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I. PROCESS

A. PROCESS NARRATIVE

Dewey & Kaye, Inc. (DKI) was selected by The Forbes Funds to conduct a series of facilitated meetings with individuals representing a cross-section of our community’s faith-based congregational programs and nonprofit organizations. Prior to conducting those sessions, DKI met with the Project Director and the Project Advisory Committee to discuss the appropriate agendas, discussion questions, potential participants and meeting schedules.

The Forbes Funds then sent out an invitation to the selected leaders, inviting them to one of eight focus group meetings. The sessions took place during November and December of 2003 and were divided as follows:

- Nonprofit Groups (small, large, and mixed)
- Congregations (urban and suburban)
- Networks and Intermediaries
- Donors

A total of 33 representatives from 30 organizations participated (Appendix A). While questions varied by focus group, all but the discussion with donors began with participants outlining their programs’ staffing, resources and services. This was followed by a brief review of The Forbes Funds’ findings-to-date from their faith-based research, and then a quick inquiry into the participants’ reaction to those findings. Finally, the following issues, as they related to each group, were raised and discussed:

- Marketing and communication
- Connections to external resources including referrals and collaborations
- Unmet community needs
- Opportunities for and limitations to growth
- Faith-based impacts and measurements

Donors were asked about their expectations and requirements, as well as the impact of faith on donations.

Following these focus group discussions, DKI met with the Advisory Committee to review preliminary findings, and then with the Project Director to review possible recommendations.
## B. OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY OF ORGANIZATIONS</th>
<th>OPERATING BUDGET</th>
<th>STAFF/SIZE</th>
<th>NATURE OF SERVICES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NONPROFITS: 12</td>
<td>$8K-$12Million</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Small - 2</td>
<td>$8K-$300K</td>
<td>0 – 3 Full Time, 0 – 11 Part Time, 100 Volunteers</td>
<td>Activity Base for Teens and Young Adults to Prevent Gang Involvement and Violence, Alternative Sentencing to Courts, Bill Payment Center, Clothing, Daycare, Emergency Food Pantry, Furniture, Meals on Wheels, Mentoring Reading Camp for Kids, Senior Advocacy, Tutoring, Utility Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium - 4</td>
<td>$440K-$850K</td>
<td>4 – 8 Full Time, 0 – 12 Part Time, 0 – 350 Volunteers</td>
<td>Adjudicated At-Risk Youth, After-School Programs, At-Risk Mobile Home Parks, Back to School, Church Coalition to Strengthen Marriages, Clothing Room, Computer Lab, Counseling Center, Daycare, Early Childhood, Fatherhood, Food Pantry, Gift Exchange, Housing, Interfaith Education, Kindergarten Readiness, Middle School Mentoring Program, Provide Home &amp; Education Through College for Hurt and At-Risk Girls, Senior Education Program: Aerobics, Social Meetings, Health Screenings, Spiritual Development, Summer Camps and Recreation, Tutoring</td>
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| **Large – 6**             | $3 Million - $12 Million | 0 – 190 Full Time, 0 – 100 Part Time, 0 – 6000 Volunteers | • Adoption  
  • Adult Literacy  
  • After-School Program  
  • At Risk Children and Families  
  • Residential - Group Homes, Foster Care, Shelter  
  • Non-Residential - Family Preservation, Alternative Education  
  • Bridge Housing  
  • Career Counseling  
  • Community Health Center  
  • Computer Training  
  • Counseling For Youth and Elderly  
  • Crisis Care  
  • Family Support Sites  
  • Food Pantry/Bank  
  • Foster Care  
  • Homeless Shelter  
  • Immigration – Legal Issues, Employment, Resettlement, Housing, High School Student Transition, Welfare  
  • Job Training  
  • Legal Services  
  • Library  
  • Licensed Outpatient Mental Health Clinic  
  • Low-Income Housing  
  • Lunch Program  
  • Meals On Wheels  
  • Psychological Counseling  
  • Refugee Housing  
  • Respite Care Center for Medical and Psychiatric  
  • Resume Help  
  • Soup Kitchen  
  • Tax and Rebate Assistance  
  • Thrift Store  
  • Transportation – Access Program  
  • Utility Assistance |
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<th>NATURE OF SERVICES</th>
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</table>
| Small – 6                 | $35K – $100K     | • 40 – 140 Members  
• 0 – 5 Full Time  
• 0 – 3 Part Time | • After-school Programs  
• Alternative High School – Collaboration with School District  
• Child Care Center  
• Child Witness to Violence  
• Christian Education for Youth  
• Clothing  
• Community Service for First Time Offenders  
• Early Childhood Program  
• Family Counseling/Conflict Resolution  
• Food Pantry  
• Food Gift Certificates  
• Half-day Kindergarten  
• Holiday Meals  
• Meals For Community 4 Days/Week – 2000/month  
• Parents’ Night Out – Family Support  
• Teen Program  
• Youth Center  
• Youth Outreach – Mostly Low-Income From Single Parent Homes |
| Medium – 3                | $300K-$400K      | • 372-500 Members  
• 2-6 Full Time  
• 2 – 3 Part Time | • After-school Program and Tutoring  
• Coalition of Area Churches – First Time Home Buying/Credit Restoration.  
• Community Computer Lab  
• Financial Assistance – (Rent, Utilities)  
• Food Pantry/Bank  
• Low-Rent, Single Family Housing  
• Youth Street Ministry  
• Youth Summer Outreach |
| Large - 1                 | >$900K           | • 1300 Members  
• 14 – 15 Full Time  
• 50+ Part Time | • Child Care  
• Preschool  
• Community Outreach - Separate 501(c)3  
  • Staff (12-14)  
  • 84 Congregations  
  • Emergency Aid, Financial Support, Emergency Services, Winter Coats, Special Programming, Holiday Meals, Resume Help, Counseling  
• Senior Ministries –separate 501 (c)3, Interagency Collaboration with Other Faith-based  
  • Computer Lab, Education, Social Meal, Bible Study |
## B. OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

