2016 ANNUAL REPORT

Florida
Faith-Based and
Community-Based
Advisory Council

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This annual report from the Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council is submitted to:

The Honorable Rick Scott, Governor, State of Florida

The Honorable Richard Corcoran, Speaker, Florida House of Representatives

The Honorable Joe Negron, President, Florida Senate

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FLORIDA FAITH-BASED AND COMMUNITY-BASED ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council (Advisory Council or Council) was created in 2006 in Florida Statute 14.31. State leadership felt that increased involvement of faith-based and community organizations was not a sufficient substitute for necessary public funding of services to individuals, families and communities in need. Likewise, they believed that without the involvement of these groups, public expenditures alone would limit the effectiveness of these government investments. The cost effectiveness of public expenditures can be greatly improved when government is focused on results and public-private partnerships are sought as a complement in order to leverage the talent, commitment and resources of faith-based and community organizations.

During the 2010 Legislative Session, the Sunset requirement for the Advisory Council was repealed through legislation sponsored by Senator Mike Bennett and Representative Clay Ford. In addition, the Advisory Council was assigned to the Executive Office of the Governor, where it is administratively housed.

The Advisory Council shall consist of 25 members and may include, but need not be limited to, representatives from various faiths, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, foundations, corporations, and municipalities. Members serve four year terms, except that the initial terms shall be staggered as determined by Florida Statute 14.31, appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the Governor, Senate President, and Speaker of the House.

The Advisory Council shall meet at least once per quarter per calendar year whether in-person, via teleconference, or through other electronic means. Annually, the Advisory Council shall elect from its membership one member to serve as Chairman of the Advisory Council and one member to serve as Vice Chairman. The mission statement was created and approved by the Advisory Council on June 11, 2013. The vision statement was approved by the members on April 8, 2014.

Mission Statement

The Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council exists to facilitate connections to strengthen communities and families in the state of Florida.

Statutory Charge

To advise the Governor and the Legislature on policies, priorities and objectives for the state's comprehensive efforts to enlist, equip, enable, empower, and expand the work of faith-based, volunteer, and other community organizations to the full extent permitted by law.

Vision

To maximize the collaboration between faith-based and community organizations and State agencies to help strengthen individuals and families.

Administrative Support

On June 12, 2007, the bill creating the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection (Office) was signed into law. The duties and responsibilities of the Office are enshrined in Florida Statute 39.001. The Office was created for the purpose of establishing, implementing, and monitoring a comprehensive, cross-agency approach for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect across the state. In October 2011, the Executive Office of the Governor allocated responsibility for administrative functions and support for the Advisory Council to the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection.

The Office worked diligently throughout 2016 to advance the efforts of the Advisory Council. As of April 2015, the Office personnel, including one full-time employee, Zackary Gibson (Chief Child Advocate and Director) and one part-time employee, Frenchie Yon (Program Support), have provided support through a servant leadership approach. In addition, the Office utilized student interns to assist with many tasks supporting the Advisory Council. The Office facilitated and coordinated meetings, travel logistics, meals, overnight accommodations, ground transportation, and site visits to local community organizations. Additionally, the Office developed correspondence, drafted meeting agendas, invited presenters to speak, worked with the Governor's, Senate President's and Speaker of the House's Appointments Office; and assisted in the creation of this annual report.

Website

The Advisory Council website can be found at: *www.flgov.com/fbcb*, and can also be found by visiting the Office's main page at *www.flgov.com/child_advocacy*. All Advisory Council meetings, as well as Advisory Council Workgroup meetings, are listed on the Office's Meeting Advisory webpage: *www.flgov.com/child_advocacy_meetings*.

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

As of December 2016, there were 20 members appointed to the Advisory Council. The following identifies each member, the organization they represent, the appointment authority, the workgroups they serve on, and topics they can assist others with.

Patricia "Pat" Smith
Chairman
Department of Children and Families
Governor's Appointee

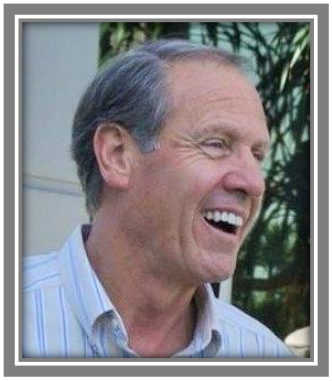
Serves on the following workgroups: Annual Conference (Chair) and Family Initiatives

Can assist others with: Adoption, Child Abuse Prevention, Leadership Strategy, Mentoring Young Adults, Prevention/Diversion, and Single Mothers

Richard Albertson
Vice Chairman
Live the Life Ministries
Governor's Appointee

Serves on the following workgroups: Family Initiatives (Chair) and Annual Conference

Can assist others with: Corrections/DJJ Re-entry, Fatherhood, Leadership Strategy, Legislative/Policy, Marriage Education, Mentoring, Relationship Education, Sexual Risk Avoidance for Youth, and Youth in DJJ Program



Pastor Kirt Anderson
Naples Community Church
Governor's Appointee

Serves on the following workgroups: Legislative

Can assist others with: Educational Tutoring, Fatherhood, Food Services, Homelessness, Human Trafficking, Jail Ministry, Leadership Strategy, Legislative/Policy, Marriage Education, Mentoring, and Substance Abuse

Rabbi Sholom Ciment
Chabad Lubavitch of Greater Boynton Beach
Governor's Appointee

Serves on the following workgroup: Disaster Planning

Can assist others with: Adoption, Child Abuse Prevention, Disaster Relief, Domestic Violence, Educational Tutoring, Elderly Populations, Family Preservation, Leadership Strategy, Legislative/Policy, Mental Health, Mentoring, Military/Veterans, Persons with Disabilities, Single Mothers, and Workforce/Employment

Trenia Cox
Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County
Governor Appointee

Serves on the following workgroup: Annual Conference and Child Welfare

Can assist others with: Child Abuse Prevention, Corrections/DJJ Re-entry, Disaster Relief, Domestic Violence, Educational Tutoring, Family Preservation, Food Services, Homelessness, Human Trafficking, Jail Ministry, Kinship Care, Leadership Strategy, Legislative/Policy, Mental Health, Mentoring, Military/Veterans, Single Mothers, Substance Abuse, Workforce/Employment, and Youth in DJJ Programs

Reverend James "Perry" Davis
Christ to Inmates, Inc.
Speaker of the House Appointee

Serves on the following workgroup: Criminal Justice

Can assist others with: Corrections/DJJ Re-entry, Fatherhood, Jail Ministry, and Substance Abuse

Alan C. Dimmitt, MPA
Liberty Youth Ranch
Governor's Appointee

Serves on the following workgroups: Child Welfare

Can assist others with: Adoption, Child Abuse Prevention, Foster Care/Aging Out, Kinship Care, Mentoring, Homelessness, and Legislative/Policy

Sheila Gomez
Catholic Charities of Palm Beach County
Governor's Appointee

Serves on the following workgroups: Disaster Planning (Chair)

Can assist others with: Child Abuse Prevention, Counseling Services, Elder Affairs, Guardianship, Hunger, Homelessness, Immigration Legal Services, Health and Wellness, Human Trafficking, Prison Ministry, Refugee Services, and Transitional Housing

Roland "Roly" Gonzalez
Victory for Youth
Governor's Appointee

Serves on the following workgroup: Child Welfare (Chair) and Annual Conference

Can assist others with: Adoption, Child Abuse Prevention, Food Services, Foster Care, Disaster Preparedness and Response, Domestic Violence, Human Trafficking

Dr. Jerry Haag, CFP
Florida Baptist Children's Home
Governor's Appointee

Serves on the following workgroups: Child Welfare, Annual Conference and Legislative

Can assist others with: Adoption, Child Abuse Prevention, Domestic Violence, Foster Care/Aging Out, Human Trafficking, Independent Living, Mental Health, Mentoring, Prevention/Diversion, and Single Mothers

Dr. Gretchen Kerr
Northland, A Church Distributed
Governor's Appointee

Serves on the following workgroups: Criminal Justice (Chair)

Can assist others with: Corrections/DJJ Re-Entry, Disaster Relief, Homelessness, Human Trafficking, Mentoring, and Substance Abuse

Thomas "Tom" Lukasik
4KIDS of South Florida
Governor's Appointee

Serves on the following workgroups: Family Initiatives

Can assist others with: Adoption, Child Abuse Prevention, Foster Care/Aging Out, Independent Living, and Prevention/Diversion

