in these activities by beneficiaries must be completely voluntary.
4. Government must ensure that a secular alternative is available for beneficiaries who object to a faith-based provider.

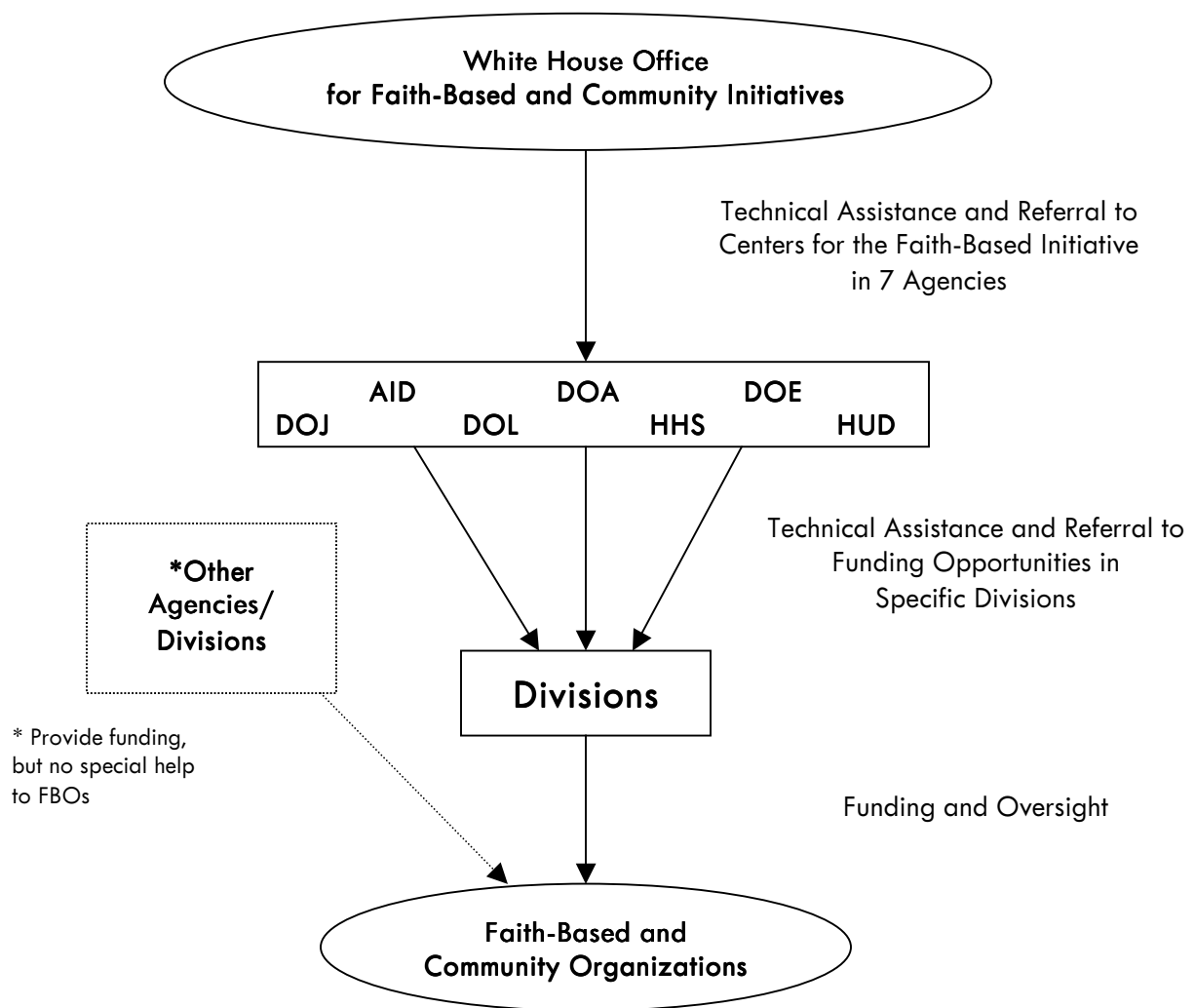
With President George W. Bush’s inauguration in January 2001, FBOs received unprecedented attention and targeted outreach. Beginning in the first few weeks of his administration, and working through executive orders and administrative changes rather than waiting for legislative action, President Bush created an infrastructure to encourage FBOs to partner with the federal government.

First, President Bush created the White House Office for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in 2001 to oversee what has become known as the “Faith-Based Initiative.” The President subsequently created Centers for the Initiative in seven federal agencies: the Agency for International Development and the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Justice, Labor, Health and Human Services, and Housing and Urban Development. (Note: While the Initiative encompasses faith-based *and community* organizations, its focus – and the focus of this report – clearly emphasizes FBOs.)

Despite the formal structure created, the WHO itself acknowledges that no federal funds are specifically designated for faith-based organizations, and, for the most part, no new funds have been appropriated for the Initiative. Rather, the Initiative aims to “level the playing field” by allowing – indeed, even encouraging – FBOs to compete against secular organizations for federal support.

