

# ASPE RESEARCH BRIEF

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PLANNING AND EVALUATION

OFFICE OF HUMAN SERVICES POLICY - U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

## The Role of State Faith Community Liaisons in Charitable Choice Implementation: Practice Models from the States

*Faith community liaisons—official contacts at the state or local level between government and faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs)—have been established in at least 36 states and in many localities as of 2008. Their work typically entails facilitating partnerships with and within the FBCO community, encouraging the organizational capacity of FBCOs, and educating both faith-based organizations and public agencies about the opportunities and requirements of the federal Charitable Choice and “equal treatment” provisions that sought to “level the playing field” for religious organizations collaborating with government. This brief discusses the characteristics of FCL functions in eight case study sites, and highlights model practices these FCLs undertook to further the goals of Charitable Choice and the federal and state faith-based and community initiatives more broadly.*

The past decade has seen the development of “faith-based and community initiatives” at the federal and state levels, initially spurred by the enactment of the Charitable Choice provisions of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), but also encouraged by interest in the work of social services grassroots and nonprofit organizations of many types. Faith community liaisons (FCLs) have played an important role in helping to encourage these initiatives and implement Charitable Choice provisions. These FCLs are individuals (often supported by staff) working within a range of government agencies and nonprofit organizations to support relationships between the public sector and faith-based and community organizations.

### ABOUT THIS BRIEF

*This brief explores the structures, resources, and practices of state-level Faith Community Liaisons (FCLs) working to further the implementation of Charitable Choice and the faith-based and community initiative in their states. It summarizes the findings from the full report, “The Role of State Faith Community Liaisons in Charitable Choice Implementation,” available on ASPE’s website: <http://aspe.hhs.gov>.*

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This brief summarizes what was learned from an in-depth study of the role of FCLs in eight sites: Alabama, the District of Columbia, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New Mexico, Texas, and Virginia. It examines the structure and resources of the FCL function, describes a range of approaches across the states, and highlights promising models. It discusses FCLs' practices for (1) encouraging partnerships with and among faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs), (2) facilitating FBCO capacity building, and (3) educating faith-based organizations (FBOs) and public agencies about the opportunities and requirements of Charitable Choice law. Finally, it highlights several additional models that address pressing social issues such as disaster preparedness and prisoner reentry.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

PRWORA's Charitable Choice provisions were developed to "level the playing field" for FBOs as they compete with other service providers for funding from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. The main provisions of Charitable Choice were subsequently expanded to additional federal programs through legislation and executive orders, including a 2002 executive order (13279) that extended "equal treatment" principles to all federally funded social services to the extent allowed by law. In 2003, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued regulations addressing the application of Charitable Choice to several of its programs. The statutes, executive orders, and regulations stipulated that FBOs funded by most federal programs are not required to remove religious art or symbols and may retain religious standards for organizational governance and hiring (unless prohibited by program statute). Those receiving direct government funding may not use these funds for "inherently religious activities," such as religious instruction, worship, or proselytizing—nor may they discriminate against clients based on their religion or require their participation in religious activities. Under Charitable Choice law, the responsible public funding agency is also required to ensure that clients objecting to the religious nature of the provider are offered an alternative provider to which they do not object on religious grounds. These provisions have opened up eligibility for public grant or contracting partnerships to some religious organizations that, prior to Charitable Choice, would have been ineligible. Over time, court cases and evolving federal policy guidance have further shaped the legal environment in which FCLs operate and in which the faith-based and community initiatives have developed. FCLs have also been working to implement Charitable Choice within differing state circumstances and resources.

## **FCL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES AND RESOURCES**

*The FCL study identified three basic models of organizational structure among the eight sites—each with its own potential strengths and limitations.*

In the **governor-centered model**, an FCL office or an individual liaison is located within the governor's office. This model has the obvious advantage of the support and authority of an influential politician, facilitating access to state agencies and possibly to FBCOs, as well as to resources for the FCL function. As one respondent noted, "People pay attention when the governor's office comes to call." But this model also presents the inevitable challenge of political transition. One FCL and her staff operating within a governor-centered office observed that they needed to plan explicitly for the transition from one governor to another, knowing that their agendas may vary. Term limits made the FCL and her office's partners very conscious of the "window of opportunity" they had for implementing the initiative and planning for sustainability.