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<th>STAFF/SIZE</th>
<th>NATURE OF SERVICES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Direct - 4                | $108K - $1.2Million | 1 – 6 Full Time, 0 – 5 Part Time, Several - 700 Volunteers | • Apartments for Seniors  
• Care Givers – Seniors, Disabled  
• Case Management Programs – Under Self-Sufficient Families  
• Chaplaincy – All City Hospitals  
• Dial of Devotions  
• Emergency Assistance – Cash for Clothing, Food, Rent, Utilities  
• Food Bank  
• For Seniors – Transport to Grocery and Medical Appointments, Safety Checks in Homes, Friendly Visiting  
• Habitat for Humanity  
• Information and Referral  
• Residential and Non-residential Programs for Chronic and Persistent Mental Illness and Developmental Disorders  
• Scholarship Fund  
• Shelter for Homeless Families  
• Summer Camp Scholarships – Faith-Based Camp |
| Intermediary – 3          | $300K - $3Million | 2 – 23 Full Time, Several – 350 Volunteers | • SERVES CONGREGATIONS  
  - Work at Executive Level  
  - Networking Mechanism  
  - Bring Together Ecumenical Ministries From 10 County Areas to Strategize  
  - Chaplin Staff at County Prison  
  - Own TV Channel  
• SERVES SERVICE PROVIDERS  
  - Business Alliance of Care Providers  
    - Group Purchasing, Address Escalating Health Care Benefit Costs, Staff Training and Development/Workforce Assistance, Pharmacy, Quality Improvement, Development of Best Practices.  
• SERVES FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS/CONGREGATIONS  
  - Capacity Building, Create Connections, Increase Capacity to Mobilize Volunteers/Supporters  
  - Storehouse for Nonprofit Organizations - Procure and Redistribute Newly Manufactured Products - Alleviates Operating Costs  
  - Coalition of Addiction and Recovery Providers  
  - Networks of Congregations  
  - Mentoring Children of Prisoners |
II. KEY ISSUES

The following outlines key issues that emerged throughout the course of these eight focus groups. They are presented in the same order here and in the body of this report that topics were raised in the focus groups.

A. MARKETING

Attending faith-based organizations revealed that they experience a tension between knowing the benefits of marketing and recognizing their lack of capacity to meet the subsequent increased demand for services. Many lack the resources to afford sophisticated marketing vehicles and depend upon simple marketing tools and “word of mouth” to reach those in need. Some organizations perceive a distinction between marketing to clients, which they find relatively easy, and the more significant challenge of marketing to donors via development or fundraising.

B. REFERRALS

These organizations make referrals based on their clients’ needs, rather than on whether the organization to which they are referring is faith-based or secular. However, some clarified that they tend to feel a stronger affinity with other faith-based organizations.

Researching and maintaining up-to-date information on a variety of referral sources are beyond the capacity of most focus group participants, especially smaller budget congregations and nonprofits.

C. COLLABORATIONS

The faith-based or secular nature of an organization is generally not a deciding factor for focus group participants when choosing organizations with which to collaborate. However, conflicts between the beliefs of prospective partners can present barriers to collaboration. An organization’s values, its track record, trust, and a compatible organizational culture are all of greater importance. It was repeatedly suggested that collaborations happen more between people than between organizations.

D. UNMET NEEDS

Important services offered by the organizations involved in these focus groups were consistent with the earlier research of Kevin Kearns and Chisung Park’s 2003 study, Comparing Faith-based and Secular Human Service Corporations in Allegheny County, in that they often provide key emergency help for basic human needs and a variety of essential human services (Kearns 3). Operating at capacity in terms of financial and staff resources, many have difficulty maintaining their current level of services and do not have the ability to address increasing demands for services. This finding for congregational human service providers is emphasized in a 2002 Tropman Report titled Social Services in Faith-Based Organizations: Pittsburgh Congregations and the Services They Provide, which stated the following: “…57% [of congregations] do not anticipate having enough staff to served additional clients, and 67% do not expect to be able to
raise more funds to serve additional clients” (Tropman Report 2). The same trend for non-congregational faith-based human service providers can be found in Kearns and Parks’ research; “A higher percentage of faith-based organizations report that demand for their services has increased over the past three years, and the average reported rate of increase in demand is higher for faith-based organizations” (Kearns 6).

These organizations recognize unmet needs in their communities, which they cannot meet due to inadequate financial and human resources. Some of these are systemic problems, too extensive for any of these individual organizations or programs to address effectively. The income levels of residents and the availability of resources in the community often influence the degree and type of unmet needs.

E. OPPORTUNITIES FOR/LIMITATIONS TO GROWTH

Many of these organizations require more diversified, long-term, and ongoing funding, which addresses both programmatic and administrative needs.

