

**PARTNERSHIPS THAT WORK:
PRELIMINARY FINDINGS FROM THE TANF
FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION INITIATIVE**

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Traditionally, the services offered by faith-based and community-based organizations (FBCOs) have helped to bridge the gaps that may leave families facing food insecurity, housing instability, and difficult choices between competing needs. Recognizing that multiple issues often challenge low-income working families and individuals, FBCOs have expanded their services to include education and training, child care, transportation, case management, mentoring programs, life-skills training, and victims' services (Archambault, Kakuska, & Munford, 2001). While many of these small, nonprofit organizations have provided indispensable services to their communities for decades, it at times has been challenging for them to access public funds to support their efforts, primarily because of insufficient capacity to identify funding opportunities or develop competitive grant applications (Hercik & Lewis, 2003).

The potential of FBCOs to play a more significant role in collaborative service provision was bolstered by Section 104 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), commonly known as Charitable Choice, which disallowed states to favor or discriminate against FBCOs when applying for federal funds to provide social services. When partnering with FBCOs for the provision of social services, states must provide secular alternatives if an individual objects to the religious character of a program. This "alternative service provision" can also be satisfied by providing clients of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program with service vouchers redeemable at the provider of their choosing.

The number of contracts between states and FBCOs has increased significantly since the implementation of Charitable Choice, and it is generally believed that FBCOs contribute positively to the provision of social services (Sherman, 2000). Often, FBCOs can have a particular impact on hard-to-serve populations facing multiple barriers to employment. For example, FBCOs have made significant strides in providing services to attach ex-offenders to employment (Banks, Hercik, & Lewis, 2004). Carlson-Thies (2000) asserted that Charitable Choice "represents an opportunity for officials who are searching for effective assistance programs...[and] makes it possible for officials to select the most effective programs, whether

they are offered by faith-based or secular organizations” (p. 4). In a comprehensive study of nearly 500 welfare-to-work programs in Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia, researchers found that among the 120 faith-based welfare-to-work programs, 50% were receiving government funding (Monsma, 2002).

More recently, studies have shown that when faith-based organizations partner with government agencies, families have greater success in achieving self-sufficiency when compared with other types of service providers. The intersection of government, nonprofit organizations, and faith-based groups can provide the necessary social capital to support individuals on the path from welfare-to-work (Schneider, 2006). Other researchers have reached different conclusions on the issue of faith-based and community-based providers. For example, Kennedy and Bielefeld (2003) found that networks with faith influence were weaker than their secular counterparts and questioned the effectiveness of faith-based job readiness services.

Despite the somewhat mixed findings described above, studies indicate that faith-based programs are generally open to partnerships and possess a high level of credibility within their local communities (Ericson, 2001). Research has stressed the benefits of Charitable Choice, suggesting that many congregations have expanded their services from “commodity-based benevolence” (e.g., food pantries, used clothing centers) to “relational” ministries (e.g., working face-to-face and intensely with needy families) (Sherman, 2000).

One of the aims of the present study is to isolate *why* faith-based organizations appear to be successful with hard-to-serve populations. Current hypotheses include credibility in the community, access outside of traditional settings and hours, and passionate commitment of volunteers. However, these assumptions have yet to be tested.

Some research findings are particularly relevant to considerations of TANF-funded FBCO services. First, most congregations do not maintain a separate 501(c)(3) to provide social services (Green, 2007), indicating instead that they are providing services directly. Second, FBCOs continue to fill an important role in serving the most disadvantaged persons, even when compared with their secular counterparts (Reingold, Pirogl, & Brady, 2007). The latter point is critically important to the question of the role of FBCOs in serving TANF clients who present with a variety of barriers to successful employment. These clients are the very ones TANF caseworkers often need the most help in serving. And, given the renewed emphasis on work placement contained in the Deficit Reduction Act—the law which recently reauthorized TANF—the capacity of FBCOs to help attach TANF recipients to employment becomes increasingly important.

This paper presents the preliminary findings from an ongoing Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) sponsored study of successful TANF-FBCO partnerships. First, overviews of five partnerships are presented, then common themes among them are identified, and finally the implications are discussed for possible future collaborations in social services provision for low-income and at-risk families.

RESEARCH AIMS

The TANF Faith-based and Community Organization Initiative is a multiyear project sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance to study the relationships between TANF agencies and faith-based and community-based social service providers. The initiative is designed to identify promising practices and disseminate information to TANF and other social service agencies so that they may replicate these types of collaborations. This study includes four discrete research tasks (details are provided in Appendix A).