Contrary to a widespread and mistaken belief that the Faith-Based Initiative is a new funding stream originating directly from the White House, the WHO and the Agency Centers do not distribute funds. Rather, they direct FBOs to dozens of existing funding opportunities at the divisional level and provide technical assistance on the federal grantseeking process. The WHO has sponsored 11 conferences around the country thus far (the closest to NC has been in Atlanta). Conferences are scheduled based on an analysis of technical assistance requests coming into the WHO. The Agency Centers also sponsor or participate in training workshops that are designed to help grantseekers build relationships with divisional staff and ask questions about particular grant opportunities.

Other agencies beyond these seven also oversee funding available to FBOs. However, only these seven have established Centers to direct FBOs to funding opportunities.



## Legislative Action

Since 2001, a number of legislative proposals have attempted to codify the Faith-Based Initiative into federal law. The Community Solutions Act of 2001, introduced by then-Representative J.C. Watts (R-OK), would have allowed FBOs to apply for federal money in a wider range of program areas without abdicating their religious character. While the bill passed the U.S. House, it stalled in the Senate until it was re-introduced as the Charity Assistance and Recovery (CARE) Act of 2002 by Senators Joe Lieberman (D-CT) and Rick Santorum (R-PA).

The CARE Act included similar language supportive of FBOs while also creating a “Compassion Capital Fund” to provide technical assistance to FBOs and community organizations that partner with the government. (See below for more on the Fund.) This bill also languished, due to some Senators’ discomfort with the attention to FBOs. When the CARE Act of 2003 emerged, it did not include language explicitly supporting the efforts of FBOs, although it retained the provision for the Compassion Capital Fund. The bills passed by the House and the Senate are strictly tax bills, primarily providing incentives for charitable giving. At the time of this report, a joint House/Senate conference committee is preparing the bill for final passage into law. No pending federal legislation includes language related to the Faith-Based Initiative (as of April 2004).

## Philosophical and Practical Concerns

The legislative debate mirrors an ongoing struggle about the value and validity of funding FBOs with government dollars. Concerns fall along five main arguments:

1. **Separation of Church and State** – While CC laws, executive orders, and all official written materials supporting the Initiative explicitly bar FBOs from using federal funds to support their religious activities, critics fear that this line can be easily blurred. For example, recipients of services might feel subtle pressure to participate in worship so as not to offend those providing the service. Providers might not be aware of the religiosity of their language and actions. Closely monitoring the daily actions in all federally funded FBOs to ensure strict adherence to the law would be simply impossible – not to mention that no consensus definition of “religious activities” exists among government officials themselves.

Furthermore, some worry that federal support might end up favoring one religion over others. Americans United for Separation of Church and State reported to a Congressional Panel in March 2004 that “nearly all the money disbursed under ‘faith-based initiatives’ so far has gone to Christian groups, including one grant to TV preacher Pat Robertson... James Towey, director of WHO, said last year that Wiccans could not get any aid because they are a ‘fringe’ group whose members lack ‘loving hearts.’”

Criticism comes not only from those who fear the Church encroaching on the State, but also from faith communities themselves who fear government intrusion into religion. Some FBOs want to maintain their independence from government and the “strings” attached to taxpayer support. They may want to be free to criticize the government without jeopardizing their funding. They may choose not to divert resources from their religious mission to manage government grants and contracts with their demanding reporting requirements. They may fear that accepting government funding will, over time, secularize their programs and services.

2. **Hiring Practices** – Perhaps the most controversial action by President Bush, and the most contentious issue blocking the passage of related federal legislation, was his December 2002 executive order allowing FBOs that receive federal contracts to use religious beliefs as a criterion in their hiring of staff and volunteers. While the Bush administration lauds this effort to “reduce discrimination” of religious organizations who want their staff to share religious beliefs, critics cite this as an example of “federally funded discrimination” on the basis of religion.

A poll conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life in the spring of 2001 found that 78% of Americans don't believe that religious groups receiving government funds should be allowed to hire “only those who share their religious beliefs”; 70% of Republicans and 65% of white evangelical Protestants polled felt the same way.

3. **Lack of Alternatives** – While the law requires that recipients of services must have access to secular providers if they choose, in reality these alternatives are not always available. Especially in rural areas, FBOs may be the only accessible providers.
4. **Privatization of Government Services** – While praising the good work of both secular and faith-based community organizations, some observers note that the Initiative is just the latest attempt to transfer government responsibilities to private entities. These critics worry that President Bush's zeal to privatize government services, coupled with his political alignment with the religious right, might further this trend while favoring some private groups over others.
5. **Racial Dynamics** – The recent focus on government funding may exacerbate the potential racial divide among FBOs. According to much-quoted survey by University of Arizona researcher Mark Chaves, African-American churches are as much as five times more likely than white churches to pursue public funding if it is available. This may reflect a sense that government money earmarked to address needs in the African-American community ought to be controlled by African-American leaders and institutions.

