

**THE WHITE HOUSE**

Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

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**WHITE HOUSE *COMPASSION IN ACTION* ROUNDTABLE HIGHLIGHTS PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO HELP NEW AMERICANS SUCCESSFULLY ASSIMILATE IN COMMUNITIES**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – In celebration of Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI) today convened a *Compassion in Action* policy roundtable titled, “Community and Faith-Based Solutions for Immigrant Assimilation and Success.” Hosted by OFBCI Acting Director Jedd Medefind, in partnership with the Task Force on New Americans, the Roundtable highlighted innovative and effective approaches of faith-based and community organizations to help immigrants reach their full potential as new American citizens.

“Every day, faith-based and community organizations serve as lifelines to new Americans, helping them overcome challenges to effectively integrate into society and enrich the fabric of our Nation,” said Jedd Medefind. “Today, as we celebrate citizenship, we highlight, honor and promote expansion of innovative models that are helping immigrants enter fully the opportunities and responsibilities of citizenship.”

For immigrants of every generation, faith-based and other community organizations have been a primary doorway to the full promise of America by helping the newly arrived overcome challenges from immediate food and shelter needs to learning English and securing employment. Today’s event assembled cross-sector leaders to spotlight successful efforts of nonprofits around the Nation, in partnership with government in this ongoing work. The discussion also explored ways to expand the role of the nonprofit sector to more effectively address the challenges faced by new Americans.

Keynote speaker Alfonso Aguilar, Chief of the Office of Citizenship within the Department of Homeland Security’s U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, discussed Federal efforts to help immigrants assimilate to American communities and enrich our Nation’s culture. For example, the Task Force on New Americans, an inter-agency collaboration created by President Bush in 2006, works to develop a more cooperative Federal approach to help immigrants settle in their new country. The task force works to help ensure immigrants have the tools and resources to learn English and embrace the common core of American civic culture. More information on the task force is available at: <http://www.dhs.gov/ximgtn/committees/details.shtm>.

Additionally, Mr. Aguilar highlighted the New Americans Project, a partnership between the Task Force on New Americans and USA Freedom Corps, President Bush’s initiative to engage more Americans in volunteer service. Launched in 2007, the New Americans Project promotes volunteer opportunities for Americans interested in helping newcomers adjust to life in the United States and connects newcomers with ways to get involved in their communities through

volunteer service. For more information on the New Americans Project and ways to answer President Bush's Call to Service, visit USA Freedom Corps at: [www.volunteer.gov](http://www.volunteer.gov).

During today's event, Alison Young, Acting Director of USA Freedom Corps, honored several volunteers who teach English to new immigrants with the President's Volunteer Service Award. Representatives from the REEP program in Arlington, Va., received the awards on behalf of 42 outstanding volunteers who are helping their new neighbors overcome challenges of integrating into American society.

In celebration of our free society and the courageous leadership of our Founding Fathers, President Bush proclaimed today as Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, during Constitution Week, President Bush encouraged all Americans to celebrate the leadership and sacrifices of our Nation's democracy

President Bush's Faith-Based and Community Initiative (FBCI) is built from the conviction that the most effective way to address our communities' great needs is to draw upon the unique strengths of every willing community and faith-based partner. He launched the FBCI upon taking office in January 2001, to strengthen America's nonprofit sector and extend its work in partnership with government. Since January 2007, the OFBCI has convened monthly Compassion in Action policy roundtables to discuss issues of interest faith- and community-based organizations and highlight honor the successes of dedicated Americans helping their neighbors in need.

To view the President's proclamation on Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, Constitution Week, 2008, visit: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/09/20080917.html>.

For more information on the Task Force on New Americans, visit: <http://www.dhs.gov/ximgtn/committees/details.shtm>.

For more information on the OFBCI and the President's compassion agenda, visit: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbc/>.

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