

Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

March 1-2, 2006

I. Call to order

Scott Merriner welcomed members and called to order the fourth meeting of the **FBCI Advisory Council** at **9:00am** on **March 1, 2006** in the **Alaska Office Building-Juneau**.

II. Moment of Reflection

III. Introductions-Scott Merriner

Advisory Council members were introduced and roll call was taken. The following members were present: Lt. Governor Loren Leman, Scott Merriner, Nancy Campbell, Glenn Clary, Judy Fulp, Keith Hamilton, Eugene Harnett, Allen Levy, Julie Morris, Ryan Ray, Kathleen Svenson, Gloria Tokar, June Ulz, Gracie Jackson and Frank Peratrovich. Stephanie Wheeler and Tara Horton represented the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

Approval of Minutes (12/9)-Advisory Council approved minutes recorded from last meeting.

Approval of Agenda (3/1)-Advisory Council approved the agenda as submitted for 3/1 meeting.

IV. Roundtable: Stanley Carlson-Thies (teleconference)

Stanley Carlson-Thies: Center for Public Justice (Thinktank-public policy and citizenship) since 1992.

-Helped draft Level Playing Field report/Compassion in Action

-Center continues to do public advocacy and consulting for FBCI.

Major items for states:

- To have an office: to keep focus and build expertise
- Advisory council that represents faith world-enables interface with govt.

Pres. Bush rallying the armies of compassion goes way beyond competition for govt. grants. Its really to draw society's attention to orgs who are day in and day out serving their communities, highlight, provide tech service, encouraging private giving, govt. funds – to bring fbo's to the table creating a more level playing field.

Charitable Choice-by Pres. Clinton... these standards only apply to *programs*. Thus, Pres. Bush adopted regs called Equal Treatment.

All major Departments have adopted general regulations that govern all money going out. These regs ensure that there is a common set of standards that create a level playing field.

- FBCI-Now-Equal Treatment rather than Charitable Choice.
(Federal push---to know and put into practice).

Cutting Edge Issues: Federal directive, but most is spent by State and local govt.
Question: Do states *understand* and are they spending the money that way?

Scott: Is there a short sweet version of these standards and how do we go about getting these into State govt?

Stanley: Powerpoint. Stanley will bring his draft to Alaska when he comes to 2006 Volunteerism & FBCI Summit.

3. Federal Level

- Federally-big issue: religious staffing, can fbos take account of religion in hiring rights. NY-Salvation Army case...judge sided with Salvation Army. Important victory.
- Dualism or plurality of advances: systemic legal change, looking at regs, announcement of programs, design of programs...to include fbos
- Pilot projects: Workforce development-govt told them they need to connect better with fbos and smaller cos. Board side-know how to connect. Pilot projects can tell a lot.
- Targeted programs: (Haven't necessarily been done well in past by govt.) Thus: Strengthening marriages, access to recovery, mentoring children...draw on the strengths of civil society, both faith-based and smaller community orgs.

CHALLENGES:

There has been a deliberate strategy...now there needs to be good **education** and **advice** to community and fbos and clear guidance that keep organizations out of trouble, but assurance that they are *not in trouble*.

Indirect Funding: Money or check goes to beneficiary-vouchers certificates...FBOs are not only eligible, but can bring faith/relig. into that programming. Court has said it is constitutional...*when there is a choice*.

Direct Funding: Grants/Contracts

SCOTT: If you were in our shoes, what would you see as the AK top priorities?

STANLEY: Hard...but 1. Task Force Report-liked important role of Office in finding better ways to support community and faith groups...convene people, bridge gaps, bring together, capacity build...continue to find ways to do that. Encourage greater philanthropic funding to these groups. Only because govt. is more restrictive.

2. Continue to think about how AK agencies work with each other. Do agencies know what it means? Partnering, procedures, internal look at p&p's. Advisory Council may be able to think about how orgs operate in their relationship to other organizations and govt.

3. Needs to be more clarity on what FBCI standards are. Help groups understand the standard: Not for religious activities, separated by time or place. Clarify the standards, and how they apply and then help be a bridge to communicate that to orgs.

JUDY: How can we change the public perception of FBCI?

STANLEY: Good reason for church/state separation. Peoples fear is not what's happening but what *might happen*. It is simply a way of connecting govt. with front-line groups. Money is not going to help proselytize but to help serve neighbors issues.

Idea: start out speeches with top 10 misconceptions about fbcI:

“You might think...but in reality”.

JULIE: They want statistics that shows that this is working. That these programs are, for instance, working to help reduce homelessness...

STANLEY: There are private/fed. Studies unfortunately, they haven't been done for very long and they are expensive. Legislators shouldn't think of it in an all or nothing way...not about believing that all fbos are going to be great and all others won't. The reality is it is a **combined effort**.

V. White House Office of FBCI: Jen Sullivan (teleconference)

Quickly summarized initiative and the office.

