

“One of the most important initiatives is the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, because I recognize that government can hand out money, but what it cannot do is put hope in people’s hearts or a sense of purpose in people’s lives. What I want to do is unleash the great compassion of America, by changing America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.”

President George W. Bush

GUIDANCE TO FAITH-BASED AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS ON PARTNERING WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- ◆ The guiding principle behind President Bush’s Faith-Based and Community Initiative is that faith-based charities should be able to compete on an equal footing for public dollars to provide public services.
- ◆ President Bush believes that the federal government, within the framework of Constitutional church-state guidelines, should encourage faith-based charities to reach out with compassion to help even more people.
- ◆ There are thousands of faith-based organizations that receive federal funds. Some of these organizations receive money directly from the federal government. Others get it through a state, city, or local government that itself receives federal funds. Still others receive money through large, non-profit organizations that the federal government funds.

“When private citizens work to address a need in their community, they tend to do so with greater flexibility, creativity, and enthusiasm than a government agency would if it approached the same problem.

Because individuals know their own communities’ needs and circumstances better than the federal government, private initiatives very often have greater success than top-down government approaches.”

-Congressman Paul Ryan

WHITE HOUSE OFFICE AND THE AGENCY CENTERS FOR FAITH-BASED AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

As one of the first acts of his Presidency, President Bush established the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. He also created Centers for the Initiative in seven federal agencies: the Departments of Justice, Agriculture, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Education, and the Agency for International Development. The White House Office and Agency Centers are charged with ensuring that local faith-based and community groups have a fair chance to compete for federal dollars without facing barriers.

The White House and Agency Centers help in other ways. They connect faith-based and community groups to each other, identify new resources, and improve their capacity to assist each other.

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WHITE HOUSE FAITH-BASED AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES



UNDERSTANDING THE FAITH-BASED & COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

FEDERAL FUNDS FOR ORGANIZATIONS THAT HELP THOSE IN NEED

If you are in the business of caring for people in need, you need money to do your job. Chances are that if you had a little more money, you'd be able to help more people and do your work better. That's where federal grants come into play. If you run an organization to help those in need, you may be eligible to receive federal money through grant programs.

RESOURCES FOR GRASSROOTS GROUPS SEEKING FEDERAL FUNDS

Internet Resources-The White House has put together a list of more than 100 federal programs that your organization may be interested in. You can use this list, which is available at www.fbc.gov, as a starting point for learning more about specific programs. The Agency Centers' web sites contain more information about specific initiatives and programs operated by their Department.

Legal Guidance-The White House Office web site also offers some guidelines on the legal requirements that can come along with federal funding. These "do's" and "don'ts" answer some of the questions that faith-based and community groups most frequently ask.

Compassion Capital Fund-Assistance may also be available from one of the nearly two dozen organizations funded by the Department of Health and Human Services' Compassion Capital Fund. These organizations help small faith-based and community organizations learn about the federal grants process. You can learn more about the Compassion Capital Fund and the organizations it funds at: www.hhs.gov/fbc.

UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT TYPES OF FUNDS

The federal government uses two kinds of grants: Formula and Discretionary Grants.

Formula-These grants (also known as block grants) are distributed to states and localities to distribute to charities and other social service providers, usually under their own rules and regulations. The majority of federal grants are awarded through formula grants.

Discretionary-Awarded directly to the applicant by an agency of the federal government. These types of grants are extremely competitive. An example of this type of grant is a homeless assistance grant given out by the Department of Health and Human Services to a homeless shelter.

An Important Point: Much more money is available from programs administered by states and localities than from the federal government.

IS A GOVERNMENT GRANT RIGHT FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Can you separate religious and non-religious components of your program

OR

Are your services so closely mixed with your ministry that you cannot separate the two?

TIP: Don't Preach on Uncle Sam's Dollar (no religious workshops, prayer, instruction)

BUT

You can continue these activities with private funds

TIPS FOR KEEPING RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES SEPARATE

- ◆ **Content-**Keep focused on program topic in order to avoid the perception of an inherently religious activity. Questions or comments about faith should be discussed at a later time.
- ◆ **Time and Location-**Hold religious activities at a different time and location than the government-funded service. For example, a bible class can be held in the same building as a government-funded program, but it must be located in a different room.
- ◆ **Careful Accounting-**Make sure that you track and account for your use of all government funds that you receive and spend.
- ◆ **Don't require program participants to attend or take part in any religious activities in order to receive program services.** Participation by recipients must be voluntary.

KEEPING THE "FAITH" IN FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

A faith-based organization does not need to change its identity in order to qualify for a federal grant, nor does it need to remove religious art, icons, scripture, or other religious symbols from its property or its publications. Please note that all of these must have been purchased with private funds. The following items do not have to be changed:

- Board members
- Mission statement
- Religious names and chartering documents
- Privately-funded religious activities