A number of faith-based organizations have a range of gaps in their management capacity and infrastructure, which inhibit their ability to maintain and expand current services to address unmet needs in their communities. For example, participants discussed the benefits of assistance with such elements as financial and strategic planning, marketing, development, and technology, especially for those small organizations and congregations that have no computers, Internet access, or technological capability. Kearns and Park suggested that similar needs were also indicated in their research findings: “There are some nuances in organizational structure, design, and capacity that might indeed form the basis for some tailored technical assistance to faith-based organizations [...]” (Kearns 15).

F. FAITH

In spite of the pervasive need for diversified, ongoing financial support, many of the participating faith-based organizations are wary about becoming involved with government funding. The emergence of this issue in the context of these focus groups is consistent with survey findings cited in Kearns and Park’s 2003 study: “Faith-based organizations also show some significant differences in the pattern of their interactions with other types of organizations. They interact less with government and private businesses and they show no inclination to dramatically increase their efforts to obtain government funding” (Kearns 2). These faith-based groups are concerned about the potential compromise of their organizational mission; the staff, systems and resources necessary to apply and to meet requirements for funding; and the short-term programmatic focus of such funding. In particular, many organizations do not have the necessary resources, systems, or expertise to evaluate the impact of their services and measure or document program outcomes. Further, they have not found effective methods of evaluating the impact of faith on their services when compared to the services of similar secular agencies.
III. FOCUS GROUP REPORT

Although there were many examples of congruity in the responses of the nonprofits, congregations, and networks or intermediaries attending the eight focus groups, much of the differentiation among the various participating nonprofits and congregations depended upon the extent of their resources or annual budget size.

The annual budgets of the 12 participating nonprofit organizations ranged from $8 thousand to $12 million. Thus their responses to each issue or topic are categorized according to this characteristic: small nonprofits signify a 501(C)3 with an annual operating budget of less than $350 thousand, medium nonprofits have budgets that range from $350 thousand to $1 million, and large nonprofits consist of organizations with an annual budget of over $1 million.

The ten congregations that attended the focus groups had annual budgets varying from $35 thousand to over $1 million. They were also classified small, medium, and large according to their annual budgets using the following categories: small congregations operate with less than $300 thousand per year, medium congregations have annual budgets between $300 thousand and $600 thousand, and large congregations have budgets of more than $600 thousand annually.

The defining feature of the seven networks centered on whether organizations act as direct service providers or as intermediaries. Using these criteria, four networks that provide direct services and three intermediaries were represented.

The seven focus groups involving nonprofits, congregations, and networks were structured around the following main issues or topics:

A. Marketing or communicating and whether the organizations have the capacity to increase service provision.
B. Connections to external resources in terms of referrals and collaborations and whether they distinguish between referring to and collaborating with faith-based versus secular organizations.
C. Challenges to their current provision of services and/or needs their programs do not meet.
D. What they would do and the kinds of assistance they would need to do more or grow.
E. The impact or contribution of faith to the organizations’ work and whether or how its effect is measured.

A focus group was also conducted with donors within which a somewhat different set of questions was used. The findings from this group will be presented in section F separately from those involving nonprofits, congregations and networks.

C. MARKETING & COMMUNICATION

Nonprofits
Small:
Only two of the 12 faith-based nonprofits (16%) represented in these focus groups are classified as small for the purpose of this report with annual budgets under $350 thousand. They tend to
communicate about, more than market, their services. Because they work to provide services
with what might be considered minimal resources, they lean mainly toward inexpensive means
of advertising, such as public service announcements (PSAs) to local newspapers, flyers, and
church or synagogue announcements in bulletins, newsletters, and by pastors and rabbis. One of
the two also distributes brochures to schools, court systems, and congregations. According to the
representative of one small nonprofit, “marketing probably is something we need, but we don’t
market because we can’t afford it and can’t handle or provide the services.” However, this
dilemma was brought up in the focus groups by organizations of all sizes.

Medium:
There are four nonprofits (33%) within this medium category with budgets between $350
thousand to $1 million annually. These groups also mentioned word of mouth, PSAs to local
newspapers, flyers, brochures, and announcements in local churches and/or synagogues as ways
of “getting the word out” about their services. In addition, some of these organizations talked
about marketing through a website, organizational newsletters, and speaking to targeted groups.
In general, they view these vehicles as more a function of marketing than of communicating.

Large:
Six (50%) of the nonprofits participating in these focus groups qualified as large, with annual
budgets above $1 million. Organizations within this category depend on the same marketing
mechanisms as their smaller counterparts, although greater resources allow for increased
sophistication in marketing. This was made evident through more frequent mention of
presentations to groups and relationships to other organizations and agencies. In addition, one
organization has a weekly radio show, and another spoke of marketing to donors. Even though
there is somewhat less apprehension among the larger nonprofits about having the resources to
market and being able to accommodate the subsequent increased demand for services, it was a
representative from a large nonprofit who pointed out that, “it pays to advertise. The more
publicity, the more requests for services; you have to be prepared.” In addition, some members
of this group emphasized that a large budget does not necessarily mean an organization has
adequate resources available to invest in advertising.