- Created when President Bush came into office
- Centers for FBCI in following govt. agencies:

[Agency for International Development](#)

[Department of Agriculture](#)

[Department of Commerce](#)

[Department of Education](#)

[Department of Health and Human Services](#)

[Department of Homeland Security](#)

[Dept of Housing and Urban Development](#)

[Department of Justice](#)

[Department of Labor](#)

[Small Business Administration](#)

[Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

Reason it was started was because Pres. believed that fbcos played an important role in providing services to communities. Churches, synagogues, mosques, temples and charity orgs focus on the results of effective programs. The aim is to keep funding open to these entities. And it makes the most sense to welcome all successful programs to compete for funds.

Tasks:

- Audit of rules and practices of federal agencies.

- As a result of barriers report: Work towards eliminating discrimination of fbos...they shifted focus to results rather than whether or not an org was fb or not.
- Saw need to educate smaller grassroots, fb and cos on navigating the process, legal dos and don'ts and grants catalogue. Novice info for tapping into govt. funding.
- New series of conference, assisting groups in producing more competitive grant apps.
- Work with state and city officials, ensure that fed Equal Treatment trickles to the state level. Local officials that administer grant programs in how to integrate...

WHATS NEW: Philanthropy Summit: WHO Conference-hoping to link fbcos to private funding philanthropic.

SCOTT: Next year making sure state agencies are doing. Have you seen other states do a state level audit?

JEN: Florida, and will get back to us with other states. A lot of liaisons don't have open communications within their state agencies.

GLORIA: Can we get handouts from Conference.

JEN: Yes, we will make that available.

JUNE: Mentioned 10 agencies, can you list them.

JEN: Listed on homepage of website:

FRANK: What sort of efforts/successes you've had with tribal govts?

JEN: Have had the opportunity to get tribal entities connected ie: access to recovery program-CA tribal govt.

FRANK: Neat opportunity to explore this, because they don't have issues with separation of church and state

Is your grants catalogue linked to website?

JEN: Homepage-grant opps-grants catalogue; Conferences: Tutorial workshops...send to intermediary organizations for that as well.

EUGENE: Could you give us some info on marriage strengthening program?

JEN: Not the best person...within the WHO domestic policy.

Good contact: Dr. Wade Horn at DHHS.

LT. GOV.: He's a great resource

JEN: Thanks for your time and if there's anything you think we should be doing or could be doing to better serve you let us know.

VI. SB 287: Gabe Aceves (Senator Ellis)

SB287 Establishes program whereby HSS can release info to Office of FBCI in order for office to promote program where churches, nonprofits, community orgs could sponsor a foster child by donating funds for a college savings account.

- Vehicle: UAA college savings program...experts say it's the best in the nation.

- Reality is: there is a group of youth who aren't able to take advantage for reasons outside themselves. This would enable churches, nonprofits, community orgs to donate.
- The youth would be able to use them for training, voc tech, community college, college funds. No change to their program. Its just a matter of getting tax deductible contributions to these accounts in individual's names. With the college savings program, it can be used for anything educational.
- Hope is to provide as many options as possible to these kids...for whatever is going to help them. Arkansas (already doing it)
- Office of FBCI would be PR machine because FBCI already has contact with multiple fb and co's....

QUESTIONS (ADVISORY COUNCIL)

-Why us? Answer: Easier for Confidential info to be transferred, office might be in a position of greater trust from community, office has more contact with fbco's.

-Define: Eligible Institutions...tied to UAA college savings program. The language is flexible.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

- How do we make sure all kids have an equal chance at this?
- Equitable?
- Why not both equal chance and the possibility of designating to specific youth?
- Will there be funding for administration of these accounts?
- Is there going to be enough support to loosen information?

FINAL THOUGHTS

- Great opportunity to set up accounts...and make a difference in a foster kid's life.
- Will create a desire, to achieve...because they know someone cares, someone is investing in their future.
- Need to start investing from the age of 5...up.
- Create a Board of Trustees...get min 5 max of 12.
- Great idea, give higher level of credence to FBCI Advisory Council
- At-risk youth is one of our priorities.
- Concern, we aren't sure of our own being for next week.
- Don't want to rush to a solution that isn't well thought out.
- Concern that we don't take resources from other equally effective options.

GABE: Welcome any and all feedback about this bill. We have Gabe's contact information. Thank you for your time.

VII. LUNCH

(On your own)- Meet at The Glory Hole for tour at 12:45pm.

VIII. Sharon Cissna's Homeless Summit (attended by Allen & Frank)

Black Hole of Homelessness/FASD-cases 2.5 million dollars in a lifetime-cost.
FRANK: Congress allows housing authorities to choose what pops you serve.
Within policies, housing authorities, have the authority to determine the populations that they focus their spending on.

The next 45 days AHFC is accepting public comments on how they spend their money.

Suggestion that we individually write and submit comment:

1. Policies be flexible to in including people with special needs (Project Based Vouchers)
2. Not be so focused on home ownership programs but direct resources
3. No one is funding transitional housing.
4. Alaska is the only state without Project Based Vouchers).

ACTION ITEM: Frank P. will draft a letter to AHFC from Advisory Council. Innovative ways that orgs that we have contact with could be stepping in to roles that serve those in need.

