Executive Summary

Partnerships between local government, faith-based and secular organizations are critical to address issues of poverty, homelessness, seniors, children, youth, women, and families. Throughout the years the City of San Antonio has worked with many faith-based and secular organizations to address human services in San Antonio.

As part of the City’s FY 2017 Budget the Mayor and City Council approved the addition of a Faith-Based Community Liaison to facilitate ongoing collaboration between the City of San Antonio, Faith based and secular organizations. The position was added to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to lead the City’s Faith-Based Initiative with the primary goal of leveraging efforts and building capacity to improve the quality of life of vulnerable residents and distressed communities. To kick off the Faith-Based initiative, DHS held a convening of congregations and faith-based organizations on April 3, 2017.

The primary purpose of this convening was to introduce the City’s new Faith-Based Initiative - *In the City for Good* - and gather input towards developing a common vision and active partnerships to improve lives of families and communities in need. Ann Helmke, Faith-Based Community Liaison, facilitated the meeting and articulated key priorities of the initiative including creating a network, facilitating a common vision, and building capacity.

The convening, held at Oblate School of Theology’s Whitley Center, was attended by 203 participants representing 33 Faith Congregations, 56 Non-Profit Agencies, and 25 other organizations including UTSA, Schools and the City of San Antonio. Participants had the opportunity to provide input regarding their interests, desired outcomes, and priorities for the initiative. Additional session outcomes included identification of community challenges and human services priorities and initial creation of an organized network of entities. The highest priority human services needs identified by the participants include literacy, poverty (generational), homelessness, health, foster care, sexual assault, and immigration.

Significant participant feedback noted a continuing need for networking opportunities and technology to effectively and directly connect stakeholders and resources that address the needs of the San Antonio community. Other noted feedback included requests for information on available services and resources; research on best practices from other communities; and capacity building support.

Based on information gathered through this initial meeting surveys of faith-based organizations, DHS will hold a follow-up meeting with the same group in late May 2017 to discuss a work plan and a structure that will include a working group representing the Faith-Based Community to focus on the priorities of the Faith-Based Initiative.
Prior to the convening, electronic invitations and messages were sent to numerous faith and community networks and delegate agencies’ contacts. Each week leading up to the convening, the invitation was sent again with a developing message providing history and information on the initiative.

- **Week 1.** Current History and You; Joining in the Co-creating of the new San Antonio Faith-Based Initiative.
- **Week 2.** Legacy of San Antonio’s Faith-based History and Community; Joining in the Conversation.
- **Week 3.** Future History-making Together; Joining in the Mutual Story of San Antonio Faith Community.

The purpose of the convening was to:

- Gather together congregations, faith-based organization leaders, and secular stakeholders,
- Begin development of an organized network and trust towards collaboration and active partnerships to improve lives,
- Introduce the City’s vision and goals for the new Faith-Based Initiative, and,
- Identify human service priorities for a working group of government, faith, and secular organizations.

“Today I saw a group of people who are ready, willing and able to take this Initiative, and move it forward in the service. I think that focused training, network sharing and a strong strategy will take all of us to places that for many years was visualized as ‘hard to do’ and in some instances—impossible.” - Bill Cancel, Convening Participant, St. Matthew’s Catholic Church
Convening Format

The convening provided participants with an introduction to the City of San Antonio's Faith-Based Initiative; services and resources available through the Department of Human Services; and information on the initiative’s goals—developing relationships; surveying leadership; creating a network; facilitating common vision; and building capacity.

Conversational Leadership

The group facilitation model of Conversational Leadership was utilized to help develop trust and begin the process of building collaborative partnerships. Utilizing well-formed questions that each dive deeper into desired outcome, participants were invited to find two other people they had never met before and form a conversational triad. The triads were then led through 3 questions:

1. Why did you decide to join us today?
2. What is your desired outcome and vision for San Antonio’s Faith-Based Initiative?
3. What are some next steps as individuals, as congregations, and/or as organizations?

In wrap up, each triad was asked to write down the best next step they discussed, share that from the microphone, and hand in those cards.

Guest Speakers

Throughout the convening, Guest speakers provided examples of collaborative efforts—
- Oblate School of Theology
- Texas Public Radio, Dare to Listen Challenge
- Pathways to Hope—Mental Health Conference
- Mayor’s Fitness Council, Healthy Temple Collaborative

Participant Input

Each participant was also asked to turn in a card identifying their highest human service priority on one side and a word to describe the morning on the other side.