Congregations
Small:
Six of the ten congregations (60%) represented in these focus groups have annual operating
budgets of less than $300 thousand and are therefore categorized as small. In general, smaller
congregations talked about similar means and concerns related to marketing as small nonprofits.
Half of the small congregations represented described that, due to word of mouth, they do not
have to market or advertise. As one Reverend explained, “We are the only Protestant church in
[the area] that offers any kind of help with anything; the Catholic Church being the other church
that offers some help with things. So just by word of mouth, we don’t have to advertise. We
don’t have to tell anybody. They just come calling and knocking. I had six calls just this
morning from people needing help with different things. So people in the community know.” In
addition to the brochures, flyers, and church announcements and bulletins, which the small
nonprofits also rely upon, small congregations make use of on-site signs and direct mail. Lack of
capacity to manage the impact of marketing was mentioned by both small and medium budget
congregations alike.
Medium:
Thirty percent (3) of the ten participating congregations have budgets between $300 thousand and $600 thousand annually. Along with word of mouth and church announcements, organizations within this group brought up newsletters and an under-used website (most congregants either do not have computer access or do not have computer skills.) Handling increasing requests for services was addressed by the Reverend of a medium budget congregation: “At the end of the week or month we’re out of food – so we’re afraid to advertise because we’re at capacity.”

Large:
Only one of the ten congregations (10%) qualifies as large in terms of resources with an annual budget above $600 thousand. This congregation also relies on some of the same marketing mechanisms as small and medium budget congregations such as flyers, newsletters, direct mail, and word of mouth. However, it also has $20 thousand per year reserved for cable advertising. Concerns of this particular congregation regarding any increases in requests for services are absorbed by its relationship with a good sized nonprofit in its community.

Networks
Direct Service Providers:
Of the seven participating networks, four (57%) provide services directly. These direct service networks use some of the marketing methods commonly cited by all sizes of nonprofits and congregations including word of mouth, PSAs, flyers, newsletters, and through congregations. In addition, marketing via websites and through communicating and developing relationships with social service agencies is prevalent with this type of network. The response of these organizations to the issue of marketing ranged from it being unnecessary, because there are already waiting lists for their services, to needing a stronger marketing plan. One network mentioned communicating for development, and another explained that, although it is known by those in need, supporters remain unfamiliar with the organization.

Intermediaries:
Three (43%) of the seven networks are intermediaries, providing services to service providers or congregations rather than to individuals. Newsletters are the predominant marketing and communication vehicle for this kind of network. One organization responded that it avoids marketing to prevent emphasizing the network over its members.

D. CONNECTIONS TO EXTERNAL RESOURCES
1. REFERRALS

Nonprofits
Small:
Overall, these two nonprofits decide to which agencies they should refer based on need, although one representative explained that her organization prefers to make referrals to Christ-centered, faith-based groups for childcare to ensure strong values are instilled. She also commented that she finds "secular organizations perceive faith-based organizations as a last resort for referral."
The representative of the other small nonprofit responded, “I look at the rolodex” to find agencies for referral, but then stated that, without systems in place or computers, keeping the rolodex up-to-date is a problem.

**Medium:**
The medium budget size nonprofits vary in their criteria for referrals. Some base referrals on the clients’ needs, as well as trust and ties with area organizations. As one respondent described, “it depends on my comfort level and experience.” Another member of this group explained that referring to secular organizations only when no suitable faith-based counterpart is available since “most of our clients come to us because we are a faith-based organization.”

**Large:**
Four of the six nonprofits in this category do not generally view an organization’s faith-based or secular nature as a deciding factor when making referrals. They look for quality, skill, expertise, and appropriateness of service in organizations, although they will refer to faith-based organizations when it is the client’s preference. There was also one mention of a potential subconscious bias toward faith-based organizations because they “tend to have different view of life-value-oriented, centered on belief in God.” In addition, another representative reported experiencing distinctions between faith-based and secular referrals in that congregations, parishes, and faith-based organizations tend to be easier to ask for help. They also provide a more immediate response, which is suitable for emergency and short-term needs. However, secular organizations require a task force review and thus are more appropriate to look to when there is more long-term need.

**Congregations**

**Small:**
The Reverends in attendance from the six small congregations make referrals depending on clients’ needs. They explained they would have to research, ask colleagues, and seek others who are knowledgeable to determine where to refer people. There was general agreement between both small and medium budget congregations that an up-to-date referral list is greatly needed to gain access to more extensive knowledge of resources and avoid wasting time on research. “That would help tremendously, a list of services of where to send people in need.”

**Medium:**
The three congregations in this group spoke of basing referrals on the client’s need and the track record and experience of the organization to which they are referring, although it was said, “if I could, I would refer to a reputable faith-based organization.”

**Large:**
The representative of the one large congregation did not comment on the issue of referrals since it is not part of his responsibilities.

**Networks**

**Direct Service Providers:**
The issue of referrals was raised in only one of the two focus groups of networks. As a result, three of the four direct service networks discussed this topic. Two of these three generally
agreed that an organization’s faith-based nature is not critical except for client preference. “If a client is Jewish, we would refer them to a kosher kitchen.” They tend to look more at responsiveness and quality of service when making referrals.

One of these members suggested that some faith-based organizations use religion too emphatically and so can be biased against or condemning of those not of their faith – “There have been times I have been hesitant to refer to faith-based organizations.” However, the other of these two commented that experiences with referrals to faith-based organizations have been better simply because the quality of service was higher, not as function of their faith-based orientation. The third representative asserted that “if both were equal, I would go with faith-based because it’s been my experience that we have a better connection as faith-based and so get better response because there’s a heart in what they do.”

**Intermediaries:**

Only one of the three intermediary networks participated in the focus group where referrals were discussed. The representative of this intermediary did not view the faith-based or secular nature of an organization as the issue when making referrals. Instead, he considers whether help is available or will the organization merely refer the client to someone else. “When this person follows the point of my finger to a referral, are they going to get response or does it just get them off my list?”