In the **embedded model**, the FCL is located within one state agency but has significant jurisdiction across agencies. The potential advantages include knowledge about and access to other state and/or local agencies, a relatively secure resource base, a level of perceived political neutrality, and sustainability over time. A potential drawback of the embedded model may be a relative lack of authority in relation to other state agencies. It appears, however, that the function can be effectively situated within the bureaucracy when it is led by a dynamic, committed, and mission-driven individual who has the experience and skill to use bureaucratic channels and relationships to good effect. In this model, the FCL and staff effectively “hunker down” within the agency to do the work in a relatively low-profile fashion. “Bringing money to the table” for partnerships with other state agencies can also help gain their cooperation, according to one embedded FCL. These liaisons may be somewhat buffered from the political volatility that can affect their sustainability. While they may not be in as strong a position to benefit from an influential political champion as those in the governor-centered model, some embedded FCLs have turned to their advisory boards for such support. This model appears to rely heavily on the strengths of the individual liaison and the relationships he or she has cultivated with agencies, FBCOs, and supporters. However, there may be limited institutional support, potentially leaving the function vulnerable if the incumbent FCL leaves.

#### **Practice Model 1. Activating the Advisory Commission for Sustainability**

The Executive Order signed in 2002 by New Jersey’s then-Governor James McGreevey situated the Office of Faith-Based Initiatives (OFBI) within the Department of State and at the same time established a 23-member Advisory Commission on Faith-Based Initiatives, with the OFBI acting as staff to the commission. The diverse make-up of the commission and its members’ relationships to important constituencies around the state have provided the OFBI with access to the governor, legislators, state agencies, and other potential supporters. The commission’s members include eight non-voting state agency heads; 15 voting members representing houses of worship, business, higher education, and other nongovernmental organizations, appointed by the governor; and a chair, also appointed by the governor. The formal roles of the commission are to advise the FCL on policy, to advocate for the OFBI on budget and other matters, and to review the OFBI’s recommendations for grant awards for its requests for proposals. The commission’s advocacy role has become particularly important in recent years since the departure of the previous secretary of state, who had been highly involved in the OFBI. Over time, the FCL has come to rely increasingly on the commission and its chair for advice and advocacy, as well as for their formal roles.

Finally, in the **nonprofit model**, FCLs and their staff are located in nonprofit entities or foundations. Potential advantages of this model are flexibility, relatively quick decision making, the ability to raise private funds, and a sense of shared identity with others in the nonprofit sector. Like the embedded model, the nonprofit model may also shield the FCL somewhat from the unpredictability associated with political transition. At the same time, though, nonprofit entities may lack direct access to state or local agencies, and their status may make it more difficult to reach important political players. In the two study sites with this structure, however, governors have been strong advocates, and support may also be found in influential boards that can facilitate political access and private fundraising. Logistical challenges, such as the need to use formal contracts when partnering with state agencies rather than more informal means such as memoranda of understanding, can also arise with this structure.

In some cases, a state began with one structure and evolved to another. In others, the structure has remained generally unchanged. The different models offer trade-offs in resources, authority, perceived political neutrality, and sustainability, but they seem to have been used effectively within the study sites' particular contexts.

### **Practice Model 2. Sustainability Through Organizational Independence**

The faith-based and community initiative in Florida is housed in the private, nonprofit Volunteer Florida Foundation (VFF). Florida's constitution has strict language limiting state funding of FBOs, and VFF's 501(c)(3) status allows the organization to raise private funds, which may be directed toward the activities of sectarian organizations. At the same time, as a quasi-independent nonprofit, the foundation can remain somewhat outside of the political sphere. Nevertheless, VFF was established to provide direct support to the Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service, and having close ties to the governor's office "sends a message," in the words of one respondent, that the foundation's initiatives have important political support. Because VFF is generally responsive to the governor's office, however, the various initiatives under the foundation's purview have been intentionally "siloe'd" to allow the organization the flexibility to direct resources toward successive governors' differing agendas. In describing this structure, the VFF president used a metaphor of a train, with each governor adding some boxcars and removing others while the whole train continued to move along. Texas has pursued a somewhat similar approach in gaining organizational independence through establishment of the OneStar Foundation, although OneStar has largely integrated rather than "siloe'd" its program areas.