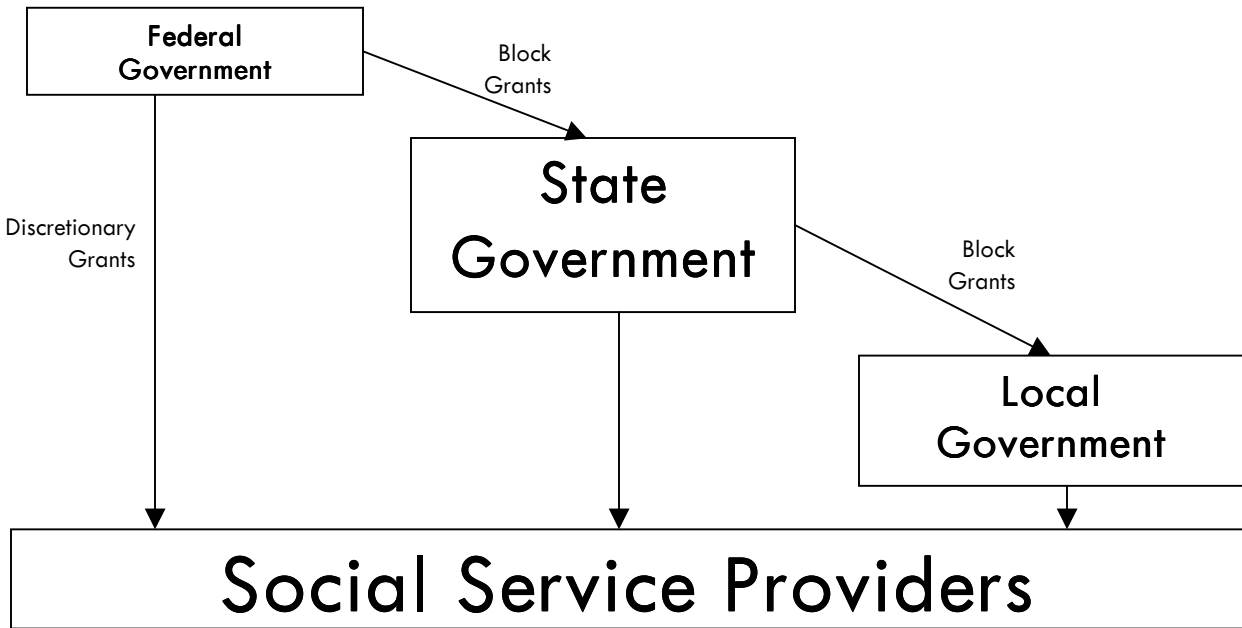
While this is inherently neither good nor bad, it highlights a tension that arises in discussions about the federal Faith-Based Initiative. Suggestions that government should not be funding FBOs might be met with resistance from those who have been marginalized from government funding in the past.

### Funding Streams

The federal government distributes grants in two ways:

- (1) “discretionary” grants through federal agencies, and
- (2) “block” or “formula” grants through the states, counties, or cities.

Social service providers can apply directly to the federal government or to an entity that distributes money it receives from the federal government. Far more federal money is distributed through state and local programs than from the federal government directly.



In addition, the government gives “vouchers” – for child care or private education, for example – that end users can spend at their discretion. They may choose a faith-based provider, and FBOs receiving vouchers as payment are not subject to the same restrictions that face providers receiving money directly from the government. For example, courts have upheld the rights of parents to use government vouchers to send their children to parochial schools, even if tuition includes religious education.

#### Compassion Capital Fund

The Compassion Capital Fund, administered by HHS, is one new source of funds connected to the Faith-Based Initiative. Beginning in 2002, approximately \$25 million is awarded annually to intermediary organizations that provide technical assistance and sub-grants for capacity building to small faith-based organizations. Awards average between \$400,000 and \$800,000 per year. CCF also set up a National Resource Center to provide technical assistance to CCF grantees.

Technical assistance activities funded under CCF must be conducted free of charge to interested FBOs and other community organizations. CCF also recommends that technical assistance be provided on a long-term, ongoing basis, rather than through single or short-term contacts (such as an annual conference). Thus far, CJH Educational Grant Services, Inc., of Raleigh is the only NC-based intermediary to receive CCF support.

CCF also funds a select group of FBOs directly with one-time \$50,000 awards to increase their capacity to serve targeted social service priority areas. The Raleigh-based Telamon Corporation received one of these awards in 2003. Originally focused on services for migrant farmworkers, today Telamon supports a range of human services in 10 states.