Dr. Leonel "Leo" Mesa, LMHC
New Day Center
Governor's Appointee

Serves on the following workgroups: Annual Conference and Child Welfare

Can assist others with: Child Abuse Prevention, Domestic Violence, Elderly Populations, Family Preservation, Fatherhood, Health Initiatives, Kinship Care, Marriage Education, Mental Health, Persons with Disabilities, Relationship Education, and Substance Abuse

Pastor Pam Olsen
International House of Prayer
Governor's Appointee

Serves on the following workgroups: Legislative (Chair)

Can assist others with: Adoption, Human Trafficking, Legislative/Policy

Pastor Carl E. Reeves
Greater Mount Lily Baptist Church
Governor's Appointee

Serves on the following workgroups: Annual Conference and Criminal Justice

Can assist others with: Corrections/ DJJ Re-entry, Family Preservation, Homelessness, Leadership Strategy

Patricia Robbins Alger
Farm Share
Governor's Appointee

Serves on the following workgroups: Disaster Planning and Family Initiatives

Can assist others with: Disaster Relief, Food Services, and Legislative/Policy

Marcus Smith
Department of Juvenile Justice
Governor's Appointee

Serves on the following workgroups: Annual Conference, Criminal Justice, and Legislative

Can assist others with: Corrections/DJJ Re-entry, Human Trafficking, Legislative/Policy, Mentoring, Prevention/Diversion, Youth in DJJ Programs

Blaine Whitt
Xtreme Soulutions
Speaker of the House Appointee

Serves on the following workgroup: Criminal Justice

Can assist others with: Corrections/DJJ Re-Entry and Prison Ministry

Karim Veerjee
Florida Hospital
Governor's Appointee

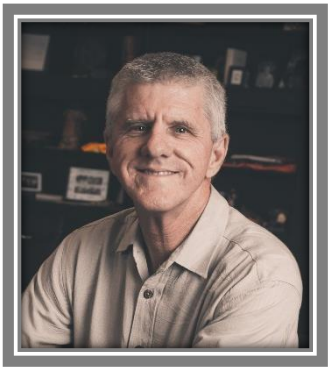
Serves on the following workgroup: Annual Conference and Disaster Planning

Can assist others with: Disaster Relief, Health Initiatives, Human Trafficking, and Mental Health

Pastor Reno Zunz
Idlewild Baptist Church
Speaker of the House Appointee

Serves on the following workgroup: Family Initiatives

Can assist others with: Adoption, Fatherhood, Leadership Strategy, and Marriage Education



The diversity of topics where information and support can be provided offers unique opportunities to facilitate connections between state and local groups to improve outcomes. Through individual and workgroup approaches, the Advisory Council builds relationships with stakeholders to advocate and advance prevention and promotion efforts that can result in more effective public-private partnerships and cost savings to the state.

2016 Advisory Council Appointments

The following member was appointed or re-appointed during 2016 with their date of appointment:

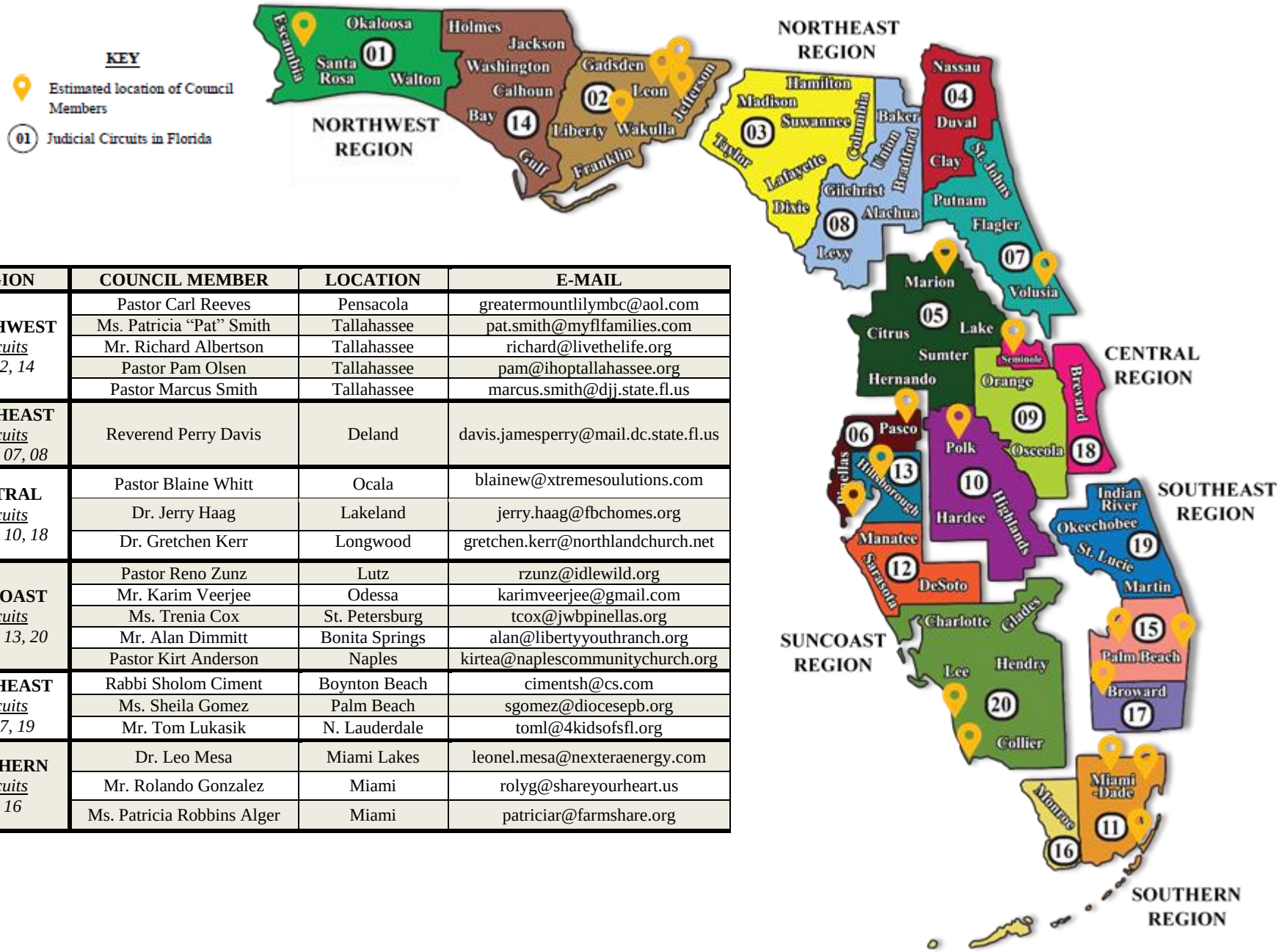
- Pastor Kirt Anderson – Reappointed – January 29, 2016
- Trenia Cox – Appointed – January 29, 2016
- Sheila Gomez – Appointed – January 29, 2016
- Roland Gonzalez – Re-appointed – January 29, 2016
- Pastor Carl Reeves – Reappointed – January 29, 2016

We would like to express our thanks and appreciation to the following individuals for their service on the Advisory Council and wish them the very best in their future endeavors:

- Stephen "Spike" Hogan – Term ending July 2015
- Carolyn Ketchel – Term ending July 2016
- Rabbi Jeffrey Kurtz-Lendner – Term ending July 2016

2016 Advisory Council Map

The Advisory Council Map, located on the next page, provides a strategic layout to identify where Advisory Council members are located throughout the state. Advisory Council members serve as regional points of contact for local faith-based, volunteer and community organizations to assist in facilitating connections with state agencies and partners to improve outcomes for children and families. This map is divided into six (6) regional boundaries and identifies Florida's 20 judicial circuits. As a quick reference, this map demonstrates the diverse geographical representation by members of the Advisory Council where they can work with and assist local faith-based and community-based groups.