### ***Sufficient funding and staff resources are essential in all structural models.***

Financial resources and staff are, not surprisingly, vital in each FCL model. Some respondents noted the advantages of dedicated funding for the function—though preserving it seemed to require ongoing advocacy by the liaison or supporters of the office. In some states, financing from multiple sources supported the function, though this could be more challenging for FCLs to manage. Several liaisons suggested that having resources to make grants specifically related to the faith-based and community initiative allowed them to develop funded partnerships and provide financial or other assistance to FBCOs. One of the study sites (Florida) had a Compassion Capital Fund (CCF) demonstration grant at the time of the study and two (New Jersey and Texas) had state funds or access to federal funds through partnering state agencies to help advance the broad goals of the faith-based and community initiative. Others, however, indicated that they saw their role more strictly as partnership facilitator rather than direct funder. Adequate staff support was also identified as important. In four study sites, staff was dedicated to the FCL function, while in other sites, staff juggled this work with other duties. Two sites intentionally integrated the FCL function with other related work, such as AmeriCorps/state service commissions, volunteerism, and disaster response. The estimated number of full-time staff positions dedicated to the FCL function across the sites ranged from one to about nine.

The liaisons came to the FCL job from a range of backgrounds, including work in state agencies such as human services and volunteerism, FCL offices, FBCOs (including one pastor and an FCL who had specialized in capacity building at a community organization), and business. All the liaisons indicated that their backgrounds helped prepare them for their FCL role. Other key characteristics and skills of staff that respondents highlighted were (1) knowledge of the FBCO community and its needs, especially related to capacity building; (2) a deep understanding of bureaucracy, including how to build and maintain relationships with public agency staff; and (3) an understanding of policy and law related to both

government programs and Charitable Choice and equal treatment. They also stressed: the ability to take what one respondent called a “circuit rider” approach, in which the FCL or his or her staff spend much of their time out in the field working closely with FBCOs and public agencies around the state; a high level of empathy for FBCOs’ mission and circumstances; and the ability to “translate” the language and culture of government to FBCOs and of FBCOs to government.

***The legal authority to perform essential elements of the function—through statute or executive order—was viewed as important.***

Having the FCL function codified in statute was seen by several respondents as particularly helpful, especially for sustaining liaison efforts. Executive orders, however, could also provide considerable authority, and some were quite specific in authorizing the FCL to implement Charitable Choice provisions or encouraging or requiring agencies to cooperate. Three study sites’ FCL functions were organizationally linked by executive order with the states’ AmeriCorps/service commissions, which appeared to provide some advantages in terms of resources and a shared sense of mission.

In some sites, state constitutional amendments placed legal limits on the use of state funds for sectarian organizations. While these so-called “Blaine Amendments” were often limited to prohibitions on funding for education or facilities and appeared not to affect the FCLs’ work, in at least one state (Florida), the amendment precluded funds from state sources from being used for partnerships with sectarian FBOs. Two liaisons noted the usefulness of having guidance from state legal officials, such as the state supreme court or attorney general, of the constitutional parameters around funded partnerships between public agencies and FBOs.

## **FCL PRACTICES**

The work of the FCLs participating in the study entailed three major elements: (1) development of partnerships with and within the FBCO sector; (2) development of the capacity of FBCOs; and (3) education of FBOs and public agencies about Charitable Choice regulations and equal treatment principles.