This paper describes the preliminary findings from the first part of the first task of this effort: the development of a Research Compendium. This task aims to understand the state of the field in terms of TANF-FBCO collaboration, document promising practices for FBCOs and intermediary/cooperative entities, and inform the selection of promising practices for inclusion in the study. The overall study will be completed by early 2010 and the findings will be available from the Welfare Peer TA Network (www.peerta.acf.hhs.gov). The methodology and preliminary findings from the development of the Research Compendium are detailed below.

DEVELOPING THE RESEARCH COMPENDIUM

The Compendium comprises three research elements plus a reporting element and it is designed to narrow the universe of FBCO employment/self-sufficiency service providers from an initial scan of 250 down to approximately 25 selected for in-depth study. Extant research, including that conducted by this research team, will inform this process.¹ The three research elements include:

1. An Environmental Scan/Literature Review that focuses broadly on employment-related services provided by FBCOs and will result in a database of 250 potential study sites. This element is the focus of this paper.
2. A Promising Practices review during which criteria for inclusion in the larger study and variables of importance (e.g., urban versus rural sites) will be identified. This step will verify data collected in the literature review and will narrow the scope of potential programs to be studied down to about 40 FBCOs.

3. A Readiness Assessment by which the capacity of each potential site to participate in the model-building² phase of the research study will be examined. It is anticipated that ultimately 25 FBCOs will emerge for continuing research.

Environmental Scan Methodology

To gain a representative profile of TANF-FBCO partnerships, it was necessary to adopt a broad approach to identifying promising practices. The ongoing Environmental Scan draws from a thorough literature review and nominations from the field. The scan was not limited to programs that specifically targeted TANF clients, but rather examined programs with experience and characteristics that could enhance current services for TANF clients or provide a foundation for further innovation. Programs meeting these criteria were identified through consultation with experts in such fields as transportation services, housing programs, and workforce development. The process incorporated a review of published works and discussions with selected sites.

Environmental Scan Findings: Preliminary Profiles

Given the ultimate objective of model and toolkit creation, it is important that the scan include projects representing a wide range of features, such as location, target population, service delivery strategies, services offered, and partnership type and length. Specifically, a range of urban, mid-sized city, and rural models was sought. Moreover, the selected programs offer unique services ranging from family mentoring, faith-based transitional housing, and workforce development, as well as in-kind donations through a network of FBCOs, and an intermediary model working with FBCOs. While more challenging to measure, estimated replicability of practices was another consideration for inclusion. While a diverse set of selection criteria was used, this approach has limitations in that it is a nonrandom sample; thus, generalizability may be limited. Table 1 provides an overview each program included in the study.

Table 1. Overview of Faith-based and Community-based Organizations

Program	Location	Target Population	Service Delivery Strategy	Services	Partnership Type	Date Established
Faith Connections (Wilson, NC)	Rural	TANF Work Mandated	Indirect: requests from DSS	Financial assistance, counseling, auto repair	Contract with TANF	July 2002
Rachel's House (Columbus, OH)	Urban	Female ex-offenders, including TANF Work Mandated	Direct	Housing and life-skills support for women reentering society	Contract with TANF	July 2006

(continued)

Table 1. Overview of Faith-based and Community-based Organizations (continued)

Program	Location	Target Population	Service Delivery Strategy	Services	Partnership Type	Date Established
Faith Partners (Colorado Springs, CO)	Mid-size city	TANF Work Mandated	Direct	Mentoring for TANF families, intake class for DSS	Contract with TANF	Mentoring and colocation of offices June 1999; class May 2007
Pathways (Petersburg, VA)	Small city	Low-income youths, including TANF Work Mandated	Direct	YouthBuild, Workforce Investment Board, and AmeriCorps programming	Contract with WIB and informal partnership with TANF	2001
Seedco (New York, NY)	Urban	Organizations serving TANF Work Mandated clients	Intermediary	Funding, technical assistance, infrastructure development	Contract with TANF and WIA	2000

Note: TANF=Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; WIB=Workforce Investment Board; WIA=Workforce Investment Act.

Site One: Faith Connections, Wilson, North Carolina

Serving a rural community since July 2002, Faith Connections is a well-established collaborative of 24 interdenominational faith partners and the Wilson County Department of Social Services (DSS). The overall goal of Faith Connections is to assist social workers by providing the additional resources (monetary and nonmonetary assistance) needed to help families and individuals maintain employment and alleviate crisis. Faith Connections’ mission is to provide real-time access to faith community leadership and resources in order to coordinate the assistance given to families in poverty, crisis, or need, serving both TANF clients and non-TANF clients. The offering of in-kind donations and support, and its rural location, makes this program unique among the sites profiled here.

