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Governor's Faith-Based & Community Advisory Board

Strengthening Florida's Families through Faith & Community Partnerships

Initial Report & Recommendations

**Per
Executive Order No: 04-245**

A Program of the Volunteer Florida Foundation

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Governor's Faith-Based & Community Advisory Board
Strengthening Florida's Families through Faith & Community Partnerships

February 28, 2005

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John Fogg
Bill Gay
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Yvonne Sawyer
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Kenneth Scrubbs
Harold Vieux
Arto Woodley

Board Staff

Liza McFadden
President
Volunteer Florida Foundation

Mark Nelson
Coordinator

Mailing Address:
401 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Dear Governor Bush:

As staff to the Governor's Faith-Based and Community Advisory Board, per Executive Order Number 04-245, I am pleased to submit the required annual report, on behalf of Chairman John Brabson.

Per requirements of the Executive Order, this report reviews activities of the board and makes specific recommendations. If you have any questions, please contact Governor's Faith-Based and Community Advisory Board Chairman, Mr. John Brabson, at (813) 390-5511 or via email jbrabson@everestptnrs.com.

We are pleased have this opportunity to work in support of the Governor's Faith-Based and Community Advisory Board.

Sincerely,

Liza McFadden

Cc: John Brabson
Barney Bishop

Board Chair

John Brabson

Board Staff

Liza McFadden
President
*Volunteer Florida
Foundation*

Mark Nelson
Coordinator
*Governor's Faith-
Based & Community
Initiative*



Governor's Faith-Based & Community Advisory Board

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**Initial Report & Recommendations
Per Executive Order No: 04-245**

We, members of the Governor's newly appointed Faith-Based and Community Advisory Board, submit the following initial report. It reflects our recommendations for this voluntary board's scope of work in the coming year and respectfully outlines activities that you could assist with in helping us reach our mutual goals of working in concert with government to more effectively serve Floridians in need.

Fourteen members of this new board also served in a voluntary capacity for the Governor's Faith-Based and Communities Initiative prior to the November signing of your Executive Order to form this new Advisory Board. Since May 2002, the Initiative worked to strengthen the ability of faith-based and community organizations to work in concert with government in providing Floridians with needed social services. It is on this foundation of work that we present you with recommendations for ongoing and substantive work in the coming year, in cooperation with nonprofit Volunteer Florida Foundation, which will provide administrative support to this board.

Recommendations

1. **Statute** — Because faith-based and community organizations provide effective and cost-efficient services to Floridians in need, this board recommends we work in concert with the State Legislature to build this advisory board and its services into state law, to clearly and effectively establish the framework for its partnership with the State of Florida in perpetuity. We ask for your leadership in this endeavor.
2. **Education** — Recognizing that many faith-based and community service providers need assistance in strengthening their organizations' fiscal and management structures to become competitive in the grant process, we recommend ongoing education seminars as conducted by state agencies in coordination with board leadership. We believe training and education is the best way to meet your goal and we "encourage the good works of faith-based and community organizations and give them the fullest opportunity permitted by law to compete for state funding". Details of the 2002-2004 work follow in this report.
3. **Working with State Agencies** — A key part of your stated goals to this board is to identify improper state barriers to faith-based and community service programs' participation in providing social services. In response we recommend that state government adopt polices to develop practices to track key indicators related to faith-based and community efforts including: number of faith and community groups funded by state agencies, best practices, funding amounts, and key outcome data. Additionally, policies that define issues related to the separation of church and state should be addresses in state grants.

We also believe that intermediaries – central organizations that can receive government grants and serve as fiscal and administrative agents to smaller sub-grantees – provide an effective mechanism for assisting smaller faith-based and community organizations in providing important social services for Floridians. We respectfully ask your assistance in helping to establish intermediaries as eligible grant recipients for government grants in the State of Florida. Further discussion of intermediaries and examples of work in action follow in this report.

4. **Partnerships with Local Government** — We recommend that we work in concert to strengthen our partnerships with local governments, as well as the State, and ask that you assist us in this endeavor by writing to municipal leaders to encourage them to begin meaningful dialogue and exploration about establishing effective partnerships with faith-based and community organizations in their service areas.

Faith-Based and Community Organizations – Background in Florida

The work of faith-based and community organizations in providing crucial social services to Floridians is a time-honored tradition. From adoption services to nursing home care and from domestic violence counseling to aid for the homeless, faith and community-based groups have long been involved with state agencies to provide quality services to Floridians.