***The FCLs in the study worked to facilitate partnerships of many types.***

A major emphasis of Charitable Choice was the facilitation of public partnerships with FBOs, and the faith-based and community initiative as it evolved appeared to expand this emphasis to include partnerships with grassroots organizations of many types, including secular community-based organizations. The FCLs in the eight states focused on a wide range of collaborations and activities involving both faith-based and community-based organizations. Some partnerships consisted of funded contracts or grants with state or local agencies using state or federal funds, and some were unfunded partnerships or collaborations between public agencies and FBCOs. Some liaisons had the resources and capacity to make grants to FBCOs. Many FCLs also saw an important role for themselves in facilitating partnerships within the FBCO sector and between FBCOs and other private organizations, such as foundations or businesses. One site (Virginia) had developed an online directory to allow public organizations and FBCOs to identify similar areas of focus, with the goal of encouraging collaboration. This “linking” function was also an important goal of several FCL-sponsored, capacity-building programs that sought to help participants share ideas and resources and establish lasting relationships. Several liaisons stressed the importance of their role as a neutral “convener” who could bring together a range of organizations with varying assets to help solve important social problems. Most liaisons said they made a particular effort to reach out to faith-based organizations to let them know about partnering opportunities

of different types. A major task for the FCLs was providing regular information to the FBCO community about grants, contracts, and other partnering opportunities with public or private organizations by means of email newsletters or alerts, websites and listservs, hard copy mailings and publications, meetings, and conferences.

### **Practice Model 3. Facilitating Access to Federal Funds**

Organized by the New Mexico FCL and held in March 2007, Governor Bill Richardson's Conference for Faith-Based and Community Organizations focused on improving FBCOs' access to federal discretionary grants. The director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives gave the keynote speech, and representatives from five major federal agencies (the departments of Education, Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Agriculture, and Labor) offered sessions on funding opportunities with their agencies. The FCL publicized the event using her database of nonprofit contacts and about 350 people attended, with 200 more on the waiting list. The conference was viewed by the FCL and other respondents as highly successful. In particular, in the grant cycle following the conference, New Mexico saw a sharp increase—from \$8.2 to \$28.6 million—in federal discretionary grants coming into the state—though it is not clear exactly how much of this can be attributed to the event.

*Capacity building of FBCOs was viewed as a key need, and FCLs devoted considerable resources to it.*

All the FCLs considered building the organizational capacity of FBCOs to be essential. Many saw it as a necessary first step for the small FBOs that were a major focus of Charitable Choice, as well as other small FBCOs that may lack staff or other resources. The liaisons invested considerable energy in further developing FBCOs' capacity to undertake activities such as establishing effective boards and governance structures, hiring and managing good staff, raising sufficient and diversified funding to support operations, tracking finances and services accurately, and planning for sustainability. Improved capacity was seen as central to FBCOs' ability to address social problems more successfully and to partner effectively and responsibly with government or other private organizations.

Liaisons undertook a range of approaches—some comprehensive and relatively costly and others more modest. Several sponsored expansive, multiphase programs that included training, technical assistance (TA), and small grants. All offered individual workshops and/or one-on-one TA. Several worked with intermediary partners to help small FBCOs cultivate their organizational capacity.

#### **Practice Model 4. Three Comprehensive Programs to Build Sector Capacity**

The New Jersey Office of Faith-Based Initiatives uses dedicated state funding for three types of grant making to build the organizational capacity of small FBCOs. Organizational Infrastructure Development grants are awarded to emerging organizations, accompanied by TA and other assistance. Direct Service grants are awarded to FBCOs collaborating with other organizations in service delivery focused on five programmatic areas: youth, homeless, seniors, English language, and substance abuse treatment and prevention. Intermediary Grants are awarded each year to selected organizations to help FBCOs throughout the state develop their capacity; in 2008, five grants were awarded to both faith-based and secular intermediaries.

The 2006-2007 Texas Demonstration Project (TDP) entailed broad outreach and focused capacity building, accompanied by small grants for emerging FBCOs in four urban counties. Developed by partners including the OneStar Foundation and the Cornerstone Assistance Network (a faith-based intermediary) and funded by a Compassion Capital Fund demonstration grant awarded to OneStar, the TDP used a three-phase model. First, FBCOs were offered six broad capacity-building symposia, followed by focused workshops, in each county. The events were open to all and addressed topics including organizational development, leadership, collaboration, funding, and service delivery. Second, OneStar held a small grants competition for FBCO applicants that had participated in at least four of the six sessions offered in their county; 25 were awarded. Third, Cornerstone staff and consultants provided grantees with assessment, individualized TA, and consulting services, with a one-year follow-up retreat. Participants were asked to account for their grants, note additional money brought in, and identify best practices developed as a result of the program.

