

Community Action Agencies
and
Faith-Based Organizations:

**A Legacy of
Productive Partnerships**



Mission Statement

It is the mission of the
National Association of Community Action Agencies
to be a national forum for public policy on poverty
and to strengthen, promote, represent and serve
its network of member agencies
to assure that the issues of the poor
are effectively heard
and addressed.

Community Action Agencies and Faith-Based Organizations:
A Legacy of Productive Partnerships

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Foreword

Since 1964, Community Action Agencies (CAAs) have taken the lead in helping millions of people move out of poverty and toward self-sufficiency. Each of the nation's more than 900 Community Action Agencies tailors its activities to the needs and circumstances of its community. They serve their communities through direct advocacy on behalf of low-income residents and through the operation of an integrated and comprehensive set of antipoverty projects.

Less well-known is the fact that, in carrying out their antipoverty mission, Community Action Agencies have established an impressive track record of partnering with other community-based organizations. Nowhere is this more true than in the long-standing and mutually supportive relationships between Community Action Agencies and faith-based organizations (FBOs). Unfortunately, until now, there has been little documentation of these relationships on a national level.

In order to portray the extent of the Community Action network's linkages with faith-based organizations, the National Association of Community Action Agencies conducted a nationwide survey of its members.

In commissioning this research, NACAA had two goals in mind: 1) to document the scope and characteristics of CAA-FBO relationships, and 2) to foster dialogue and further collaboration between Community Action Agencies and faith-based organizations. This report provides many important new findings and lessons. However, it may be seen mainly as a status report, with suggestions for meeting the challenges ahead.

The report was prepared by Robert Clark, D.P.A., NACAA research consultant, and Judy Mason, NACAA Human Services Policy Analyst. NACAA staff members Elizabeth Bernard and Michael Catron provided valuable support.

The survey instrument benefited from the comments of a number of people, including Bill Breidinger, CCAP, Special Project Director, Division of Community Services, New York State Department of State, and Marci Phillips, Legislative Policy Analyst, National

Community Action Foundation. The following CAA Executive Directors also made helpful comments: Jim Hall, CCAP, Eastern Idaho Special Services; Winston Ross, CCAP, Westchester Community Opportunity Program, New York; MacDonald Stacks, CCAP, CAP of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania; and Jim Scharping, CCAP, Orleans Community Action Committee, New York.

Tawny Stottlemire, Executive Director of the Kansas Association of Community Action Programs, and Kip Bowmar, Executive Director of the Kentucky Association for Community Action, represented the state CAA association directors in providing input to the survey. Ms. Stottlemire, as well as Elaine West, Executive Director of the Missouri Association for Community Action, and Phyllis Parrish, Program Specialist, Virginia Department of Social Services, Office of Community Services, shared their state FBO survey information with us. This information was useful in choosing topics and designing the national survey.

We thank them one and all.

We particularly thank the 285 Community Action Agencies that provided data for this study. They have made it possible for us to document on a national level the impressive partnerships between Community Action Agencies and faith-based organizations.

We welcome your comments on this report and your ideas for building on the legacy of partnerships between Community Action Agencies and faith-based organizations.



John Buckstead
Executive Director
National Association of Community Action Agencies
Summer 2001

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1.

The Growing Role of Faith-Based Organizations in Community-Based Programs

1.1 Introduction

Community Action Agencies have a long history of close and productive ties to religious entities in their communities. Many, if not most, Community Action Agencies began with assistance from religious leaders and their organizations. Clergy and other representatives from religiously affiliated groups sit on the boards of directors of Community Action Agencies.

By their nature, Community Action Agencies are nonsectarian, with a broad mission to eliminate the causes and conditions of poverty in their communities. They are not driven by any one set of religious beliefs. Although their core source of funding is governmental, they develop comprehensive antipoverty plans and programs based on the specific needs and interests of their communities.

The modus operandi of Community Action Agencies stresses local initiative, community-building, problem-solving, and inclusiveness. They are subject to federal and state laws and regulations governing nondiscrimination in the provision of services, equal opportunity in staffing, fiscal management, and accountability.

Faith-based organizations embrace a wide spectrum of sectarian entities, such as individual congregations, parishes, and churches; religiously affiliated groups like Catholic Charities, Jewish Family Services, and Lutheran Social Services; ministerial alliances; and national denominational bodies, including their social service arms. Faith-based organizations consist of people with a strong sense of caring, a willingness to share resources with those less fortunate, and great dedication in the delivery of supportive services.

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There are numerous cases of partnerships between Community Action Agencies and faith-based organizations in advocating for the poor and delivering services to them. Community Action Agencies provide a vehicle by which more narrowly focused faith-based programs can link to the broader social service and antipoverty settings of diverse communities.

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 expanded the role of community-based organizations in the provision of work support and social services to families leaving the welfare rolls. Under Section 104, faith-based organizations specifically were allowed to compete for state and federal welfare funds on the same basis as nonsectarian social service providers — the so-called “Charitable Choice” provision. Similar Charitable Choice language was included in other federal legislation, most notably the 1998 reauthorization of the Community Services Block Grant, which is the source of core funding for Community Action Agencies.

The 2000 election of George W. Bush as President has given new impetus to expanding the role of faith-based organizations in the social welfare system. This new presidential initiative has important potential consequences, both positive and negative, for the nation’s more than 900 Community Action Agencies.

1.2 Recent Federal Efforts to Support Faith-Based Organizations

President Bush began his second week in office by launching a faith-based initiative that was a focal point of his campaign for the presidency. On January 29, 2001, the President signed two Executive Orders. The first stated that faith-based and other community organizations “are indispensable in meeting the needs of poor Americans and distressed neighborhoods.”

He went on to say that “[g]overnment cannot be replaced by such organizations, but it can and should welcome them as partners.... [P]rivate and charitable community groups, including religious ones, should have the fullest opportunity permitted by law to compete on a level playing field, so long as they achieve valid public purposes, such as curbing crime, conquering addiction, strengthening families and neighborhoods, and overcoming poverty.”

The Executive Order established a White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives to take lead responsibility in the

government's effort "to enlist, equip, enable, empower, and expand the work of faith-based and other community organizations to the extent permitted by law."

The second Executive Order created Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in several Cabinet Departments, namely Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Labor. According to the second Executive Order, the purpose of these centers "will be to coordinate department efforts to eliminate regulatory, contracting, and other programmatic obstacles to the participation of faith-based and other community organizations in the provision of social services." These new entities will revise federal program guidelines and regulations where possible to eliminate restrictions on the funding of faith-based organizations.

The President has presented several plans to implement his faith-based initiative. His Administration will seek to expand legislative provisions governing Charitable Choice, which exist in the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), 1998 Community Services Block Grant Act reauthorization, 2000 Community Renewal Tax Relief Act, and 2000 Children's Health Act.

Several of the President's proposals affect the tax code. Non-itemizing federal taxpayers would receive a charitable tax deduction. Retirees could withdraw contributions from Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA) for charitable purposes tax-free. States would be encouraged to provide a tax credit up to 50 percent for the first \$500 that individuals contribute to poverty-related charities. States would be able to use Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds to offset the cost of this tax credit.

The Administration has also indicated it will create new federal programs to test partnerships between the federal government and faith-based community groups. These programs will focus on such target groups as children of prisoners, prisoners nearing release, unwed mothers, and low-income children.

The Administration's faith-based initiative has provoked controversy from both ends of the political spectrum. These issues can be grouped under four headings: (a) constitutional questions, (b) allocation of resources, (c) accountability, and (d) unintended consequences.

The key constitutional question is whether or not the faith-based initiative erodes the traditional separation of church and state,

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- **CREATED CENTERS
FOR FAITH-BASED
AND COMMUNITY
INITIATIVES IN THE
DEPARTMENTS
OF EDUCATION,
HHS, HUD,
JUSTICE, AND
LABOR**

**THE FAITH-BASED
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SOME RELIGIOUS LEADERS FEAR THAT CHURCHES COULD BECOME DEPENDENT ON FEDERAL MONEY AND RISK LOSING THE SPIRITUAL CHARACTER THAT DISTINGUISHES THEM FROM OTHER GOVERNMENT-FUNDED SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

particularly if the federal government determines which religious groups to fund. In violation of their right to religious freedom, program beneficiaries may feel pressure to convert to the religion of the agency from which they receive services.

The faith-based initiative does not seek to expand the pool of funding available for community-based human services. Hence, it could instill competition for existing funds among various religious groups, as well as between those groups and traditional nonsectarian agencies. This could lead to the fragmentation and even duplication of service delivery.

Regarding the issue of accountability, recipients of federal grant funds must adhere to a variety of laws, regulations, and guidelines. Among other things, these cover accounting standards and practices, audits, equal employment opportunity, and nondiscrimination in eligibility and the delivery of program benefits and services. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act permits religious entities to discriminate in hiring based on religious affiliation. The Administration would seek to relax the standards on eligibility and fiscal accountability for faith-based organizations.

There could be unintended consequences to the faith-based initiative. Even with relaxed standards, there would still be a degree of federal oversight of grants and contracts to faith-based organizations. Hence, some religious leaders fear that churches could become dependent on federal money. They risk losing the spiritual character that distinguishes them from other government-funded social service providers.

1.3 Other FBO-Related Efforts by States, Local Governments, Foundations, and the Private Sector¹

At the state level, there have been initiatives to promote greater involvement by faith-based organizations in the delivery of social services. Indiana, Texas, and Wisconsin have encouraged welfare agencies to seek partnerships with faith-based organizations. In late 1999, the Family and Social Services Administration of Indiana introduced FaithWorks, an initiative designed to promote faith-based services. In Pennsylvania, the Department of Public Welfare has awarded several welfare-to-work contracts to faith-based groups.

New Jersey's Office of Faith-Based Initiatives, which is located in the Department of Community Affairs, implements the governor's

¹ This section draws considerably on Griener, G.

faith-based community development initiative, coordinates a post-TANF outreach and referral services program, and administers the New Jersey Faith-Based Training Institute. The Institute has developed partnerships with the Center for Non-Profit Corporations, Chase Manhattan Bank, and Kean University, among others.

California has drafted guidelines to ensure that contracts awarded by the Department of Social Services comply with the provisions of federal Charitable Choice legislation. In August 2000, the state issued a Solicitation for Proposal, seeking applications from faith-based organizations that serve “individuals least likely to seek assistance through traditional government channels.” For its part, the California Council of Churches is educating congregations on how to help families make the transition from welfare to work.

Faith-based efforts have not been limited to state governments. In Houston, Texas, the Department of Human Services organized a Charitable Choice Committee, which has brought together over 200 faith-based organizations interested in partnering with government. Public/Private Ventures, a research organization based in Philadelphia, has sponsored faith-based research and demonstration projects in eight cities: Boston, Cleveland, Denver, Detroit, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco/Oakland, and Seattle.