Faith Connections serves as a network of rural churches that acts as a referral agency network to support local DSS clients who are in crisis or need. The Program Coordinator interfaces with Wilson County DSS and the individual faith partners to serve persons in need.

Partnership with TANF Agency and Services to TANF Clients

An interdenominational, faith-based initiative that is housed at Career Plus, a Work First Self-Sufficiency Center, Faith Connections was designed and staffed by the Wilson County DSS to supplement the needs of TANF families. Rather than working directly with families and

individuals, Faith Connections' clients are the referring agencies and social workers themselves. Faith Connections is the liaison between the workers requesting assistance for their clients and the churches who have agreed to assist financially.

Referrals to Faith Connections are not limited to financial assistance. Support can also be provided for spiritual and emotional counseling, pro bono dental work, housing resources, holiday items, food, and other areas that may be identified as a need through the referring agent. Recycled computers (donated by local organizations), furniture, clothing items, cars, and auto repair are other examples of nonfinancial support.

Results and Lessons Learned

Faith Connections leverages state and local government funds to provide families and individuals with comprehensive services and resources to alleviate crisis situations.³ It allows social workers the flexibility to offer more comprehensive solutions for their clients so that anyone in crisis can potentially overcome obstacles and remain on the path to long-term self-sufficiency.

Having served 411 families and individuals in fiscal year 2006–2007, Faith Connections has been able to make a difference in the lives of clients in Wilson. Since July 2002, \$88,325 has been received from all the Faith Community partners to help those in need. DSS has made 1,613 total referrals to Faith Connections since July 2002.

The Wilson DSS recognizes the need to allow churches and faith-based partners to maintain their autonomy in determining what services to offer. By maintaining fiscal responsibility at DSS, the Faith Connections program coordinator can focus on the program side and collaborations with the faith-based community. Furthermore, an efficient referral system that allows for maximum accountability has been vital. Faith Connections works with DSS to track each client's application form to show what services, resources, and programs the client has received. In addition, Faith Connections submits a monthly report to the faith partners summarizing the services, resources, and programs provided to clients with their donations. By locating the Faith Connections program at an off-site building (the Career Plus Self-Sufficiency Center), and not at DSS, the program has become more accessible to clients, services, and faith partners.

Site Two: Rachel's House, Columbus, Ohio

Rachel's House is one of numerous programs operated by Lower Lights Ministries, a faith-based not-for-profit organization with extensive experience and success in serving the distressed community of Franklinton, an urban neighborhood on Columbus' Westside. Rachel's House was created to support women recently released from prison by providing transitional housing and

supportive services. As part of a holistic approach, Rachel's House focuses on life- skills development, employment attainment and retention, financial management, addiction recovery, and spiritual formation. Rachel's House works with the local TANF office and provides several mentors to assist each woman in moving toward self-sufficiency.

While Rachel's House is careful to use the TANF funding appropriately, this faith-based organization does offer specific faith components in their work with clients. Rachel's House is supported by the presence and support of their sponsoring church, Bellows Church of the Nazarene, and church volunteers play a major role in the success of the program. Rachel's House also partners with 13 other FBCOs, 6 of which are other churches.

Partnership with TANF Agency and Services to TANF Clients

Rachel's House receives TANF funding from the Ohio Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives as well as program support from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections. Since July 2006, Rachel's House has been receiving TANF funding as part of the Strengthening Ohio's Families Initiative. Rachel's House uses the TANF funding only for the needs specified and government funding does not pay for any activities with faith content.⁴ Rachel's House also helps residents apply for food stamps.

The Rachel's House program serves female ex-offenders from prison populations at Franklin Pre-Release Center in Columbus, and the Ohio Reformatory for Women in Marysville.⁵ The program begins in prison with a discipleship Bible study. Each week approximately 45 women meet with Rachel's House volunteers in a small-group setting to discuss life-skills applications. Participants can then apply to be part of Rachel's House residency on their release.

The Rachel's House residency program is a continuous program that provides safe, drug-free housing for each participant for 6 to 18 months depending on the individual needs of each participant. While it provides such basic needs as housing and physical wellness, the program is defined by the provision of five specific components: life-skills development, employment attainment and retention, spiritual formation, financial management, and addiction recovery.