**2. COLLABORATIONS**

**Nonprofits**

**Small:**
The two small budget nonprofits said little regarding collaborations other than that it is a challenge to stand alone as a small organization.

**Medium:**
Three of the four nonprofits in this group do not consider organizations’ faith-based or secular orientation a deciding factor in choosing to collaborate with them. Instead, as with referrals, potential collaborators are chosen depending upon need and trust. However, similar values and morals were emphasized as important, as were the motives of collaborating partners. The fourth nonprofit felt more strongly that an organization’s faith-based nature influenced whether it would be interested in joining in collaboration: “we don’t do much collaborating with secular organizations. It just seems more natural with faith-based.”

Only one medium budget nonprofit was involved in a discussion about whether these organizations encounter theological conflicts with collaborating partners and how they resolve such conflicts when they arise. The representative from this organization commented, “Very seldom do I have value conflicts with partners. Usually it’s financial problems or conflicts more than moral or ethical. Patience and perseverance are a large part of any successful collaboration. It’s not easy to get multiple organizations walking in the same direction. In any partnership or collaboration there is a dance that you go through; one leads and then the other. Some don’t work like when we’d been working on a collaboration with the City for almost a year
and then found out the legal department wouldn’t contract with us because we won’t hire homosexuals.”

Large:
Among the six large nonprofits, the faith-based nature of organizations plays less of a role in whether they will collaborate with them than trust, past experience, and the people involved. “Collaborations are a matter of personalities. It’s person to person.” However, whether potential collaborators have a “compatible culture” with these nonprofits is a factor, as are the skill and expertise they bring to the table.

One respondent did describe the following differences between working with secular versus faith-based organizations: secular volunteers have a specific time frame, whereas faith-based volunteers are typically longer-term, with a more ongoing commitment; secular organizations tend to think about what they will get out of collaborations; some secular organizations hesitate to collaborate with faith-based groups because of their view of faith-based organizations. In addition, two of the six large nonprofits mentioned that they are not included in some faith-based collaborations because of their interfaith nature.

Two of these nonprofits were present for a conversation about theological conflicts and resolution with collaborating partners. Only one addressed this issue emphasizing again that cultural compatibility is critical: “collaboration is good thing, but the cost is a lot of work. There really is a need, if you’re going to have a successful collaboration, to look into the organization’s culture. It must be similar or compatible or at least you have to understand your differences.”

Congregations
Small:
Which organizations can help meet a particular need was clearly a more primary element considered by the six small congregations in collaborating than faith-based versus secular orientation. Increasing the chance to have an impact through collaboration was discussed. One Reverend asserted that she feels an organization’s ability to share is an important characteristic of potential collaborators. “If an organization is only serving itself, I’m afraid too many resources would get spun out and not get back to the people.”

The Pastor of one small congregation explained that he was starting to look outside the congregation for networking and resources because the needs within his community are increasingly overwhelming congregants. Several leaders of congregations in one community spoke of a network among area churches, which allows them to specialize without competing or duplicating services. For example, one church has the neighborhood nursery school, another focuses on providing meals, while a different congregation supplies clothing, thus preventing any one church from bearing the totality of the community’s needs.

Medium:
The three medium budget congregations look at potential collaborators’ track records and qualifications more than whether they are faith-based or secular, and all collaborate with secular organizations “as long as it doesn’t conflict with the church mission.” The idea was also raised
that “pastors are key to collaborations,” which reinforces the proposition of larger nonprofits that collaborations are often a matter of people and personalities more than of organizations.

Large:
The Pastor from the one large budget congregation spoke of seeking strong track records and experience in groups with which to collaborate. “We look for groups who don’t have to reinvent the wheel.” The human resources within this particular congregation, such as health care and social workers, were also mentioned and compared to a natural network.

Networks
Direct Service Providers:
The issue of collaboration was largely addressed in the context of whether these organizations encounter theological conflicts when involved in collaborations and how such conflicts are resolved if they do arise. Three of the four direct service networks responded concerning this aspect of collaboration. One direct service network did not indicate that this was a significant concern. The other two had diverging reactions. One explained that such conflicts do emerge and are not typically resolved but are ongoing and an integral part of the dialogue between the organization and the community: “It depends on the issue; some are cultural, such as the degree to which we incorporate actual religion–observance within the programs. It’s an ongoing dialogue. We settle on a temporary way to do things for now.” The other direct service network claimed that, as a network of more than 30 churches of different denominations, it had never had a theological problem other than with fundraising: “for example Bingo, gambling works for Baptists, not for Catholics.”

Intermediaries:
All three intermediaries commented on theological conflict and resolution regarding collaborations. Two of them agreed that conflicts are usually not about values or theology, but are “more a matter of turf or change,” and that such conflicts challenge people to meet their organizational missions in a different way. The other intermediary involved in this conversation did speak of encountering such conflict and gave an example of how it handles theological conflicts: “[one collaborator] would not train Jewish or Muslim congregations, so we told them they can’t be the lead partner – so [another partner] leads, and we use [the first partner] for certain Christian congregations.”

