



# Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships

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## Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships Blog

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### Here's What You Had to Say Part 4

Posted by [Vicky Marquez](#) on February 25, 2011 at 3:13 PM EST

Thank you to everyone who continues to follow up with us and our Centers on what you like and what you didn't, whether it's a blog posting or an event. The White House Office on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships has received a number of positive responses regarding past events and blogs, but here are two that stood out:

Dear Joshua,

Great speech by our President at the [National Prayer Breakfast!](#) Thanks for your dedication, commitment and Spiritual support to our President! God Bless and we daily remember you and your team of faith based supporters around the nation.

- Walter D.

I want to acknowledge how encouraging it is to know that a group like this exists within government.

- Thomas C.

Please continue to let us know how you feel about the work we do and the information you would like to learn more about by sending a message to [whpartnerships \(at\) who.eop.gov](mailto:whpartnerships@who.eop.gov).

*Victoria Marquez serves as Policy Analyst for the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships.*

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### Labor Faith/Neighborhood Partnerships Office Hosts Conference Call on Jobs with Secretary Solis, Joshua DuBois, Jane Oates

Posted by [Ben Seigel](#) on February 25, 2011 at 10:19 AM EST

Communities across the country are gearing up for new Department of Labor competitive grant opportunities that are being released early this year in areas such as healthcare and green careers, prisoner reentry, and transitional jobs. To promote these opportunities and make them accessible to as wide a range of organizations and communities as possible, [my office](#) partnered with Joshua DuBois and the [White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships](#) to hold a national conference call last week. We were joined by Labor Secretary Hilda Solis and Assistant Secretary for the Employment and Training Administration Jane Oates who provided information on 10 grant competitions.

Amazingly, we had 842 phone lines activated for the call. Given that in many cases multiple people listened in on the same phone line, we likely had over 1,000 participants! This overwhelming interest in employment and training grants highlights the intense focus of communities across the country on jobs and job training. On the call, we emphasized the value of partnerships in these grant programs and encouraged faith-based and community organizations to join forces with others in their communities and regions to apply as partnerships or consortia. A partnership model can significantly strengthen programs by leveraging the varied expertise of large and small organizations in areas such as job training, case management, supportive services, employer outreach and more. Additionally, partnerships allow smaller, grassroots organizations to participate in larger programs that they lack the organizational capacity to apply for directly.

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## Faith Offices at USDA and CNCS Help Expand Access to Nutrition Assistance

Posted by Max Finberg and John Kelly on February 25, 2011 at 8:01 AM EST

There was a buzz in the room as the statue of George Washington looked out at the [newly inaugurated foot soldiers in the fight against hunger](#). From Philadelphia's historic City Hall, these 46 new AmeriCorpsVISTA volunteers will spread out around the country to form the new [National Anti-Hunger and Opportunity Corps](#), an innovative collaboration between the US Department of Agriculture, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS, the parent organization of AmeriCorpsVISTA), the non-profit [New York City Coalition Against Hunger](#) and the Walmart Foundation.

As the Director of the USDA Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, I worked with CNCS Strategic Advisor for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, John Kelly, and other colleagues to help build this partnership. I was pleased to represent the White House Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships initiative at this exciting launch and stress to the Anti-Hunger Corps Members the importance of building partnerships with congregations and community groups.

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## Fruit and Faith

Posted by Ari Alexander on February 24, 2011 at 4:07 PM EST



Ari Alexander is meeting with Mrs. Grace Mensah, a mango farmer from one of ADRA's site visits. Photo taken by Joshua Umahi –intern for ADRA.

Hello from Ghana, where I had the privilege earlier this week to observe the fruits of a great development success story in the Eastern Region of Ghana. A faith-based organization conceived, proposed, designed, and implemented a project to introduce fruit trees to smallholder farmers as a path to economic growth and sustainability. USAID through the use of PL480 Title II Food Aid resources supported this concept from 1997 until 2006. Visiting with these orange and mango farmers five years after USAID's support ended, the success of our cooperative investment is self-evident. The farmers now sustain themselves and contribute largely to Ghana's economy.

The Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA) brought me to the farms in Somanya, Sikaben, and Akyem Sekyere where, originally, 1-3 acre plots were allotted to 5,424 different farmers in the region. Fourteen years after this program started, these farmers have organized into associations and are selling their fruit to local processing plants. Many of the farmers have expanded to dozens of acres.

The families have become frontline actors in a story of economic growth. More young people are finding farming an attractive possibility for a financially secure future.

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## Dr. Howard Koh Addresses Methodist Young Clergy at Leadership Forum

Posted by [Acacia Bamberg Salatti](#) on February 21, 2011 at 10:29 AM EST



U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Assistant Secretary For Health Dr. Howard Koh discusses his faith journey as an Asian-American and as a United Methodist with a group of young clergy.

In the United Methodist Building, steps away from our nation's Capitol, I listened attentively to Assistant Secretary For Health Dr. Howard Koh discuss his journey as an Asian-American and as a United Methodist with a group of young clergy. He shared how his faith, family upbringing, and early experiences in medicine shaped his career mission to create better systems of care for all people, especially the most vulnerable among us.

The young clergy members were participating in the 8th annual Young Clergy Capitol Hill Leadership Forum. The forum provides creative and participatory ways to teach the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church in congregations.

Before addressing the attendees myself, I listened to Dr. Koh explain how life as the son of immigrant parents was sometimes challenging – at times growing up, he felt it was a struggle to “fit in.” He passionately discussed how improving health care and access to health care fell in line with what he had learned growing up with his family in the Methodist Church: he said that he found it important to live a life of higher purpose and ultimately to give back to society. The audience responded warmly as they connected with a companion of their faith who reminded them that health is a gift that must be protected. Dr. Koh called on those in the audience to continue the role of healing and caring for their congregations, while also speaking to what health care reform means for their communities.

[Includes Photo Gallery](#)

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## A “Tripod of Caring” for America’s Veterans: Chaplaincy, Mental Health and Faith Communities

Posted by [Rev. E. Terri LaVelle](#) on February 17, 2011 at 11:14 AM EST

As the Director of VA’s Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships (CFBNP), I attended the Bridging Chaplaincy and Mental Health Care training conference held in San Diego, California, January 20 & 21, 2011. The conference brought leaders together to discuss the key contributors to the physical and mental health of Veterans. Sixty-seven individuals who care for the needs of our Veterans and their families participated in the conference. The conference provided a rationale and framework for the integration of services provided by VA and the community, including faith communities.

The crucial role faith communities and other non-profits play in the lives of our Veterans become increasingly apparent the longer I serve as Director of the [VA Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships](#). Our office looks for opportunities to bridge and connect the mission and goals of faith communities with the needs of our Veterans.

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