
RALLYING THE ARMIES OF COMPASSION



THE UNITED STATES HAS A LONG AND HONORABLE COMMITMENT TO ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES WHO HAVE NOT FULLY SHARED IN AMERICA'S PROSPERITY. YET DESPITE A MULTITUDE OF FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS TO BATTLE SOCIAL DISTRESS, TOO MANY STILL SUFFER POVERTY AND DESPAIR. IT IS CLEARLY TIME TO HARNESS THE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES OF FAITH- AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS TO BETTER SERVE THOSE IN NEED IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES.



Source: U.S. Department of Labor

On January 29, 2001, President Bush signed an executive order creating the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and the Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in the Departments of Labor, Health &

Human Services, Housing & Urban Development, Justice and Education. Each Center is mandated to ensure that Federal government policies and programs support, not hinder, community-serving groups both secular and religious, and identify

barriers to the participation of these organizations in federal social service programs.

The Department of Labor (DOL), along with the other five Cabinet offices for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (FBCI), issued a report in

August, 2001 outlining the funding gap between the government and the grassroots, highlighting barriers that faith-based and community organizations face in obtaining federal support for their work, and clearly revealing how much must be done to mobilize what the president has called the “armies of compassion.” The DOL FBCI report made five major recommendations:

- create a level playing field for grants, recognizing that Federal grant experience and grant size often affect the ability of faith- and community-based organizations to submit a successful grant application;
- increase understanding among Federal officials of the role and function of these groups and their role in promoting the mission of Federal government programs;
- establish a comprehensive database of faith-based and community organizations offering training, job readiness and support services to ensure that they have accurate information about the availability of Federal assistance and their ability to participate;
- improve outreach to state and local governments so they are educated about the goals of the Initiative and encouraged to pursue partnering

“*The indispensable and transforming work of faith-based and other charitable service groups must be encouraged. Government cannot be replaced by charities, but it can and should welcome them as partners. Government must support our quiet heroes who are lifting lives and healing neighborhoods one heart and one act of kindness at a time.*”

— PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH



Source: U.S. Department of Labor

opportunities with faith- and community-based groups when allocating grants; and

- recognize that the Department of Labor’s connection to America’s workers and businesses uniquely positions it to mobilize private resources, in addition to public funds, to help faith- and community-based organizations serve people in need in their local communities.

The DOL FBCI is focused on expanding relationships between DOL and faith-based and community-based groups. A cooperative agreement was recently reached between the Job Corps and Public/Private Ventures to create linkages between P/PVs faith-based intervention program for high-risk and at-risk youth and Job Corps. Additionally, pursuant to the president’s strong interest in mentoring, the DOL FBCI is exploring the creation of a Mentoring Initiative to encourage public and private commitments to increase the number and availability of mentors for children and young adults.

As President Bush put it, “I am confident that this initiative, when fully implemented, will help us realize the dream that America — its hope, its promise, its greatness — will extend its reach throughout every single neighborhood, all across the land.” **XXI**