## Measuring Success

The President's Initiative was designed to strengthen the partnership between government and FBOs – no specific goals related to community-level impact have been articulated. The White House reports an overall increase in the amount of federal dollars flowing to FBOs providing social services. In March 2004, the White House reported that the federal government gave more than \$1.1 billion to FBOs in fiscal year 2003:

- HHS gave \$568 million to 680 FBOs – a 19% rise in dollars and 41% increase in number of recipients.
- HUD gave \$532 million to 765 FBOs – an 11% rise in dollars and 16% increase in recipients.
- DOJ gave \$51 million to FBOs (no comparison data available)
- DOL gave \$11 million to FBOs (no comparison data available)
- DOE gave \$7 million to FBOs (no comparison data available)

Since the overall dollars for grants to social service providers have not increased, a logical corollary to the increased funding of FBOs would be decreased funding to secular groups. The White House has not released data about funding to secular groups and maintains that FBOs have been unfairly excluded in the past.

## The NC Story

Given the range of funding streams – across different levels of government as well as various agencies at each level – and the decentralization of the government bureaucracy, tracking federal dollars that make their way to FBOs in North Carolina is impossible. The WHO does not track funding across all agencies, and acknowledges that each agency maintains its own database and protocol for tracking. While the WHO identified the HHS Center as the best organized, it, too, could not provide data on funding to NC organizations for this report.

No NC agency tracks federal money flows to nonprofits in the state. Both the NC Washington Office and the Governor's Office in Raleigh confirmed that tracking all government dollars making their way to NC FBOs would require a department by department, even division by division, analysis at each level of government (federal, state, and local). This would be not only time consuming but also unreliable, as each division has a different protocol for data management.

While a handful of states have a "Faith Coordinator" situated in state government (see below for the example from New Jersey), NC does not. (The nonprofit Faith Partnerships serves this function in NC.) So the state has no central mechanism for tracking state support of FBOs – the State Auditor's Office, which oversees all state funding of private organizations, makes no distinction of faith-based versus secular groups and thus could not say how much state money goes to FBOs – and also does not provide technical assistance targeted to FBOs.

The October 2003 report "Scanning the Policy Environment for Faith-Based Social Services in the United States: Results of a 50-State Study," released by The Roundtable on Religion and Social Welfare Policy, listed NC as a state with "insufficient data" to evaluate its efforts related to Charitable Choice. The report identified four factors inhibiting data gathering nationally that may also apply to NC:

1. Variation in responsibility and authority for grants and contracts.
2. No centralized data on FBO funding.

3. No common definition of terms.
4. Reluctance and inability of program officials to provide information.

While it is impossible to track all government funding to all FBOs across the state, five organizations included in this report offer anecdotal information (note: all groups are reported anonymously, since some asked for confidentiality):

- One group reports that it has received hundreds of thousands of dollars in government contracts, and attributes all of it to the Faith-Based Initiative.
- One group reports a similar level of funding, but given its long history of government support, it does not attribute it to the Faith-Based Initiative.
- One group has chosen not to seek money attached to the federal Faith-Based Initiative because of the feeling that it is too politically motivated and thus not a likely source of support for this group's work. This group is choosy about what it applies for because of the resources required to apply for government funding.
- One group has a policy not to seek or accept any government funding because it wants to stay independent and free to criticize government actions.
- One group has not yet sought or received any government money. This group does not have a policy about government funding; it has simply not yet pursued this funding stream.

In the absence of quantifiable data, this report also reflects anecdotal information about the relationship between the state and FBOs from two state agencies – one that makes a special effort to include FBOs in its outreach and one that provides significant funding to FBOs for service delivery.

**NC Department of the State Treasurer.** A top priority of the State Treasurer is increasing financial literacy among North Carolinians. The State Treasurer has reached out to faith-based groups, among others, to get out its message. Department staff say that the reason for this special outreach is the recognition that FBOs have a following and can reach a lot of people. Further, the Department realized that pastors are called upon to provide more than just spiritual guidance, and it wanted to help them with their role as both information providers and church managers. In many cases, the Department provides technical assistance and information about debt financing to FBOs wanting to start community development corporations and child care centers.

**NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).** Pheon Beal, Director of the Division of Social Services (DSS), notes that the state has always worked with FBOs. Shortly after President Bush created his Faith-Based Initiative, several programs within DHHS specifically targeted FBOs as potential grantees and contractors. Additionally, during that period, the NC Rural Center received a two-year, \$3.5 million appropriation from the NC General Assembly for its Faith Partnerships project (this has now spun out as its own 501(c)(3) nonprofit) to provide grants and technical assistance to other FBOs around the state.

As demand for the use of funds increased, however, DHHS has shifted its focus and does not specifically target FBOs for funding. The state does allow counties to seek out faith-based partners for grants and contracts administered at that level. Further, the state no longer appropriates funds to Faith Partnerships for technical assistance and capacity building.

County-level “Faith Coordinators” exist in approximately 20 communities, though the placement and purpose of this function varies. In response to an email inquiry through the NC Association of County Directors of Social Services, 13 county DSS directors responded – five do not have this function internally but coordinate with a resource in the community, seven have a staff person or contractor who has taken on the responsibility for connecting with the faith community, and only one (Mecklenburg) has taken the step of creating a position and/or office specifically to advance a Faith-Based Initiative.

