



**McHenry County
Department of Planning and Development**

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 Community Development
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STATEMENT ON FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Organization Name:

Church-State issues notwithstanding, religious institutions are frequently involved in the delivery of public services. On December 12, 2002, President George W. Bush issued Executive Order 13279 “to ensure equal protection of the laws for faith-based and community organizations, to further the national effort to expand opportunities for, and strengthen the capacity of, faith-based and other community organizations so that they may better meet the social needs in America’s communities.”

The next year, HUD issued a final rule covering eight HUD programs administered by its Office of Community Planning and Development – including CDBG – to implement the Executive Order. The following associated regulations apply:

24 CFR 570.200(j) Equal participation of faith-based organizations.

The HUD program requirements in § 5.109 of this title (see below) apply to the CDBG program, including the requirements regarding disposition and change in use of real property by a faith-based organization.

24 CFR 570.109 Equal participation of faith-based organizations in HUD programs and activities.

(a) Purpose. Consistent with Executive Order 13279 (issued on December 12, 2002, 67 FR 77141), entitled “Equal Protection of the Laws for Faith-Based and Community Organizations,” as amended by Executive Order 13559 (issued on November 17, 2010, 75 FR 71319), entitled “Fundamental Principles and Policymaking Criteria for Partnerships With Faith-Based and Other Neighborhood Organizations,” this section describes requirements for ensuring the equal participation of faith-based organizations in HUD programs and activities. These requirements apply to all HUD programs and activities, including all of HUD’s Native American Programs, except as may be otherwise noted in the respective program regulations in title 24 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), or unless inconsistent with certain HUD program authorizing statutes.

(b) Definitions. The following definitions apply to this section:

Direct Federal financial assistance means Federal financial assistance provided when a Federal Government agency or an intermediary, as defined in this section, selects the provider and either purchases services from that provider (i.e., via a contract) or awards funds to that provider to carry out an activity (e.g., via grant, sub-grant, sub-award, or cooperative agreement). The recipients of sub-grants or sub-awards that receive Federal financial assistance through State-administered programs (e.g., flow-through programs) are considered recipients of direct Federal financial assistance. In general, Federal financial assistance shall be treated as direct, unless it meets the definition of indirect Federal financial assistance.

Federal financial assistance means assistance that non-Federal entities receive or administer in the forms of grants, contracts, loans, loan guarantees, property, cooperative agreements, food commodities, direct appropriations, or other assistance, but does not include a tax credit, deduction, or exemption.

Indirect Federal financial assistance means Federal financial assistance provided when the choice of the provider is placed in the hands of the beneficiary, and the cost of that service is paid through a voucher, certificate, or other



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similar means of Government-funded payment. Federal financial assistance provided to an organization is considered indirect when the Government program through which the beneficiary receives the voucher, certificate, or other similar means of Government-funded payment is neutral toward religion; the organization receives the assistance as a result of a decision of the beneficiary, not a decision of the Government; and the beneficiary has at least one adequate secular option for the use of the voucher, certificate, or other similar means of Government-funded payment.

Intermediary means an entity, including a nongovernmental organization, acting under a contract, grant, or other agreement with the Federal Government or with a State, tribal or local government that accepts Federal financial assistance and distributes that assistance to other entities that, in turn, carry out activities under HUD programs.

(c) Equal participation of faith-based organizations in HUD programs and activities. Faith-based organizations are eligible, on the same basis as any other organization, to participate in HUD programs and activities. Neither the Federal Government, nor a State, tribal or local government, nor any other entity that administers any HUD program or activity, shall discriminate against an organization on the basis of the organization's religious character or affiliation, or lack thereof. In addition, decisions about awards of Federal financial assistance must be free from political interference or even the appearance of such interference and must be made on the basis of merit, not based on the religious character or affiliation, or lack thereof, of an organization.

(d) Separation of explicitly religious activities from direct Federal financial assistance.

(1) A faith-based organization that applies for, or participates in, a HUD program or activity supported with Federal financial assistance retains its independence and may continue to carry out its mission, including the definition, development, practice, and expression of its religious beliefs, provided that it does not use direct Federal financial assistance that it receives (e.g., via contract, grant, sub-grant, sub-award or cooperative agreement) to support or engage in any explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization), or in any other manner prohibited by law.

(2) A faith-based organization that receives direct Federal financial assistance may use space (including a sanctuary, chapel, prayer hall, or other space) in its facilities (including a temple, synagogue, church, mosque, or other place of worship) to carry out activities under a HUD program without removing religious art, icons, scriptures, or other religious symbols. In addition, a faith-based organization participating in a HUD program or activity retains its authority over its internal governance, and may retain religious terms in its organization's name, select its board members on a religious basis, and include religious references in its organization's mission statements and other governing documents.

(e) Explicitly religious activities. If an organization engages in explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization), the explicitly religious activities must be offered separately, in time or location, from the programs or activities supported by direct Federal financial assistance and participation must be voluntary for the beneficiaries of the programs or activities that receive direct Federal financial assistance.

(f) Intermediary responsibilities to ensure equal participation of faith-based organizations in HUD programs. If an intermediary - acting under a contract, grant, or other agreement with the Federal Government or with a State, tribal or local government that is administering a program supported by Federal financial assistance - is given the authority to select a nongovernmental organization to receive Federal financial assistance under a contract, grant, sub-grant, sub-award, or cooperative agreement, the intermediary must ensure that such organization complies



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with the requirements of this section. If the intermediary is a nongovernmental organization, it retains all other rights of a nongovernmental organization under the program's statutory and regulatory provisions.