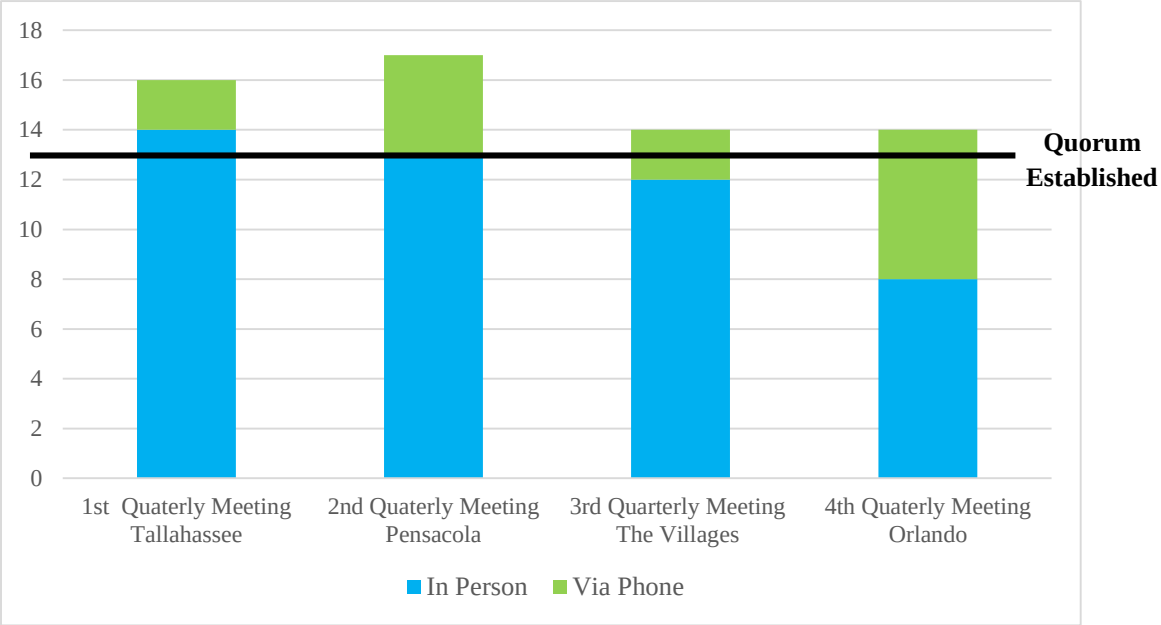


REGION	COUNCIL MEMBER	LOCATION	E-MAIL
NORTHWEST *Circuits* *01, 02, 14*	Pastor Carl Reeves	Pensacola	greatermountlilymbc@aol.com
	Ms. Patricia "Pat" Smith	Tallahassee	pat.smith@myflfamilies.com
	Mr. Richard Albertson	Tallahassee	richard@livethelife.org
	Pastor Pam Olsen	Tallahassee	pam@ihoptallahassee.org
	Pastor Marcus Smith	Tallahassee	marcus.smith@djj.state.fl.us
NORTHEAST *Circuits* *03, 04, 07, 08*	Reverend Perry Davis	Deland	davis.jamesperry@mail.dc.state.fl.us
CENTRAL *Circuits* *05, 09, 10, 18*	Pastor Blaine Whitt	Ocala	blainew@xtremesoulutions.com
	Dr. Jerry Haag	Lakeland	jerry.haag@fbchomes.org
	Dr. Gretchen Kerr	Longwood	gretchen.kerr@northlandchurch.net
SUNCOAST *Circuits* *06, 12, 13, 20*	Pastor Reno Zunz	Lutz	rzunz@idlewild.org
	Mr. Karim Veerjee	Odessa	karimveerjee@gmail.com
	Ms. Trenia Cox	St. Petersburg	tcox@jwbpinellas.org
	Mr. Alan Dimmitt	Bonita Springs	alan@libertyyouthranch.org
	Pastor Kirt Anderson	Naples	kirtea@naplescommunitychurch.org
SOUTHEAST *Circuits* *15, 17, 19*	Rabbi Sholom Ciment	Boynton Beach	cimentsh@cs.com
	Ms. Sheila Gomez	Palm Beach	sgomez@diocesepb.org
	Mr. Tom Lukasik	N. Lauderdale	toml@4kidsofsfl.org
SOUTHERN *Circuits* *11, 16*	Dr. Leo Mesa	Miami Lakes	leonel.mesa@nexteraenergy.com
	Mr. Rolando Gonzalez	Miami	rolyg@shareyourheart.us
	Ms. Patricia Robbins Alger	Miami	patriciar@farmshare.org

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Meeting Attendance

As identified in Florida Statute 14.31, a total of 13 members must be in attendance in order to establish a quorum for the purpose of voting on Advisory Council action and activities. Members may participate in scheduled meetings across the state either in-person or via teleconference call. The chart below reflects attendance for each Advisory Council meeting during 2016.



Meeting materials and summaries of each meeting were developed and are posted on the Advisory Council's website at: *http://www.flgov.com/fbcb-meetings-2016*.

Meeting Outreach

The Florida Channel live streamed and recorded three meetings of the Advisory Council and the Florida Faith Symposium. This assisted in reaching organizations and individuals throughout the state to increase awareness of the Advisory Council's purpose and mission, upcoming events, and various initiatives to improve outcomes for Floridians.

The Advisory Council allocated time before, during and after two Council meetings to create opportunities for meeting participants to become aware of and connect with local and state organizations. This resulted in the development of partnerships to expand services and work to improve outcomes for targeted populations. The Advisory Council also participated on site visits during two meetings to increase awareness of services being offered through faith and community-based organizations. Information on the site visits are included in the meeting highlights on the following pages.

Tallahassee, Florida
FIRST QUARTERLY MEETING

First Quarterly Meeting Highlights

The first quarterly meeting of 2016 took place on January 26th at Florida Capitol in Tallahassee, FL. Chair Pat Smith welcomed the Advisory Council and attendees. The opening prayer was given by Reverend Dr. R. B. Holmes, Jr., Senior Pastor of Bethel Missionary Baptist Church in Tallahassee, FL.

- Recognition of the 2016 Council Leadership: Ms. Pat Smith as Chair and Mr. Richard Albertson as Vice-Chair
- State Agency leadership were invited to share their initiatives to engage faith and community-based organizations to enable the Council to target their efforts throughout the year. State agencies represented include:
  - Agency for Persons with Disabilities
  - Department of Elder Affairs
  - Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
  - Department of Health
  - Department of Children and Families
  - Department of Juvenile Justice
  - Department of Corrections
  - Division of Emergency Management
  - Department of Education
- The Advisory Council also heard from special guests on their perspectives to engage faith and community-based organizations to partner with state government.
  - The Honorable Eleanor Sobel, Florida Senator and Chair of the Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee
  - The Honorable Gayle B. Harrell, Florida House Representative and Chair of the Children, Families and Seniors Subcommittee
  - The Honorable, Dennis Baxley, Florida House Representative and Chair of the Local and Federal Affairs Committee
- Presentations were made by:
  - Reverend Dr. Russell Meyer, Executive Director, Florida Council of Churches, presented an overview of the Florida Council of Churches.
  - Mr. Jabari Paul presented on the Faith in Florida organization.
  - Reverend Anthony Evans presented on the National Black Church Initiative.
  - Mr. Charles McDonald, Executive Director of Children's Home Society, and Mrs. Missy Albritton, presented information on the 111 Project and efforts to bring the project to Tallahassee.
- Public Comments included:
  - Pastor Gary Montgomery shared information on the Children of Inmates program.

Second Quarterly Meeting Highlights

Brownsville Assembly of God

The second quarterly meeting took place on April 26th at Brownsville Assembly of God. Prior to the meeting, the Advisory Council toured the medical/dental clinic for low-income residents and Charis House operated by Mt. Olive Baptist Church. Charis House is a ministry for women struggling with addition and provides a home-like setting for their drug and alcohol recovery program. On the day of the meeting, 28 exhibitors were present to engage and connect with attendees.

The Reverend Dr. Earl F. Jackson, Pastor with the Damascus Road Missionary Baptist Church in Pensacola provided the opening prayer and Commissioner Lumon May, Escambia Board of County Commissioners, District 3, provided the welcome to members and attendees.

- Ms. Trenia Cox and Ms. Sheila Gomez were both introduced and welcomed as new members to the Advisory Council.
- Information on upcoming awareness month topics and events were presented.
- Presentations were made by:
  - Dr. Evon Horton, Senior Pastor of Brownsville Assembly of God, presented on the Brownsville initiative, which partners elected local officials with faith-based organizations to provide resources for the betterment of the community.
  - Pensacola Police Chief David Alexander III presented information on the Safe Heaven Initiative which focused on bridging the division between youth and society through faith and relationships.
  - Mr. Shawn Salamida, CEO of Families First Network, presented on the organization's initiatives and marketing strategies to promote adoption of children in foster care.
  - Superintendent Mary Beth Jackson and her team with the Okaloosa County School District and the Honorable Terrance Ketchel, Circuit Judge, First Judicial Circuit, presented on collaborative efforts of the district, courts and sheriff's office to address truancy from school.
  - Mr. Justin Mandrup-Poulsen, GIS Technician with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, presented the *Road Map to Healthy Living* website and demonstrated features on this tool that can identify areas in need of healthy foods during the summer months.
- Advisory Council members shared activities that support the mission of the Council to faciltate connections to strengthen communities and families.