After an initial 40-day orientation to Rachel's House, residents reenter the community with crucial help from staff and volunteers. Working with the women individually to determine their goals, an employment mentor helps each woman decide what kind of job or educational opportunities are most appropriate. A volunteer helps each woman write her resume and focus on job retention. In addition to her employment mentor, each woman is supported by the following:

- **Personal Mentor:** The main purpose of the personal mentor is to be a mature friend who demonstrates a caring interest in the resident.
- **Financial Mentor:** The financial mentor works with a resident to help her understand budgeting skills, plan for the future, and compare spending habits with targeted objectives.
- **Community Support Team:** Comprising three to four adults, this team meets monthly with the resident to discuss personal progress, obstacles, goals, and other matters of concern.

Results and Lessons Learned

The programming and commitment at Rachel’s House has resulted in a 10.1% recidivism rate for the 59 women who have been a part of the residency program in its 5-year existence. In a recent large study, the Department of Justice found a three-year recidivism rate of 60% nationally (Deschenes, Owen, & Crow, 2007). Because of their success with Ohio inmates, Rachel’s House has become a model for faith-based transitional homes. To date, five organizations have used the Rachel’s House program model to start similar housing programs for ex-offenders.⁶

Rachel’s House was able to add more women to their programs as their capacity grew. Location also was a key to success: the residential houses are in the same neighborhood as their sponsoring church, so Rachel’s House had credibility and visibility in the neighborhood. By training and equipping volunteers to serve in specialized roles, the mentors are more effective. Thus, Rachel’s House ensures that the volunteers are using their time and skills in the areas they wish to serve, which is a key element of volunteer retention.

Site Three: Faith Partners, Colorado Springs, Colorado

As a nonprofit organization formed by several faith organizations, Faith Partners provides services to families transitioning from TANF-funded services, and currently collaborates with over 160 churches to do this work. Specifically, by offering volunteer mentoring as well as a 30-day Crossroads class, Faith Partners assists individuals and families leaving welfare who need additional support to make this transition successful and permanent. Working with the El Paso County (Colorado Springs) Department of Human Services (DHS), volunteer mentoring teams are trained to lend encouragement, support, and life-skills coaching to families desiring to become self-sufficient.

Faith Partners has successfully blended a faith-based presence with a skills-based approach. In partnership with churches, they recruit volunteers from the faith community, educate them about poverty and the challenges facing TANF clients, and focus on skill building. Everything Faith Partner volunteers teach and do for the clients is entirely skill based and secular. While

volunteers are recruited from communities of faith and the volunteers are motivated by their faith to mentor, they do not actively speak about or encourage the participants to learn about their faith.

Partnership with TANF Agency and Services to TANF Clients

Since June 1999, Faith Partners has contracted with DHS for services to TANF clients, with funding directly from TANF dollars, to connect families and individuals leaving welfare with volunteer mentor teams who can help support that transition. These teams—for whom this work is a 12-month commitment to a specific family—fill a gap in the lives of these families and help prevent welfare recidivism by providing soft skills training and a solid foundation of support during the transition period. In addition to being trained in the issue areas listed below, mentoring team members are given resources for sharing with mentees. DHS relies on referrals and the widespread distribution of materials to clients about Faith Partners services to accomplish this mentoring goal, as well as referring clients directly to Faith Partners. Faith Partners questions the family about their needs in the mentoring relationship; this intake process drives the creation of a mentoring team specifically for that family. The family chooses from several different mentoring categories, such as personal development, strengthening key relationships, financial wisdom, vocational skills, and educational advancement.

In addition to the mentor teams, Faith Partners also operates a 30-day Crossroads class for new TANF clients in El Paso County, which is held at DHS. This weekly class sets the stage for future successful work participation by encouraging clients to think about their opportunities, changing attitudes about work, and laying the groundwork for expectations of success. In April 2008, the Crossroads class became mandatory for all work-ready TANF clients in El Paso County. Faith Partners developed the Crossroads curriculum after attending Dr. Ruby Payne’s “Bridges Out of Poverty” training, a class that helps participants understand their life-skills and workplace needs.

Results and Lessons Learned

Because Faith Partners has been colocated in the DHS, and cohoused with the TANF unit for the past 10 years, they have been able to fully integrate their services. The Colorado DHS’s TANF/Colorado Works Program provides support to both El Paso County DHS and Faith Partners.⁷ Offering the Crossroads class, which has been in place for 10 months, is a direct result of the success of Faith Partners in helping families and individuals to become self-sufficient. This new class has presented a true win-win situation for DHS and Faith Partners because both entities have a better product, as clients move from one work participation opportunity (i.e., the

Crossroads class) to another (possible mentoring by Faith Partners and job assistance and placement with DHS).

