

# Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council: Volunteer Information

The Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council is partnering with state agencies in Florida to provide faith-based and community-based organizations volunteer opportunities in every community. Volunteers are a driving force and energy behind faith-based and community-based organizations that can provide vital services to the community and its citizens. In order to maximize the effectiveness the state has increasingly been facilitating collaborations between the government, its agencies, departments and programs and faith-based and community-based organizations.

Below are state agencies, information about their scope of operation, links to more information, and contact information if you are interested in volunteering with the state agency.

## **Agency for Healthcare Administration**

Florida KidCare

[www.fdhc.state.fl.us/Medicaid/MediKids/index.shtml](http://www.fdhc.state.fl.us/Medicaid/MediKids/index.shtml)

Contact: [gail.hansen@ahca.myflorida.com](mailto:gail.hansen@ahca.myflorida.com)

*What is Florida KidCare?*

Florida KidCare is the State of Florida's high-quality, low-cost health insurance for children. The program was created through Title XXI of the Social Security Act and reauthorized in 2009. Through its four partners, including Florida Healthy Kids, the program covers children from birth through age 18.

*The Agency for Health Care Administration:*

- Administers Medicaid services.
- Administers MediKids program for children ages 1 through 4.
- Works with the federal government to make sure the Florida KidCare program follows all federal laws and rules.

Resources:

- Eligibility
- Helpful Information
- Brochure

Currently, more than 1.8 million Florida children are enrolled in Florida KidCare. Enrollment is open and families can apply online (<https://www.healthykids.org/apply/>) or call 1-888-540-KIDS (5437) to have an application mailed to them.

## **Agency for Persons with Disabilities**

Family Care Council

<http://fccflorida.org/>

Contact: [stephanie\\_rogers@apd.state.fl.us](mailto:stephanie_rogers@apd.state.fl.us)

The mission of the Family Care Council is to advocate, educate, and empower individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, partnering with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), to bring quality services to individuals for dignity and choice. The Family Care Council (FCC) is not a provider of services. The FCC is comprised of volunteers from within an area's developmental disability community, i.e., individuals who have a developmental disability or a family member or guardian of a person with a developmental disability. The FCC was established through Florida Statute 393.502 and each of the 14 area councils are allowed up to 15 members, at least three of which must be a person with a developmental disability. Knowledge is power! For more information please visit <http://fccflorida.org/>.

## **Department of Children and Families**

There are many ways faith-based and community-based organizations can engage with Department of Children and Families and the clients they serve.

*Partners for Promise*

[www.FLPartnersforPromise.com](http://www.FLPartnersforPromise.com)

Contact: [Kriss\\_Vallese@dcf.state.fl.us](mailto:Kriss_Vallese@dcf.state.fl.us)

Partners for Promise is a statewide initiative designed to engage businesses and organizations in volunteer activities that enable Florida's families, children and seniors to pursue healthy, safe and productive lives. The volunteer possibilities are unlimited. This program encourages Florida's businesses, large and small, to share their time, talents and resources in five focus areas, the "Five Promises for Florida."

- Promise of Academic Success – focus on foster children mentoring and education.
- Promise of Family Prosperity – focus on coaching families out of poverty.
- Promise of Healthy Living – helping those who are either recovering from addictions as well as those who may be pregnant and in need of short-term help.
- Promise of Child Safety – building stability in families during times of crisis.
- Promise to Support our Seniors – providing supports that ensure quality of life for Florida's elderly.

*Camps for Champions*

[www.campsforchampions.org](http://www.campsforchampions.org)

Contact: [Johnf\\_Davis@dcf.state.fl.us](mailto:Johnf_Davis@dcf.state.fl.us)

Camps for Champions provides an opportunity for hundreds of children and young adults from Florida's foster care system to participate in a summer camp experience. DCF staff teams up with nationally recognized professional athletes and role models, community partners, and other

mentors to create and lead wellness and leadership activities to help these young adults build self-esteem and confidence to succeed in life. Camps are held all across the state. Volunteer opportunities include camp sponsorships, providing supplies or meals, mentoring, creating camp activities and recreation, and much, much more. Volunteers may provide administrative support in an office setting, lend their special skills as medical and dental professionals, interpreters, computer experts, photographers, and more. Community and faith based organizations are key components in the program.

