



# NEWS

## The United States Conference of Mayors

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### **MAYORS LAUNCH NEW CENTER FOR FAITH-BASED AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES**

Washington, D.C. – Under the leadership of Philadelphia Mayor John F. Street and Miami Mayor Manuel Diaz, Chair and Vice-Chair of the U.S. Conference of Mayors Faith-Based and Community Task Force respectively, the Conference today officially launched a new *Mayors Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives*. The purpose of the Center is to inform, educate and train mayors, city-designated faith-based liaisons, and other public servants on how to best engage the faith community for more effective partnerships and service. Ultimately, the goal is to increase both public and private-sector awareness and support for faith-based efforts toward neighborhood revitalization.

“For many years, cities have worked closely in partnership with faith and community serving organizations. These collaborations have played a critical role in improving the lives of residents in many cities by providing a plethora of vital services -- including job training and employment services, health support services, services related to crime prevention and intervention, mentoring for children of prisoners, domestic violence prevention and intervention and housing services. I look forward to the prominent role of this new Center, which will strengthen a structural base for exploring new avenues to work more closely with faith communities across the country,” said Conference President and Hempstead Mayor James Garner.

Touting his city’s *Amachi Program*, Philadelphia Mayor and Conference Task Force Chair John F. Street said, “By simply reaching people in need who are left behind by government, I believe faith-based institutions can make a real difference in our cities – particularly in the lives of children.”

“Mayor Diaz, Conference Task Force Co-Chair said, “We often turn to faith and community-based organizations to create opportunity and make significant things happen in cities. I find it only natural to reach out to faith-based organizations because of their ties to the community.”

Through the guidance of the Task Force, the Center seeks to accomplish its goals by doing the following:

- Engaging local elected officials in constructive, nonpartisan dialogue in forums to discuss best practices and share experiences and lessons learned
- Advocating for policies and practices that support the efforts of local municipalities in this area
- Providing research-based models of effective practices in localities of various sizes that can be replicated

- The Center's primary constituencies are mayors and the faith-based liaisons which have been designated by the mayors. However, other elected officials, city administrators, national policy institute representatives, private funders and clergy will also find this information relevant and, therefore, will be encouraged to attend these sessions as well as access the outcome materials.

A small panel of experts in the field will serve in an advisory capacity to the Task Force. Many of the Center's events and forums will be held during Conference meetings or in conjunction with other leading national organizations and institutions.

*The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,139 such cities in the country today, each represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the Mayor.*

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