E. CHALLENGES TO CURRENT PROVISION OF SERVICES/UNMET NEEDS

Nonprofits
Small:
The two small nonprofits discussed three general areas of unmet needs, which they cannot serve in their communities. These areas are direct financial assistance, such as rent and utilities, money management or financial literacy, and counseling within families. One nonprofit, facing unmet needs for direct financial assistance and financial literacy within its community, declared, “we never get to it because we can’t service the need.” The other small nonprofit mainly voiced concerns regarding the lack of counseling available for families and the fact that schools limit their help to career counseling. This representative asserted that counseling within schools is “a weak link” and that these institutions need to take a broader view.
Medium:
The major concerns of the four medium budget nonprofits centered on youth. They spoke of the need for teen drug and alcohol services and programs, after-school care, youth mentoring, counseling in educational settings and the overall need for schools to play a stronger role in identifying and providing for the needs of youth. As one representative lamented, “it’s easier to get funding for rehabilitation than prevention of social ills.” One of the nonprofits in this group criticized the gap between schools and the community and called for schools to change and “make sure kids are properly educated [...] How can so many kids be inside an educational building and not be served and not learn to read and not learn to do math?” Another group member spoke emphatically of the tremendous need for youth mentoring, with particular stress on the 4000 to 5000 kids in Allegheny County with incarcerated parents. Eldercare was also mentioned by one nonprofit as an unmet need.

Large:
The six large budget nonprofits recounted some additional unmet needs along with those reported by the other nonprofits. The organizations in this category specified the needs of the young, the aging, the working poor, and illegal immigrants going unserved as far as medical needs and insurance, housing, emergency utility and rental assistance, legal issues, and drug and alcohol counseling.

In terms of medical needs and insurance, two of these groups stressed the 150,000 largely blue collar uninsured or working poor in Allegheny County, who earn too much for assistance but not enough to afford insurance. Three of the six large budget nonprofits spoke of the number of elderly in their communities who cannot afford their prescription medications: “the Community Health Center gets samples and grants to cover pharmacy costs, but pharmacy assistance needs are constant.” They also described seniors who cannot afford to live in a nursing home or pay for in-home care and so instead live in unsafe, dilapidated homes without access to the medical care they require. As the representative of one large nonprofit declared, “the roofs are falling down around our elderly.”

While illustrating the growing need for emergency assistance with rent and utilities, two of these organizations described the condition of the working poor who, in conjunction with not qualifying for assistance, lack health benefits and are unable to afford health care. One nonprofit exclaimed, “families can’t make it to end of month.” The other representative who raised this issue said that this particular need has become overwhelming: “the last six to eight months have been the worst of my 28 years in [the area].”

One large nonprofit expressed great concern regarding the lack of available services surrounding legal issues in its community. This respondent declared that help was needed with negotiating leases, and that people in the community, who have drug and alcohol offenses require assistance in having their records expunged. Otherwise, they struggle to find employment because they are considered felons.

Drug and alcohol counseling and services were raised as an unmet need by at least one nonprofit, as were youth services in general. The need for aftercare or continuing follow-through was also...
mentioned. This representative called for a network of churches, community groups, and nonprofits to affect a more systematic hand-off of people needing services. One nonprofit expressed concern about “the growing subterranean problem” of illegal immigrants and suggested that this population, which the representative estimated to consist of over 14,000 people, lacks access to services of all kinds.

**Congregations**

**Small:**
The six small budget congregations involved in the focus groups raised many of the same unmet needs in their communities as the nonprofits including the following examples: legal, the elderly, youth, and emergency assistance for utilities and rent for working families. In addition, there was significant concern expressed about mental health issues and the lack of available services, especially within close proximity to their communities. One Reverend clarified that services must be available “in the community. I cannot send them to Oakland. They won’t go.” In commenting on the need for mental health support, small budget congregations emphasized staff training to help them handle agitated people and spoke of the difficulty, as a congregation, in working with mental health workers: “there’s suspicion in the mental health community that religion and the mental health community don’t fit together. They’re afraid of evangelizing.” They reported that children and parents are more troubled than in the past and discussed the need for family intervention. The Pastor of one congregation cited mental health as “a major problem,” explaining that 39 of his church’s 140 members are diagnosed mental health patients. Regarding this particular issue, he reaffirmed the need for information on referral sources.

Two of the congregations in this category mentioned legal issues as an unmet need. One Reverend asserted that “legal is paramount in all areas. It affects everything.” The other focused mainly on religion’s role in legal end-of-life issues.

Concerns regarding the elderly were prevalent among all types of organizations participating in the focus groups. Small budget congregations were no exception. These congregations discussed how insurance is not keeping up with health care costs, and that people cannot afford both prescription medications and food.

The major issue raised regarding working families involved rent and utility assistance. One representative generally listed working families as an unserved population. Another specifically cited emergency assistance for utilities and rent, explaining “it has been overwhelming the past three months. I get at least one call a day.” Parenting and youth ministry were also mentioned by a congregation in this group

**Medium:**
Two of the three medium congregations also related the troubles of the elderly and working families. The Reverend of one of these congregations listed medical, drug and alcohol, eyesight, and hearing as among the needs she sees going unserved. She repeated the concern raised by a small congregation that “some people are having to choose between medication and food.” In addition, it was the representative of a congregation within this medium budget category, who spoke of the problem of the accessibility of weapons in the community. This Reverend explained that the community does not share information with the police and expressed her belief
that state law concerning this issue needs to change. The other Reverend from this group expanded upon this issue: “as clergy, it’s difficult to establish a genuine conversation with law enforcement.”