*Everybody's a Teacher*

[www.dcf.state.fl.us/initiatives/everybodysateacher](http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/initiatives/everybodysateacher)

Contact: [Mary\\_Cagle@dcf.state.fl.us](mailto:Mary_Cagle@dcf.state.fl.us)

Children and youth in foster care can have very little stability in their educational experience, and face life challenges that very few of their teachers and peers understand. As a result, educational performance and graduation rates among foster children are very low. Everybody's a Teacher is an initiative to help children & youth in foster care get the best education possible. Mentors are needed across the state.

### **Department of Corrections**

Each year thousands of Florida citizens contribute thousands of hours of valuable service in Florida prisons. The involvement of volunteers is highly valued by the Department. It is an opportunity that is both important public service and personally rewarding experience.

Volunteers help the Department to deliver better programs and services. They bring a variety of skills and display an exceptional brand of engaged citizenship. Many volunteers help offenders become more productive, educated, self-sufficient, and law abiding citizens. We, at the Department of Corrections, pledge to provide you with adequate training and the appropriate utilization of your time and talent! For more information please visit <http://fldocjobs.com/volunteer/index.html>.

### **Department of Education**

The Bureau of Family and Community Outreach provides technical assistance, resources and services to Faith and Community-Based Organizations to promote family involvement in their communities. Our goal is to partner with Faith and Community-Based Organizations who want to reach out and support families in their communities in helping their children achieve academic excellence. The Bureau also provides resources, training, recognition, and technical assistance for parents, volunteers, schools and communities to support families in making choices that will promote a high quality education for their children.

Programs:

*Dropout Prevention*

<http://www.fldoe.org/family/dropout/default.asp>

Contact: [Tameka.Thomas@fldoe.org](mailto:Tameka.Thomas@fldoe.org)

The Office of Dropout Prevention provides technical assistance, strategies and resources to assist students, schools, parents and community organizations throughout the state of Florida. Our efforts ensure students have access to innovative programs which improve the quality of education options available to enhance students' opportunities for access, advancement, and achievement.

*Parent Involvement*

<http://www.fldoe.org/family/title1/>

Contact: [Joyce.Hobson@fldoe.org](mailto:Joyce.Hobson@fldoe.org)

When schools work together with families to support learning, children are better prepared to succeed not just in school, but throughout life. The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) recognizes that a child's education is a responsibility shared by the school and family during the entire period the child spends in school. Although parents come to schools with diverse backgrounds, primary languages, and needs, they want their children to be successful in school. FDOE, Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), and schools, in collaboration with parents, teachers, students, and administrators, are working together to enhance parental involvement and recognize the needs of students and families in the communities they serve.

*Safe Schools*

<http://www.fldoe.org/safeschools/>

Contact: [Brooks.Rumenik@fldoe.org](mailto:Brooks.Rumenik@fldoe.org)

The Office of Safe Schools serves to promote and support safe learning environments by addressing issues of student safety and academic success on state, district, and school levels. Schools that implement school safety measures, drug prevention programs, and positive school climate that promote caring relationships either directly or indirectly facilitate rising student academic achievement.

*21st Century Community Learning Centers*

<http://www.fldoe.org/curriculum/21century/>

Contact: [Lani.Lingo@fldoe.org](mailto:Lani.Lingo@fldoe.org)

The 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) initiative is a key component of the "No Child Left Behind" Act. It is an opportunity for students to enhance and reinforce academic lessons of the regular school day, while also allowing them to learn new skills and discover new opportunities after the regular school day has ended.

*The Family & School Partnership for Student Achievement Act*

<http://www.fldoe.org/family/fspsa.asp>

Contact: [Joyce.Hobson@fldoe.org](mailto:Joyce.Hobson@fldoe.org)

This law was created to provide parents with specific information about their child's educational progress and promote family and community involvement. Each school year districts are required to develop and distribute a parent resource guide which gives parents information about their school district. The parent resource guide is due on October 1st of each fiscal year to the

Department of Education. The Bureau of Family and Community Outreach provides technical assistance to districts to ensure compliance.