Special thanks to (left to right) Pastor Carl Reeves, Ms. Carolyn Ketchel and Ms. Phyllis Gonzalez with DCF for their efforts to coordinate the meeting, presenters and exhibitors; and Ms. Patricia Robbins and Farm Share for providing breakfast items.

The Villages, Florida
THIRD QUARTERLY MEETING

Third Quarterly Meeting Highlights

The third quarterly meeting took place on July 26th in The Villages, Florida at the Rohan Regional Recreation Center. Prior to the meeting, the Advisory Council toured the Marion County Correctional Institution and learned about services offered through the Xtreme Soulutions program to build faith and character behind the razor wire. On the day of the meeting, 17 exhibitors were present to engage and connect with attendees.

The Honorable Dennis Baxley, Florida House Representative, provided the opening prayer and the Honorable Marlene O'Toole, Florida House Representative, provided the welcome to the members and attendees.

- Updates were provided from each of the Advisory Council's workgroups, as well as awareness month topics and events that corresponded with each workgroup.
- Presentations were made by:
  - Mr. John Cooper, CEO of Kids Central Inc., presented information on initiatives and strategies to recruit foster and adoptive families.
  - Ms. Susan Cizmadia, Administrator, Circuit 5 Community Corrections, spoke on behalf of Mr. Dann Eberlein, State Community Transition Administrator, on how the Department created the Division of Development, Improvement, and Readiness to provide services and resources to institutions and community corrections. She also shared information on the types of community supervision provided by Community Corrections.
  - Ms. Nicki Brown, State Bonding Coordinator with the Department of Economic Opportunity, presented opportunities through the Federal Bonding Program.
  - Ms. Debra Wise-Velez with Kids Central Inc., Mr. Gene Barton with Helping Hands Outreach Ministries, and Mr. Gary Cantrell with New Covenant UMC, presented information on their partnership serve and strengthen families in the Wildwood community.
- Public Comments included the following:
  - Ms. Shay Rayzar shared information about her work in Lake County with homeless and youth aging out, and asked faith leaders for their assistance and resources.
  - Ms. Erin Hess shared how faith organizations can promote health with congregations.
  - Mr. Howard Moon spoke about the Born Drug Free Line and CLEAR Warm Line and how they serve to assist those in need.

Special thanks to (left to right) Pastor Blaine Whitt, Ms. Joelle Aboytes and Mr. Jeremy Thomas with DCF for their efforts to coordinate the meeting, presenters and exhibitors; Ms. Patricia Robbins-Alger and Farm Share for providing breakfast items, and the Sumter County Children's Alliance for providing lunch items.

Fourth Quarterly Meeting Highlights

The fourth quarterly meeting took place on November 1st at the Wyndham Orlando Resort International Drive in conjunction with the Florida Faith Symposium. Chair Smith welcomed members and attendees. Member Karim Verjee provided the opening prayer.

The focus of the meeting was to review Advisory Council workgroups, accomplishments and plan for 2017. The Lead member of each workgroup provided an overview of initiatives and progress made throughout the year. This also included a review of each workgroup narrative descriptions and membership to advance the Council's mission. The following workgroups were discussed:

1. Annual Conference Workgroup
   - *Lead* – Chair Pat Smith
2. Child Welfare Workgroup
   - *Lead* – Mr. Roland Gonzalez
3. Criminal Justice Workgroup
   - *Lead* – Dr. Gretchen Kerr
4. Disaster Planning Workgroup
   - *Lead* – Ms. Sheila Gomez
5. Family Initiatives Workgroup
   - *Lead* – Vice-Chair Richard Albertson
6. Legislative Workgroup
   - *Lead* – Pastor Pam Olsen

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The Council discussed various locations to host quarterly meetings in 2017. Members also discussed and supported opportunities to conduct workgroup meetings in advance of scheduled business meetings. The following venues were selected:

- Ft. Lauderdale.
- Orlando (Outside of the Faith Symposium)
- St. Petersburg
- Tallahassee

The Chair opened the floor to accept volunteers and nominations for the 2017 Vice-Chair position. The following list identifies the nominees.

- Dr. Gretchen Kerr volunteered to serve as Vice-Chair.
- Chair Pat Smith nominated Pastor Marcus Smith to serve as Vice-Chair and Pastor Marcus Smith Accepted.
- Pastor Marcus Smith nominated Pastor Carl Reeves to serve as Vice-Chair.

Due to time constraints, a final vote will take place via email for members to cast their vote.

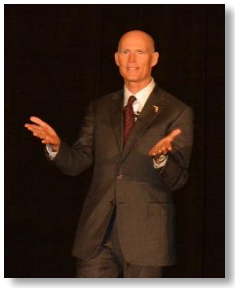
ADVISORY COUNCIL INITIATIVES

Each workgroup of the Advisory Council is designed to align and support state agency initiatives and works to facilitate connections with faith, volunteer and community-based organizations to improve collaboration and coordination of efforts. The information below highlights activities of each workgroup. The Advisory Council participates on Florida's Five-Year Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan and serves as a Citizen's Review Panel for DCF. Each Advisory Council member serves on at least one workgroup.

Annual Conference Workgroup

Secretary Mike Carroll

The Advisory Council was part of one of the largest gathering of faith-based organizations and government agencies in the state of Florida. In collaboration with DCF and the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), the 2016 Florida Faith Symposium in Orlando featured another round of inspirational speakers and dynamic musical performers. The Very Reverend Paul J. Henry, Rector of Mary, Queen of the Universe, in Orlando, opened the symposium with the invocation and Secretary Mike Carroll with DCF and Deputy Secretary Tim Niermann with DJJ provided opening remarks. The symposium was once again honored to have Governor Rick Scott attend to share his faith and desire to make Florida the best state in the nation.


Governor Rick Scott

Pastor Paula White-Cain

Pastor Paula White-Cain, Senior Pastor of New Destiney Christian Center in Apopka, FL, provided an interactive and inspirational keynote message. Musical performer, Christopher Duffley, with his sister Grace, sang, "Open the Eyes to My Heart", and shared his personal story of overcoming medical challenges, being adopted, and serving to be an inspiration to others through his music and podcasts. Attendees broke from the morning session to attend one of the 36 workshops offered at the two-day symposium.

Grace and Christopher Duffley

Ernie Sims and Jonathan Evans

During the luncheon, Heather Cox-Rosenberg, DCF Children's Ombudsman, provided the invocation and recording artist Omega Forbes got the audience moving in preparation for the Champion of Hope award nominees and winners for DCF and DJJ (*see Champion of Hope Awards section).* Mr. Jonathan Evans, the Dallas Cowboys' Chaplain, provided a powerful luncheon keynote address that focused on how we are all interconnected and can play a role to help others.

Division Director Shannon Hughes

Mr. Jack Levine, Founder of 4Generations Institute, opened the second day of the symposium by providing the invocation. Ms. Shannon Hughes, Division Director for the Division of Community Health Promotion with the Department of Health (DOH), and Ms. Penny Jones, Director of Corporate Relation & Partnerships with Florida Hospital, providing opening remarks. The symposium hosted an amazing Youth Panel Discussion, moderated by Ms. Tanya Wilkins, which featured youth involved in state systems, who shared their experiences in the system and how they are working to create a positive future.

Tanya Wilkins (center) with Youth Panelist

Pastor Marcus Smith

Recording artist Omega Forbes ignited the audience with his powerful voice and member Marcus Smith provided the invocation. The Champions of Hope nominees and winner for DOH were announced. The Reverend Dr. R.B. Holmes took the stage to deliver a crowd-raising address that emphasized the importance of serving children and families. Ms. Alice Sims, Assistant Secretary of Prevention and Victim Services, provided final remarks to before attendees broke to attend the final workshops offered.

Omega Forbes

A special thank you is expressed to everyone for their participation in the 2016 Florida Faith Symposium. With over 500 attendees and 41 exhibitors, the symposium continues grow and build momentum to facilitate connections between government and faith and community-based organizations to improve services for Floridians. Specifically, we would like to recognize Chair Pat Smith for her leadership on the Annual Conference Workgroup and for the amazing job serving as Mistress of Ceremonies. We would also like to recognize the Symposium Planning Team for their efforts to coordinate all aspects of the symposium.