Large:
The Pastor of the one congregation in this category repeated similar unmet needs concerning seniors and working families. He spoke of seniors not being able to afford their utility bills and prescription medications, as well as the need for in-home help to prevent them from requiring a nursing home. He suggested that nurses, who could go into the homes of elderly to take blood pressure or do diabetic checks, might make a difference. Regarding working families, this Pastor mentioned the predicament of working parents when a child falls ill and cannot go to school or daycare. He reported that mental health and legal needs going unmet are less of a problem because his congregation’s community, and the nonprofits and congregations within it, have adequate human and financial resources to ensure that those needs are addressed. When asked whether he found a lack of trust between mental health workers and clergy, he expressed that he felt that trend was largely the result of a lack of training on the part of pastors who are often on the “front line” with people during stressful events such as funerals and tragedies: “Sometimes pastors get in over their head with diagnostics and try to heal with spirituality and you get into serious problems in a hurry.” He recommended that pastors cultivate relationships and networks with mental health professionals for referrals.

Networks
Direct Service Providers:
Among the networks, which function as direct service providers, the issues and needs of people with mental health problems and addiction were raised by three of the four group members. The representative of one network claimed that there is “no one we can’t serve in some way.” However, he continued by bemoaning dramatic cuts in funding and the subsequent decrease in mental health and addictions services. Another respondent mainly focused on the need for advocates for affordable housing and against the stigmas of addiction and poverty. The connection between mental health problems and poverty was also commented upon: “we see people who can live almost independently, but it’s hard for them to get and keep a job.” The one network, which did not include the above among unmet needs encountered in its community, concentrated on the necessity of geographically expanding its service area because some of those in need of services “slip through the cracks if we don’t serve [their] area.”

Intermediaries:
The issue of unmet needs among those served was not fully addressed by these intermediary service providers, probably because they tend to serve organizations rather than individuals. One intermediary did comment that there is “inadequate investment in addictions recovery” and that the impact on families and children of “incarceration unhappiness is killing us economically.”

The unmet needs listed by the other networks in this category centered on the challenges of organizations and were often connected to the need for and resistance to change. One intermediary that largely serves congregations and churches conveyed that congregations, which “haven’t been able to commit to changing with neighborhoods and mill towns,” are struggling, and many will likely close in the next five years. This particular intermediary also characterized
a lack of willingness to address the impact of racism and classism. Another participant stated, “everything that we offer requires some sort of change.” This representative then described some of the network’s members, as being unable to take advantage of offered services because of a limit to the amount of change such organizations can withstand in a given time period.

F. OPPORTUNITIES FOR & LIMITATIONS TO GROWTH

Nonprofits

Small:
The two small budget nonprofits reported more funding and staff would be required in order to increase their provision of services. One spoke of financial challenges to following through on its goals, including needing money to purchase property and hire staff. This organization serves a population of adjudicated youth, who have General Equivalency Diplomas/Degrees (GEDs) but still need skills. The representative explained, “we’d like to assist beyond alternative sentencing.” They are interested in cooperating with unions to help these youth learn a trade. Already they have begun collaborating with construction companies, which have agreed to help the youth develop skills through working on blighted homes in the community.

The second nonprofit in this category did not discuss what the organization would do if it could expand its services. This respondent talked more about the need to expand the organization’s capacity by increasing staff and diversifying its funding base. The organization relies mainly on individual donors and congregations to “keep us afloat” and has difficulty procuring government money.

Medium:
When asked what they would do if they could grow, the four organizations classified as medium budget nonprofits spoke of expanding and improving programs, developing new components, and simply maintaining the programs and services they currently provide. These organizations, like the small nonprofits, also communicated the need for increased funding. They discussed requiring money for operating and capital expenses, staff, and research. One representative particularly criticized the lack of available ongoing funding.

Three of these four nonprofits reported needing help with staff. They listed staff training and increasing their wages as paramount. The staff members of one of these nonprofits have worked for more than a decade without a raise, and the organization’s representative deplored the impact that has on morale. Another organization mentioned its lack of development staff and how that reduces its ability to secure funding. Marketing and public relations issues were brought up when one nonprofit related needing assistance with infrastructure.

In the area of program improvement, one organization in this category wants to increase consistency, and another seeks to serve at a better level by having its daycare program nationally accredited.

Large:
The representatives of the six large nonprofits focused this part of the conversation more on the assistance their organizations need, particularly related to infrastructure development, than what
they would do if they could expand their services. One nonprofit in this group did suggest that, if it were able to grow, it would expand services to teens and invest in the enhancement of its cultural center.

Two of the nonprofits in this category related their general struggle with the issue of infrastructure. One declared, “Infrastructure is a constant headache,” while the other said “we’re too small to afford to add a lot of infrastructure but too big to manage with what we have.” A member of this group explained that his organization could use help with marketing: “Especially as the organization grows, as we enter into competitive markets with for-profits involved, we have to market our services. We need a plan and a director.” Another commented on the problem of accountability explaining the need for “sophisticated information systems with technology, software, and someone who can use them to meet accountability demands.”

In discussing their funding issues, one representative was troubled at her organization’s dependency on soft money and pointed out that more stable funding would enable the nonprofit to plan in a more deliberate long-term way. Another nonprofit of this budget size complained that 90 percent of grant funds are obliged to go toward direct services, leaving nothing for administrative costs, which can lead to transferring the burden of increased health care costs to employees.