*Faith & Community-Based Outreach*

<http://www.fldoe.org/family/fbo.asp>

Contact: [Joyce.Hobson@fldoe.org](mailto:Joyce.Hobson@fldoe.org)

The Department of Education Faith & Community-Based Outreach program works to reach out into the communities to provide educational services to families to help their children reach Florida's academic standards. To provide local faith and community-based organizations with tools that will enable them to promote family involvement in schools in their communities.

*Florida After-School Network*

<http://www.myfan.org/>

The Florida Afterschool Network provides unified leadership to advocate for the development, enhancement and sustainability of innovative, high quality afterschool programs and policies statewide. The Florida Department of Education is a key partner along with the Children's Services Councils of Florida, the Florida After School Alliance, The Children's Forum, and other stakeholders whose common thread is the desire for all children to have access to fun, engaging, and educational afterschool opportunities.

Recognition Programs:

<http://www.fldoe.org/family/dvc.asp>

Contact: [Susan.Walton@fldoe.org](mailto:Susan.Walton@fldoe.org)

Commissioner's Business Recognition Awards are awarded to worthy business partners for their commitment to improving the academic performance of Florida's public school students and for their outstanding public service. We are proud to recognize excellence in education with the following Awards:

- Five Star School Awards
- Golden and Silver School Awards
- Outstanding School Volunteer Awards
- Parent Involvement Awards

Resources:

- Questions Parents Ask About Schools
- 100 Tips for Parents
- Fact Sheets for Families
- Family Fun Reading Activities
- Sparkplugs for Parent Involvement

For more information please contact: Bureau of Family and Community Outreach

Florida Department of Education

Phone: 850-245-0847

Website: <http://www.fldoe.org/family>

## **Department of Elder Affairs**

As one of Florida's smallest state agencies, the Department of Elder Affairs has to use innovative and cost-effective methods to serve one of the state's largest populations. With the help of more than 40,000 volunteers, the Department and the aging services network are able to foster an environment where seniors can thrive and grow. Through its dedicated corps of volunteers, the Department can be a perfect fit for anyone with a passion for advocacy and helping seniors.

Programs:

*Americorps*

<http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/americorps.php>

Contact: FDEA AmeriCorps Program Director 850-414-2000

A network of national service programs that engage members and community volunteers in intensive service to meet critical needs in education, public health and the environment. Since 1996, the Department of Elder Affairs has partnered with Volunteer Florida and local community-based organizations to administer AmeriCorps programs that provide respite, home modification and repair, chore services and community outreach to elders, caregivers and families.

*Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program*

<http://ombudsman.myflorida.com/Volunteer.php>

Contact: [LTCOPInformer@elderaffairs.org](mailto:LTCOPInformer@elderaffairs.org) or 1-888-831-0404

Utilizes volunteers to help improve the lives of Floridians by advocating on behalf of those who live in long-term care settings such as nursing homes, assisted living facilities and adult family care homes.

*Respite for Elders Living in Everyday Families – RELIEF*

<http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/relief.php>

Contact: Christine Kucera or Mary Hodges (850) 414-2000

Offers respite services to caregivers of frail elders and those with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia. The RELIEF Program provides in-home respite that is an expansion of respite currently available through other programs, including evening and weekend respite. The purpose of this service is to increase the ability of a family unit to continue to care for a homebound elderly individual by providing in-home respite beyond the basic provisions of current public programs.

*Senior Companion Program*

[http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/senior\\_companion.php](http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/senior_companion.php)

Contact: (850) 414-2000

Volunteers provide services to elders at risk of institutionalization due to chronic illness, disability or isolation. Services include such things as transportation to medical appointments, shopping assistance, meal preparation, companionship and advocacy, as well as respite for

caregivers. By remaining active and contributing to their communities, Senior Companion volunteers benefit from the program along with the clients they serve. Program goals include establishing new social service roles for lower-income elder volunteers through which they maintain a sense of self-worth, improved health and mental alertness.

*Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders – SHINE*

<http://www.floridashine.org/>

Contact: [information@elderaffairs.org](mailto:information@elderaffairs.org) or 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337)

Provides educational materials and free, unbiased insurance counseling to Florida elders, caregivers and family members. Our goal is to help elders understand and receive the health insurance coverage they need through Medicare, Medicaid, Prescription Assistance, Long-Term Care Planning & Insurance, and other health care issues.

