

ISSUE BRIEF:

Faith-Based and Community Organizations and Volunteering



“The indispensable and transforming work of faith-based and other charitable service groups must be encouraged. ... We must heed the growing consensus across America that successful government social programs work in fruitful partnership with community-serving and faith-based organizations.”

—President George W. Bush



The Corporation for National and Community Service recognizes the important role that faith-based organizations play in advancing a spirit of compassionate service among all Americans. As President Bush has often stated, faith-based organizations have distinct characteristics that make them successful partners with the government in providing social services to those in need. The following information highlights research findings on faith-based and community organizations and volunteering, and describes what the Corporation is doing to strengthen its commitment and to contribute to the success of its partnerships with faith-based and community organizations.



Religious Organizations Are Vital to Volunteering in America

- More than 23 million people, representing 34.8 percent of all volunteers, donate their time primarily through religious organizations—more than through any other type of organization.
- 45 percent of volunteers ages 65 and older volunteer primarily with religious organizations.
- 34 percent of teens who volunteer do so with congregations—more than with any other type of group, including schools (18 percent).
- One-third of American adults who volunteer learn about services through their congregation, and 72 percent of all volunteers say they attend weekly religious services.
- People who give to and volunteer for religious organizations are more likely than others to donate time and money to non-religious charities.
- Volunteers across all racial and ethnic groups are more likely to donate their time through religious organizations than through any other type of organization, with 45.5% of African-American volun-

teers, 37.1% of Latino volunteers, 33.8% of white volunteers, and 33.6% of Asian volunteers serving primarily through religious organizations.

Corporation Partnerships Can Enhance the Effectiveness of Faith-Based Volunteer Programs

- Nearly 50 percent of congregations with social service activities reported that the most helpful capacity-building tool for carrying out their volunteer programs would be a one-year, full-time volunteer with a stipend with the responsibility for volunteer recruitment and management.

*The Amachi program is a partnership of community and faith-based organizations, which work together to provide mentoring to children of incarcerated parents. The full-time AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members who are placed with Amachi serve as the Congregation Volunteer Coordinators at faith-based organizations to recruit, train, and monitor Amachi mentors.*

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- While paid volunteer managers have been shown to enhance the effectiveness of social service programs, only 37 percent of congregations with social service outreach activities reported having a paid volunteer manager.
- Participants in Corporation-sponsored programs devote significant resources to recruiting and managing volunteers.

Partnerships with Faith-Based Programs Enhance Volunteer Opportunities

- Charities with ties to religious organizations have invested more in volunteer management than have those without such ties.

The Historic Minority College and University Consortium/North Carolina Central University Foundation, a Learn and Serve America grantee, runs a faith-based after-school program for low-performing and at-risk youth. University and high school students serve as mentors, focusing their efforts on character education, civic engagement, and increasing academic performance through tutoring and other skill-building activities.

- Among volunteers who mentor youth, the highest percentage—43 percent—volunteer in or through religious organizations.
- Most youth who attend religious services regularly volunteer primarily outside their congregation.

The Corporation's Commitment to Faith-Based and Community Organizations

- In fiscal year 2005, approximately \$371 million, or nearly 60 percent of the Corporation's available grant funding, was awarded to faith-based and other community organizations.
- The Corporation's Faith-Based and Community Initiative continues its efforts to reduce barriers for faith-based organizations to participate in the agency's programs, increase outreach to potential program participants, and establish pilot programs to act as models for future partnerships.

Research Funded by or Conducted by the Corporation

- "Current Population Survey Supplement on Volunteering in America," Bureau of Labor Statistics/U.S. Census Bureau, 2002-2005.
- "Volunteer Management Capacity in America's Charities and Congregations," Urban Institute, 2004.
- "Building Active Citizens: The Role of Social Institutions in Teen Volunteering," Youth Helping America series, Corporation for National and Community Service 2005.
- "Volunteers Mentoring Youth: Implications for Closing the Mentoring Gap," Corporation for National and Community Service 2006.

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Corporation for National and Community Service administers the Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs, as well as a number of special initiatives. The mission of the Corporation is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. Together with USA Freedom Corps, the Corporation is working to foster a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility in America. For more information, visit www.nationalservice.gov.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Join the FBCI ListServ. FBCILIST is an information resource and update forum created by the Corporation for National and Community Service Faith-Based and Community Initiative. To join, send a blank e-mail to join-fbcilist@lists.etr.org.
- Call the FBCI Hotline: 1-866-783-2237
- Visit Corporation for National and Community Service Web Site: www.nationalservice.gov

August 2006