The District of Columbia's Strengthening Partners Initiative (SPI) is a one-year comprehensive training program for leaders of emerging FBCOs, funded through the Mayor's Office of Partnerships and Grants Services. SPI began in 2002 and serves about 20 FBCO leaders each year, who are selected through a competitive application process. For the first six months, the program offers biweekly capacity-building instruction on core topics such as fundraising, financial management, and board development. It also provides several months of individual coaching with professionals from local nonprofits, businesses, and government. At the end of the program, participants present a project demonstrating how they plan to use the tools gained from SPI to improve their organizations. Graduates are eligible for additional capacity-building mini-grants. The cohort structure of the program supports ongoing relationships and even the development of formal partnerships between participants.

More modest approaches to capacity building included facilitating the matching of FBCO executives with more experienced nonprofit executive mentors or coaches. Several FCLs also made capacity-building tools or publications available on their websites or in hard copy. In general, the liaisons and their staff and capacity-building partners reported working in similar ways with FBOs and CBOs, viewing their basic needs as more similar than different. But without basic organizational capacity, small FBOs, in particular, were viewed by some respondents as at risk of unintentionally crossing church-state lines and of failing to meet the financial or service requirements of government grants or contracts.

#### **Practice Model 5: Leveraging Resources**

With state budgets tight, FCLs in several sites took creative approaches to leverage resources on behalf of FBCOs in their community. When the New Mexico FCL organized the conference focused on FBCO access to federal discretionary funds, she enlisted the University of New Mexico and the United Way to provide space, catering, and registration services for the event—thereby reducing costs both for her office and for participant registration fees. New Mexico's other relatively low-cost capacity-building effort involved linking executives from small or new FBCOs with "mentors" from larger or more seasoned organizations. Texas also drew on "coaches" from other organizations to advise emerging FBCOs. In Illinois, the FCL and his colleagues in the Department of Human Services relied heavily on in-kind contributions of space, refreshments, printing, and other resources, from churches in particular. Such support allowed the liaison to host gatherings throughout the state without expending a large amount of his program's limited funds.

*Some FCLs placed a special emphasis on education of FBOs interested in partnering with government about the opportunities and responsibilities entailed in Charitable Choice.*

Although FCLs worked with both faith-based and community-based organizations, FBOs partnering with government were seen as having a special need to understand the opportunities and requirements entailed in Charitable Choice. About half of the FCLs explicitly emphasized educating FBOs about Charitable Choice rules at the time of the study. They used methods such as presentations at capacity-building workshops, individualized TA, and written materials such as handbooks or information packets. They also referred FBOs to federal or independent organizations' resources for more detailed information. FCLs said they also sometimes recommended that FBOs consult lawyers for their analysis of particular partnership plans or organizational circumstances that might take the organization into the "gray area" of church-state law.

#### **Practice Model 6. Integrating Charitable Choice into Capacity Building**

A quarterly capacity-building workshop offered by the Alabama Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (GFBCI) provides a useful method for reaching FBOs and teaching them about the essentials of Charitable Choice. The workshops, which last a half day, largely address organizational basics such as board development, management, and financial accountability. They also include discussion of the key elements of Charitable Choice and equal treatment principles. Materials packets presented at the workshops—and available from the GFBCI at other events and by request—emphasize the rights of FBOs and their responsibilities to protect applicants' and clients' religious freedom. Documents in these packets include "Charitable Choice 101—An Introduction" by the Center for Public Justice (CPJ); an "Overview of the HHS Equal Treatment Regulations," also from CPJ; and a "Brief Do's and Don'ts" handout focused on Charitable Choice and equal treatment requirements. The packets also include federal documents and guidance and a list of faith-based web resources. The workshops are free of charge and take place in Montgomery, the state capital, because it is centrally located.