## **Department of Health**

The Florida Department of Health is home to a number of diverse programs aimed at protecting and promoting the health of all residents and visitors in the state. Many of our programs carried out at the local level are done so in collaboration with community partnerships. For information on volunteering locally in your community, please contact your county health department. Other statewide collaboration opportunities include:

### **Volunteer Health Services Program**

- This innovative program is a network of volunteers who promote access to quality health care for medically underserved and uninsured residents in Florida through the commitment of volunteers.  
The Florida Department of Health provides many opportunities for anyone who wants to contribute.
- This program is active in almost all of Florida's counties. Click on Chapter 110 Volunteer Program Manual for more information or contact Glen Davis at 850-245-4104.

### **HIV/AIDS Testing/Prevention/ETC**

- Community involvement is an important part of HIV prevention. The goals of the faith initiative are to expand opportunities for faith-based organizations to strengthen their capacity to meet the HIV/AIDS needs of Floridians and to mobilize congregations to respond to the HIV/AIDS crisis regardless of race, ethnicity, or behavior. All of the faith initiatives listed below are currently ongoing:
  - Faith-Based Advisory Group – In 2004, the Bureau of HIV/AIDS established a Faith-Based Advisory Group in an effort to address HIV/AIDS issues in Florida's communities of faith. The advisory group consists of pastors from around the state that represent a variety of denominations and make recommendations on how to work effectively with other faith-based organizations and develop materials to be used in

churches throughout the state. To be a part of this Advisory Group, visit <http://www.wemakethechange.com/wp-content/uploads/Faith-Partnership-App.pdf>.

- African Methodist Episcopal Church Initiative -The Florida Department of Health partnered with the Eleventh Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church with the goal of establishing at least one AME church as an HIV testing site or test location in each of Florida's 67 counties. To become a testing site, visit <http://www.wemakethechange.com/wp-content/uploads/Faith-Partnership-App.pdf>
- The National Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS – The Bureau of HIV/AIDS coordinates activities during the National Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS, which occurs annually during the first week of March. To participate in the National Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS, visit <http://www.wemakethechange.com/wp-content/uploads/Faith-Partnership-App.pdf>
- For more information on how to be a part of these faith-based initiatives, visit <http://www.wemakethechange.com/wp-content/uploads/Faith-Partnership-App.pdf> and for other volunteerism opportunities with HIV/AIDS prevention, visit <http://www.wemakethechange.com/community/volunteering/>
- Child Care Food Program
  - The Florida Department of Health's Child Care Food Program helps reimburse child care settings for nutritious meals and snacks. Currently, over 190 faith-based organizations participate in the Child Care Food Program in addition to other care centers such as, family child care homes, homeless shelters and afterschool care programs.
  - For more information on how to qualify as a participant in the Child Care Food Program visit <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/ccfp/index.htm>
- Body and Soul in Motion
  - Aimed at African American churches, this evidence-based program promotes an environment of and activities that support healthy behaviors. Church members receive training and materials for their congregation to help build sustainable healthy changes within their church community.
  - To learn more about bringing Body & Soul in Motion to your congregation contact Cynthia Seaborn, Office of Minority Health's State Partnership Program by phone at 850-245-4941 or email at [Cynthia\\_seaborn@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:Cynthia_seaborn@doh.state.fl.us)
  - Get Involved in Your Community: Tobacco Free Partnerships are made up of community organizations and leaders committed to educating others about tobacco use, helping protect kids from tobacco, and strengthening local policies, especially those that protect the public from secondhand smoke. If you are interested in helping implement change, visit <http://www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/getinvolved.html>
- Tobacco Free Florida

- Tobacco Free Florida's Faith Based Project: The purpose of Tobacco Free Florida's Faith Based project is to work with local faith-based organizations to eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke through policy development, increased access to cessation services and addressing point of sale tobacco issues in rural and low-income underserved populations in Madison and Jefferson County. This strategy targets populations underserved by tobacco control programs and cessation campaigns. In addition, the strategy incorporates the development of a health ministry for sustainability purposes. For more information, contact: Kalinda Pyles at 850-245-4144.