Several national foundations have provided funding for faith-based initiatives. These include the Ford Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Stuart Foundation, Charles F. Hayden Foundation, and Pew Charitable Trusts. A number of local or regional foundations are active in supporting faith-based initiatives as well.²

These are but a few selected examples of the expanding role faith-based organizations are playing in the delivery of social services, with the active encouragement and collaboration of governmental and private sector partners. However, not all faith-based groups are involved in government partnerships or even want to be. Some remain skeptical of close collaboration with government. Others simply lack experience in writing proposals and preparing applications for funding. Administering state contracts with detailed requirements for recordkeeping, documentation of results, and financial accountability deters some.

It is too soon to label the totality of state and local faith-based initiatives as a movement. But there is clearly an upswing in the number of faith-based organizations collaborating with government as a result of charitable choice, the Administration’s faith-based

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² See Trulear, H.D.

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initiative, and a trend toward contracting out for services at the state and local level. These developments present the Community Action network with a new set of problems, but also with new opportunities.

1.4 Implications of Current FBO Initiatives for Community Action Agencies

Community Action Agencies support comprehensive community planning to address the needs of low-income residents. They invite participation from all sectors of the community. They deliver, or partner with others in delivering, a comprehensive and integrated package of services. They subscribe to programmatic and fiscal accountability and have an independent audit conducted of their operations every year. They are established as broadly based and inclusive organizational structures to foster community-wide planning in the use of antipoverty funds.

Community Action Agencies are charged with a broader mission than faith-based organizations and have developed the capacity to operate effectively in highly diverse communities. There is a risk that the Administration's faith-based initiative may foster divisiveness over inclusiveness, fragmentation of services over community-wide coordination, and responsiveness to particular congregations rather than to the community as a whole. In short, it could endanger relationships that have developed and matured over the decades.

Community Action Agencies believe that the most effective anti-poverty strategy engages all elements of the community — including faith-based organizations. Over their 35 year history, they have demonstrated that this is not just rhetoric, but an operating principle that is the key to their success. If the Administration's faith-based initiative builds on existing relationships and is fleshed out with the participation of all affected parties, it could contribute to greater community-wide awareness of poverty and the broad-based collaborative strategies needed to overcome it.

This report is offered in that spirit.

2.

The Community Action Network and Faith-Based Organizations

2.1 Introduction

To address the issues posed by the faith-based initiative and to seize available opportunities, the National Association of Community Action Agencies decided as part of its research program to document CAA-FBO relationships on a national scale. On February 13, 2001, NACAA mailed the 2001 NACAA Survey of CAA Relationships with Faith-Based Organizations to over 900 Community Action Agencies. Many of the questions requested answers that could be analyzed quantitatively. We examine those in Section 3.

2.2 Examples of Current Collaborations between Community Action Agencies and Faith-Based Organizations

The survey asked respondents to cite a noteworthy CAA-FBO relationship. In this section, we present a selection of those projects to illustrate the rich diversity that now exists around the country.

1. *Gila County CAP*, Globe, Arizona, began its partnership with Payson Helping Payson, Inc. (PHP) in 1989 when a group of charity coordinators from churches in the Gila County town of Payson approached the CAA for assistance. The coordinators asked the agency to act as a “clearinghouse” for emergency assistance in order to avoid duplication of services. The CAA helped organize the group of local churches to incorporate as Payson Helping Payson, a private nonprofit organization. The interfaith group determines its annual budget for emergency assistance with applications and vouchers to pay for the services. Funding from PHP in 2000 was more than \$4,000.

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✓ EMERGENCY
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**✓ OPERATE A
FOOD PANTRY**

**✓ ADMINISTER
HOME-DELIVERED
AND CONGREGATE
MEALS PROGRAMS**

**✓ DISTRIBUTE
HOLIDAY GIFTS TO
NEEDY FAMILIES**

2. *Tri-County Opportunities Council (CAA)*, Rock Falls, Illinois, operates the Bureau County Food Pantry in partnership with the Princeton Ministerial Council. In early 1999, the Council decided that the food pantry had grown too large for a solely volunteer operation and requested that the CAA assume operating responsibility. After a series of meetings, it was determined that the CAA would own and operate the food pantry, but that the churches would continue to collect food and donations and solicit volunteers. Since taking over the operation in April 1999, the agency has relocated to a building that houses both the food pantry and the agency's outreach office. Last year, funding for the food pantry included cash donations from churches, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the United Way, as well as in-kind donations of food from churches. As a result of the food pantry's success, the CAA was also asked to function as the Salvation Army in Bureau County.
3. *CAA of New Haven, Inc.*, New Haven, Connecticut, administers home-delivered and congregate meal programs for the elderly in its service area. When the programs began, there was a need for kosher meals. The CAA successfully partnered with the Jewish Community Center and its sponsor, the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven, to provide hot kosher meals to Jewish clients both in-home and at the local Community Center. The Federation agreed to cover the additional cost of the meals. The relationship continues to benefit the elderly Jewish population in the area.
4. *Multi-Service Center (CAA)*, Federal Way, Washington, works with Steel Lake Presbyterian, Marine View Presbyterian, and several other faith organizations to brighten the holidays for families in need through Christmas House and the Giving Tree. Volunteers gather and distribute toys, clothes, and other gifts at the Steel Lake location. The project operates 10 hours a day, seven days a week from Thanksgiving to Christmas Eve. Various churches assume specific responsibilities according to their capacity — e.g., donating cash, providing volunteers, paying specific expenses. One church's ladies' auxiliary prepared and donated bags of personal care items.
5. *Tri-CAP, Inc.*, St. Cloud, Minnesota, and Catholic Charities both receive funding from the Stearns County Family Services Collaborative to provide child care services in conjunction with the Head Start program. Reach Up/Head Start also provides

these services. The three agencies coordinate their services to best meet the needs of the households.

The Catholic Charities In-Home Program rents space from the CAA in its building, which allows the two organizations to work together to provide child care and family homeless prevention and assistance services more effectively. The CAA is fiscal agent for the Family Homeless Prevention program and partners with nine other programs, five of which are FBOs.

For the past five years, Tri-CAP has also served as fiscal agent for the Great River Interfaith Partnership, a group of churches and two nonprofits (Tri-CAP and Catholic Charities) that work together on social justice issues. The CAA was asked to do this originally because the group did not want any single church to do it. In return for providing the service, the CAA receives only the interest earned on the account, which for several years was zero.

6. *Pikes Peak Community Action Agency (PPCAA)*, Colorado Springs, Colorado, has maintained a close working relationship for more than a decade with Fountain Valley Cares, an organization comprised of five area churches. On a daily basis, the two organizations refer needy families and individuals to each other's services. Fountain Valley Cares provides emergency food and some utility assistance; PPCAA provides record keeping, determines eligibility, and administers intake for those services. PPCAA provides housing and utility assistance, transportation assistance, help with medical prescriptions, and other miscellaneous services. In addition, the two organizations coordinate closely with each other to provide special food and gift programs during the holiday seasons.

Over the years, Fountain Valley Cares members have served on PPCAA's board of directors, while a representative from PPCAA attends Fountain Valley Cares board meetings. The two organizations are mutually supportive in reaching out to the surrounding community and encourage the community to contribute both volunteer and financial resources to either, or both, organizations.

7. *Community Services of Calhoun and Cleburne Counties (CAA)*, Anniston, Alabama, collaborates with World Changers and the Calhoun Baptist Association on a seasonal program providing home repairs to low-income, elderly, and disabled residents. The project is designed to make the best use of the CAA's

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✓ **COMMUNITY-
BASED MENTAL
HEALTH CARE**

Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) funds and to use donations to cover needed repairs that WAP cannot fund. The project operates for one week each summer with donations from city governments, county governments, and local businesses, with volunteer labor, and with local churches providing meals and drinks for the volunteers. The pooling of resources makes possible this joint effort to meet this community's need.

8. *CTE, Inc. (CAA)*, Stamford, Connecticut, at the request of Person-to-Person, an FBO affiliate in Darien, Connecticut, convened an Ad Hoc Affordable Housing Task Force to develop an agenda for addressing the region's affordable housing problem. The Task Force consists of area business, labor, nonprofit, and government leaders, as well as representatives from FBOs — in particular, the Interdenominational Ministers and Pastors Consortium. As a result of the work of the Task Force, the City of Stamford has hired an Affordable Housing Consultant to develop recommendations on affordable housing for inclusion in Stamford's Master Plan for Zoning and Development.
9. *New River Community Action*, Christiansburg, Virginia, and the local Department of Social Services (DSS) were approached by the Blacksburg Presbyterian Church, which wanted to volunteer resources to meet community needs. Both the CAA and DSS identified child care for working poor families as a critical need. Together, the three organizations established the Low-Income Childcare Fund. The Church provided the initial funding and input into the program design. Now DSS screens the families, the CAA administers the program and conducts fundraising, and the Church provides ongoing financial support.
10. *Upper Des Moines Opportunity (CAA)*, Graettinger, Iowa, partners with Sacred Heart Catholic Church to provide a drop-in mental health center. Spencer Psychiatry and Spencer Municipal Hospital assisted in the development of the center and continue to provide referrals. "Just Friends" is housed at the church in donated space that formerly was a convent. The CAA employs a part-time coordinator for the program and acts as fiscal agent. The center provides socialization, computer use, and meals for mentally disadvantaged people living independently or in group homes throughout the community. The program is such a success that residents of a neighboring town have asked the CAA and the church for assistance in establishing a similar program in their community.

11. *EOC of San Luis Obispo (CAA)*, California, opened the county's only homeless shelter in 1989. By 1992, the need to expand the community's sheltering capacity during the coldest months resulted in the collaboration between EOC and the Interfaith Coalition for the Homeless (ICH) to develop the Winter Shelter Program. Local churches accept responsibility for the Winter Shelter for one month each year, providing their church facility as the overnight shelter and their volunteers as overnight staff. The CAA provides equipment, supplies, training, technical assistance, staff backup, and support. In response to an increase in homeless women and children, the Winter Shelter program expanded in 1999 to a year-round Overflow Program.

The success of the Winter Shelter Program led to a second collaborative project between EOC and ICH to build and operate a homeless day center. Prado Day Center opened in 1997 and is now the daytime service hub for the homeless in San Luis Obispo. Local public and private service providers bring an array of direct safety net services — mental health, drug and alcohol education, social services, health screening, AIDS outreach and education, literacy, veterans services, and Head Start — to the center. EOC raises public funding to support the program and provides paid staff; Friends of Prado raises private funding; ICH provides daily volunteers. In 2000, 91 ICH volunteers donated 5,264 hours to the Center.