Those sites that did not focus on Charitable Choice education appeared to lack the resources, mission, and/or legal or political authority to do so. Several sites that had launched their FCL functions shortly after PRWORA was enacted in 1996 suggested that an initial focus on Charitable Choice had already established at least some base of knowledge. Some liaisons also viewed the responsibility for Charitable Choice education as primarily resting with those public agencies involved in funding FBOs. No FCL offices systematically assessed FBOs' understanding of Charitable Choice, though some of those with grantmaking authority indicated that their own grantee monitoring could allow them to address problems with appropriate church-state boundaries or other government accountability requirements.



### **Practice Model 7. A Tool for Charitable Choice Implementation: The Virginia Technical Assistance Handbook**

A technical assistance handbook, *Community Connections: Strengthening Virginia Communities*, was developed by the current FCL in Virginia, with assistance from other contributors. It addresses organizational assessment and development and capacity building broadly for FBCOs. It also emphasizes the opportunities and requirements of Charitable Choice and equal treatment provisions and discusses potential funding sources and accountability requirements. The handbook provides detail about the faith-based and community initiative in Virginia; the statutes authorizing the initiative and FCL's work; questions for FBCOs to consider before contracting with public agencies (including special considerations for FBOs); a "Top Ten Tips for Ministries" and "Top Ten Tips for Public Officials" developed by the CPJ; and a list of internet resources. It is used as a basic guide at training, technical assistance, and outreach sessions with individual churches, FBOs, and CBOs, as well as at larger meetings and conferences, and was cited as a valuable and accessible tool for Charitable Choice education. It has been updated several times and plans are underway to make it available online.

*About a third of the FCLs in the study sites explicitly emphasized educating state or local agencies about Charitable Choice opportunities and requirements.*

Those sites currently emphasizing educating state or local agencies about Charitable Choice and equal treatment principles said they do so in various ways, including responding to agency requests for specific information; conducting presentations for agencies, either on their own initiative or at agency request; and bringing in outside speakers or experts. Some meet regularly with agency heads and staff and/or work to inform agency staff in the context of issue-focused partnerships or informal collaborations between the government and FBCOs.

### **Practice Model 8. Authority and Access to Support FCL Education of Agencies**

The director of the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (GFBCI) in Alabama appears to have unusual authority and resources to pursue the education of state agencies about Charitable Choice and to encourage their implementation of it. Four related factors contribute to this: (1) the language of the executive order establishing the state's faith-based and community initiative, (2) the FCL's regular access to social service agency heads, (3) the FCL's position within the governor's office, and (4) the governor's personal commitment to the initiative. The executive order establishing the GFBCI also established an interagency Advisory Board on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, whose membership includes the heads of eight major public agencies most likely to be covered by Charitable Choice and equal treatment principles. The FCL (the director of the GFBCI) is the chair of the interagency board and presides over its meetings. In addition, the liaison reports to the governor's chief of staff and attends two of the four regular meetings of the governor's cabinet, specifically those focused on human services and public safety, the two greatest areas of emphasis for Charitable Choice and the faith-based and community initiative in Alabama. Moreover, the executive order specifically references the Charitable Choice provisions of PRWORA and mandates the interagency board to "cause the provisions of this order to be implemented by all appropriate agencies of state government" and to "cooperate fully" with the GFBCI and the board in implementing the initiative.

Some FCLs and FBCOs viewed the legal ground underlying Charitable Choice and the related permissible practices as somewhat complex and unsettled. The potential for lawsuits or other legal action, evolving federal guidance, and the possibility of court decisions further shaping the parameters of permissible activity appeared to encourage a cautious approach on the part of some FCLs. Numerous respondents stressed that small FBOs with minimal resources may be vulnerable to unintentionally breaching church-state separation, and several FCLs emphasized that they did not want to steer FBOs wrong. Some stressed the need for FBOs to seek independent legal counsel and/or consult with federal or state funders if they are likely to tread into any uncertain areas of the law.