In 2007, Faith Partners provided mentoring services to over 30 families and life-skills education to over 360 TANF clients while operating within a budget of approximately \$110,000. In the program's history, over 1,200 volunteers have become mentors and have mentored over 440 families. By Faith Partners colocating with DHS, communication and information sharing has been facilitated. The ease of sharing has encouraged joint problem-solving and a unique perspective on each partner's needs and business practices.

Site Four: Pathways, Petersburg, Virginia

Founded in 1995 as an interfaith community development corporation in Petersburg, Pathways, formerly known as Petersburg Urban Ministries, has participation from the Jewish, Muslim, Christian, and Bahia faith communities. Pathways is highly visible in its community, serving a predominantly low-income, African-American population of young people aged 15 to 24. It is also an AmeriCorps member and an affiliate of YouthBuild USA.⁸ Pathways partners with the local Department of Social Services (DSS), the local Workforce Investment Board (WIB), and other groups to provide job training opportunities, job placement, and retention support for a number of young adults receiving TANF. By offering a holistic approach, Pathways uses an asset-based approach, seeing the full potential of all their clients, and helping them to attain it.

Pathways is unique among the profiles for its interfaith work, which has breadth and depth into many different faith traditions. With 34 congregations and 23 faith groups contributing to their joint mission, Pathways offers a nonsectarian spirituality in its approach to programming, reflecting the interfaith nature of the collaboration. With so many faith groups represented, the volunteers and staff refrain from proselytizing, but may speak about their faith convictions. In general, Pathways emphasizes spiritual attributes, like stewardship of resources and gratitude, on a daily basis. The interfaith nature of the organization is demonstrated in its board of directors and its volunteers. Faith groups are involved in many aspects of volunteering, from working alongside AmeriCorps program participants to tutoring on a weekly basis.

Partnership with TANF Agency and Services to TANF Clients

Pathways has a strong but informal partnership with their local TANF agency: they have a letter of support from DSS that they will refer TANF recipients to Pathways programs, with specific commitments from each party. Pathways' social workers often work on behalf of TANF-eligible clients, interfacing with their caseworkers to provide information and support. These social workers also help those who qualify for TANF to apply.

While not exclusively focusing on TANF recipients, Pathways serves TANF clients in its YouthBuild Program, the AmeriCorps program, and in workforce development through the local WIB. The clients receive a range of supports, including educational classes, tutoring, and job training. They are also engaged in leadership development, community action projects, mentoring, and job shadowing. Specifically, the low-income young people in YouthBuild programs work toward their high-school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED), learn job skills, and contribute to their communities by building affordable housing, thereby changing their own lives as well as benefiting their community. Most of these individuals move from being TANF-eligible to being ineligible due to income earnings after completion of the program. In addition, Pathways is dedicated to providing opportunities for educational advancement to youths and adults, as well as faith support, if the clients express interest. In their personal assessment on entrance, clients have the opportunity to talk about their own faith or spirituality and may follow up on that with their counselor or other staff.

Results and Lessons Learned

Serving 500 youths a year, Pathways also serves 100 TANF clients and referrals in the course of a year. Moreover, 75% to 80% of clients receive a recognized credential in their work of choice. Pathways has a 75% program completion rate, with a 90% or better placement rate in higher education and/or employment after clients graduate from the program.

As an interfaith organization, Pathways is unique among the programs profiled in this study. Instead of finding their differences to be a roadblock, Pathways members have found that when people work together on a project and have a common goal, the participants are able to collaborate more easily. In this case, housing and youths were the two issues that the community agreed needed their intervention, so Pathways began to work with vulnerable youth populations and on community housing issues. Pathways attributes their lack of challenges to the commonly held vision and mission, as well as the inclusive approach they have used from the start of their work. Inspired by their faith backgrounds, the 23 different faith groups were (and continue to be) brought to the table for a project that they all see as important.

Site Five: Seedco, New York, New York

Seedco's mission as a national nonprofit organization is to work with local partners to create economic opportunities for disadvantaged job seekers, workers, and neighborhood entrepreneurs by implementing innovative, multipartner initiatives that foster financial advancement and security. Over the past decade, Seedco has developed, refined, and replicated an approach for delivering high-quality welfare-to-work services to TANF clients on a large scale by partnering

with networks of FBCOs. The FBCOs provide preemployment support and employment and retention services to residents in their communities. While Seedco works in other locations, the focus here is on its work in New York City, with its 14 FBCO partners there.