12. *Community Action, Inc*, Topeka, Kansas, for 10 years has sponsored an annual Back-To-School Fair. A primary supporter of the event is St. Francis Hospital, affiliated with the Catholic Church. The hospital has pledged a donation of \$10,000 a year for the next three years to underwrite the Fair. Hospital staff serves on the event planning committee (a five-month obligation). Volunteers staff a health education booth at the Fair and provide doctors and nurses who conduct free health screenings. In addition, the hospital donates cash to purchase school supplies for low-income children.

13. *Cattaraugus Community Action*, Salamanca, New York, responded to the 1998 recommendations of the community's violence prevention task force by establishing a Batterer's Treatment Program. The CAA raised funds, mostly from local FBOs, designed and implemented a 29-week intervention program, and trained program facilitators and local judges, who are responsible for mandating participation in the program. The

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✓ **CHILDREN**

✓ **VICTIMS OF
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**CAAS ARE
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CAA operated the program for more than a year, making certain it was well-established and respected by the courts and local law enforcement; after which time its operation was transferred to Catholic Charities, where the program continues to intervene successfully in situations of domestic violence.

2.3 Summary

The examples of model projects provided in the previous section, and those used as examples in other sections of this report, illustrate the variety of ways that Community Action Agencies collaborate with faith-based organizations.

Community Action Agencies are particularly well-suited to the role of intermediary organization operating on behalf of small, start-up faith-based providers. They have long experience in providing critical administrative functions and satisfying the requirements of multiple funding sources. If a small project grows beyond the capability of a faith-based group to manage it, the Community Action Agency may assume responsibility. Conversely, the Community Action Agency may test a new program and, once it is proven feasible, turn it over to a faith-based organization.

As intermediary organizations, some Community Action Agencies act as fiscal agents for faith-based organizations that lack experience with the financial management requirements of federal, state, and local agencies. They contract with faith-based organizations to provide specific services that fit within the agency's overall plans and programs. Community Action Agencies and faith-based organizations refer clients to each other's services. Community Action Agencies sometimes function as clearinghouses to prevent overlap and duplication of services. With the Community Action Agency serving as an intermediary organization, the faith-based group is free to concentrate on direct service delivery.

Other mutually supportive relationships on behalf of the poor exist as well. As an urban Community Action Agency in Pennsylvania commented in responding to the survey: "These partnerships are a perfect example of how, and why, faith-based organizations and Community Action Agencies have found ways to mobilize private dollars and volunteers to supplement federal dollars, and make a real difference in the lives of the disadvantaged, promoting healing and renewal." (See Appendix 2 for additional comments.)

3. The 2001 NACAA Survey of CAA Relationships with Faith-Based Organizations

3.1 Background

The 2001 NACAA Survey of CAA Relationships with Faith-Based Organizations was designed to cover a wide range of CAA-FBO relationships. The survey topics fall under the following headings: (a) FBO participation on CAA Boards and Committees; (b) FBOs as a source of volunteers for CAAs; (c) FBO cash and in-kind contributions to CAAs; (d) CAA-FBO contract and referral arrangements; (e) types and roles of FBOs partnering with CAAs; and (f) CAA attitudes toward CAA-FBO relationships.

Surveys were completed and returned by 285 Community Action Agencies for a 31.1 percent response rate. Not all respondents answered every question. Therefore, the number of respondents varies from one table to another. The data presented in this report are not weighted to produce population estimates. Hence, while the findings may indicate overall patterns in the entire population of Community Action Agencies, strictly speaking they apply only to the respondent sample.

3.2 Survey Respondent Characteristics

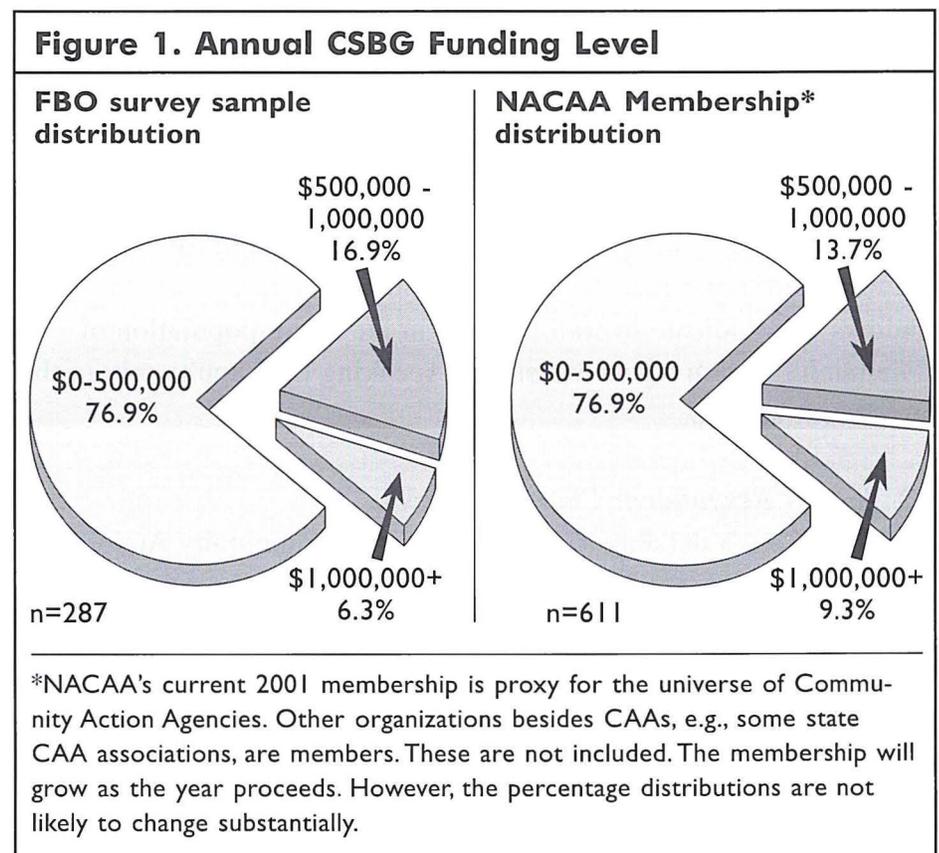
NACAA's database lists a total of 915 Community Action Agencies of which 127 – or 13.9 percent – are public. Among the 285 survey respondents, 14.4 percent were public and 85.6 percent were private, nonprofit Community Action Agencies. In terms of their public/private status, the survey respondents were very similar to the universe of Community Action Agencies. Overall, the mean number of full-time equivalent staff persons per responding Community Action Agency was 123.

**285 CAAs
COMPLETED
AND RETURNED
THE SURVEY —
A 31.1%
RESPONSE RATE**

**CLOSE TO
TWO-THIRDS OF
RESPONDENTS
SERVE RURAL
AREAS EXCLUSIVELY**

Single-county, rural Community Action Agencies made up 16.9 percent of the respondents; multi-county, rural Community Action Agencies 46.3 percent. Thus, close to two-thirds (63.2 percent) of the respondents served rural areas exclusively. Community Action Agencies serving a mix of urban and rural areas made up 25.4 percent, urban-only agencies 5.1 percent, and metropolitan/MSA agencies 6.3 percent. The survey respondents came from 47 of the 54 states and U.S. Territories and all of the 10 standard federal regions. (See Appendix 4.)

The exact distribution of Community Action Agencies nationally in terms of Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding is not known. A close proxy is NACAA's membership, which consists of approximately 80 percent of all eligible entities under the CSBG. In spring 2001, the membership – 611 Community Action Agencies – was distributed as follows: 76.9 percent received up to \$500,000 in CSBG funding, 13.7 percent received between \$500,000 and \$1 million, and 9.3 percent received over \$1 million dollars. For the survey respondents, the corresponding figures for these funding ranges were 76.9 percent, 16.9 percent, and 6.3 percent, respectively. (See Figure 1.)



Compared to the universe of Community Action Agencies, those responding to the NACAA 2001 CAA-FBO survey closely mirrored Community Action Agencies in the \$0 to \$500,000 funding range, slightly overrepresented those in the \$500,000 to \$1 million range, and slightly underrepresented those in the \$1 million plus range. Overall, the respondents to the survey were similar to the universe of Community Action Agencies.

**THE SURVEY
RESPONDENTS
WERE SIMILAR TO
THE UNIVERSE OF
CAAs**

**Table 1. CAA Annual CSBG Funding
by Primary Area Served**

CAAs whose annual CSBG funding is...	Primary Area Served					All (%)
	Single- co. Rural (%)	Multi- co. Rural (%)	Urban/ Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Metro/ MSA (%)	
\$0 - 100,000	10.9	2.4	1.4	0.0	0.0	3.3
\$100,001 - 250,000	65.2	35.7	21.7	14.3	29.4	35.7
\$250,001 - 500,000	17.4	43.7	43.5	42.9	23.5	37.9
\$500,001 - 1,000,000	2.2	16.7	24.6	21.4	23.5	16.9
\$1,000,001 - 3,000,000	2.2	1.6	7.2	14.3	17.6	4.8
\$3,000,001 +	2.2	0.0	1.4	7.1	5.9	1.5
COLUMN TOTAL	100.1	100.1	99.8	100.0	100.0	100.1
n=272 Column totals may not add exactly to 100% due to rounding.						

As shown in Table 1, the proportion of Community Action Agencies whose annual CSBG funding is at least \$1 million is higher for those in urban and metropolitan areas than those in rural areas. For example, only 4.4 percent of single-county, rural Community Action Agencies receive \$1 million or more a year in CSBG funds, compared to 23.5 percent of metropolitan Community Action Agencies.

The data in this report reflect only the findings for the survey respondents. However, since the survey respondents are a high proportion of all Community Action Agencies and resemble the whole in terms of selected key characteristics, the findings shed a great deal of light on the size, scope, and immense variety of CAA-FBO relationships.

**THE SURVEY
FINDINGS REVEAL
MUCH INFORMATION
ABOUT CAA-FBO
RELATIONSHIPS**

**BY LAW, CAA
BOARDS MUST
INCLUDE PUBLIC
OFFICIALS, LOW-
INCOME RESIDENTS,
AND DELEGATES
FROM BUSINESS,
INDUSTRY, LABOR,
RELIGIOUS,
SOCIAL WELFARE,
AND OTHER
PRIVATE GROUPS**

3.3 FBO Participation on CAA Boards and Committees

A local public or nonprofit organization has achieved its status as a Community Action Agency by virtue of official designation by local or state government. By law, the governing board of the Community Action Agency has a tripartite nature. One-third of the members must be local public officials or their designees, at least one-third must be democratically selected representatives of low-income residents, and the remaining members must be representatives of business, industry, labor, religious, social welfare, and other private groups in the community.³

Thus, the governing board is structured so as to represent all sectors of the community. As a Community Action Agency, the organization becomes eligible to receive funding under the Community Services Block Grant to confront poverty in its community.