IX. Annual Report

Click on link above to access Annual Report. Scott led a discussion on the highlights of the Annual Report. The highlights will be the focus/talking points of meetings with Legislators tomorrow.

X. Committee Membership

If Advisory Council Members are not already a member of a committee-need to choose.

Present Members:

Education: Judy Fulp, Diane Johnson, Julie Morris, Kim Patterson, Kathleen Svenson, Gloria Tokar, June Ulz

Legislative: Nancy Campbell, Cindy Cashen, Mike Enschede, Lt. Gov., Eugene Harnett, Julie Morris

Rural: Nancy Campbell, Judy Fulp, Jeanie Greene, Allen Levy, Gloria Tokar, June Ulz

Office Support: Eugene Harnett, Gracie Jackson, Diane Johnson, Scott Merriner, Kim Patterson, Nancy Campbell

XI. Conference Update:

April 24-25th: 2006 Summit will be jointly convened by Office of FBCI and Alaska State Community Service Commission. Planning meetings have been positive and productive.

- Office is hoping to find funds to bring Advisory Council members to Anchorage for Summit...unknown if funds are available at this point.
- Need Advisory Council Participation in Committees (Silent Auction, Fundraising/Sponsorships, Booth, Stars of Gold Award)
- FBCI has pledged to raise \$10,000-15,000 in sponsorships to decrease the registration fee from \$100 to \$50 for two days (plus meals). The thought was more of FBCI target participants may have a harder time paying \$100.
- Advisory Council members responsible to find one item for Silent Auction-get it to Tara prior to Summit.
- Tara will get a marketing pack to Advisory Council members by Monday March 6th-to be used for awareness, marketing and fundraising in each community.

XII. Legislative Plan for March 2nd

Teams of 2-3 council members signed up for meetings scheduled with legislators. Beginning at 8:00am through 4:30pm Thursday.

** See Talking Points at the end of Minutes*

XIII. Adjournment

Scott Merriner adjourned the meeting at **4:30pm**.

Minutes submitted by: Tara Horton (Associate Coordinator)

Minutes approved by: Stephanie Wheeler (Executive Director)

NO MINUTES WERE DOCUMENTED FOR MARCH 2 nd - LEGISLATIVE MEETINGS ALL DAY

Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Talking Points

- FBCI Office being created in DHSS, Admin Order 221
- To improve the well-being of Alaskans by strengthening and expanding the contributions of faith-based and community initiatives.
 - Foster Partnerships
 - Building Capacity
 - Expanding Awareness
- Stephanie Wheeler, Executive Director of the Alaska Office of FBCI
- Funding request in 2007 Budget
 - Executive Director and one staff person
 - To help faith and community organizations increase their capacity to provide services and partner with government
 - Support for advisory council

Core Services

Council:

- Advise the Governor on policies and practices to increase the contributions of faith-based and community organizations.
- Promote service partnerships between faith, community and governmental entities.

Office:

- Provide a single point of contact for faith-based and community organizations to receive information, assistance and referrals within the executive branch of state government.
- Provide guidance, direction and support for increased collaboration among faith-based and community organizations and between faith-based and community organizations and the executive branch of state government.
- See financing to support faith-based and community initiative programs and services
- Facilitate or provide grant writing training, organizational development and other technical assistance and training to help faith-based and community organizations develop increased capacity to provide services and programs to those in need in Alaska.
- Provide training to state employees in the executive branch on how to work with faith-based and community organizations.

Background

- December 2002. Lt. Governor asked to lead FBCI effort.
- Feb – May 2003 Community Scoping Meetings Fairbanks, Anchorage and Juneau
- June 2003 Lt. Governor appoint members to FBCI Task Force
- Nov 2003 – May 2004
 - Inventory and interview over 100 service providing organizations and ministries in Alaska
 - Complete assessment to identify most pressing social needs and gaps in services
 - Identify opportunities to promote faith, community and government partnerships
 - Identify strengths of faith and community based services

Highlights

- Alaska recognized by White House FBCI Office as best practice FBCI state
- April 2004 Hosted one day FBCI summit and Stars of Gold Awards Banquet
- Community Funding Forums with community partners
- Grant Writing training with community partners
- Increased funding to Alaska through Compassion Capital fund – Targeted Capacity Grant (\$530,000) – FY 06 targeting at risk youth, homeless families and rural areas– Hosted on-site technical assistance workshop
- Providing guidance and grant management to 14 Healthy Marriage Initiatives grantees
- Hosted Grants.gov workshop
- October 2004 Alaska named one of 10 states selected to participate in the national FBCI “Partners In Transformation” awards program - 2005 Covenant House won \$5000 award for showing example of community partnership

How have we done?

- Transformational Living Community (faith-based housing unit) at Palmer Correctional Center
- Expansion of soup kitchen and food pantry programs around the state
- Healthy Marriage Initiative Grant program funded and underway in December 2004
- State Military & Vet Affairs working with churches to provide support to military families whose family members may be deployed
- Alaska one of 10 states participating in the Partner’s in Transformation contest through FASTEN Applications due 04-01-05