In **Martin County**, for example, a full-time DSS Adult Care Home Case Manager who is also a minister serves as a liaison to the faith-based community, coordinating efforts to help county residents affected by natural disasters and economic conditions. The county does not provide technical assistance to FBOs. This liaison role evolved from informal outreach to FBOs to meet the growing needs of clients that the county could not adequately serve. The liaison took on this role in February of 2002, while maintaining all of his other duties. He believes that if he were to leave his position, the county would shift his liaison role to someone else in DSS, probably to an intake supervisor.

**Mecklenburg County** has invested significantly in a stand-alone Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. The Initiative grew out of a research effort in 1996 by a DSS staff member who administered child welfare services and noticed the caseload skyrocketing. Following a survey to the community to gauge its needs, DSS first created a project known as “Faith Community Partnership,” then the “DSS Faith Initiative.” Today, it has one full-time staff person and an operating budget nearing \$100,000. Its primary function is providing technical assistance through one-on-one consultation with FBOs, through referrals to other organizations, and by sponsoring conferences. An April 27 conference featured representatives from the federal HHS to share information about grant opportunities.

## DISTINCT CHARACTERISTICS OF FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

### Assets

Even advocates of FBOs and the Faith-Based Initiative, like Ron Sider of Evangelicals for Social Action, acknowledge that “sophisticated, quantitative social science research has yet to prove... that deeply faith-based programs work better than other programs and that faith is a key causal factor in that success.” Nonetheless, most observers would agree that FBOs have some unique assets to leverage in their social services programs.

In 2003, the Organized Religion Evaluation Initiative articulated several assumptions about the benefits of working with faith-based institutions:

1. They are places where people gather. Participants range from those most marginalized in society to those with the greatest resources and networks.
2. They promote values that underpin civic engagement.
3. They offer concrete ways for people to act on their faith through engagement in the community and public affairs.
4. They are rich in social capital.
5. They are incubators for leadership development. They offer opportunities for members to develop political skills, a framework for social analysis, and self-confidence.
6. They enable “faith” to be both a means and an end for program participants.

Other observers note these assets particular to FBOs:

- Congregations tend to be very well organized and have a track record of engaging with the community at some level.
- They are perceived as being close to the issues and close to the community. Anecdotally, clients report a higher level of trust in community organizations – faith-based and secular – than in government agencies that couple an enforcement function with service delivery.
- They provide a reliable vehicle to communicate with a variety of people on a variety of issues since members meet regularly.
- While the impact on recipients is yet unclear, faith does seem to be a motivator for providers in FBOs. Some research shows that the most dedicated volunteers are driven by faith.
- They leverage grant dollars with their high proportion of volunteers.

## Needs

Amidst these many strengths, along with the immeasurable power of faith itself, it can be easy to overestimate the capacity of churches and church leaders to work and effect change on longstanding, complex community problems. Pastors must spend their time on pastoral duties. Despite the best intentions, they have little extra time to run a FBO at the same time that they may not have the luxury – or the management skills – to delegate these responsibilities to others.

Further, the downside of heavy reliance on volunteers is high turnover. Like all nonprofits, FBOs struggle to retain institutional memory through human resource changes.

Not surprisingly, FBOs most need the same thing that all nonprofits need: capacity building. But capacity building must be customized to build upon their distinct assets, organizational culture, and faith-based missions. Specific areas of needed assistance include:

- Board development
- Strategic planning
- Evaluation
- Financial management
- Fundraising
- Sustainability
- Collaboration
- Legal issues
- Conflict of interest
- Staff development
- Volunteer development

This capacity building is particularly important to FBOs who are new to the world of government funding. They may be surprised to discover that they must carry more new responsibilities before any new money comes in the door. Many are not prepared to absorb the potential financial risk. They may not have the staff capacity to divert from church duties or the governance systems to objectively weigh risks. In some cases, FBOs have been deterred by bad experiences with people they hire to find sources of funding and write grants; these people may take their money and then fail to deliver the big dollars promised.

Even those FBOs that successfully access government funding soon discover that the government woefully underpays for social services. Community needs increase as resources to support them decrease. To fulfill their faith missions, FBOs often find themselves putting even more of their own funds into their government-supported programs to help as many people as possible.

## Research Needed

In general, the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors need a better understanding of FBOs and their role in addressing community needs and effecting social change. Specific questions include:

- How can communities of faith contribute their assets and resources to foster more just and equitable communities?
- What are the unique assets of FBOs? What are their unique needs?
- Are FBOs filling a need that's not being met in another way? What's unique about their approach?
- How do FBOs measure the effectiveness of their efforts?

Further, the field needs to better understand the life cycle of FBOs as distinct from other nonprofits. This would allow FBOs and the funders that support them to better assess capacity and growth opportunities. Finally, the field needs to better understand the power of spiritual influence in changing human behavior.