Structurally, Seedco serves as a management services intermediary, whereby it receives performance-based contracts from state and local TANF agencies and then subcontracts with FBCO partners that are responsible for providing direct services to TANF recipients and applicants. In addition to contract management and interface with TANF agencies, Seedco also provides common program models and tools, centralized management information systems, resource development, technical assistance, and administrative support. FBCOs, in turn, leverage their capacity to engage individuals with multiple employment barriers and provide responsive, high-quality services to them. Because of this cooperative program design, all FBCOs and Seedco share a stake in overall performance, and FBCOs have the opportunity to learn from each other.

In New York City, Seedco's 14 FBCO partners include a range of organizations, from small community development corporations that develop housing in their communities to larger agencies that offer a range of services to a targeted neighborhood or geographic area. While both FBCOs are part of this network, all of the services provided are secular. The Seedco model allows FBCOs to compete as welfare-to-work service providers because participating FBCOs collectively can reach a level of scale comparable to large providers and the FBCOs benefit from Seedco providing a shared infrastructure and administrative support for the network. By providing the infrastructure elements to its FBCO partners, Seedco is able to leverage the FBCOs' individual strengths at working with low-income workers. Simultaneously, Seedco pools their resources in a common model that has a far greater reach than the individual FBCOs would be able to achieve, both in terms of numbers of clients served, as well as professional systems to serve and track the clients.⁹ Seedco identifies challenges faced by multiple partners and areas in need of improvement, and responds accordingly with training, technical support, and other tools.¹⁰

Partnership with TANF Agency and Services to TANF Clients

Although Seedco often leverages private foundation dollars to fund service enhancements and innovations, contracts with FBCOs are funded through TANF and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) contracts. Seedco's model was fully implemented with local TANF funds in 2000. In New York City, the local TANF agency assigns TANF recipients to Job Centers for welfare-to-work services based on where the recipient resides. Once at one of four Seedco-run Job Centers,

Seedco staff assign clients to an FBCO partner based on the FBCO's caseload capacity, geographic proximity, and the preference of the client. In 2008, Seedco will place approximately 8,000 individuals into jobs through the FBCO networks, including 5,000 TANF clients. Overall, Seedco is consistently among the top performers in New York's welfare-to-work contracting arena in terms of client placement, employment retention, and reduced welfare recidivism.¹¹

Results and Lessons Learned

When Seedco first established its FBCO network, it committed resources to build staff and information technology infrastructure. These front-end investments have resulted in an ability to add new FBCO partners at a negligible cost because they built their internal capacity in the beginning of the FBCO work. With the infrastructure elements already established, Seedco can offer new FBCOs partnership opportunities using those preexisting templates, models, and staff expertise. In addition, Seedco's centralized back-office support allows the network as a whole to achieve economies of scale. Seedco's partners collectively share the costs associated with the support they receive, including funder relationship management, contract procurement, data tracking and reporting, and fiscal oversight. And Seedco's program development department secures new contracts at the city, state, and federal levels as well as with private funders.

COMMON THEMES AND IMPLICATIONS

As discussed in the research overview, findings have not yet coalesced around the features of TANF-FBCO partnerships that make them successful. The larger project of which this Environmental Scan is a part intends to provide specific answers to this question. However, the profiles included here illustrate certain features that seem to be common among most successful programs:

- **Location:** Each of the sites mentioned the importance of location. For some sites, locating near their government partners allowed for ease of referral and streamlined services. For other sites, a location in a neighborhood or near church partners lent additional credibility. The core message appears to be the importance of a strategic location that resonates with the population targeted for service.
- **Volunteer Recruitment:** The sites in this study operate different types of programs and, as such, use volunteers differently. However, each of the nonintermediary programs emphasized the importance of finding, recruiting, training, and retaining skilled, appropriate, and motivated volunteers.
- **Referrals:** The sites, other than Rachel's House, serve clients that are referred to them from their local TANF offices, and the mechanisms that guide those referrals (e.g. contracts, Memorandums of Understanding [MOUs]) are important.

- **Targeted Services:** All of the sites agreed that services delivered should be targeted to the needs of their clients and capitalize on their own organizational strengths.
- **Building Services in Increments:** All of the sites agreed about the importance of “starting small” and expanding over time. Specifically, sites described the wisdom of working on smaller contracts first and then pursuing larger opportunities as their infrastructure became more established.