Many Community Action Agencies were begun over 35 years ago at the initiative of faith-based organizations, and the interactions between the two have continued over the succeeding decades. As Table 2 shows, over two-thirds of the Community Action Agencies

Table 2. FBO Participation on CAA Boards and Committees	
CAA Board and Committee Participation by FBOs	Result
Percent of CAAs where Board seats are reserved for FBOs in CAA bylaws	21.9%
Percent of CAAs where Board seat is filled by an FBO	68.4%
Mean number of CAA Board Members affiliated with an FBO (n=285)	2.1
Mean number of CAA Board Members affiliated with an FBO where at least one Board Member is affiliated (n=195)	3.1
Mean number of CAA Advisory Committee Members affiliated with an FBO (n=284)	4.3
Mean number of CAA Advisory Committee Members affiliated with an FBO where at least one member is affiliated (n=162)	7.4
Overall n=285	

³ See NACAA's publication *What is a Community Action Agency? A Review of Current and Past Legislation*. Washington, D.C.: Summer 2000.

responding to the survey have at least one representative of a faith-based organization on their boards of directors. Furthermore, in one out of five Community Action Agencies, the bylaws explicitly reserve seats for faith-based organizations on their boards.⁴

Community Action Agencies have gone beyond nominal involvement of faith-based organizations. For the Community Action Agencies in the survey, each board has on average two representatives of faith-based organizations. If we focus on Community Action Agencies where there is at least one board member from a faith-based organization, we find that the average number of FBO representatives on the board rises to three.

Participation in the governance of a Community Action Agency is not limited to board membership. Most large programs operated by a Community Action Agency, such as Head Start and Weatherization Assistance, have their own advisory committees. On average, the number of members from faith-based organizations serving on one or more advisory committees exceeds four. For those Community Action Agencies where there is at least one member from a faith-based organization on the agency's advisory committees, the average rises to more than seven.

3.4 FBOs as a Source of Volunteers for CAAs

Faith-based organizations do more than participate in the governance of Community Action Agencies. In nearly two-thirds of the responding Community Action Agencies, faith-based organizations are a source of volunteer assistance.

On average, Community Action Agencies received the assistance of 8.5 FBO-sponsored volunteers, who provided 1,311 hours in 2000. If we consider only those cases where volunteers were provided, the average rises to 14.7 volunteers and 2,442 hours. (Table 3, next page.) The latter figure is equal to more than one full-time equivalent (FTE) staff person.

With the assistance of volunteers made available through faith-based organizations, Community Action Agencies provide a variety of services. From a list of 19 services, survey respondents were asked to check all that were provided with the assistance of FBO volunteers. (See Figure 2, page 25.)

**OVER TWO-THIRDS
OF THE SURVEY
RESPONDENTS
HAVE AT LEAST
ONE FBO
REPRESENTATIVE
ON THE BOARD;
ONE-FIFTH OF THE
CAAs HAVE BYLAWS
DESIGNATING
BOARD SEATS
FOR FBOs**

**THE AVERAGE CAA
RECEIVED
ASSISTANCE
FROM 8.5
FBO VOLUNTEERS,
PROVIDING 1,311
HOURS**

⁴ The statements on board structure apply to private nonprofit CAAs, which make up 86 percent of all CAAs. The Community Services Block Grant legislation gives local officials some discretion in establishing administering boards of public CAAs, but the goal of broad-based community representation must still be met.

Table 3. FBO Sponsorship of Volunteers for CAA Programs	
FBOs as a Source of Volunteers for CAAs	Result
Percent of CAAs where FBOs provide volunteers (n=281)	63.0%
Mean number of volunteers provided by FBOs to CAAs (n=285)	8.5
Mean number of volunteers provided by FBOs where at least one volunteer was provided (n=164)	14.7
Mean number of volunteer hours in year 2000 provided through FBOs to CAAs (n=285)	1,311.0
Mean number of volunteer hours provided in year 2000 through FBOs to CAAs where at least one hour was provided (n=153)	2,442.0
Overall n=285	

The services checked most frequently were:

- (1) food and nutrition
- (2) holiday donations
- (3) emergency assistance
- (4) clothing
- (5) homelessness services, and
- (6) utility bill payments.

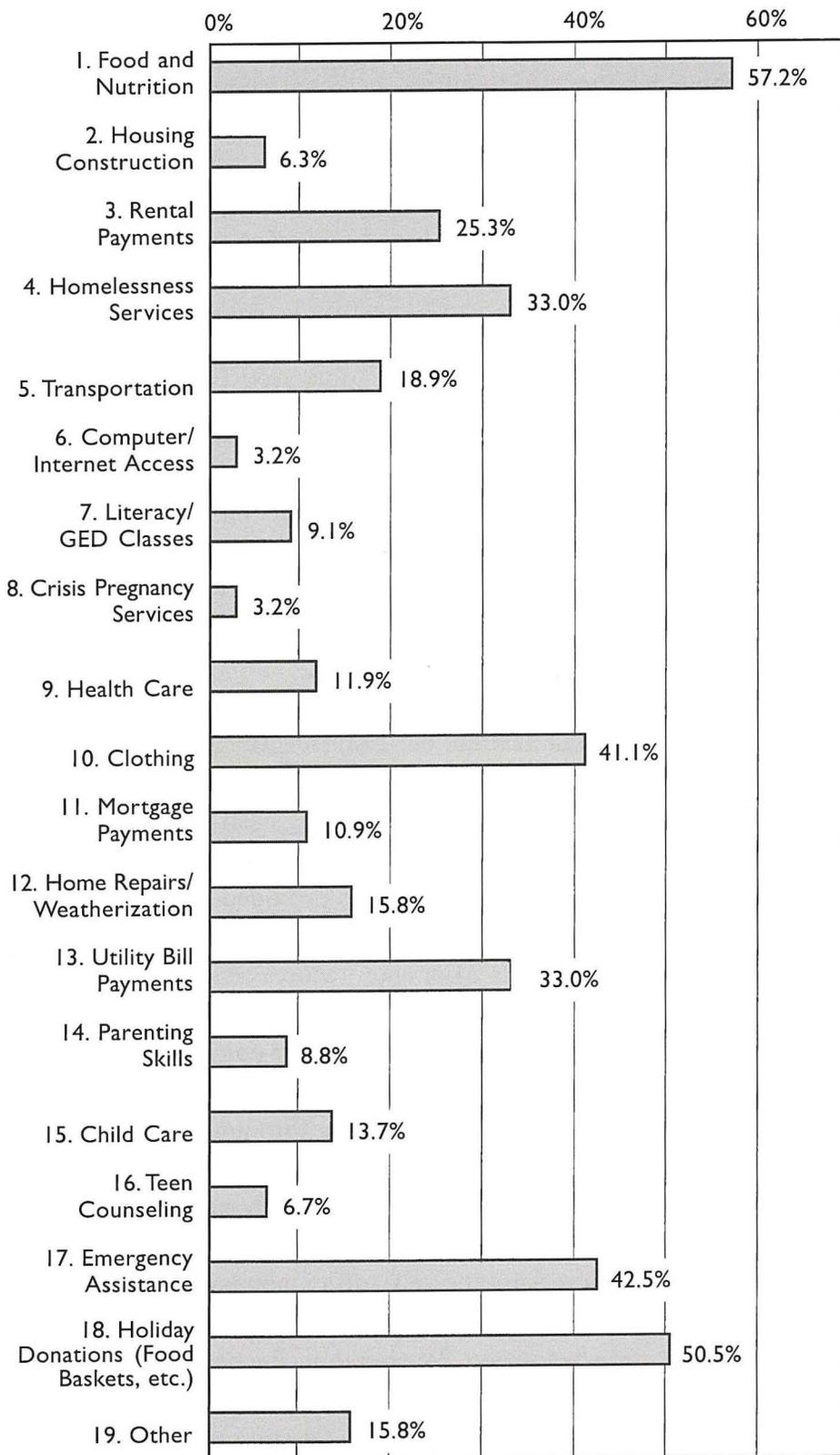
**ONE-THIRD
OR MORE OF THE
RESPONDENTS
REPORTED USING
FBO-SPONSORED
VOLUNTEERS**

One-third or more of the respondents reported making use of FBO-sponsored volunteers for each of these services. In the cases of food and nutrition and holiday donations, the figures reached or exceeded 50 percent.

In general, these types of services may be viewed as short-term interventions to meet an immediate need. At the same time, it should be noted that there was some involvement of faith-based organizations in all 19 listed services, including long-term interventions like health care and high school equivalency preparation.

An exceptional use of faith-based volunteers is evidenced by the *Community Action Agency of Delaware County, Inc.*, Media, Pennsylvania. This CAA operates an emergency shelter facility, Life Center of Eastern Delaware County. More than \$500,000 a year in cash and in-kind donations for the operation of the shelter comes from the agency's partnership with more than 40 faith-based organizations. Last year, these faith-based organizations provided 540 volunteers contributing over 20,000 hours of service to the agency.

Figure 2. CAA Services Provided through FBO-Sponsored Volunteers



THIS CHART SHOWS THE VARIETY OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY CAAS WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF FBO VOLUNTEERS

Overall n=285

**FBOs SUPPORT
CAAs WITH:**

- CASH
- SPACE
- EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES
- FOOD, CLOTHING, AND HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

Each day, one of 30 faith-based organizations coordinates and serves dinner to 150–200 individuals at the center and provides food for its 50 residents to prepare the next day’s breakfast and lunch. Faith-based organizations also sponsor special holiday dinners at the center and contribute donations of toiletries, personal items, sheets, pillow-cases, blankets, and clothing.

3.5 FBO Cash and In-Kind Contributions to CAAs

In addition to volunteers, faith-based organizations provide cash and in-kind contributions to Community Action Agencies. In fact, over half the survey respondents reported that they had received cash from a faith-based organization to support their agency’s programs. Nearly half reported that faith-based organizations had provided space for one or more of the programs. Such space could be used for Head Start, high school equivalency classes, or similar services. One-third of the respondents reported that faith-based organizations provided equipment and supplies, while nearly two-thirds indicated that faith-based organizations were a source of food, clothing, and other household items for Community Action Agency programs.

It is noteworthy that such contributions typically came not from just one faith-based organization, but from several. Thus, of the Community Action Agencies reporting a cash contribution, the mean number of faith-based organizations providing cash was nearly 13. Again, for respondents reporting this kind of contribution, an average of nearly 13 faith-based organizations provided food, clothing, and other household items.