In June 2003, the Working Group on Human Needs and Faith-Based and Community Initiatives released a helpful typology of religious organizations and their programs, adapted from the work of Ron Sider at Evangelicals for Social Action. This typology presents six categories of visibly expressive ways that religion may be present in a community organization (note: the categories are not meant to convey a sense of hierarchy of “more” or “less” religious, since different faiths express their religiosity in different ways):

- Faith-permeated
- Faith-centered
- Faith-related
- Faith background
- Faith-secular partnership
- Secular

This typology and other resources from the Working Group and others can help eliminate the notion of one monolithic “faith-based organization” and replace it with a more sophisticated analysis to understand the nuances that cut across the universe of faiths and their social services programs.

## INTERMEDIARIES AND CAPACITY BUILDERS

In some ways, FBOs need capacity building just like secular organizations. And yet, delivery of that capacity building may take very different forms. To have credibility and work effectively with FBOs, intermediaries must possess both (1) technical expertise on organizational management and (2) a cultural understanding about the assets and needs particular to FBOs.

Given the diversity of faiths, organizational structures and developmental stages, and missions embodied in FBOs across the state, perhaps no one intermediary can – or should – provide appropriate technical assistance to all in need. The following list summarizes the range of intermediaries that currently provide services to FBOs or could be tapped for this purpose.

Group	Notes
<b>Faith Partnerships</b>	<p>FP originated as the “Communities of Faith Initiative” of the NC Rural Economic Development Center in 1999 and incorporated as an independent 501(c)(3) in 2001. Its mission is rooted in strengthening FBOs to effectively address the needs of the poor.</p> <p>FP estimates that it assisted more than 500 people in 2003 on issues ranging from creating new programs and forming nonprofit corporations to fundraising and fiscal responsibility. More than 250 people attended its 2004 Annual Conference last month.</p>
<b>CJH Educational Grant Services/Mission Tree</b>	<p>In 2003, CJH became the only NC recipient of the Compassion Capital Fund, receiving a three-year, \$1.1 million award. It established the nonprofit corporation Mission Tree and completed its first round of sub-granting – 21 grants of \$20,500 and 10 grants of \$10,000. These sub-grants can be used for capacity building only, not for direct services or religious activities.</p> <p>Mission Tree supports new FBOs with training and technical assistance on a range of capacity-building topics. In March, it held its first workshop for new grantees. The two-day mandatory workshop covered subjects like grant administration, accounting, budgeting, planning, legal rules, and evaluation. Mission Tree plans to hold approximately 40 additional workshops – open to any FBOs providing social services to high-need populations – over the next six months.</p>
<b>NC Council of Churches</b>	<p>The Council does not see itself as a technical assistance provider to FBOs running community ministries. With its focus on systemic change rather than services, it cannot provide in-depth capacity building to faith-based social service providers.</p> <p>Through a collaboration with the NC Conference, United Methodist Church, the Council created the guidebook <i>Street Smarts: Steps for Community Ministry</i>. While the guidebook is written from a Christian, and specifically Methodist perspective, it provides helpful hints that can be adapted to other FBOs.</p>
<b>NC Association of Community Development Corporations/NC Community Development Initiative</b>	<p>These two groups work with community development corporations (CDCs) – not FBOs per se. However, CDCs often evolve from faith-based efforts. Both organizations offer highly regarded training and technical assistance at low or no cost to CDCs statewide on topics such as administrative and financial management, project development, and organizational issues.</p>

<b>Latino-Focused Organizations</b>	While no intermediary organization caters to their unique cultural and language needs, Latino-led FBOs seek out technical assistance from groups they know like El Pueblo, the statewide advocacy and policy nonprofit for the Latino community. El Pueblo does not have a staff person or program specifically aimed at serving FBOs, but aims to be responsive to groups seeking assistance.
<b>Denominational Support</b>	<p>Some faith traditions have institutional structures that can offer sophisticated support and technical assistance to member congregations' community ministry programs. The <i>Street Smarts</i> guidebook mentioned above exemplifies the resources provided by and for the United Methodist Church.</p> <p>United Jewish Communities (UJC), the umbrella organization for Jewish Federations across North America, offers a vast range of technical assistance to its member organizations through its Helpline, website, and consultant network. Individual Federations financially support dozens of small Jewish organizations and efforts while also raising money for UJC.</p>
<b>Nonprofit Sector-Wide Assistance</b>	Organizations like the NC Center for Nonprofits, the Duke Certificate Program in Nonprofit Management, and local United Way affiliates report increased requests for advice and support from FBOs.
<b>Small Business Centers</b>	Small Business Centers operate in 58 community colleges across North Carolina. They provide no- or low-cost workshops and confidential counseling on topics like how to start a business, how to write a business plan, financing a business, marketing, record keeping, and tax planning. Each Center houses a library, and many offer teleconferencing.
<b>Mature FBOs</b>	<p>Mature faith-based organizations, such as Urban Ministries, Habitat for Humanity, and Goodwill, have learned how to balance their programmatic goals with attention to their internal capacity. They speak the same language as other FBOs, and also provide a voice of experience.</p> <p>In the late 1970s, Greensboro Urban Ministry launched a "Christian Life Center" to provide technical assistance to churches and nonprofits involved in the delivery of social services. Modestly priced workshops and one-on-one consultation focused on strategic planning, board and staff development, and other organizational needs. The Center supported itself through fees, requiring no grant funding. In 1985, the national Human Services Institute took over this technical assistance function, with about 40% of its practice directed at FBOs of all faiths. The Institute closed in 2000.</p>
<b>Individual Consultants</b>	In addition to the range of organizations listed above, a handful of individuals in different corners of the state also have the background, skills, and style to work credibly with FBOs.

## EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES AND OTHER FUNDERS

### New Jersey

The “welfare to work” era of the late 1990s brought new attention to and praise for the successes of houses of worship throughout the country. Consequently, demand for services of FBOs grew by leaps and bounds. Religious leaders in New Jersey met with then-Governor Whitman (R) and, in 1998, she allocated \$5 million per year in the state budget for the “Governor’s Faith-Based Initiative,” originally housed in the Department of Community Affairs. Note that this statewide Initiative started before President Bush came into office and created the federal program.

The NJ Initiative funded 159 FBOs over its first five years with grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$150,000. It also offered comprehensive technical assistance to, as executive director Eddie LaPorte puts it, “protect the integrity of FBOs” receiving funds. Recognizing that FBOs have varying needs based on their developmental stage, the Initiative first surveyed the faith-based community to assess the needs and then provided customized services through subcontracts with a cadre of training organizations. The Initiative also informed FBOs about funding opportunities from federal and state government, foundations, and corporations.

In 2001, current Governor McGreevey (D) issued an executive order creating the Office of Faith-Based Initiatives in the Department of State. The Office sits one level below the Governor’s Office and has direct access to the highest levels of state government.

In June 2003, the Office sponsored its first Annual Faith-Based Resource Expo, featuring 75 workshops and staff from the WHO and all seven federal Agency Centers. More than 700 people participated. A second Expo is planned for June 2004. Additionally, the Office works with the Agency Centers to offer – free – two-day grant writing workshops so FBOs can better access federal funds. Each of these workshops exceeds its 200-participant limit.

LaPorte says he gives his “customers” what they want – access to funding opportunities. He created the “Faith-Based Loop,” a free email service to let FBOs know about available funding. And for fiscal year 2005, the Office will receive \$3 million to sub-grant for organizational infrastructure development, training and technical assistance, and direct services. But once those funding opportunities get FBOs in the door, the Office makes sure to give them the technical assistance they need. For example, organizational infrastructure development grantees will be required to attend 15 workshops each year in exchange for grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$45,000.

To reach all FBOs, even those that might not get state funding, the Office has also partnered with Kean University in Union, NJ to offer the Faith-Based Executive Leadership Certificate. Participants get two years of training leading to this certification for about \$2,000 in tuition.

The NJ Office accomplishes all of these ambitious goals with an operating budget of \$450,000 and a staff of four. In addition to state funding, the Office gets in-kind support from businesses to lower the cost of delivering technical assistance workshops.

New Jersey’s commitment to Faith-Based Initiatives is unusual. About 18 states have identified a statewide Faith Coordinator, and only a handful of these sit within state government, usually at lower

levels of authority. While the financial cost is significant, NJ believes it is getting more than its money's worth through its successful partnership with FBOs.

### Louisiana

In September 2003, The Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations (LANO) became the only state association of nonprofits to receive Compassion Capital Funds. The three-year, \$1.2 million grant allows LANO to focus its capacity building efforts on FBOs in the Baton Rouge area, where LANO is based.

To launch the project, LANO held eight 2-day capacity-building workshops. Each provided an overview of the "Standards for Excellence" and helped participants better understand what is "capacity building." The workshops concluded with the distribution of applications for LANO's Rural Capacity Academy, which will provide in-depth training on organizational management. LANO received 62 applications for 40 slots.

FBOs can also apply to LANO for sub-grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000. LANO intentionally structured its funding application to mirror the federal grants process – yet another opportunity to enhance FBOs' capacity to apply for state and federal funding.

It is too soon to assess LANO's results. Through its CCF funding, LANO has partnered with Southern University to conduct an evaluation of the project.

### Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Faith in Action

Starting in 1983 with the Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers Program, and continuing in 1993 with Faith in Action (FIA), the Robert Wood Johnson (RWJ) Foundation has supported faith-based community efforts to provide volunteer caregiving to people with long-term health problems. RWJ chose to support FBOs because research showed that the most dedicated volunteers are driven by faith. At the same time, the Foundation wanted to avoid proselytizing. It resolved this tension by requiring grantees to form interfaith coalitions that broadly represent the faith traditions in the community. (Small, rural communities must include at least different denominations, if not different faiths.) Currently, RWJ supports 1,000 FIA program sites across the country.