Table 2. Common Themes among Faith-based and Community-based Organizations

Program	Location	Volunteer Recruitment	Referrals	Targeted Services	Incremental Growth
Faith Connections (Wilson, NC)	•	•	•	•	•
Rachel’s House (Columbus, OH)	•	•		•	•
Faith Partners (Colorado Springs, CO)	•	•	•	•	•
Pathways (Petersburg, VA)	•	•	•	•	•
Seedco (New York, NY)			•	•	•

Table 2 represents the commonality of these themes by program. Location emerged as a key determinant of success. Many of the individual FBCOs indicated that their location in a community was of vital importance, but they differed on what location was best suited for them, which varied based on the services provided and organizational goals. When recruiting volunteers, many of the organizations found that working with other FBCOs greatly enhanced their ability to recruit others interested in serving TANF individuals and families, whether directly, for most of the profiled FBCOs, or indirectly, as in the case of Faith Connections. All of the FBCOs found that targeting their efforts toward specific services greatly enhanced their productivity and maximized the positive impact on clients. Furthermore, all of these FBCOs found that building their services in increments was vital for their overall success. While all the projects have different goals and service offerings, by starting small, the FBCOs were able to learn from their first efforts and adjust their strategies for improving service delivery, growing their capacity, and offering increasingly comprehensive supports to TANF clients.

For client referrals, having a close, formal working relationship with TANF agencies was crucial for program success and growth for Faith Connections, Seedco, and Faith Partners. With a letter of support from the local DSS, Pathways also receives referrals, in an informal partnership with their TANF agency. Because Rachel’s House works with women in prison before they leave, the referral process does not apply to their organization in the same way; however, they do receive TANF funding to serve those who are eligible. Lastly, as an intermediary-supported network of

FBCOs implementing a common program model, Seedco differs from the other profiled programs in that this model allows small FBCOs to collectively serve large numbers of TANF referrals. The intermediary model, as shown by the success of Seedco, demonstrates that small FBCOs, operating as a network that is supported by an intermediary, can collectively reach a level of scale comparable to large for-profit and nonprofit providers and successfully compete with these groups.

Implications for Future Research

As noted earlier, this Environmental Scan is the first step in a larger research effort. The findings presented here should be considered preliminary and are not necessarily applicable to all TANF-FBCO partnerships. Future research, both as part of this project and conducted by others, can further examine these relationships.

By looking at a broad range of FBCOs and considering a group with diverse characteristics and geography, the findings from this TANF Initiative will be helpful and informative for other agencies and programs within the federal government seeking to partner with FBCOs to effect real change in the lives of citizens. The criteria for assessing FBCOs could be adapted for future use by other departments and agencies in the areas of research, policy, and practice. It is hoped that this initiative will be used as a promising practice model across the government, as a comprehensive look at “what works” with FBCO partnerships and evaluation. Preliminary findings, such as the apparent importance of starting small, building programs in increments, and targeting services will be explored in the future phases of this research project and tested in the pilot phase. The descriptive profiles included in the Compendium can be illustrative for programs seeking new or enhanced partnerships with FBCO social service providers, and the toolkit will provide guidance for making these partnerships successful. Together these pieces lay a solid foundation for rigorous evaluation of the quality of selected partnerships and additional examination of how these partnerships change and develop over time.

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NOTES

1. The Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion (ISR) examined the success of faith-based and community initiatives in Ohio, providing numerous insights and highlighting the fact that exemplary programs were able to dramatically increase the number of clients that they

served and the services they offered. Similarly, in 2004, Compassion Capital Fund (CCF) funded Caliber Associates (now ICF) to evaluate the Kairos Horizon Program, a faith-based residential rehabilitation program for prisoners and their families. Several of the outcomes investigated suggested that the Kairos Horizon program positively impacted prerelease measures of prison safety and postrelease measures of recidivism (e.g., delaying the onset of rearrest) and support of dependent children.

