



United States Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Secretary  
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# Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

Alleviating Hunger and  
Revitalizing Communities



# Faith- Based and Community Initiatives

*“USDA recognizes the vital role that faith-based and community organizations play in serving those in need. And, through our partnership and grant opportunities, USDA welcomes faith-based and community groups as important partners in our work.”*

SECRETARY MIKE JOHANNIS  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

President George W. Bush created offices for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives within the White House and 10 Federal agencies to leverage the essential work of faith-based and community organizations in a “determined attack on need.”

President Bush established the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) by executive order on December 12, 2002. USDA has a long history of working with faith-based and community organizations to help those in need. For example, USDA works with faith-based and community groups to provide vital assistance through our domestic food and nutrition programs, rural development opportunities, natural resources and conservation programs, and international food aid programs.

As part of the President’s Faith-Based and Community Initiative, USDA is strengthening its existing partnerships with faith-based and community organizations while creating new ones to reach even more people in need. The Initiative is ensuring that these groups are allowed to compete on an equal footing for Federal dollars, educating them on grant opportunities, and encouraging greater private support for these organizations.

**USDA'S** FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE (FNS) increases food security and reduces hunger in partnership with cooperating organizations. It does this by providing children and low-income people access to food, a healthful diet, and nutrition education in a manner that supports American agriculture and inspires public confidence.

Faith-based and community groups can partner with FNS to provide assistance to those in need through a number of programs, including the Summer Food Service Program, The Emergency Food Assistance Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Food Stamp Program. To learn more about FNS programs, visit [www.fns.usda.gov/fns/](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/)



*“People need these kinds of programs, especially the seniors.”*

— Anna Rivera, a homebound senior citizen who receives food from Aid for Friends. Aid for Friends heard about FNS’s Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program from the Faith-Based and Community Initiative liaison at a Food and Nutrition Service conference.

# USDA'S FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE (FAS) works

with a variety of cooperating sponsors, including faith-based and community groups, to provide food aid around the world. Faith-based and community organizations have a long history of partnering with FAS to provide food to hungry people, humanitarian assistance to those in need, and agricultural development support to newly emerging democracies.

Faith-based and community organizations are helping those in need through such FAS programs as Food for Progress and the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program. To learn more about FAS programs, please visit [www.fas.usda.gov/food-aid.asp](http://www.fas.usda.gov/food-aid.asp)



*“We have been able to reach over 70,000 people monthly with the milk program. It is unbelievable how many people we have found in these remote villages that are literally starving. We thank Food for the Poor and the United States Government for sending us this food and allowing us the privilege to serve these most humble people.”*

— excerpted from a thank-you letter from a pastor in Guatemala to Food for the Poor, a faith-based organization that partnered with FAS to distribute nonfat dry milk and various grains in 14 countries.

**USDA** RURAL DEVELOPMENT is committed to helping build stronger, more vibrant rural communities across the Nation. Rural Development partners with faith-based and community organizations to assist families and individuals in finding or building safe and affordable housing. In addition, faith-based and community groups help Rural Development bring community facilities, utilities, and other services to rural communities.

Rural Development offers a variety of partnership opportunities through programs such as Community Facilities, Mutual Self-Help Housing, and Rural Rental Housing, to name just a few. For more information on Rural Development grant and loan programs, visit [www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov)



*“If you are after the American dream and think it is never going to happen, this is the program for you!”*

-- Rebeca Fernandez, a young widow and mother of two, who became a homeowner through Rural Development’s Mutual Self-Help Housing Program with the help of Mennonite Housing Rehabilitation Services, a faith-based organization in Wichita, Kansas.

This brochure highlights only a few of the many ways that faith-based and community organizations can partner with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. USDA offers a variety of partnership opportunities to help provide vital assistance to those in need. It does this through its domestic food and nutrition programs, rural development opportunities, natural resources and conservation programs, and international food aid programs.

We encourage you to contact USDA's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives or visit our Web site for more information on the Initiative and USDA programs.

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To join our list serve and receive information on upcoming grant competitions and other important announcements, visit **[www.fbc.usda.gov/form/](http://www.fbc.usda.gov/form/)**

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