RWJ offers 30-month start-up grants of \$35,000 plus technical assistance to help communities organize interfaith coalitions. In addition, each state is assigned a "Faith in Action Mentor" to help local sites build relationships across congregations. Cathy Ahrendsen of A Helping Hand Ministry serves this function for NC's 43 FIA sites. She hosts statewide meetings – on topics like endowment building, board and volunteer development, working with elected officials, and sustainability – once or twice each year, and she also coordinates the state groups' participation at the annual national conference.

### Jessie Ball duPont Fund

In the Fund's Fall 1994 *Notes from the Field* featuring approaches to religious grantmaking, Executive Director Sherry Magill writes,

*Some mistakenly believe that it is illegal to fund religious organizations; some argue that religious organizations suffer from accountability problems; some do not wish to become embroiled in contemporary "theological" debates. ... We have learned a valuable lesson from*

*these institutions: human community might be found in many times and places, but often what motivates people and binds them together is a church. Consequently, if one wishes to work at the grassroots level, to work with those organizations already laboring in the trenches, one must be willing to work with religious organizations.*

Through its Religious Initiative, the Fund supports 94 religious organizations through five grantmaking programs:

- **People in Need Grants** – In 2002, 68 organizations received a total of \$510,000, then redistributed 100% of these funds to needy people in their communities.
- **Repair and Restoration Grants** – Churches can receive up to \$50,000 from the Fund to renovate or repair their buildings.
- **Clergy Enrichment Funds** – Allow clergy to attend conferences, take extended leaves, subscribe to theological publications, or begin or complete studies in an accredited degree program.
- **Diocesan Enrichment Funds** – Support professional development for clergy in specific eligible organizations.
- **Technical Assistance Grants** – Support purchase of computers, office and communications equipment, and organizational management training.

#### Annie E. Casey Foundation

This Foundation does not have a grantmaking program specifically targeting FBOs. Rather, the Foundation focuses on children. In that context, it looks at the ingredients of a place that positively impact children. In many cases, FBOs are part of the mix that provide services, leadership, and influence to support children's needs.

In addition, the Foundation tries to capture what it learns about how FBOs can and do work with communities through its "knowledge development and learning agenda." Senior Associate K.C. Burton says that, in working on the ground with FBOs in targeted cities, the Foundation has learned that each community is different. No over-arching strategy will work in all communities. The nuances are important to understanding the things that drive each community. The response of providers, including FBOs, will likewise be different depending on those drivers.

#### Duke Endowment

Through its Rural Church Division, the Duke Endowment (DE) supports the United Methodist Church in North Carolina with grants to:

- Retired ministers and families of deceased ministers
- Rural churches
- The NC and Western NC Conferences of the United Methodist Church
- Duke Divinity School

For DE, "rural" means populations smaller than 5,000. DE has also funded Faith Partnerships and underwritten the development of the guidebook *Street Smarts* to help build the capacity of its rural

church grantees. Joe Mann, director of the Rural Church Division, says DE does not require or even encourage churches to set up separate 501(c)(3), although he cites at least two good reasons for them to do so:

1. It sets up a firewall that offers some institutional protection to both the church and the nonprofit.
2. It may enable the FBO to access additional funds not available to churches alone.

#### Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro

Like many community foundations, the Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro (CFGG) has noticed an increase in requests from FBOs over the last year. Through its small grants program “Building Stronger Neighborhoods,” CFGG supports a small handful of churches doing neighborhood work. It also funded the initial gathering of the Inter-Faith Alliance in Greensboro in fall 2002 and recently made a three-year grant to support ongoing activities of the network. CFGG also holds the endowment for the Piedmont Interfaith Council.

Beyond grantmaking, CFGG uses its convener role and provides technical assistance to grantseekers. Recognizing that most faith-based applicants do good work in their communities, but lack experience with grant writing, CFGG plans to hold focus groups with churches and other FBOs to better understand their needs and prepare them to access foundation funds.

#### Self-Help Credit Union Community Facilities Fund

Through its Community Facilities Fund, Self-Help makes loans to churches for new buildings and to FBOs for social services like child care and housing for the elderly. Staff of the Fund provides considerable technical assistance, especially if the FBO seems like a viable loan. The Fund’s website includes comprehensive, downloadable resources like:

- “Child Care Spreadsheet” to help applicants analyze cash flow, break-even point, debt coverage, and key ratios
- “Helpful Hints for Child Care Providers” with tips for starting up or expanding a child care and a list of mostly free resources to help with curriculum and business plans
- “Business Side of Child Care Manual” that addresses operations, regulations, quality issues, financing considerations, facility planning, and Self-Help’s approach to child care lending

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