



# City of San Antonio Faith-Based Initiative



Artwork Courtesy of San Antonio Artist Christopher Maroney

## First Convening of the Faith-Based Initiative Summary Report, April 3, 2017



HUMAN SERVICES  
CITY OF SAN ANTONIO



## 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.





## Convening Overview

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).



## Next Steps



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.





# Congregational & Organizational Participants

## 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

\* FY 2017 City of San Antonio Delegate Agency

# Congregational & Organizational Participants Cont.



KEL Ministries	Alamo Area Council of Governments	San Antonio Bible Institute
Last Chance Ministries	Alamo Colleges *	San Antonio School for Inquiry & Creativity
Latina Leadership Institute	Bexar Area Agency on Aging	Veterans for Educational Reform
Martinez Street Women's Center *	City of Leon Valley	UTSA *
Methodist Healthcare Ministries	City of San Antonio, Department of Human Services, Metropolitan Health District, and Office of the Mayor	
NAMI San Antonio	CommuniCare Health Centers	
NowCastSA	Communication Workers of America	
Open Table	Department of Family Protection Services, State of Texas, Faith-Based Initiative	
Pax Christi San Antonio	IKOR/Alamo Caregiver Support Coalition	
P16 Plus Council of Greater San Antonio *	Lee Plus Associates	
Presa Community Center *	Mexican American Catholic College	
Project MEND *	My Education Solutions	
Raindrop Turkish House	National AFL-CIO	
San Antonio Christian Hope Resource Center	National Interorganizational Collaborative	
San Antonio Community of Congregations	New Image DM&M, LLC	
San Antonio Food Bank *	Oblate School of Theology	
San Antonio Interfaith Power & Light	Our Lady of the Lake University	
San Antonio Marriage Initiative	PROSA	
San Antonio Metropolitan Ministries *	RAICES	
San Antonio Peace Center	River City Christian School	
San Antonio Youth Literacy *	Salem Media Group	
Save 22		
Texas Alliance for Human Needs		
<b>Other Organizations:</b>		

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