EightCAP, Inc., Greenville, Michigan, receives cash donations from the parish of St. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Ionia to provide emergency services to the poor of their community. The church has made a commitment to both the poor living in the community and the many transient poor passing through the community. *EightCAP, Inc.*, provides workshops and trainings to the people of the parish on the causes of poverty and the effects poverty has on the poor. In return, parishioners provide contributions to assist *EightCAP, Inc.*, in addressing the self-sufficiency issues of the poor and homeless, which also fulfills their Church’s social mission.

Community Action Southwest, Washington, Pennsylvania, operates a community learning center in space donated by a local Baptist Church. The agency provides three computer stations, telephone lines, Internet hook-ups, staff, and volunteers. The agency’s CSBG

Type of contribution by FBO to CAA	Percent of CAAs reporting a contribution by an FBO	Mean number of faith-based organizations per CAA that made a contribution	
		All respondents*	Only respondents reporting a contribution
Cash to support CAA programs	52.5%	6.7	12.7
Space for CAA programs	47.2%	2.9	6.1
Equipment and supplies for CAA programs	34.5%	2.4	6.9
Food, clothing, other household items for CAA programs	63.7%	8.1	12.7
Other in-kind contributions to CAA	48.2%	3.5	7.2
*includes CAAs where no contribution was reported. n=285			

funding purchased equipment and covers operating costs. The agency has recently received funding from a telecommunications company for phone and Internet connection expenses and from the Community Foundation to purchase software. Church members and other residents of the community (both children and adults) use the center.

3.6 CAA-FBO Contract and Referral Arrangements

The relationship between Community Action Agencies and faith-based organizations is a two-way street. For example, two of five respondents contract with faith-based organizations. Thus, under contract with the Community Action Agency, faith-based organizations may deliver services such as food, utility payment assistance, and child care. In such circumstances, the Com-

**UNDER CONTRACT
WITH THE CAA,
FBOs MAY DELIVER
SERVICES SUCH AS
FOOD,
UTILITY PAYMENT
ASSISTANCE,
AND CHILD CARE**

**A CAA-FBO
PARTNERSHIP
PROVIDES AN
AFTER-SCHOOL
PROGRAM FOR
AT-RISK YOUTH**

munity Action Agency often assists with eligibility determination and serves as the fiscal agent, while the faith-based organization focuses on service delivery.

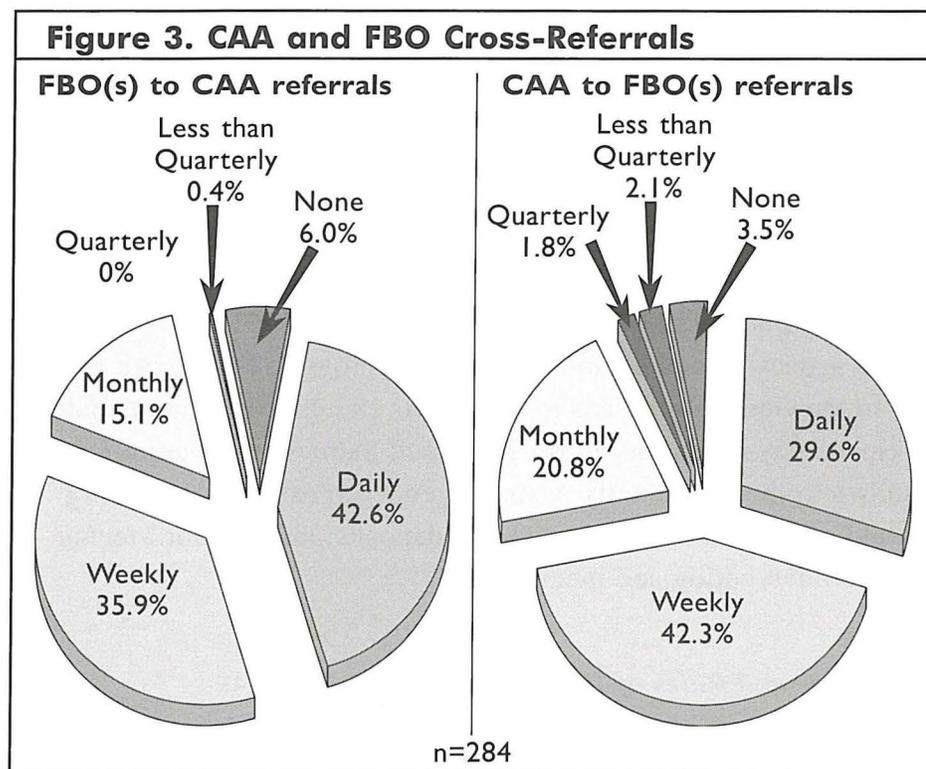
Wateree Community Actions, Inc., Sumter, South Carolina, and St. Luke AME Church have just such a relationship. The two entities jointly operate an after-school program for youth called “Project Right Start.” Its purpose is to promote safety, security, and success for at-risk youth who live in drug-infested, crime-ridden, deprived, rural communities in lower Richland County, adjacent to Columbia, South Carolina.

St. Luke AME Church is the operating partner, with the pastor serving as project director. The Community Action Agency is the grant applicant and fiscal agent. Parents, churches, and communities are involved in the program implementation. Program activities take place in the Parks and Recreation Center, the church, and the Community Center. The school system provides transportation from school to the program sites; parents and project staff transport the youth home in the evening. Nutritional food supplements are procured at a nominal cost from the Harvest Hope Food Bank. Church volunteers help prepare and serve the food and tutor the children.

As shown in Table 5, the practice of making referrals from a faith-based organization to the Community Action Agency and vice versa is virtually universal. Thus, a faith-based organization providing substance abuse services may find that some of its clients have other

Table 5. CAA-FBO Contract and Referral Relationships

Type of CAA-FBO Relationship	CAAs Reporting This Type of Relationship
CAA Contracts with FBO(s) to deliver services (n=277)	40.4%
FBO(s) refer clients to CAA (n=274)	97.8%
CAA refers clients to FBO(s) (n=281)	97.2%
CAA and FBO(s) jointly manage projects (n=278)	43.2%
CAA has relationship w/ a twelve-step program* (n=267)	29.6%
Overall n=285	
*Refers to programs with a spiritual content like Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, etc. The relationship includes such things as referrals, providing space, etc.	



poverty-related needs. These clients can be referred to the Community Action Agency, which offers case management and access to a comprehensive set of services and supports.

Conversely, while addressing a range of clients' needs, the Community Action Agency may find that substance abuse is a problem. In that circumstance, the agency may refer such clients to the faith-based organization. In this fashion, the CAA and the FBO work to complement each other's strengths.

It is noteworthy that three of ten survey respondents report having a relationship with a twelve-step program, such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous. Such programs have an avowedly spiritual element that is consistent with the Community Action Agency's mission to help its clients achieve self-sufficiency without continued dependence on government-funded services and supports.

The strength of these referral relationships is suggested by the data in Figure 3, above. Two of five respondents reported that faith-based organizations made referrals to the Community Action Agency on a daily basis and over one-third indicated that faith-based organizations made referrals weekly.

Conversely, three of ten Community Action Agencies reported making referrals to faith-based organizations on a daily basis and two of five made them on a weekly basis.

FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND CAAS REGULARLY MAKE REFERRALS TO EACH OTHER, OFTEN ON A DAILY BASIS

An example of such a cross-referral relationship exists between *Salt Lake Community Action Program (SLCAP)*, Salt Lake City, Utah, and The Cathedral of the Madeleine’s Good Samaritan Program. The agency refers hundreds of families each year to the program, which provides emergency services for low-income families. These services include sack lunches, bus tokens, gasoline vouchers, temporary lodging, emergency food, personal care items, baby items, and prescription assistance.

The agency’s housing and employment program staff make referrals to the Good Samaritans to meet their clients’ basic, immediate, or emergency needs. In return, The Good Samaritan Program refers families to the Community Action Agency for affordable housing rental listings, first month’s rent and deposits, and landlord-tenant dispute intervention and mediation.

3.7 Types and Roles of FBOs Partnering with CAAs

What types of faith-based organizations collaborate with Community Action Agencies? The NACAA survey asked respondents to identify their relationship with various types of FBOs. Nearly nine of ten Community Action Agencies collaborate with nonprofit faith-based affiliates. These include organizations like the Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, and Lutheran Social Services.

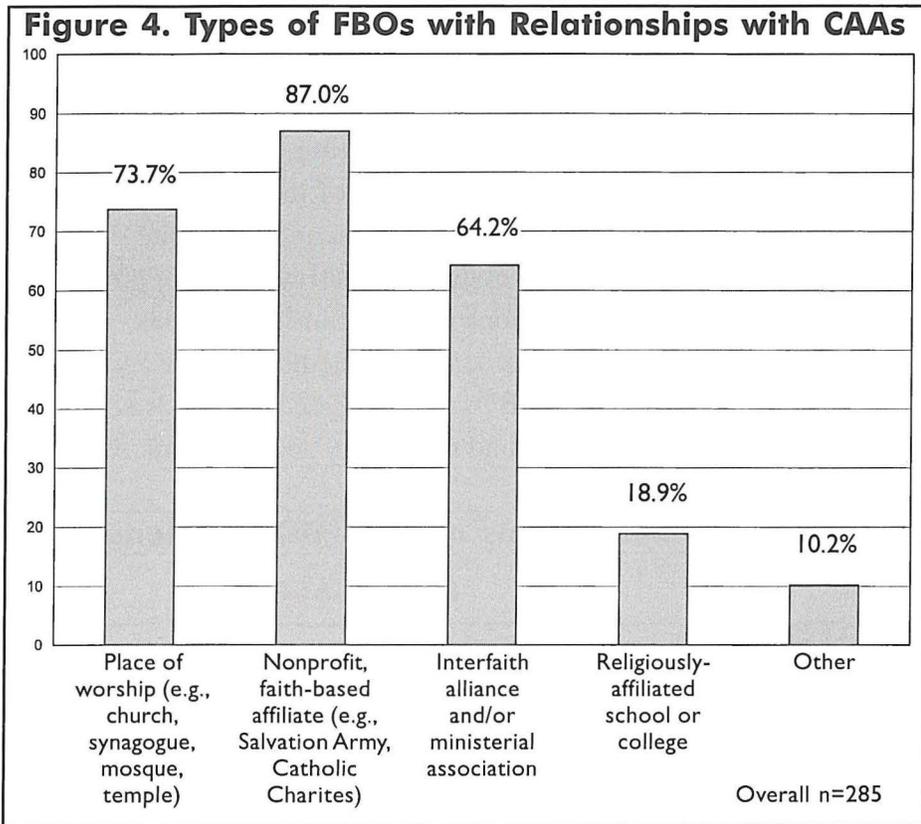
Nearly three-quarters work directly with individual houses of worship, such as parish churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples. Nearly two-thirds collaborate with interfaith alliances or ministerial associations. A smaller, but nonetheless significant proportion — one in five respondents — work with a religiously affiliated school or college. (See Figure 4, next page.)