*Many FCLs focused on substantive issues of pressing importance to their states, complementing their goals of partnership development, capacity building, and Charitable Choice education.*

Issue-specific initiatives allowed FCLs—and collaborating FBCO and public and private partners—to address urgent social issues and, at the same time, provided them with additional opportunities to expand partnerships, facilitate capacity building, and develop a greater understanding of Charitable Choice in their states. The issues varied according to the sites’ geographic, political, economic, and social contexts, as well as available funding sources and other factors. For example, in the wake of hurricanes Ivan, Katrina, and Rita, the three Gulf Coast states in the study (Alabama, Florida, and Texas) initiated more coordinated public-FBCO partnerships focused on disaster preparedness and response, particularly the more effective management of volunteers and donations. Another FCL (District of Columbia) responded to a local public health crisis by taking on a capacity-building initiative for groups providing HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment services. Yet another liaison (New Mexico) worked with state agencies and a range of large and small nonprofit organizations to develop a “Plan to End Hunger” that brought together resources already available among state agencies, foundations, and the FBCO community.

#### **Practice Model 9: Collaborations to Address Pressing State Issues**

In Alabama, involvement of the state’s FBCO and volunteer communities in public emergency preparedness and response activities has been a key focus since the Governor’s Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives’ (GFBCI) founding. The office manages Alabama Department of Homeland Security (ADHS) grants to Alabama Civilian Corps Councils (CCC), which are part of a locally focused disaster preparation and relief program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The GFBCI also manages grants and training related to community emergency response and long-term recovery, runs its own VISTA disaster response and recovery team, and works with ADHS to develop and manage a range of “Be Ready Alabama” activities to help citizens prepare for disasters. Finally, when the governor declares an emergency, the GFBCI “flips” and becomes an operational center for managing volunteers and donations. In this case, the office becomes the Volunteer and Donation Management Coordinator for the state, is the lead agency at the State Emergency Operations Center for management of volunteers and donations, and maintains a call center.

In Virginia, the Reentry Policy Academy is a public interagency partnership that identifies barriers to successful prisoner reentry in the state and develops strategies to reduce recidivism. The state Policy Academy grew out of the FCL’s and others’ participation in a National Governor’s Association effort to spur state initiatives to reduce recidivism rates by improving pre-and post-release services. Virginia Governor Tim Kaine also identified reentry as a priority and issued an executive order directing state agencies to work together in the academy to develop more effective programs. By spring 2008, seven Virginia localities had voluntarily established reentry councils, a key component of the model, and are now implementing the approach, with a formal evaluation. To improve services for prisoners leaving incarceration, the councils regularly coordinate the efforts of state and local social service and criminal justice agencies and local FBCOs, including churches. The FCL works closely with each council to maintain consistency with the model and to share information and facilitate linkages within and across councils. Mentoring has been an important part of the model, and FBOs and churches are seen as particularly well suited to provide mentors. However, the initiative receives no dedicated funding, which has proven challenging to sustaining the effort.

## STATE CONTACTS AS OF DECEMBER 2008

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## **STUDY METHODOLOGY**

The study aimed to increase understanding of how Charitable Choice and the FBCI were being implemented through FCLs at the state level. The methodology included (1) a scan of multi-state data sources to examine liaison characteristics and potential measures of effectiveness of the FBCI in each site, and to select potential case studies and (2) eight case studies of the FCL function in sites where evidence showed relatively effective Charitable Choice implementation. The multi-state data sources included (1) a 2004 ASPE-funded survey of state contracting officials about Charitable Choice implementation within their agencies (Jacobson et al. 2005); (2) the results of interviews with liaisons conducted between 2003 and 2005 (Sager 2006); (3) a search of the LexisNexis legal database to identify state legislation related to the FBCI between 1997 and 2007; and (4) consultations with six experts in the area of state faith-based initiatives. Study sites were selected based on evidence of increased state agency partnerships with FBOs, efforts to ensure that they are legal and appropriate, understanding within state agencies of FBO rights and responsibilities under Charitable Choice, and a level of activity and institutional security for the FCL function. Other site selection factors included geographic location, source of FCL legal authority, FCL organizational structure, and political environment.

The eight case study sites were Alabama, the District of Columbia, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New Mexico, Texas, and Virginia. All had formal statewide FCLs except Illinois, which had a similar agency position that was not formally statewide at the time of the study. The case studies included site visits, interviews, observations, and document review.

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