

OUTREACH TO FAITH BASED COMMUNITIES

A Report of the Subcommittee on Outreach to Faith-Based Communities of the U.S.
Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women
National Advisory Committee on Violence Against Women

Executive Summary

Outreach to faith-based and community organizations is one of the priority issues the current NAC was charged to consider.

Religious and community organizations are often the first place a victim turns to for counseling and assistance regarding domestic and sexual violence. Smaller faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs) are sometimes the only resource for victims in rural communities. How can we best coordinate efforts with these groups, and supply technical support, training, and financial assistance to these organizations? The Committee will identify how educational efforts and grant making processes can reach more FBCOs as applicants and grantees. The Committee will explore how to leverage better outcomes to reduce violence against women through increased public-private partnerships.

The FBCO Subcommittee of the National Advisory Committee has sought to develop recommendations for tools and materials to assist faith leaders and other interested members of the faith community, while respecting the limitations on government action required by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and related laws.

The Faith-based and Community Organizations Subcommittee concluded that faith-based and community organizations, particularly smaller congregations, want to be responsive to victims of sexual and domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking but they often lack the information and resources they need to be effective. The Subcommittee therefore recommends:

1. The creation of an “online one-stop shop” for faith leaders; and

The Subcommittee has consulted closely with the Office on Violence Against Women and the National Criminal Justice Reference Service to develop a prototype for an online one-stop shop for faith leaders through OVW’s new public awareness web site enditnow.gov. We recommend an add-on to the site, enditnow.gov/faith, that would direct faith leaders to resources.

- 2. Outreach to faith-based communities to make them aware of these resources through the creation of materials (e.g., bookmarks, post cards, bulletin inserts, and fliers) for distribution to congregations and interfaith organizations and at faith-based conferences.**

The Subcommittee recommends that OVW coordinate with the White House and Department of Justice Offices of Faith-based and Community Initiatives in a pro-active outreach effort to make faith leaders aware of enditnow.gov/faith. Through our consultations with OVW and the National Criminal Justice Reference Service we have developed “mock-up” examples of bookmarks, bulletin inserts and fliers and we recommend that these be distributed to national interfaith organizations and seminaries and at conferences for faith leaders. Advertisements for enditnow.gov/faith could also be placed in major religious magazines.

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