These organizations' roles took an important step toward the future in May 2002, during the National Day of Prayer ceremonies in Tallahassee, when you created the Governor's Faith-Based and Community Initiative to explore how these community and faith-based organizations could more effectively work with government organizations, in increasing our collective strength in providing needed services to Floridians. Specifically, this Initiative was tasked with:

- Working to encourage the good works of faith-based and community organizations and giving them the fullest opportunity permitted by law to compete for state funding;
- Identifying improper state barriers to faith-based and community service programs' participation in providing social services;
- Identifying ways to encourage greater corporate and philanthropic support for faith-based and community organizations through public education and outreach activities.

We would like to acknowledge key persons who have assisted the Governor's Faith-Based and Community Initiative with its early research. At its inception, the Initiative conferred with Jim Towey, who is an Assistant to the President and serves as the Director of the nation's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, as well as with representatives of the federal offices of faith-based and community initiatives to review federal guidelines and procedures and to determine best practices being used in the federal government to assist faith-based and community providers to have equal access to federal funding.

Mr. Towey has also attended three of the four statewide conferences held in the past years to meet with our board, and to provide leadership and guidance on policy and programmatic issues. We realize that a great deal of the drive for this effort came from the recommendation of Florida's Strengthening Families Transition Team. Much of the work of this effort has been tied around how the involvement of faith-based and community groups can assist the state in strengthening Florida families.

Faith-Based and Communities Initiative – 2002/04 Activities

One of the first activities of this new Initiative was to build a strong network of faith-based organizations, community groups, foundations and state leaders. The Initiative relied on the assistance of the nonprofit Volunteer Florida Foundation, which served as an administrative support group to this Initiative's board. A network of individuals and organizations provided the initial outreach leadership to reach organizations across Florida with much needed resources to aid in their service to Florida's needy.

As this group looked at ways to identify improper state barriers to faith-based and community service programs' participation in providing social services and to encourage greater support for faith-based and community organizations through public education and outreach activities, it became apparent that the greatest need was for education and training. In September 2002, when the Initiative hosted the first Governor's Faith-Based and Community Conference, over 500 persons responded to attend with little more than three weeks notice. The advisory group determined that in many instances, it was not "improper state barriers" as much as a lack of education by both state agencies and faith-based and community providers on how to work cooperatively.

Since that time two important efforts have occurred. First, most state agencies have subsequently identified a lead person to assist faith-based and community providers, and second, that the Initiative made educational outreach the highest priority. The Initiative, Volunteer Florida Foundation and participating state agency representatives conducted 36 regional and four statewide trainings, free to participants. These education seminars were specific to capacity-building and grant writing.

We were honored that you attended each of the four statewide trainings:

- September 3-4, 2002 – 1st Annual Faith-Based & Community Conference
Orlando, Florida
- October 3, 2003 – 2nd Annual Faith-Based & Community Conference
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
- December 5, 2003 – White House Regional Conference
Tampa, Florida
- April 15, 2004 – North Florida Faith-Based & Community Conference
Tallahassee, Florida

Establishment of Subcommittees, 2003

In December 2003, with solid education and communication work achieved, the Initiative identified four specific areas to further its goals, and appointed voluntary leaders to chair four subcommittees. The subcommittees, and their activities in 2004, are:

A. Education & Training

The Education & Training subcommittee, chaired by Yvonne Sawyer of the Family and Children Faith Coalition, was created to discuss the need for outreach efforts around the state. The committee looked at the differing needs in various areas of Florida to develop region-specific trainings. Trainings varied from program/service specific, where a specific state agency representative volunteered to train participants on applying for grants directly relating to his/her state agency, to a grant-writing session, where the Initiative provided a blank Request For Proposal and instructed participants on writing a solid government grant application.

The subcommittee, in collaboration with our state agencies, has suggested this advisory board continue this work by preparing a database of government and non-government RFP descriptions and release dates, so organizations can prepare well in advance when preparing a proposal for a grant. This database could be located on the Volunteer Florida Foundation's website (<http://www.volunteerfloridafoundation.org/>).

Our new Advisory Board plans continuation of this work.

B. Intermediary Identification & Evaluation

Recognizing that many grassroots community and faith-based organizations do not have the administrative infrastructure to effectively compete for grants, the Initiative's Intermediary Identification and Evaluation subcommittee formed to seek effective means to help these organizations. It was co-chaired by Randy Nelson, 21st Century, and David Odahowski, Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation. The subcommittee agreed upon a general definition of an intermediary, and gained board approval. That definition is:

An Intermediary (Lead Partner) is a faith-based or community based organization that helps government offer successful programs and social services to diverse socio-economic and disadvantaged populations including the disabled. It is familiar with both private resources and public programs. Therefore, it can empower faith-based and community-based organizations to serve their communities and, when appropriate, develop synergistic alliances with the responsibility to provide technical and/or fiscal assistance.