(g) Beneficiary protections. Faith-based organizations that carry out programs or activities with direct Federal financial assistance from HUD must give written notice to beneficiaries and prospective beneficiaries of the programs or activities describing certain protections available to them, as provided in this subsection. In addition, if a beneficiary or prospective beneficiary objects to the religious character of the organization carrying out the programs or activities, that organization must promptly undertake reasonable efforts to identify and refer the beneficiary or prospective beneficiary to an alternative provider to which the beneficiary or prospective beneficiary has no such objection.

(1) Written notice. The written notice must state that:

- (i) The organization may not discriminate against a beneficiary or prospective beneficiary on the basis of religion, religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice;
- (ii) The organization may not require beneficiaries to attend or participate in any explicitly religious activities that are offered by the organization, and any participation by beneficiaries in such activities must be purely voluntary;
- (iii) The organization must separate, in time or location, any privately funded explicitly religious activities from activities supported by direct Federal financial assistance;
- (iv) If a beneficiary objects to the religious character of the organization, the organization must undertake reasonable efforts to identify and refer the beneficiary to an alternative provider to which the beneficiary has no such objection; and
- (v) Beneficiaries or prospective beneficiaries may report an organization's violation of these protections, including any denial of services or benefits by an organization, by contacting or filing a written complaint to HUD or the intermediary, if applicable.

(2) Timing of Notice. The written notice must be given to prospective beneficiaries before they enroll in any HUD program or activity. When the nature of the program or activity or exigent circumstances make it impracticable to provide the written notice in advance, the organization must provide written notice to beneficiaries of their protections at the earliest available opportunity.

(3) Referral requirements.

- (i) If a beneficiary or prospective beneficiary of a program or activity that receives direct Federal financial assistance from HUD objects to the religious character of an organization that carries out the program or activity, that organization must promptly undertake reasonable efforts to identify and refer the beneficiary or prospective beneficiary to an alternative provider to which the beneficiary or prospective beneficiary has no such objection.
- (ii) A referral may be made to another faith-based organization, if the beneficiary or prospective beneficiary has no objection to that provider based on the provider's religious character. But if the beneficiary or prospective beneficiary requests a secular provider, and a secular provider is available, then a referral must be made to that provider.



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(iii) Except for activities carried out by telephone, Internet, or similar means, the referral must be to an alternative provider that is in reasonable geographic proximity to the organization making the referral and that carries out activities that are similar in substance and quality to those offered by the organization. The alternative provider also must have the capacity to accept additional beneficiaries.

(iv) If the organization determines that it is unable to identify an alternative provider, the organization shall promptly notify the intermediary or, if there is no intermediary, HUD. If HUD or an intermediary is notified that an organization is unable to identify an alternative provider, HUD or the intermediary, as appropriate, shall promptly determine whether there is any other suitable alternative provider to which the beneficiary or prospective beneficiary may be referred. An intermediary that receives a request for assistance in identifying an alternative provider may request assistance from HUD.

(4) Recordkeeping. A faith-based organization providing a referral under paragraph (g)(3) of this section must document a beneficiary or prospective beneficiary's request for a referral, whether the beneficiary or prospective beneficiary was referred to another provider, to which provider the beneficiary or prospective beneficiary was referred, and if the beneficiary or prospective beneficiary contacted the alternative provider, unless the beneficiary or prospective beneficiary requests no follow up.

(h) Nondiscrimination requirements. Any organization that receives Federal financial assistance under a HUD program or activity shall not, in providing services or carrying out activities with such assistance, discriminate against a beneficiary or prospective beneficiary on the basis of religion, religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice. However, this section does not require any organization that only receives indirect Federal financial assistance to modify its program or activities to accommodate a beneficiary that selects the organization to receive indirect aid.

(i) Exemption from Title VII employment discrimination requirements. A religious organization's exemption from the Federal prohibition on employment discrimination on the basis of religion, set forth in section 702(a) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e-1), is not forfeited when the organization participates in a HUD program. Some HUD programs, however, contain independent statutory provisions that impose certain nondiscrimination requirements on all grantees. Accordingly, grantees should consult with the appropriate HUD program office to determine the scope of applicable requirements.

(j) Acquisition, construction, and rehabilitation of structures. Direct Federal financial assistance may be used for the acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation of structures only to the extent that those structures are used for conducting eligible activities under a HUD program or activity. Where a structure is used for both eligible and explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization), direct Federal financial assistance may not exceed the cost of the share of acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation attributable to eligible activities in accordance with the cost accounting requirements applicable to the HUD program or activity. However, acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation of sanctuaries, chapels, or other rooms that a HUD-funded faith-based organization uses as its principal place of worship, may not be paid with direct Federal financial assistance. Disposition of real property by a faith-based organization after its use for an authorized purpose, or any change in use of the property from an authorized purpose, is subject to Government-wide regulations governing real property disposition (2 CFR part 200, subpart D) and the HUD program regulations, as directed by HUD.

(k) Commingling of Federal and State, tribal, and local funds. If a State, tribal, or local government voluntarily contributes its own funds to supplement direct Federal financial assistance for an activity, the State, tribal or local



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government has the option to segregate those funds or commingle them with the direct Federal financial assistance. However, if the funds are commingled, the requirements of this section apply to all of the commingled funds. Further, if a State, tribal, or local government is required to contribute matching funds to supplement direct Federal financial assistance for an activity, the matching funds are considered commingled with the direct Federal financial assistance and, therefore, subject to the requirements of this section. Some HUD programs' requirements govern any activity assisted under those programs. Accordingly, recipients should consult with the appropriate HUD program office to determine the scope of applicable requirements.

Based on review of the aforementioned two regulations, please respond to the following questions:

Is your organization faith-based?

If you selected "Yes," briefly explain how your agency will demonstrate compliance with 2 CFR 570.200(j) which prohibits inherently religious activities.

I certify that this statement is true and accurate.

Printed Name

Signature

Date