**2016 Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council Recommendations**

The following recommendations are provided to address the scope of activities 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.