3.8 CAA Attitudes toward CAA-FBO Relationships

In addition to specifying the nature and extent of their collaboration with faith-based organizations, the respondents also indicated their attitudes toward these relationships. Their responses to selected statements could range from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Thus, seven of ten respondents agreed strongly with the statement: “FBOs refer people because we provide a coordinated range of services.” Over nine of ten respondents believe that faith-based organizations consider the Community Action Agency to be capable and accountable.

CAAs PARTNER WITH VARIOUS TYPES OF FBOs:

- ✓ NONPROFIT FBO AFFILIATES
- ✓ INDIVIDUAL PLACES OF WORSHIP
- ✓ INTERFAITH ALLIANCES AND MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATIONS
- ✓ RELIGIOUSLY AFFILIATED SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES



Obviously, there is no guarantee that a survey of faith-based organizations would yield similar findings. However, the fact that collaborations between Community Action Agencies and faith-based organizations are so widespread suggests that these perceptions of Community Action Agencies may be on target.

At a minimum, these responses indicate the role that Community Action Agencies seek to play as community-based antipoverty and human services organizations. In short, they provide a coordinated array of antipoverty services in a capable and accountable manner. In carrying out their mission, they work with all sectors of the community, in particular with faith-based organizations.

Over eight in ten respondents either disagree or disagree strongly with the idea that faith-based organizations can provide the same or comparable services as the Community Action Agency. What this suggests is there is a keen sense that the strengths of Community Action Agencies and the strengths of faith-based organizations are not duplicative, but rather are complementary. Indeed, 85 percent either agree or agree strongly that Community Action Agencies and faith-based organizations by their very natures have complementary strengths.

**MORE THAN
9 OF 10
RESPONDENTS
BELIEVE THAT FBOs
CONSIDER CAAs
CAPABLE
AND RESPONSIBLE**

CAAS HAVE DEVELOPED SPECIAL EXPERTISE IN MANAGING THE LEGAL AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS OF THEIR FUNDING SOURCES

As noted, Community Action Agencies are designated as such by local or state governments. They function with a diverse set of federal, state, local, and private funding sources. They are required to meet a host of statutory, regulatory, reporting, and financial management requirements in the administration of their programs. Indeed, over the past four decades, they have acquired special expertise in managing the incredibly diverse, sometimes overlapping, sometimes conflicting expectations of their funding sources.

It is not surprising that nine of ten respondents agree or agree strongly with the statement: “FBOs receiving federal funds should have to meet all the legislative and regulatory requirements (e.g.,

Table 6. CAA Perceptions of CAA-FBO Relationships

STATEMENT*	Percent of CAAs					
	SD	D	NO	A	SA	N/A
FBO(s) refer people because we provide a coordinated range of services. (n=280)	4.3	0.0	0.4	20.0	72.5	2.9
FBOs can provide the same or comparable services as our agency. (n=279)	48.7	34.1	6.1	5.7	2.5	2.9
FBOs consider our agency to be capable and accountable. (n=280)	3.9	0.4	0.4	12.9	80.4	2.1
FBOs receiving federal funds should meet all legislative and regulatory requirements. (n=280)	5.4	0.7	1.1	5.4	84.3	3.2
CAAs and FBOs have complementary strengths. (n=278)	3.6	3.6	6.5	41.4	43.9	1.1
Overall n=285 SD= Strongly disagree; D=Disagree; NO=No opinion; A=Agree; SA=Strongly agree; N/A=Not applicable. *Statements are paraphrased for conciseness. See Appendix 3 for complete wording.						

income eligibility, fiscal accountability, nondiscrimination in hiring).” Community Action Agencies have learned that these are important elements in demonstrating accountability for taxpayer dollars, building credibility with all members of the community, and documenting results.

**90% OF
RESPONDENTS
AGREE THAT FBOs
SHOULD MEET ALL
THE LEGISLATIVE
AND REGULATORY
REQUIREMENTS FOR
RECEIVING FEDERAL
FUNDS**

4.

Key Findings, Discussion, and Conclusion



4.1 Key Findings

Community Action Agencies have a long and productive history of relationships with faith-based organizations. Many Community Action Agencies were originally established at the initiative of their community’s faith-based organizations. Faith-based organizations are involved in the governance of Community Action Agencies. More than two-thirds of survey respondents have faith-based organizations represented on their boards of directors. One in five reserves seats for faith-based organizations on its board under the agency’s bylaws.

With respect to ongoing relationships, almost nine in ten respondents work with nonprofit faith-based affiliate organizations, three-quarters work with individual congregations and houses of worship, and nearly two-thirds collaborate with interfaith alliances and ministerial associations.

Nearly two-thirds of the survey respondents report using volunteers from faith-based organizations. These volunteers contributed on average the equivalent of more than one year of a full-time staff member’s service. Over half the respondents received cash contributions from faith-based organizations. Conversely, two of five responding Community Action Agencies contract with one or more faith-based organizations to provide services. Slightly more than two in five jointly manage projects with faith-based organizations. The cross-referral of clients occurs virtually universally.

4.2 Discussion

The faith-based initiative of the new Administration has much to recommend it. Faith-based organizations have proven their ability to change lives and in particular provide low-income people with the incentives and opportunities to move toward self-sufficiency. At the same time, the initiative has raised concerns about its impact on the constitutional separation of church and state.

THE FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE HAS MUCH TO RECOMMEND IT, YET IT HAS ALSO RAISED CONCERNS ABOUT ITS IMPACT ON THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

Charitable choice provisions notwithstanding, faith-based organizations remain leery. They worry about the overlay of rules, regulations, and scrutiny that inevitably accompanies the expenditure of taxpayer dollars.

From the standpoint of Community Action Agencies, an unsettling element is introduced by the enhanced ability of faith-based organizations to compete for federal and state funding without being subject to long-standing requirements for nondiscrimination in hiring, equal access to services, and financial accountability.

At the extreme, charitable choice and the new faith-based initiative may lead some to conclude that they indicate a great void in the provision of community-based services, the failure of Community Action and other community-based institutions, and the lack of any need for alternative, nonsectarian service providers. As a consequence, there is a risk that the historically productive interaction between Community Action Agencies and faith-based organizations could suffer.

There could emerge an unwelcome and divisive competition for limited funds. This could extend to the entire community. There could result an unhealthy competition among faith communities, as one seeks to show how much worthier it is of government funding than another. Members of faith-based communities may decrease their contributions to the extent that they see funding needs being met by public dollars. Clients would face the prospect of being rejected on sectarian grounds or being subjected to unwelcome proselytizing in order to receive services.

But such consequences don't have to be necessary. The exemplary working relationships between Community Action Agencies and faith-based organizations that exist in abundance today can serve as a model for expanded faith-based and community-based partnerships. Building on their complementary strengths, Community Action Agencies and faith-based organizations would benefit from expanded collaboration in order to focus the community's resources more effectively on the poor.

4.3 Conclusion

The first working principle of the faith-based initiative should be to do no harm. That means avoiding the introduction of competitive tensions into communities that could threaten existing relationships and further fragment the service delivery system. Under the initiative, there is an opportunity to create incen-

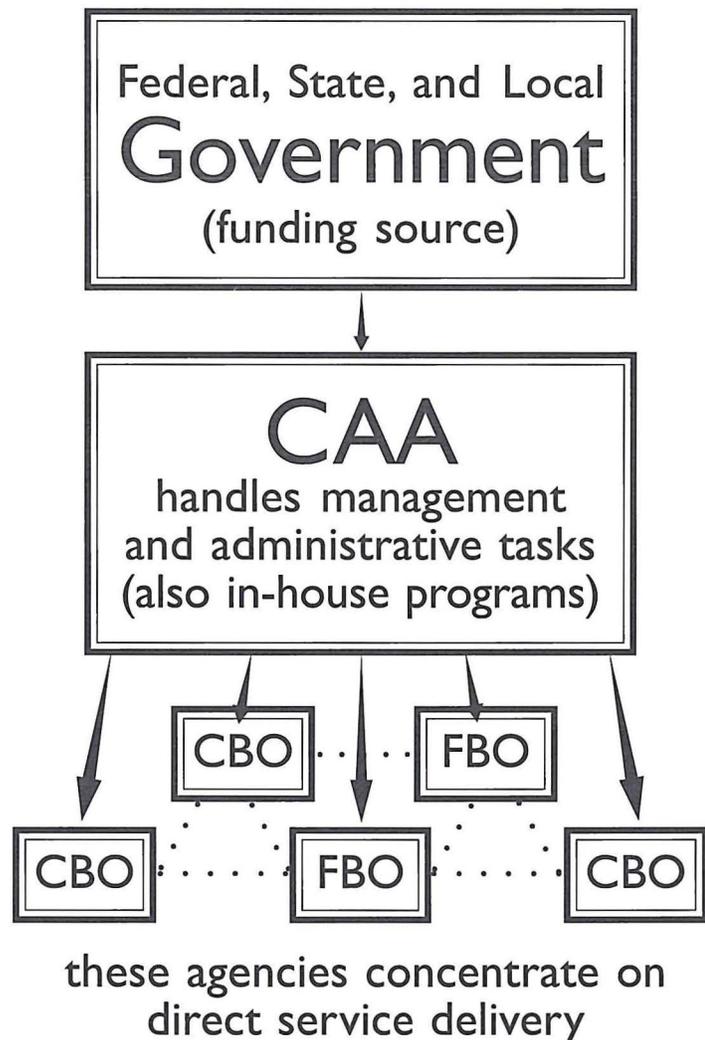
**THE EXEMPLARY
CAA-FBO
RELATIONSHIPS CAN
SERVE AS MODELS
FOR EXPANDED
FAITH-BASED AND
COMMUNITY-BASED
PARTNERSHIPS**

CAAS FUNCTION WELL AS INTERMEDIARY ORGANIZATIONS, ENABLING FBOs TO ACCESS PUBLIC FUNDS, PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY-BUILDING, AND ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY

tives for Community Action Agencies and faith-based organizations to work together. Around the country there are a number of models demonstrating how CAAs and FBOs collaborate to expand existing services and address unmet needs.

Community Action Agencies function well as intermediary organizations that enable faith-based organizations to access public resources for social services while preserving the broader social goals of inclusiveness and accountability. As a national network of community-based organizations, Community Action Agencies have long experience in building effective faith-based partnerships. It is an appropriate time to build on this experience. We should certainly avoid undermining it.