The Very Rev. Paul J. Henry

Deputy Secretary Tim Niermann

Chair Pat Smith

Penny Jones

Jack Levine

Rev. Dr. R.B. Holmes

Champion of Hope Awards

Realizing the value of faith communities and organizations in providing support to the state and state agencies, the Champions of Hope award was created to recognize organizations that go above and beyond the ordinary to improve the lives of at-risk youth and children in care. The Annual Conference Workgroup provided nomination forms to the Department of Children and Families, Department of Juvenile Justice and Department of Health for dissemination to regional offices to identify and nominate faith-based organizations for consideration. There were a total of 18 nominees to include:

- Black on Black Crime Taskforce and Mentor2Mentor, Gainesville, FL
- Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church, Miami Gardens, FL
- Mr. Will Halvosa, Gainesville, FL
- Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, Tallahassee, FL
- Christ Fellowship, Miami, FL
- Christian Heritage Church, Tallahassee, FL
- Foundation for Foster Children, Winter Park, FL
- Grace Way Church, Leesburg, FL
- Helping Hands Ministry, The Villages, FL
- Wishing and Fishing Reach and Teach Ministry, Inc., Clearwater, FL
- Allen Temple AME Church, Tampa, FL
- Hope Kids Community, Bradenton, FL
- Mayflower Congregational, Naples, FL
- Pine Manor Improvement Association, Ft. Myers, FL
- Running Zone Foundation, Melbourne, FL
- St. Martin de Porres Community Outreach Ministry, Palm Beach, FL
- Shepherd's Hands of Suwannee Valley, Inc., Live Oak, FL
- Titus 2 Partnership, Inc., Panama City, FL

The 2016 winners are listed below by the presenting state agency:

Department of Juvenile Justice – Black on Black Crime Taskforce and Mentor2Mentor

Department of Children and Families – Bethel Missionary Baptist Church

Department of Health - Shepherd's Hands of Suwannee Valley Inc.

Child Welfare Workgroup

Led by Mr. Roland Gonzalez, the Child Welfare Workgroup assisted to advance efforts to enhance and improve the welfare of children in Florida. The workgroup focused on increasing awareness of topics to include prevention of child maltreatment, foster care, adoption, independent living, human trafficking, health and well-being, youth with disabilities, and education. The workgroup coordinates efforts with state agency liaisons and various faith-based and community-based organizations to identify needs, gaps in services, and propose solutions in order to facilitate a more collaborative and coordinated approach to improving outcomes for children and families.

Progress made throughout 2016 includes:

- Increasing awareness of healthy child development and participating in the Pinwheels for Prevention Campaign.
- During three Council meetings, chief executive officers from CBC Lead Agencies presented information and strategies to recuit foster and adoptive parents.
- Through the support of the Legislature, the Share Your Heart program received funding to serve families and individuals in crisis or distress by providing food, clothing, emotional and spiritual support through a volunteer chaplaincy network.
- Promoted and shared information on state agency initiatives and awareness month topics to support healthy child and family development.

Areas of focus for 2017 include:

- Identify opportunities to develop a volunteer chaplaincy network to expand the Share Your Heart program to other areas of the state.
- To continue engaging faith and community-based organizations to participate in the Pinwheels for Prevention campaign and to assist in promoting foster care and adoption.
- To provide information and training to faith-based organizations, who provide child care services, on child development and how to speak with families regarding concerns and available resources.

Criminal Justice Workgroup

Led by Dr. Gretchen Kerr, the Criminal Justice Workgroup supported efforts of the Department of Corrections and DJJ to improve outcomes for their populations. The workgroup focused on identification of best practices and effective strategies to include prevention, early intervention, diversion and re-entry or reintegration of adults and juveniles from jail and juvenile facilitaties, substance abuse, mental health, and persons with disabilities. The workgroup will bring together state agency liasions and vairous faith-based and community-bsaed organizations to identify needs, gaps in services, and propose solutions in order to fcilitate a more collaborative and coordinated approach to working with state government agencies.

Progress made throughout 2016 includes:

- Initiated communication with FDC around re-entry efforts to identify how faith-based organizations can better support inmates through programs and services.
- Highlighted information on the Federal Bonding Program that provides fidelity bonds to encourage employers to consider hiring individuals that may have a questionable background.

- Conducted presentations on how faith and government can work together and coordinate efforts to serve individuals and families in need.
- Supported the state's efforts to raise awareness of human trafficking prevention and promoted participation in the Human Trafficking Summit led by Attorney General Pam Bondi. Northland church partnered with Shared Hope International to host the Just Faith Summit to engage faith organizations on their efforts to combat human trafficking.
- Promoted and shared information on state agency initiatives and awareness month topics to support healthy child and family development.

Areas of focus for 2017 include:

- Continue to build relationships with FDC and DJJ to support prevention, diversion and re-entry initiatives.
- Promote the Childrens of Inmates program that can strengthen relationships between children and their incarcerated parent.
- To explore hosting a faith and government event to highight collaboration and efforts to address human trafficking.
- To continue identifying opportunities to promote the work of the Advisory Council and associated workgroups, and to facilitate connections for organizations who wish to be involved.

Disaster Planning Workgroup

Led by Ms. Sheila Gomez, the Disaster Planning Workgroup assisted to further engage faith and community-based organizations in the state's efforts to effectively prepare, respond, and recover from natural and man-made disasters. The workgroup assisted in facilitating connections of organizations and groups to existing state/regional/lcocal teams and networks to enable communities to come together before and after a disasters.

Progress made throughout 2016 includes:

- Disseminated information on hurricane preparedness activities.
- Encouraged contributions to the Florida Disaster Fund after the Pulse nightclub shooting.
- Supported DOH's efforts to raise awareness of the Zika virus and the *Spill the Water* campaign.
- Engaged the Division of Emergency Management to provide informational cards on preparedness activities to be included in all conference bags at the Florida Faith Symposium.

Areas of focus for 2017 include:

- Support the state's efforts to encourage preparedness for mosquito and hurricane seasons.
- Assess participating in the Governor's Hurricane Conference.
- Encourage faith and community-based organizations to become ACCESS partners to enable individuals and families to obtain benefits in their local areas in times of disaster.
- Encourage faith and community-based organizations to become certified as Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT).
- Support efforts of Volunteer Florida to enlist organizations to serve in times of disaster.

Family Initiatives Workgroup

Led by Mr. Richard Alberston, the Family Initiative Workgroup assisted in advancing efforts on topics to include family preservation, healthy marriage, fatherhood, single parent famlies, and other family related issues such as employment and homelessness. The workgroup brings together state agency liaisons and various faith-based and community-based organizations to identify needs, gaps in services and proposed solutions in order to facilitate a more collaborative and coordinated approach to strengthening families.

Progress made throughout 2016 includes:

- Developed a website in targeted areas to list and promote faith and community-based organizations that offer free training/meetings to strengthen relationships and support families.
- Supported fatherhood initiatives and activities in Florida and highlighted organizations for their efforts. Promoted the Department of Education's initiative of *Dads Take Your Child To School Day*.
- Support county health department efforts to engage faith organizations to integrate healthy activities and choices.

- Supported the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' efforts to enlist organizations to serve as summer meal sponsors and sites to reduce the number of children who do not have access to healthy foods during the summer.

Areas of focus for 2017 include:

- Develop a partnership with All Pro Dads and bring together various fatherhood groups to share information, ideas and resources.
- Continue to build a relationship with DOH and county health departments to support their efforts to engage faith and community organizations to promote healthy weight initiatives, nutrition and chronic disease prevention.
- Encourage faith organizations to establish resource rooms where health, education and other information can be accessed by individuals and families.
- Encourge organizations to support adoption finalizations, child reunifications, and home visiting graduates.
- Explore opportunities to conduct presentations at Florida conferences on healthy relationships and marrages.
- Support efforts of Farm Share through their free food distributions statewide.

Legislative Workgroup

Led by Pastor Pam Olsen, the Legislative Workgorup works closely with all Advisory Council workgroups to research and identify recommendations to refine, improve, and strengthen policies and legislation affecting Advisory Council workgroup areas of focus and faith-based and community-based organizations.

Areas of focus for 2017 include:

- Work with the Governor's Legislative Office and the Office on Policy and Budge to identify legislation that aligns with Advisory Council efforts.
- Assess opportunities for the Advisory Council to write a letter of support for specific legislation.
- Work to key Advisory Council members updated with bills during the 2017 Legislative Session.

Florida's Five-Year Prevention and Permanency Plan

The Advisory Council continues to support and promote efforts of the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan*. The central focus of the plan is to build resilience in all of Florida's families and communities to equip them to better care for and nurture their children. In accordance with state law (Florida Statute 39.001), the five-year prevention and permanency plan provides for the prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect; promotion of adoption; and for the support of adoptive families.

Vision

Florida's highest priority is that children are raised in healthy, safe, stable, and nurturing families.

