

State of Connecticut

By His Excellency

John G. Rowland

Governor

Executive Order No. 31

WHEREAS, The State of Connecticut is fortunate to have a rich diversity of community, faith-based and other private charitable organizations that render effective assistance to people in need; and

WHEREAS, these groups operate efficient and successful programs and achieve impressive results by using human, financial and spiritual resources to bring services that at times are beyond government's capacity; and

WHEREAS, citizens of Connecticut recognize that government need not be the first or the only provider of assistance to those in need, but that it is prudent for government to enlist the aid of independent community and faith-based organizations in the public efforts to address pressing social issues; and

WHEREAS, the "Charitable Choice" provisions of the 1996 Welfare Reform Law, the 1997 federal Welfare-to-Work Grant Program, the 1998 Community Services Block Grant Program and the Community Renewal Tax Relief Act which in part encourage states to engage faith-based organizations on the same basis as all other charitable organizations as providers of services to needy citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Charitable Choice provisions of the Welfare Reform Law, the Welfare-to-Work Grant program, the Community Services block Grant Program and the Community Renewal Tax Relief Act protect both the religious character and integrity of participating faith-based providers and the religious freedom of aid recipients; and

WHEREAS, President Bush in January 2001 established a White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (White House OFBCI) within the Executive Office of the President that has lead responsibility in the executive branch to establish policies, priorities and objectives for the Federal Government's comprehensive effort to empower and expand the work of faith-based and other community organizations to the extent permitted by law; and

WHEREAS, Connecticut state agencies, in fulfillment of their missions, traditionally have relied upon the faith-based community to meet fundamental needs of residents through the effective delivery of services and programs; and

WHEREAS, the federal framework provides Connecticut with the opportunity to broaden and enhance participation of the faith-based community within the network of public resources currently available in the state and to the state;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John G. Rowland, Governor of the State of Connecticut, acting by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the statutes of this state, so hereby **ORDER** and **DIRECT**:

1. That there be established the Governor's Faith-Based Council (hereinafter Council) to serve as an intermediary in support of the development and enhancement of all state collaborative efforts with faith-based organizations for the provision of social services.
2. That the Council, through regular meetings, research, communications, briefings, public hearings and conferences, shall
 - a. Identify opportunities for the collaborative involvement of the faith community to provide services;
 - b. Provide ongoing documentation of existing collaborations between state agencies and faith-based organizations;
 - c. Identify obstacles to efficient and effective collaboration;
 - d. Assess the capacity of faith-based organizations to provide social services;
 - e. Provide necessary training and technical assistance to faith-based organizations to ensure their maximum participation;
 - f. Make recommendations, including proposed legislation, that would result in more successful collaborations between state agencies and faith-based organizations;
 - g. Assure a single point of contact within the member-agencies listed below for faith-based organizations;
 - h. Develop and submit a comprehensive framework and annual plan of action to me by July 1, 2004 and update such plan annually thereafter.
3. That an equal number of representatives from state agencies and faith-based communities shall constitute the membership of the Council. State members shall include the heads of the following state agencies or their designees:
 - a. The Department of Children and Families,
 - b. The Department of Correction,
 - c. The Department of Education,
 - d. The Department of Labor,
 - e. The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services,
 - f. The Office of Policy and Management, and
 - g. The Department of Social Services.

I shall appoint seven representatives of the faith-based community within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this Order.

The Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) or his designee shall chair the Council and convene the Council no later than forty-five (45) days of the effective date of this Order. OPM shall provide staff to the Council.

4. That this Order shall take effect immediately.

Dated in Hartford, Connecticut, this 24th day of October 2003.

JOHN G. ROWLAND
Governor

By His Excellency's Command

Susan Bysiewicz