From this definition, the subcommittee has been working on identifying a strong network of intermediaries that will be able to address local fiscal and non-fiscal relationships with surrounding grassroots organizations. In doing so, the subcommittee looked at the important work of intermediaries in Florida, such as FreshMinistries in Jacksonville, which serves as a central funder for U.S. Dept. of Labor funding and funding from the City of Jacksonville.

FreshMinistries has built a network of partner organization that is strengthened through the association. By incubating new nonprofit groups and by partnering with existing organizations, FreshMinistries, through its sub-grants and fiscal/administration lead have helped:

- First Baptist Church of Oakland's youth program, which provides the tutors and supervision for 40-plus inner-city youth;
- Create a landmark agreement with Jacksonville's African-American leaders to cooperate on redevelopment plans in a historically African-American neighborhood;
- Jacksonville's economic empowerment zone, providing grants for business owners operating in this economically stressed zone;
- Operation New Hope in its startup phase of launching a job training/housing restoration program;
- 22 nonprofit organizations, to offer Individual Development Accounts to their low-income clients;
- First Timothy Baptist Church to sponsor home ownership and business ownership workshops in the core city;
- Purchase 100 homes and home sites in a blighted area, with the land-banked sites being released to partners such as Habitat for Humanity, Oakland Baptist Church CDC and Operation New Hope for housing restoration and construction.

The intermediary network this Initiative's subcommittee has been working to establish would assist the small organizations willing and able to provide the social service, but incapable of handling the accountability. The Intermediary (Lead Partner) could help community organizations get involved in a variety of ways, including:

- Serve as fiscal/administrative/reporting agent for grants awarded by government or philanthropic entities
- Assist in identifying community needs
- Develop organizational mission and strategy
- Increase capacity to provide services
- Provide technical assistance and training
- Promote partnerships with other service providers
- Recommend best practices

As stated in our recommendations, we respectfully ask your assistance in helping to establish intermediaries as eligible grant recipients for government grants in the State of Florida.

Additionally, it is recommended that state government work to develop practices to track how many faith-based and community groups are funded by agency in order to track best practice, overall funding amounts, and key outcome data.

Our new Advisory Board plans to continue this subcommittee's work. Emphasis of this committee will move to accountability and evaluation as we move from an early emphasis on education and outreach to one of program and accountability.

C. Municipal & Corporate Partnerships

The Municipal & Corporate Partnerships subcommittee was created and was chaired by Arto Woodley, President, Frontline Outreach, to look at the future of partnerships both with municipalities and corporations. This subcommittee will review the leadership set by the city of Miami and Jacksonville. Both cities have launched cooperative programs that are working to decrease crime, increase employment opportunities and improve the lives of the most distressed citizens by working cooperatively with a number of faith-based and community organizations.

Municipalities can be a great asset to grassroots organizations. By providing technical assistance, they can empower these organizations to support already established initiatives. These initiatives, with the assistance of these groups, can aid in the transformation of communities affected by crime, poverty, and lack of educational resources.

The Initiative also looked closely at the effective work being conducted between the City of Miami and faith-based and community groups working there, as well as the work between the City of Jacksonville and its faith-based and community organizations. As stated in our recommendations to you, we respectfully ask that you assist us in opening dialogue in cities across Florida by writing to the mayors of Florida's cities and requesting such activities.

The subcommittee also has been looking at the possibility of corporate collaborations. Corporations have the ability to provide both a fiscal, as well as a non-fiscal relationship. Non-fiscally, corporations can provide a strong mentor relationship that can assist small organizations with the ability to run their organization like a business with strong accounting principles. A survey to corporations to gauge interest in working with faith-based and community organizations has been developed and has been slated for deployment in 2005.

Our new Advisory Board plans to continue this subcommittee's work

D. State Programs: Best Practices

The Best Practices subcommittee, chaired by Bill Gay, Vice President, W.W. Gay Mechanical Contractors, and Linda King, statewide advocate, focused on identifying best practice models (faith-based & community with state/federal government) in the nation to give guidance to Florida's effort. The work of this committee resulted in the recommendation that creating a strong infrastructure for this effort meant that our vision, and focus of work, should be written into statute.

Our new Advisory Board plans to continue this subcommittee's work. In 2005, the work of this committee will continue to focus on supporting legislation that will strengthen this effort in Florida. Additionally the committee will work to identify best practices by faith and community partners.