Mission

To serve as a blueprint that will be implemented to provide for the care, safety, and protection of **all** of Florida's children in an environment that fosters healthy social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development.

Overarching Goal

All families and communities ensure that children are safe and nurtured and live in stable environments that promote well-being.

Advisory Council Support

The Advisory Council continues to participate in the following sections of the five-year plan: Prevention of Child Maltreatment, Promotion of Adoption, and Support of Adoptive Families. The following activities occurred through 2016 in support of the plan:

- Disseminated information to create awareness of Protective Factors during quarterly meetings.
- Supported and participated in the Pinwheels for Prevention campaign and disseminated Family Development Guides provided by Prevent Child Abuse Florida during Child Abuse Prevention month.
- Promoted adoption of children from foster care and had chief executive officers, from CBC Lead Agencies, present information on initiatives to recruit foster and adoptive parents during quarterly meetings.
- Members have attended association meetings and worked to facilitate connection to support adoptive families.
- The Advisory Council continues to collaborate with DCF and DJJ to host the annual Faith Symposium to highlight opportunities for faith and community-based organizations to work collaboratively with government entities. The Council also continues to support efforts to have best and promising practice approaches presented at the Faith Symposium.

Citizens Review Panel

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) provides federal funding to states for child abuse and neglect prevention, treatment and training for staff who work in the child protection system. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) serves as the lead agency for the federal funding. The Advisory Council serves as a Citizens Review Panel to support DCF's efforts to refine, improve and strengthen the child welfare system.

Citizen Review Panels were included in the 1996 CAPTA reauthorization and must:

- Be composed of volunteers who are representative of the community in which they operate.
- Meet at least quarterly.
- Prepare an annual report that describes the panel's activities and includes recommendations to improve the child protection system.
- Have at least one member with expertise in child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment.

Each panel is responsible to review:

- Compliance of state and local child protection service agencies and state CAPTA plan
- Coordination with foster care and adoption programs
- Review of child fatalities and near fatalities (performed by the Child Abuse Death Review Team)

The Advisory Council was formally designated as a Citizens Review Panel for the Federal Fiscal Year 2016. Below are recommendations provided to DCF:

- Work with the Department of Corrections to certify programs delivered by faith and community-based organizations to meet court and case plans of incarcerated parents.

- Work with Community-Based Care Lead Agencies and providers to have one representative present at local foster and adoptive parent association meetings to provide updates, address questions and facilitate connections for services and supports.

- Work with Community-Based Care Lead Agencies and providers to identify mechanisms that can create efficiencies with their efforts to provide training to become licensed foster or adoptive parents.

- Encourage in-person presentations at the local level to Head Start providers, early learning providers and schools to reinforce online training on signs and responsibilities associated with child abuse reporting.

- Provide and encourage local presentations and training opportunities for early care and education programs, schools, faith and community-based organizations to build protective factors and strengthen protective capacities within parents and caregivers.

ADVISORY COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are provided to address requirements outlined in Florida Statute 14.31.

1. **How faith-based and community-based organizations can best compete with other organizations for the delivery of state services, regardless of an organization's orientation, whether faith-based or secular.**

   Faith-based and community-based organizations are uniquely positioned in communities, ready to move forward in providing services to those who may be in need. In order to best compete for the delivery of state services, these organizations must first be aware of opportunities available through the state and attend necessary training(s) to ensure they understand state expectations and have the capacity to meet financial, operational, and compliance requirements. These organizations should consider accessing available opportunities through the My Florida Marketplace – Vendor Bid System website and register and/or sign-up to receive electronic notifications about bid advertisements. When applying to perform services for the state, it is encouraged for these organizations to articulate how they may be able to leverage funding streams and potential volunteers to maximize funds from the state to achieve desired outcomes. The Advisory Council will work to post links to the My Florida Marketplace website to enable interested parties to access information available. Additionally, the Advisory Council will continue to work to better locate and identify available funding opportunities for interested parties.

2. **How best to develop and coordinate activities of faith-based and community-based programs and initiatives, enhance such efforts in communities, and seek such resources, legislation, and regulatory relief as may be necessary to accomplish these objectives.**

   One of the first challenges to overcome when working to develop and coordinate activities of faith-based and community-based programs is to be aware of what is being provided. The Advisory Council continues to work on creating awareness of its functions and ability to provide support to organizations. During quarterly meetings, the Advisory Council seeks presentations on best practice approaches and innovative programs, and recognizes organizations for their efforts to strengthen children and families in Florida. This is done to spur ideas in other areas of the state and to develop additional local connections to support activities. Council members serve as regional points of contact for organizations throughout Florida and can assist in facilitating connections to agency staff to build upon the activities.

3. **How best to ensure that state policy decisions take into account the capacity of faith-based and other community-based initiatives to assist in the achievement of state priorities.**

   The Advisory Council encourages elected officials and state agencies to establish review criteria that includes assessment of faith-based and community-based initiatives when determining state policy. Officials and agencies are encouraged to utilize the Advisory Council as a mechanism to disseminate information on proposed changes, community meetings, etc. that can illicit comment and feedback on state policy decisions from faith-based and community-based organizations

4. **How best to identify and promote best practices across state government relating to the delivery of services by faith-based and other community-based organizations.**

   Each year, the Advisory Council, in collaboration with DCF and DJJ, disseminates information to faith-based and community-based organizations to encourage submission of presentations for the

annual Faith Symposium on best practice approaches to improve outcomes. Additionally, once activities are identified, members either facilitate connections directly to state agency contacts or works with the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection for guidance on who best to connect with.

5. **How best to coordinate public awareness of faith-based and community nonprofit initiatives, such as demonstration pilot programs or projects, public-private partnerships, volunteerism, and special projects.**

   The Advisory Council will continue to utilize its quarterly meetings as a platform to highlight and bring attention to initiatives that are making a positive impact in communities and on families. The Advisory Council will also engage the Circuit Task Forces from throughout the state to provide feedback on initiatives that can raise awareness and inform where individuals and families can go for services and supports.

6. **How best to encourage private charitable giving to support faith-based and community-based initiatives.**

   The Advisory Council will continue to work to become informed of initiatives and seek opportunities to facilitate connections to businesses and organizations who can consider supporting such initiatives. The Advisory Council also supports the use of development professionals and consultants who can strategize to achieve financial/in-kind goals.

7. **How best to bring concerns, ideas, and policy options to the Governor and Legislature for assisting, strengthening, and replicating successful faith-based and other community-based programs.**

   The Advisory Council will continue to communicate with state agency liaisons and staff, legislative leaders and staff, and through the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection to bring concerns, ideas, and policy options to the Governor and Legislature. Council members may also work directly with their local legislative delegation to create awareness of concerns, ideas and policy options. Additionally, the Advisory Council will continue to seek comment and input from faith-based and community-based organizations to assess and consider including as part of their recommendations to the Governor and Legislature.

8. **How best to develop and implement strategic initiatives to strengthen the institutions of families and communities in this state.**

   The workgroups established by the Advisory Council are designed to coordinate and facilitate connections that can strengthen communities and families. Additionally, the Advisory Council will continue to work with state agency liaisons to identify opportunities to develop and implement initiatives that can strengthen the institutions of families and communities. The Advisory Council will continue to support the efforts of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet and other state associations and groups to develop and implement strategic initiatives.

9. **How best to showcase and herald innovative grassroots nonprofit organizations and civic initiatives.**

   The Advisory Council will continue to highlight innovation organizations and civic initiatives at quarterly meetings, local events, state conferences, through the Champion of Hope Award provided at the annual Faith Symposium, and encourage submission of nominations for the Champions of Service Award provided by Volunteer Florida.

10. **How best to eliminate unnecessary legislative, regulatory, and other bureaucratic barriers that impede effective faith-based and other community-based efforts to address social problems.**

    The Advisory Council will continue to seek comment and input from faith and community-based leaders and members on topics regarding legislative, regulatory and other bureaucratic barriers that may impede effective efforts to address social problems. The public comment portion of the Advisory Council meeting is specifically designed for feedback and perspectives to be shared in order to provide information to make necessary recommendations to eliminate such barriers. The Advisory Council will continue to work with state agency contacts and elected officials to eliminate barriers that may impede efforts to strengthen communities and families.

11. **How best to monitor implementation of state policy affecting faith-based and other community-based organizations.**

    Through the collaboration and engagement of state agency liaisons, the Advisory Council will continue working to identify state policies that may affect the efforts of faith-based and other community-based organizations. The Advisory Council's Legislative Workgroup will also seek to monitor implementation of such policies in order to make recommendations that can result in increased collaboration and coordination between faith-based, volunteer and community-based organizations and the state.

