

# Virginia Department of Social Services' Faith and Community Initiative

## Birth of Faith and Community Initiative (FCI) in Virginia

President George W. Bush established in 2001 the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, and set up parallel offices within the US Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Justice, Social Services, etc.

The Virginia General Assembly developed the foundation for the Virginia Department of Social Services' (VDSS) Faith and Community Initiative (FCI) through a [Joint Resolution of the 2010 Session of the General Assembly](#).

FCI works closely with the Virginia Department of Health's (VDH) *Virginia Partners in Prayer & Prevention (Virginia P3)* program. Virginia P3 is the evolution and rebranding of Virginia's Congregations for Million Hearts program. The initiative facilitates partnerships between marginalized communities, faith and interfaith organizations and the state public health agency.

## What is FCI?

The VDSS Faith and Community Initiative (FCI) works with Virginia's faith and community organizations (FCOs) to increase the health and wellness of Virginia's families, particularly those that interface with the family welfare systems, and to increase substance use disorder (SUD) prevention, treatment, and recovery. By collaborating with FCOs, residents of Virginia can search for VDSS resources within their own community. FCI will ensure an ongoing relationship between VDSS and faith based organizations.

## What Does FCI Do?

- General DSS Trainings: The purpose is to equip faith and community-based organizations with training in evidence-based and evidence-informed curriculums related to family welfare, re-entry, SUD, benefits and capacity building training.
- Development of a Certified Recovery Congregation (CRC) program: When a congregation completes the certification process, they will be added to the statewide recovery support network.
- Increased resources for Peer Recovery Supports (PRS) that are connected to FCOs.
- Surveys may be collected to measure change and capacity of these organizations in Virginia.

Finally, FCI aids in raising awareness of, and increasing access to, services that address SUD. The Virginia FCI believes that building relationships with FCOs will increase a community's knowledge and use of VDSS resources. In particular, individuals who have the most barriers will be best served.

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