A summary of responses is provided on the next page. Cross cutting themes included requests for continuing opportunities to meet and the need for a technology solution to connect government, community, and faith-based organizations.
Summaries from Participant Input

Top Human Service Priorities in descending level of priority

- Poverty (Generational, Spiritual, Seniors)
- Literacy (in general, but also health and computer literacy)
- Immigrants (and at-risk undocumented persons)
- Homelessness and Hunger
- Religious Discrimination
- Public Health
- Children and Foster Care
- Mental Health

A Word about In the City for Good

Attendees were asked to provide a single word describing how they felt about the event. Each word provided was placed into the word-cloud below. The more times a word was mentioned, the larger it is in the word-cloud (below).
Based on participant input and surveys of stakeholders, next steps include:

- **Hold follow-up meeting** with stakeholders in late May to discuss an implementation plan and structure that will include a working group representing the Faith-Based community to focus on the priorities of the City of San Antonio Faith-Based Initiative.

- **Beginning September 2017, DHS will hold quarterly convenings** to continue momentum and provide all stakeholders with opportunities for learning, networking, and input as well as broader awareness of DHS and City initiatives.

- **Create Working Group** for the Initiative that is diverse, has necessary skillsets and capacity, and is motivated and committed to the potential outcomes of the Initiative. Hold first meeting by August 2017.

- **Identify potential technology solutions** to provide faith based and community organizations with access to resources.
Faith-Based Congregations:
Abiding Presence Lutheran Church
Antioch Missionary Baptist Church
Archdiocese of San Antonio
Baha’i
Bandera City Church (non-denominational)
Bethany Congregational, United Church of Christ
Buddhist Center of San Antonio
Celebration Circle (interfaith)
City Church (non-denominational)
CJC Life Church (non-denominational)
Colonial Hills United Methodist Church
Community Bible Church (non-denominational)
Cornerstone Church (non-denominational)
Covenant Presbyterian Church
Cross Roads Church (non-denominational)
Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit
Friends Meeting (Quaker)
Glorious Pentecostal Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ
Gloryland Revival Center (Pentecostal)
Greater Corinth Baptist Church
Greater Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church
HE Butt Family Foundation
House of Prayer Lutheran
Krishna Temple
Liberty View Church of Christ
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
MacArthur Park Lutheran Church
Mandaean Congregation
Mt. Calvary Baptist Church
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church
River of Life Church
San Antonio Mennonite Church
Shambala Center (Buddhist)
Sikh Community

Non-Profit Organizations:
Acts of Hope Center
Adult and Teen Challenge of Texas
American Red Cross
Any Woman Can
Baptist Health Foundation of San Antonio
Baptist Health System of San Antonio
Bethel Community Development Corporation
Biblical Leadership for Excellence
Catholic Charities*
Catholic Muslim Youth Dialogue
Center for Healthcare Services *
Community of Churches for Social Action
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Texas
Crescent Project
Daily Bread Ministries
Daughter of Charity Services of San Antonio
Delpelchin Children’s Center
Dialogue Institute of the Southwest
Domain’s Kingdom Group
Engage SA!
FaithAbility
Families Especial
Family of Faith
Fight Against Sexual Assault
Full of Grace Marketing
Girl Scouts of Southwest Texas *
Good Samaritan Center *
Haven for Hope *
HIS BridgeBuilders of San Antonio
House of Praise International Ministries
Interfaith Welcome Coalition

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KEL Ministries
Last Chance Ministries
Latina Leadership Institute
Martinez Street Women’s Center *
Methodist Healthcare Ministries
NAMI San Antonio
NowCastSA
Open Table
Pax Christi San Antonio
P16 Plus Council of Greater San Antonio *
Presa Community Center *
Project MEND *
Raindrop Turkish House
San Antonio Christian Hope Resource Center
San Antonio Community of Congregations
San Antonio Food Bank *
San Antonio Interfaith Power & Light
San Antonio Marriage Initiative
San Antonio Metropolitan Ministries *
San Antonio Peace Center
San Antonio Youth Literacy *
Save 22
Texas Alliance for Human Needs

Other Organizations:

Alamo Area Council of Governments
Alamo Colleges *
Bexar Area Agency on Aging
City of Leon Valley
City of San Antonio, Department of Human Services, Metropolitan Health District, and Office of the Mayor
CommuniCare Health Centers
Communication Workers of America
Department of Family Protection Services, State of Texas, Faith-Based Initiative
IKOR/Alamo Caregiver Support Coalition
Lee Plus Associates
Mexican American Catholic College
My Education Solutions
National AFL-CIO
National Interorganizational Collaborative
New Image DM&M, LLC
Oblate School of Theology
Our Lady of the Lake University
PROSA
RAICES
River City Christian School
Salem Media Group
San Antonio Bible Institute
San Antonio School for Inquiry & Creativity
Veterans for Educational Reform
UTSA *

* FY 2017 City of San Antonio Delegate Agency