12. **How best to ensure that the efforts of faith-based and other community-based organizations meet objective criteria for performance and accountability.**

    The Advisory Council will continue to make itself available to assist faith-based and community-based organizations and work with state agency liaisons and staff to provide technical assistance and training to meet objective criteria for performance and accountability.

Appendix

Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council
Florida Statute 14.31

(1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.—The Legislature finds that:

(a) Compassionate groups of individuals have selflessly aided this state in serving our most vulnerable residents and our most debilitated neighborhoods.

(b) Inspired by faith and civic commitment, these organizations have accomplished much in changing the lives of thousands and resurrecting neighborhoods torn by the strife of crime and poverty.

(c) It is essential that this state cooperate with these organizations in order to provide an opportunity to participate on an equal basis, regardless of each organization's orientation, whether faith-based or secular.

(2) LEGISLATIVE INTENT.—It is therefore the intent of the Legislature to recognize the contributions of these organizations and to encourage opportunities for faith-based and community-based organizations to work cooperatively with government entities in order to deliver services more effectively. The Legislature further intends that the purpose of the council is to advise the Governor and the Legislature on policies, priorities, and objectives for the state's comprehensive effort to enlist, equip, enable, empower, and expand the work of faith-based, volunteer, and other community organizations to the full extent permitted by law.

(3) ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COUNCIL.—

(a) The Florida Faith-based and Community-based Advisory Council, an advisory council as defined in s. 20.03, is established and assigned to the Executive Office of the Governor. The council shall be administratively housed within the Executive Office of the Governor.

(b) The council shall consist of 25 members. Council members may include, but need not be limited to, representatives from various faiths, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, foundations, corporations, and municipalities.

(c) The council shall be composed of the following members:
1. Seventeen members appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the Governor.
2. Four members appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the President of the Senate.
3. Four members appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(d) Council members shall serve 4-year terms, except that the initial terms shall be staggered as follows:
1. The Governor shall appoint six members for a term of 3 years, six members for a term of 2 years, and five members for a term of 1 year.
2. The President of the Senate shall appoint two members for a term of 3 years and two members for a term of 2 years.
3. The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint two members for a term of 3 years and two members for a term of 2 years.

(e) A vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the original appointing authority for the unexpired portion of the term.

(4) MEETINGS; ORGANIZATION.—

(a) The first meeting of the council shall be held no later than August 1, 2006. Thereafter, the council shall meet at least once per quarter per calendar year. Meetings may be held via teleconference or other electronic means.

(b) The council shall annually elect from its membership one member to serve as chair of the council and one member to serve as vice chair.

(c) Thirteen members of the council shall constitute a quorum.

(d) Members of the council shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for per diem and travel expenses pursuant to s. 112.061.

(5) SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES.—The council shall review and recommend in a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives:

(a) How faith-based and community-based organizations can best compete with other organizations for the delivery of state services, regardless of an organization's orientation, whether faith-based or secular.

(b) How best to develop and coordinate activities of faith-based and community-based programs and initiatives, enhance such efforts in communities, and seek such resources, legislation, and regulatory relief as may be necessary to accomplish these objectives.

(c) How best to ensure that state policy decisions take into account the capacity of faith-based and other community-based initiatives to assist in the achievement of state priorities.

(d) How best to identify and promote best practices across state government relating to the delivery of services by faith-based and other community-based organizations.

(e) How best to coordinate public awareness of faith-based and community nonprofit initiatives, such as demonstration pilot programs or projects, public-private partnerships, volunteerism, and special projects.

(f) How best to encourage private charitable giving to support faith-based and community-based initiatives.

(g) How best to bring concerns, ideas, and policy options to the Governor and Legislature for assisting, strengthening, and replicating successful faith-based and other community-based programs.

(h) How best to develop and implement strategic initiatives to strengthen the institutions of families and communities in this state.

(i) How best to showcase and herald innovative grassroots nonprofit organizations and civic initiatives.

(j) How best to eliminate unnecessary legislative, regulatory, and other bureaucratic barriers that impede effective faith-based and other community-based efforts to address social problems.

(k) How best to monitor implementation of state policy affecting faith-based and other community-based organizations.

(l) How best to ensure that the efforts of faith-based and other community-based organizations meet objective criteria for performance and accountability.

(6) RESTRICTED ACTIVITIES.—The council may not make any recommendation that conflicts with the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or the public funding provision of s. 3, Art. I of the State Constitution.

(7) REPORT.—By February 1 of each year, the council shall prepare a written report for the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives containing an accounting of its activities and recommended policies, priorities, and objectives for the state's comprehensive effort to enlist, equip, enable, empower, and expand the work of faith-based, volunteer, and other community-based organizations to the full extent permitted by law.

History.—s. 1, ch. 2006-9; s. 1, ch. 2011-155.

Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection
Florida Statute 39.001, Sections 8 – 12

(8) LEGISLATIVE INTENT FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE, ABANDONMENT, AND NEGLECT OF CHILDREN.—The incidence of known child abuse, abandonment, and neglect has increased rapidly over the past 5 years. The impact that abuse, abandonment, or neglect has on the victimized child, siblings, family structure, and inevitably on all citizens of the state has caused the Legislature to determine that the prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect shall be a priority of this state. To further this end, it is the intent of the Legislature that an Office of Adoption and Child Protection be established.

(9) OFFICE OF ADOPTION AND CHILD PROTECTION.—

(a) For purposes of establishing a comprehensive statewide approach for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect, the Office of Adoption and Child Protection is created within the Executive Office of the Governor. The Governor shall appoint a Chief Child Advocate for the office.

(b) The Chief Child Advocate shall:

1. Assist in developing rules pertaining to the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and implementation of child abuse prevention efforts.

2. Act as the Governor's liaison with state agencies, other state governments, and the public and private sectors on matters that relate to the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and child abuse prevention.

3. Work to secure funding and other support for the state's promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and child abuse prevention efforts, including, but not limited to, establishing cooperative relationships among state and private agencies.

4. Develop a strategic program and funding initiative that links the separate jurisdictional activities of state agencies with respect to promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and child abuse prevention. The office may designate lead and contributing agencies to develop such initiatives.

5. Advise the Governor and the Legislature on statistics related to the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and child abuse prevention trends in this state; the status of current adoption programs and services, current child abuse prevention programs and services, the funding of adoption, support of adoptive families, and child abuse prevention programs and services; and the status of the office with regard to the development and implementation of the state strategy for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and child abuse prevention.

6. Develop public awareness campaigns to be implemented throughout the state for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and child abuse prevention.

(c) The office is authorized and directed to:

1. Oversee the preparation and implementation of the state plan established under subsection (10) and revise and update the state plan as necessary.
2. Provide for or make available continuing professional education and training in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

3. Work to secure funding in the form of appropriations, gifts, and grants from the state, the Federal Government, and other public and private sources in order to ensure that sufficient funds are available for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and child abuse prevention efforts.

4. Make recommendations pertaining to agreements or contracts for the establishment and development of:

    a. Programs and services for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse and neglect.

    b. Training programs for the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

    c. Multidisciplinary and discipline-specific training programs for professionals with responsibilities affecting children, young adults, and families.

    d. Efforts to promote adoption.

    e. Postadoptive services to support adoptive families.

5. Monitor, evaluate, and review the development and quality of local and statewide services and programs for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse and neglect and shall publish and distribute an annual report of its findings on or before January 1 of each year to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, the head of each state agency affected by the report, and the appropriate substantive committees of the Legislature. The report shall include:

    a. A summary of the activities of the office.

    b. A summary of the adoption data collected and reported to the federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and the federal Administration for Children and Families.

    c. A summary of the child abuse prevention data collected and reported to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and the federal Administration for Children and Families.

    d. A summary detailing the timeliness of the adoption process for children adopted from within the child welfare system.

    e. Recommendations, by state agency, for the further development and improvement of services and programs for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse and neglect.

    f. Budget requests, adoption promotion and support needs, and child abuse prevention program needs by state agency.