Figure 5. CAA as Intermediary for FBOs and other Community-Based Organizations



Appendix 1

Examples of Web Sites on Faith-Based Initiatives

The sites are listed here for informational purposes only. NACAA does not necessarily support their content or goals.

American Jewish Congress, www.ajcongress.org
 Americans United for Separation of Church and State, www.au.org
 Brookings Institution, www.brook.edu/gs/projects/FaithBasedInitiative.htm
 California Council of Churches, www.calchurches.org
 Castelli Enterprises, Inc., hometown.aol.com/jimcast/welcome.htm
 Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy, Urban Institute, nccs.urban.org
 Call to Renewal, www.calltorenewal.com
 Center for Public Justice, www.cpjustice.org/charitablechoice
 Center for Religion and Civic Culture, University of Southern California,
www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/religion_online/welfare/capacityfindingse.html
 Faith-based Organizations in Rural Community Empowerment,
http://healthinfo.montana.edu/ruralhealth/FORCE_Internet_Resources.html
 Indiana University, Prevention Resource Center,
www.drugs.indiana.edu/prevention/faith.html
 National Aging Information Center, www.aoa.gov/NAIC/Notes/faithandaging.html
 National Association of Community Action Agencies, www.nacaa.org
 National Association for State Community Services Programs, www.nascsp.org
 National Community Action Foundation, www.ncaf.org
 National Housing Institute, www.nhi.org/online/issues/115/FBODirectory.html
 Nonprofit Sector Research Fund, The Aspen Institute,
www.nonprofitresearch.org/index.htm
 OMB Watch Charitable Choice Info. Page, www.ombwatch.org/npadv/2001/charchoice.html
 The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, www.pewforum.org
 Progressive Religious Partnership, www.religiousprogressives.org
 Public/Private Ventures, www.ppv.org
 Texas Department of Human Services, [www.dhs.state.tx.us/
communitypartnerships/charitable](http://www.dhs.state.tx.us/communitypartnerships/charitable)
 U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Center for Faith-Based
 and Community Initiatives, www.hud.gov/cdc.cfm
 Welfare Information Network, www.welfareinfo.org/faithbase.htm
 Welfare Policy Center, Hudson Institute, www.welfare-reformer.org/Faith.html
 White House, www.whitehouse.gov/news/reports/faith-based.pdf

Appendix 2

Selected Comments Included with Survey Responses

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1. Organizations such as Catholic Charities have proven that it is possible to work alongside CAAs to offer the best means of assistance to those in poverty. It is our opinion that by delegating already “strained” funding to inexperienced FBOs, President Bush intends to “reinvent the wheel.” This step, it seems, would only slow down what CAAs are already doing [in] the war on poverty. Our view is that FBOs that would possibly seek funding to start what is already in place should follow the example of Catholic Charities. If CAAs and such organizations could continue to serve as the hub, FBOs could serve as the spokes for added needed assistance. [multi-county, rural Community Action Agency in Missouri]
2. I think it is very unfortunate that the President is fostering what is a divisive issue [rather] than a healing and uniting stance. CAAs work very closely and in partnership with their local religious communities. This has been and continues to be an excellent system of supplementing what each does best. CAAs hold many of the same values as religious organizations. We provide guidance and friendship to our customers. We hold them in our esteem and show respect. [rural and urban Community Action Agency in Washington]
3. I think most of our FBOs would prefer for us to keep receiving funds and they’ll continue to work with us. Some have indicated they could not (or would not) do the “red tape” that we have to do with our programs. [multi-county, rural Community Action Agency in Mississippi]
4. FBOs should not be thrust into competition with CAAs, as that would not be fair to either. Most FBOs have access to monies outside state and federal resources. Why not combine the two and make stronger and more viable programs for the poor, elderly and disadvantaged? [multi-county, rural Community Action Agency in Texas]
5. We have had a long-term relationship (approximately 10 years) with a local congregation. They ask what the program needs and invariably are able to help out. They talk with residents that are interested. There is no exchange of money. It has been invaluable to the program to have been “adopted” by a large, local congregation that cares about the program and its purpose. They respect our role and don’t try to duplicate. [urban Community Action Agency in New Jersey]
6. Organizations using public funds must be accountable and therefore must hold their customers accountable for making good choices and using their resources wisely. FBOs using private donations may focus on practicing

their beliefs (“love thy neighbor as thyself”). Being accountable for public funds would interfere with their religious mission to save souls (“feed the hungry, clothe the naked, house the homeless”) when these hungry, naked, homeless refuse to accept accountability for their own actions. [single-county, rural Community Action Agency in Wyoming]

7. The real question in this proposed initiative is — will those in need be better served and/or will funds be saved? The answer to both is definitely not. This will simply leave more groups competing for existing funds, increasing administrative costs, diluting services, and serving fewer people. The opportunity for FBOs to compete for federal and state funds has always existed. If there is a desire to provide a service or meet an unmet need, many churches have begun a ministry and then spun it off as a private, nonprofit organization able to compete for private and public dollars. Community Action Agencies have a 35 plus year history of providing needed programs and services to all who are in need and doing so effectively, economically, fairly and efficiently. To undo this or dilute this would be a national travesty. [multi-county, rural Community Action Agency in Michigan]
8. CAA and FBO relationships can better serve communities. In the age of collaborative projects, it is sound business to include FBOs as a partner. Some FBOs in our community are blind to government-based programs and alienate themselves from the local social service network. I believe any organization requesting funding should be an active participant in community meetings and assisting in obtaining information for community needs assessments. The FBOs should be required to abide by the same rules and regulations imposed upon CAAs. [multi-county, rural Community Action Agency in Oregon]
9. Depending upon the degree to which FBOs don't have to follow the same federal guidelines as CAAs do, many more FBOs may be after the money. CAAs do a good job of providing services to ALL in need, regardless of sex, religion, race, age, etc. We fear that FBOs will focus on helping their own and that we will end up with a huge duplication of services being provided. [rural and urban Community Action Agency in Iowa]
10. We have a good working relationship with area churches now. Creating another social service network will create a competitive nature between us, and will change the focus of our current relationship. It will take already small administrative dollars and stretch them even further, which will result in fewer service dollars. [multi-county, rural Community Action Agency in Minnesota]
11. Our concern is that well-intentioned FBO volunteers would differentiate between the “deserving” and the “undeserving” poor. CAAs provide direct services without passing judgment on or discriminating against those who need help. [multi-county, urban and rural Community Action Agency in California]
12. [Our agency] has had relationships with FBOs for years. The relationships have not particularly varied from our relationships with non-FBOs. We have a public procurement process that is used to select organizations from which to buy services in the community. Several of the successful respondents have been FBOs. They have not been selected because they are an FBO, but rather, because they scored well in meeting the requirements stipulated in the request for proposals. [metropolitan Community Action Agency in Oregon]

13. I see the faith community as a partner in the mission of Community Action. [single-county, rural Community Action Agency in Pennsylvania]
14. FBOs tell us that we are able to be effective in settings that they would not have the trained staff or capacity [such as] where sanitation, safety, and mental illness are a concern. We work with FBOs on a case-by-case basis analyzing our individual areas of strengths and expertise and then making a cost effective plan for helping people in need in our community together. [urban Community Action Agency in Tennessee]
15. In our rural communities, FBOs work in partnership with the CAA. Usually the FBO lacks staff, expertise, and experience to work directly with clients in need. So the FBOs rely on [our agency] to screen clients, prevent duplication of services, and provide case management. The FBOs generally prefer the role of providing financial or in-kind support and leadership through advisory or governing boards. [multi-county, rural Community Action Agency in Virginia]
16. It has always been that CAAs look at programs based on merit and community need and impact and not on religious affiliation. If this changes, there will be an increase in duplicative programming. As it stands now, in [our county], none of our programs are duplicative of any community-based or faith-based organization. [rural and urban Community Action Agency in New York]
17. In our estimation, letting FBOs compete with CAAs for funding will be a duplicative effort. Opening the FBO arena will be like “reinventing the wheel,” especially in rural areas like ours. And it would very likely ruin the collaborative spirit that has taken many years to build. [multi-county, rural Community Action Agency in Ohio]
18. We are in a very rural area, dominated primarily by conservative denominations. FBOs are not well organized and, with the exception of food pantries, there is little interest in FBOs administering programs. Most of the larger churches are becoming interested in forming private schools rather than administering social programs. [multi-county, rural Community Action Agency in Arkansas]
19. This type of relationship is not something that we report on a monthly basis for state or national statistics. It is a relationship of community trust, reliance and it is an unspoken knowledge that we are all going to go the extra mile to help someone in need. [multi-county, rural Community Action Agency in Ohio]
20. It has been my experience that the Faith-Based Organizations play an important role in providing direction to CAAs in policy-making, and the establishing of an agenda of an agency and the programs offered to the low-income. Should they begin to administer federal programs, they will lose an important role as a resource in the community and as an independent advocate for the poor. [multi-county, rural Community Action Agency in Oklahoma]
21. This is a direct assault on separation of church and state. There are many mainstream FBOs already providing services. This is an attempt to interject a specific type of religion into people’s lives. [multi-county, rural Community Action Agency in Ohio]
22. Concerns regarding CAA/FBO relationships: Will this money become a war-zone that will erode relationships? We already work well together so

why rock the boat? Will FBOs be held to the same accountability as we are? Will this be another level of bureaucracy? [single-county, rural Community Action Agency in Tennessee]

23. We don't think we have had a "model" relationship with an FBO. We cross-refer, help each other, get along. This is not national news! [multi-county, rural Community Action Agency in Michigan]
24. I worked for almost 15 years as the Director of an FBO. There seems to be fear on both sides. We need to develop ways that we can leave our "separating" hats at the door and work together to meet the needs in our communities. We need to not only acknowledge our differences but to recognize our common goals and objectives. Sometimes, it seems as if we focus on the differences; this tends to inhibit our working relationships. The need is to focus on the common goal and to trust each other. [single-county, rural Community Action Agency in California]
25. Our relationship with FBOs has been mostly financial agreements for children's centers. They have been extremely costly contracts for very high rents. There has been little reduction or in-kind offered. We often feel that churches have seen that our agency's Head Start program is a money source for their churches. [rural and urban Community Action Agency in California]
26. FBOs are important members in this community. Each has its special strengths and focus. In combination with a larger multi-service CAP, the needs and interests of low-income families and individuals can be matched to those of the FBO. The CAP is often the vehicle that protects confidentiality, nurtures trust, and acts as the link for some agency clients to the most appropriate FBO. [single-county, rural Community Action Agency in Massachusetts]
27. Many FBOs do not want to be lead fiscal agent and needing to develop administrative capacity but would like to partner with CAAs and other community-based organizations who would do the fiscal oversight and [act as] lead. This is a giant leap to ask FBOs to give up partnering, which would be a much better idea. If not, FBOs may be held to a lesser fiscal standard, and program reputation will be damaged. [multi-county, rural Community Action Agency in California]
28. These partnerships are a perfect example of how, and why, faith-based organizations and Community Action Agencies have found ways to mobilize private dollars and volunteers to supplement federal dollars, and make a real difference in the lives of the disadvantaged, promoting healing and renewal. [urban Community Action Agency in Pennsylvania]