2. Readiness assessments do not examine the capacity of a given site to participate in model *testing* but rather their capacity for participating in data collection efforts. Factors may include staff availability, infrastructure, longevity of service, or other considerations.
3. Faith Connections' assistance funds come directly from churches and individuals in the community, which are used to meet the assistance needs. The only other funding that is necessary is the salary for the Faith Connections' Program Coordinator, who is a DSS employee. That salary is partially funded by the county and partially by TANF. The funds that come from the churches are deposited into a DSS donation fund account and checks are drawn on this account through the DSS fiscal department. The Faith Connections' Program Coordinator is responsible for balancing this account.
4. TANF funds in this grant (Strengthening Ohio Families Initiative) are specified for nonreligious salaries: case management (LSW), volunteer coordination, project management, and one third occupancy costs.
5. Ohio has opted out of the federal ban on providing TANF-funded services to drug felons.
6. Five organizations have used the Rachel's House program model to start similar housing programs for ex-offenders, including the Ohio Department of Rehabilitations and Corrections, Sarah's Place, House of Bethel, Divine Mercy House, and Lydia's House.
7. Colorado is a state-supervised and county-administered system under TANF. In order for partnerships—such as that of El Paso County DHS and Faith Partners to work well—policy makers, community leaders, and other bodies of leadership must encourage and support them.
8. YouthBuild is a youth and community development program that simultaneously addresses key issues facing low-income communities, such as housing, education, employment, crime prevention, and leadership development.
9. Monthly program design meetings are typically data-driven meetings. Seedco prepares and distributes a management report that details the performance of the network as a whole as well as the performance of individual FBCOs in meeting placement and retention milestones. The report and the data are a jumping-off point for a more qualitative discussion, with high-performing FBCOs sharing their strategies and practices, and other FBCOs discussing challenges and brainstorming with the group to develop course corrections.
10. This structure also provides economies of scale with respect to training delivered by the intermediary. Seedco can provide training and technical assistance to the network at large because each partner is executing the same programmatic activities. By bringing the network partners together, FBCOs can learn from each other by directly comparing experiences and sharing challenges and successes.

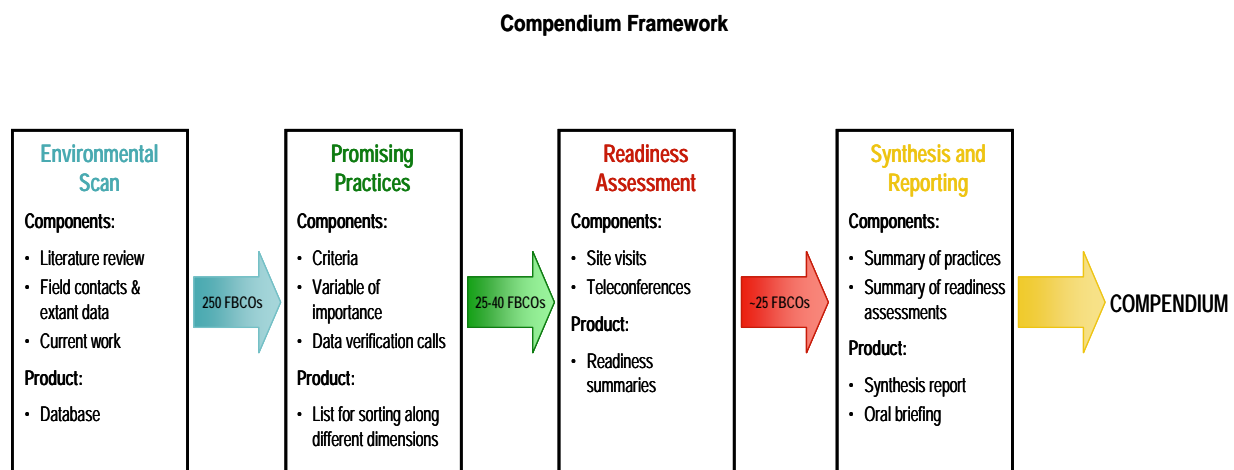
11. For the most recently completed TANF welfare-to-work contracts for New York City (which ended in 2006), Seedco ranked first in the city for both its clients' low welfare recidivism rates and their average wages.

APPENDIX A

The TANF Faith-based and Community Organization Initiative includes four discrete research tasks:

- **Develop a Research Compendium:** This task aims to understand the state of the field in terms of TANF-FBCO collaboration, document promising practices for FBCOs and intermediary/cooperative entities, and inform the selection of promising practices for inclusion in the study.
- **Design a Model Program Pilot:** The pilot task will develop a workable strategy for faith-based/employment partnerships, provide guidance for bridging the gap between TANF programs and FBCOs so that they may partner successfully, and isolate the elements of successful partnerships that may be replicated in other sites.
- **Provide Site Technical Assistance:** This task will provide technical assistance to selected jurisdictions on program model implementation and general operations, test the model elements, and assess the fidelity with which jurisdictions are operating the model.
- **Develop a Toolkit:** The capstone product of this research effort, the toolkit will highlight replication guidance and advance the field with respect to TANF-FBCO partnerships. The toolkit is intended to facilitate the dissemination of project findings to a broad audience, provide replication advice, and provide usable tools to the field.

Figure A-1 Compendium Framework



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