## **Department of Juvenile Justice**

### Faith Community Network/Chaplaincy Services Program Overview

The vision of the Faith Community Network and Volunteer Chaplaincy Services program is to provide a full range of programs and services that will turn around the lives of troubled youth and ensure that voluntary chaplaincy services are available to youth and their families during times of family crisis. Currently, more than 1,800 faith communities and faith-based organizations serve as Faith Partners providing services such as mentoring, tutoring, after school programs, pastoral care and counseling. To date, (474) volunteer Chaplains and faith volunteers have completed the Chaplains Basic Training and serve as Chaplains in juvenile justice facilities across Florida.

For more information or to become involved in the Faith Community Network/Chaplaincy Services program please contact:

Andy Hindman, Director of Faith and Community-Based Partnerships

Office of Prevention and Victim Services

Office: (850) 410-2577

E-Mail: [andy.hindman@djj.state.fl.us](mailto:andy.hindman@djj.state.fl.us)

## **Guardian ad Litem**

### *What is the Guardian ad Litem Program and the role of the volunteer?*

The Florida Guardian ad Litem Program is a state program which is appointed by a court whenever a child is removed from a parent by DCF because a child was abused or neglected and can't be kept safe in their home. At the first court hearing the Judge appoints the program.

Our Program assigns a volunteer and their job is to be a voice for the child and to advocate for the child's best interest. They also become the person who is there for the child in all matters, to help them, and to fight for them.

The volunteer is invested in the child, connected to the community, trained by the program and most important passionate that they state unequivocally that "I am for the child".

### *Who can be a volunteer?*

First, you have to have big heart for children. You must be 21 years old, have local and national

background screening an interview and 30 hours of training to prepare you to be certified as a volunteer. The child you are assigned takes about 10 hours each month. So you must have time to give.

Once certified you will sit down with an advocacy team leader and discuss a child for whom you may be a voice. You will then meet the child. That child will have their own advocate to trust and call their own.

*Why are the volunteers so important?*

The volunteer is an independent voice for the child. They bring their life experiences to the table enhancing possible creative solutions for the child.

The volunteer investigates and examines the situation including needs and wants of the child, they facilitate in partnership with the community providers so the child's needs are met, they advocate for the child, and they monitor the case so the WHOLE child's needs are met (this means all aspects of the child's life).

The Judge relies on the volunteer in making decisions. In addition, the volunteers become so much more to the child, a mentor, someone to trust and lean on, a role model, an advocate in the court, school or meeting the needs of the child in any way possible.

Studies have shown when there is a volunteer there is less time in foster care, higher permanency rates including adoptions, increased services and enhanced educational outcomes. It gives a child one constant person who will be there for them during a traumatic time of their life.

*How do I become a volunteer?*

Today in Florida too many abused and neglected children will go to court with no one there to stand up for them – to be their voice. You can change that and help make a difference in the life of a child.

You can pave a positive path to a child's future of hope and emotional security.

Please call 1-866-341-1425 or go to [www.guardianadlitem.org](http://www.guardianadlitem.org). You can apply on line.

## **Office of Early Learning**

Florida's Office of Early Learning leads quality early learning services. Our mission and vision is supported by four major lines of service including School Readiness (SR), Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK), Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R), and the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC). Early learning focuses on children from birth to 5 years old. Some of our services also benefit targeted eligible school age children who are at risk or with special needs. Our office is staffed with business professionals and early learning experts striving to deliver constitutionally mandated services in the most efficient and effective manner in order to ensure Florida's youngest, and often most vulnerable children, have access and the opportunity to benefit from Florida's world class educational system. We are an organization that is dedicated to achieving measurable results and creating high-value outcomes for citizens of the state of Florida. We design and nurture an environment where Florida's children demonstrate

readiness to learn and providers demonstrate increased quality as measured by standard assessment; and, that conveying these demonstrated gains will so energize private and public audiences that they invest in early learning with their time, talents, and treasures.

### *Community Collaboration*

As part of the School Readiness Education program, Florida's Office of Early Learning is charged with establishing a statewide Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Network that provides unbiased referrals to families for child care and family resources. Florida's CCR&R program enables parents to access child care information about high-quality, full-choice early learning opportunities so they can work. The program also helps families with information and referrals for community services. CCR&R offices are responsible for collaborating with their local partners to assist parents and families with community resources that best meet their needs. For more information, please call the State CCR&R Network Office at 1-866-357-3239 or visit [http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/EarlyLearning/OEL\\_CCRN\\_Networks.html](http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/EarlyLearning/OEL_CCRN_Networks.html).