Appendix 3

Copy of CAA-FBO Survey Instrument

CAA-FBO
Survey
Cover
Page

2001 NACAA Survey
of
CAA Relationships
with
Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs)



February 2001

**PLEASE COMPLETE THE SURVEY.
DATED MATERIAL - READ IMMEDIATELY!**

National Association of Community Action Agencies
1100 17th Street, NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20036
Fax 202-265-8850



**The National Association of
Community Action Agencies (NACAA)**

"Helping People Help Themselves"

Executive Director

John Buckstead

Executive Board

Paul D. Dole, CCAP, *President*
Barbourville, KY

Bill Powell, *1st Vice President*
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Marcia Rose Walker, CCAP, *3rd Vice President*
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Joyce Dorsey, *Secretary*
Atlanta, GA

MacDonald Stacks, CCAP, *Treasurer*
Lancaster, PA

MEMO

TO: All CAA Executive Directors
FROM: John Buckstead
DATE: February 13, 2001
RE: NACAA FBO Survey

Community action agencies have a long and productive history of relationships with faith-based organizations. To be ready to address the issues and seize the opportunities presented by President Bush's Faith Based and Community Initiative, it is important that we document these relationships and their success. The attached NACAA Survey of CAA Relationships with FBOs will allow us to gather the raw data to produce such documentation. The report we develop from this survey information will paint the national picture of the relationship between CAAs and FBOs and will create a framework you can use for your own agency's unique situation.

The survey is designed to capture the scope of relationships between community action agencies and religious organizations in their communities. For the sake of this survey, an FBO can be defined as 1) a local place of worship, such as a church, mosque, synagogue or temple; 2) a service-providing organization affiliated with a religious group (this could be anything from a church-operated child care facility to the Salvation Army); 3) a religiously affiliated school or college; or 4) an interfaith or ecumenical alliance, or a ministerial association. As you complete the survey, be sure to take into consideration all of the religiously affiliated organizations with which your agency works.

We know that you recently received a survey on this same topic from NCAF. Although both surveys ask for some of the same information, because of the different purposes of the surveys, NACAA and NCAF agreed that each organization needed to use a different format. Our survey was designed so that the information can be aggregated to present a national perspective. Also, we worked hard to make our survey as brief and as simple to complete as possible.

Whether this project results in a report that is useful to community action depends very much on you! The more completed surveys NACAA receives, the more accurate the picture of CAA/FBO relationships.

We have been asked by several state CAA associations to share the completed surveys with them. We have therefore included a question on the last page of the survey that asks for your approval to provide a copy of your survey to your state association. In the final report, no CAA will be identified by name, except for those whose model projects will be used to illustrate the variety and innovation of CAA/FBO partnerships. Prior approval from the CAA will be obtained before including their model project in the final report.

This survey is one of a series that NACAA is sponsoring to develop a national picture of community action. The February issue of the *NACAA network* contains an article describing NACAA's research project.

We expect to complete a preliminary analysis of the FBO survey data prior to our Policy Forum on May 1 so that the results may be a topic of discussion at that event. In addition, the survey results should be extremely useful in educating policymakers on community action and its impact on low-income individuals, families, and communities.

Please return the completed survey to NACAA by February 28, 2001, attention: Suzette Murrell. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Judy Mason at jmason@naca.org or (202) 265-7546.

(202) 265-7546

1100 17th Street, NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20036

Fax (202) 265-8850

info@naca.org <http://www.naca.org>

2001 NACAA FBO SURVEY

C. VOLUNTEERS

1. Do any FBOs provide your agency with volunteers? _____ YES _____ NO
(If YES, answer Questions 2-4.)
- NUMBER**
2. In the year 2000, how many different FBOs provided volunteers to your agency? _____ FBOs
3. Please estimate the number of volunteer hours that were provided to your agency in 2000 through FBOs? _____ hours
4. What services did your agency provide with the assistance of FBO-sponsored volunteers? Check all that apply.
- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| _____ food and nutrition | _____ clothing |
| _____ housing construction | _____ mortgage payments |
| _____ rental payments | _____ home repairs/weatherization |
| _____ homelessness services | _____ utility bill payments |
| _____ transportation | _____ parenting skills |
| _____ computer/Internet access | _____ child care |
| _____ literacy/GED classes | _____ teen counseling |
| _____ crisis pregnancy | _____ emergency assistance |
| _____ health care | _____ holiday donations (food baskets, toys, etc.) |
- OTHER: _____

D. FBO CASH OR IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

1. How many FBOs provided cash to support your agency's programs in 2000? _____ FBOs
2. How many FBOs donated space for your agency's programs in 2000? _____ FBOs
3. How many FBOs donated equipment and supplies for your agency's programs in 2000? _____ FBOs
4. How many FBOs donated food, clothing or household items for your agency's programs in 2000? _____ FBOs
5. How many FBOs provided other in-kind contributions to your agency in 2000? _____ FBOs

E. CONTRACTS AND REFERRAL ARRANGEMENTS

1. Does your agency contract with one or more FBOs to deliver services (e.g., Early Head Start, information and referrals, immigration assistance)? _____ YES _____ NO
2. How many such contract arrangements are currently in effect? _____ contracts
3. Do one or more FBOs refer clients to your agency? _____ YES _____ NO
4. How often does this occur on average? (Check one only.)
- _____ Daily
 _____ Weekly
 _____ Monthly
 _____ Quarterly
 _____ Less frequently than quarterly

2001 NACAA FBO SURVEY

5. Does your agency ever refer clients to one or more FBOs? ____ YES ____ NO

6. How often does this occur on average? (Check one only.)
 ____ Daily
 ____ Weekly
 ____ Monthly
 ____ Quarterly
 ____ Less frequently than quarterly

7. Does your agency jointly manage one or more projects with FBOs? ____ YES ____ NO

8. If YES to Question 7, how many such projects? ____ projects

9. Does your agency have a relationship (refer clients, provide meeting space, etc.) with any Twelve Step Programs (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous) ____ YES ____ NO

10. Does your agency partner with FBOs in any other ways? Describe briefly.

F. FBO IDENTIFICATION AND ROLE

1. For this question, please name each of the FBOs with which your agency has a relationship. If there are more than five FBOs, add them on the back of this sheet. Indicate the type of relationship using one of the letters below. **Circle all letters that apply for each FBO.**

- A = Serves on CAA board and/or one or more advisory committees.
- B = Provides volunteers for CAA projects.
- C = Provides cash or in-kind contributions to CAA activities.
- D = Sends referrals to CAA.
- E = Receives referrals from CAA.
- F = Operates under a contract from CAA.
- G =Other: _____

Name of FBO

1. _____	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
2. _____	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
3. _____	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
4. _____	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
5. _____	A	B	C	D	E	F	G

2. Based on your response to the previous question, what are the types of FBOs with which your agency has a relationship ? **Circle all that apply.**

- 1 - place of worship (e.g., church, synagogue, mosque, temple)
- 2 - nonprofit faith-based affiliates (include Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, etc., as well as social services ministries of individual congregations)
- 3 - interfaith alliances or ministerial associations
- 4 - religiously affiliated school or college
- 5 - other _____

2001 NACAA FBO SURVEY

G. ATTITUDES TOWARD CAA-FBO RELATIONSHIPS

Please read the following statements. Determine your reaction to each statement by circling the appropriate number. Code:

- 1 - Strongly Disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - No Opinion
- 4 - Agree
- 5 - Strongly Agree
- 6 - Not Applicable

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. FBOs refer people to our agency because we provide a coordinated range of services. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 2. FBOs can provide the same or comparable range and types of services available through our agency. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 3. FBOs consider our agency to be capable and accountable in serving low-income people. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 4. FBOs receiving federal funds should have to meet all the legislative and regulatory requirements (e.g., income eligibility, fiscal accountability, nondiscrimination in hiring). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 5. CAAs and FBOs can work together because they have complementary strengths. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

H. MODEL CAA - FBO RELATIONSHIP

Please briefly describe your most successful relationship with a faith-based organization. Include (a) background (b) situation addressed (c) objectives (d) key features of the relationship (e) funding (f) current status (g) accomplishments. Feel free to use additional paper if necessary. (Note: NACAA may contact you to discuss using your case example in reports based on this survey.)

2001 NACAA FBO SURVEY

I. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE CAA - FBO RELATIONSHIP

* NACAA is authorized to share this survey form with the State CAA Association. YES NO
(Note: If neither box is marked, NO is assumed.)

Name of Person Completing Survey: _____

Title of Person Completing Survey: _____ Date: _____



**THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY.
PLEASE MAIL OR FAX IT BY FEBRUARY 28, 2001, TO:**

**SUZETTE MURRELL
1100 17TH STREET, NW
SUITE 500
WASHINGTON, DC 20036**

202-265-8850 FAX

Appendix 4

Survey Count by Region

Region 1

Connecticut – 5
Maine – 4
Massachusetts – 6
New Hampshire – 2
Rhode Island – 0
Vermont – 0

Region 2

New Jersey – 5
New York – 14
Puerto Rico – 1
U.S. Virgin
Islands – 0

Region 3

District of
Columbia – 0
Delaware – 0
Maryland – 6
Pennsylvania – 17
Virginia – 4
West Virginia – 4

Region 4

Alabama – 8
Florida – 5
Georgia – 9
Kentucky – 9
Mississippi – 5
North Carolina – 7
South Carolina – 3
Tennessee – 4

Region 5

Illinois – 12
Indiana – 6
Michigan – 13
Minnesota – 10
Ohio – 11
Wisconsin – 3

Region 6

Arkansas – 2
Louisiana – 9
New Mexico – 4
Oklahoma – 6
Texas – 11

Region 7

Iowa – 10
Kansas – 2
Missouri – 12
Nebraska – 4

Region 8

Colorado – 1
Montana – 3
North Dakota – 6
South Dakota – 2
Utah – 2
Wyoming – 1

Region 9

Arizona – 2
California – 14
Hawaii – 2
Nevada – 1
Trust Territories – 0

Region 10

Alaska – 0
Idaho – 4
Oregon – 6
Washington – 11

Total

No. of states/U.S. territories that responded – 47
No. of states/U.S. territories that did not respond – 7
All 10 standard federal regions are represented.

n=285

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