6. Work with the direct-support organization established under s. 39.0011 to receive financial assistance.

(10) PLAN FOR COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH.—

(a) The office shall develop a state plan for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of abuse, abandonment, and neglect of children and shall submit the state plan to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, and the Governor no later than December 31, 2008. The Department of Children and Families, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Education, the Department of Health, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Law Enforcement, and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities shall participate and fully cooperate in the development of the state plan at both the state and local levels. Furthermore, appropriate local agencies and organizations shall be provided an opportunity to participate in the development of the state plan at the local level. Appropriate local groups and organizations shall include, but not be limited to, community mental health centers; guardian ad litem programs for children under the circuit court; the school boards of the local school districts; the Florida local advocacy councils; community-based care lead agencies; private or public organizations or programs with recognized expertise in working with child abuse prevention programs for children and families; private or public organizations or programs with recognized expertise in working with children who are sexually abused, physically abused, emotionally abused, abandoned, or neglected and with expertise in working with the families of such children; private or public programs or organizations with expertise in maternal and infant health care; multidisciplinary child protection teams; child day care centers; law enforcement agencies; and the circuit courts, when guardian ad litem programs are not available in the local area. The state plan to be provided to the Legislature and the Governor shall include, as a minimum, the information required of the various groups in paragraph (b).

(b) The development of the state plan shall be accomplished in the following manner:

1. The office shall establish a Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council composed of an adoptive parent who has adopted a child from within the child welfare system and representatives from each state agency and appropriate local agencies and organizations specified in paragraph (a). The advisory council shall serve as the research arm of the office and shall be responsible for:

a. Assisting in developing a plan of action for better coordination and integration of the goals, activities, and funding pertaining to the promotion and support of adoption and the prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect conducted by the office in order to maximize staff and resources at the state level. The plan of action shall be included in the state plan.

b. Assisting in providing a basic format to be utilized by the districts in the preparation of local plans of action in order to provide for uniformity in the district plans and to provide for greater ease in compiling information for the state plan.

c. Providing the districts with technical assistance in the development of local plans of action, if requested.

d. Assisting in examining the local plans to determine if all the requirements of the local plans have been met and, if they have not, informing the districts of the deficiencies and requesting the additional information needed.

e. Assisting in preparing the state plan for submission to the Legislature and the Governor. Such preparation shall include the incorporation into the state plan of information obtained from the local plans, the cooperative plans with the members of the advisory council, and the plan of action for coordination and integration of state

departmental activities. The state plan shall include a section reflecting general conditions and needs, an analysis of variations based on population or geographic areas, identified problems, and recommendations for change. In essence, the state plan shall provide an analysis and summary of each element of the local plans to provide a statewide perspective. The state plan shall also include each separate local plan of action.

f. Conducting a feasibility study on the establishment of a Children's Cabinet.

g. Working with the specified state agency in fulfilling the requirements of subparagraphs 2., 3., 4., and 5.

2. The office, the department, the Department of Education, and the Department of Health shall work together in developing ways to inform and instruct parents of school children and appropriate district school personnel in all school districts in the detection of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect and in the proper action that should be taken in a suspected case of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect, and in caring for a child's needs after a report is made. The plan for accomplishing this end shall be included in the state plan.

3. The office, the department, the Department of Law Enforcement, and the Department of Health shall work together in developing ways to inform and instruct appropriate local law enforcement personnel in the detection of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect and in the proper action that should be taken in a suspected case of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect.

4. Within existing appropriations, the office shall work with other appropriate public and private agencies to emphasize efforts to educate the general public about the problem of and ways to detect child abuse, abandonment, and neglect and in the proper action that should be taken in a suspected case of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect. The plan for accomplishing this end shall be included in the state plan.

5. The office, the department, the Department of Education, and the Department of Health shall work together on the enhancement or adaptation of curriculum materials to assist instructional personnel in providing instruction through a multidisciplinary approach on the identification, intervention, and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect. The curriculum materials shall be geared toward a sequential program of instruction at the four progressional levels, K-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12. Strategies for encouraging all school districts to utilize the curriculum are to be included in the state plan for the prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect.

6. Each district of the department shall develop a plan for its specific geographical area. The plan developed at the district level shall be submitted to the advisory council for utilization in preparing the state plan. The district local plan of action shall be prepared with the involvement and assistance of the local agencies and organizations listed in this paragraph, as well as representatives from those departmental district offices participating in the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and treatment and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect. In order to accomplish this, the office shall establish a task force on the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect. The office shall appoint the members of the task force in accordance with the membership requirements of this section. The office shall ensure that individuals from both urban and rural areas and an adoptive parent who has adopted a child from within the child welfare system are represented on the task force. The task force shall develop a written statement clearly identifying its operating procedures,

purpose, overall responsibilities, and method of meeting responsibilities. The district plan of action to be prepared by the task force shall include, but shall not be limited to:

a. Documentation of the magnitude of the problems of child abuse, including sexual abuse, physical abuse, and emotional abuse, and child abandonment and neglect in its geographical area.

b. A description of programs currently serving abused, abandoned, and neglected children and their families and a description of programs for the prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect, including information on the impact, cost-effectiveness, and sources of funding of such programs.

c. Information concerning the number of children within the child welfare system available for adoption who need child-specific adoption promotion efforts.

d. A description of programs currently promoting and supporting adoptive families, including information on the impact, cost-effectiveness, and sources of funding of such programs.

e. A description of a comprehensive approach for providing postadoption services. The continuum of services shall include, but not be limited to, sufficient and accessible parent and teen support groups; case management, information, and referral services; and educational advocacy.

f. A continuum of programs and services necessary for a comprehensive approach to the promotion of adoption and the prevention of all types of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect as well as a brief description of such programs and services.

g. A description, documentation, and priority ranking of local needs related to the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect based upon the continuum of programs and services.

h. A plan for steps to be taken in meeting identified needs, including the coordination and integration of services to avoid unnecessary duplication and cost, and for alternative funding strategies for meeting needs through the reallocation of existing resources, utilization of volunteers, contracting with local universities for services, and local government or private agency funding.

i. A description of barriers to the accomplishment of a comprehensive approach to the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect.

j. Recommendations for changes that can be accomplished only at the state program level or by legislative action.

(11) FUNDING AND SUBSEQUENT PLANS.—

(a) All budget requests submitted by the office, the department, the Department of Health, the Department of Education, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Corrections, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, or any other agency to the Legislature for funding of efforts for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect shall be based on the state plan developed pursuant to this section.

(b) The office and the other agencies and organizations listed in paragraph (10)(a) shall readdress the state plan and make necessary revisions every 5 years, at a minimum. Such revisions shall be submitted to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate no later than June 30 of each year divisible by 5. At least biennially, the office shall review the state plan and make any necessary revisions based on changing needs and program evaluation results. An annual progress report shall be submitted to update the state plan in the years between the 5-year intervals. In order to avoid duplication of effort, these required plans may be made a part of or merged with other plans required by either the state or Federal Government, so long as the portions of the other state or Federal Government plan that constitute the state plan for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect are clearly identified as such and are provided to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate as required under this section.

(12) LIBERAL CONSTRUCTION.—It is the intent of the Legislature that this chapter be liberally interpreted and construed in conformity with its declared purposes.

History.—s. 1, ch. 26880, 1951; s. 1, ch. 73-231; s. 1, ch. 78-414; s. 1, ch. 82-62; s. 62, ch. 85-81; s. 1, ch. 85-206; s. 10, ch. 85-248; s. 19, ch. 86-220; s. 1, ch. 90-53; ss. 1, 2, ch. 90-208; s. 2, ch. 90-306; s. 2, ch. 91-33; s. 68, ch. 91-45; s. 13, ch. 91-57; s. 5, ch. 93-156; s. 23, ch. 93-200; s. 19, ch. 93-230; s. 14, ch. 94-134; s. 14, ch. 94-135; ss. 9, 10, ch. 94-209; s. 1332, ch. 95-147; s. 7, ch. 95-152; s. 8, ch. 95-158; ss. 15, 30, ch. 95-228; s. 116, ch. 95-418; s. 1, ch. 96-268; ss. 128, 156, ch. 97-101; s. 69, ch. 97-103; s. 3, ch. 97-237; s. 119, ch. 97-238; s. 8, ch. 98-137; s. 18, ch. 98-403; s. 1, ch. 99-193; s. 13, ch. 2000-139; s. 5, ch. 2000-151; s. 5, ch. 2000-263; s. 34, ch. 2004-267; s. 2, ch. 2006-97; s. 1, ch. 2006-194; s. 2, ch. 2006-227; s. 1, ch. 2007-124; s. 3, ch. 2008-6; s. 1, ch. 2010-114; s. 42, ch. 2011-142; s. 2, ch. 2012-105; s. 19, ch. 2012-116; s. 4, ch. 2013-15; s. 9, ch. 2014-19; s. 2, ch. 2014-224.

Note.—Former s. 39.20; subsections (3), (5), and (6) former s. 39.002, s. 409.70, subsections (7)-(9) former s. 415.501.

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