The question of shared staff as a possible solution to administrative needs and costs was broached and met with a fairly positive response. One representative commented on the importance of a Human Resources Director regarding shared staff and thought “if two or three groups needed a development person, it could work to share.” Another large nonprofit is already involved with shared staff collaboration: eight agencies share an endowment fund person to develop endowment programs. This representative emphasized the importance of trust and compatibility in such a collaboration and was positive about the organization’s experience with sharing staff: “none of us on our own could hire a qualified person but together we can.”

The idea of informational seminars or workshops was also introduced. One representative reacted somewhat negatively to this proposal: “seminars are not as helpful. I was part of a [capital] campaign at CMU. I know how to do it. I need a body.”

In addition, these large nonprofits were asked what they would recommend regarding the pervasive need for funding in light of federal limitations. Their reactions consisted of both complaints and recommendations. One organization criticized grant applications explaining that they are too involved to manage without development staff. Another representative asserted that “money is getting watered down and not getting to the streets” and felt that collapsing organizations and establishing evaluations and standards were part of the solution. A different representative declared, “we are maxed out in terms of resource potential. It’s somewhat of a fallacy to say you can do more with less.” She suggested scaling down expectations and improving coordination among agencies, but also expressed concern that faith-based nonprofits maintain their integrity in the face of federal funding guidelines.
Congregations
Small:
Four of the six small budget congregations spoke of what they would do if they could grow and expand their services. One had an extensive list of how it would increase services if it had the resources, including expansion of the after-school program so it would be offered daily, parent development courses, and meeting physical needs. These physical needs are comprised of financial assistance relating to rent and utilities and food. The Pastor of this congregation clarified that these needs are immediate and finding ways to meet them requires time and connections: “we’re just really strapped with what we can offer immediately to people.” This particular congregation offers services out of four buildings on four different blocks, including the Church, a youth center, and a food bank. They are struggling to purchase a building to consolidate their services into one location from which to offer programs to the community.

Another small budget congregation mentioned wanting to provide a visiting nurse, who would not be bound by the medical referral system. The representative expressed that such a service could make a difference to 97% of the children in their community service program, who come from single-family homes and often do not have insurance. Another group member said, “transportation is a big issue.” More structured tutoring and a computer lab were also specified as ways in which one congregation would like to enhance available services.

All six congregations in this category offered suggestions on assistance, much of which specifically related to infrastructure and capacity issues. These suggestions included financial assistance, logistical and financial planning, leadership training, technical expertise, technology and sustainability, help in determining how to streamline services, and equipment, such as copiers, faxes, and Internet access. The leaders of these churches also spoke of their need for increased staffing and staff with more skills, space or buildings, and a network of resources. In terms of finances and financial planning, one Reverend declared, “we need someone to wake us up and help us take it step by step.” A grant writer was mentioned as a needed area of expertise. In addition, pastors from both small and medium budget congregations agreed that they struggle with facilities management and structural upkeep: “Our resources have gone down. Congregations don’t have engineers and resources in their membership which used to sustain them.”

In response to observers’ questions about what could be done to support pastors facing burnout due to lack of time and overwhelming need, the Pastor of a sole Protestant service provider in its area, explained, “we’re spread too thin. We need to figure out what do we do well, and where are we weak. Scrap the areas where we’re weak and build the strong areas.” The need for a network of resources to reduce time spent on research was raised by several small congregations. As one representative described, “I’m spending a lot of time that I shouldn’t have to spend trying to find a way to meet the needs that come in.”

There was some discussion of whether seminary interns might be a possible resource for some of these congregations and their leaders. One participant responded positively to this idea, while another disagreed “I need someone who is more long-haul or long-term than a seminary intern.”
Medium:
The three medium congregations did not detail how they would grow if they could. Instead, they examined what assistance would be helpful to them. All three of their comments chiefly related to infrastructure. One congregation suggested that it could use “some infrastructure support in order to continue to help effectively.” The Reverend from this congregation explained that a computer system and software would enable them to organize financially and that they would like to learn to “develop, implement, and evaluate.” Another Reverend mentioned wanting assistance with finances to foster accountability and develop a sustainable budget and endowments: “Help us understand how to create sustainable wealth and be realistic about spending our money.” The third congregation in this group reported that learning to develop ways of keeping track of people the congregation serves would be beneficial, as would someone who could facilitate the creation of networks with organizations like UPMC to open doors and enable access to such resources as nursing students.

Large:
One participating large budget congregation listed seed money to start an intervention program and enable staff growth, and computer and technology training for job skills as assistance needed to expand services. In terms of other assistance, this representative reported, “we have skills and talents already in our system” and, therefore, often referred to his experience working for a smaller congregation with fewer resources. In this context, he spoke of the degree to which having access to the Internet is a tremendous asset and resource, and he emphasized the need for support money for the requisite technology. He also recommended help with purpose, mission, vision, and specifically cited strategic planning processes. He strongly encouraged fostering more openness among school districts, social service agencies, and churches. This Pastor did not respond enthusiastically to the idea of workshops and training sessions, claiming, “there’s not enough time and energy.” Instead, he suggested smaller congregations collaborate with businesses and hospitals, which already have experience with what congregations need to learn. “From such conversations, maybe we could realize that we’re one nice big town here, and we have a lot to offer each other.”

Networks
Direct Service Providers:
Direct service networks addressed both how they might like to expand services and the types of assistance that would enable them to do so. Two of the four networks in this category specified how they would increase services. One network would like to try starting a loop of services closer to the City. This organization’s representative also expressed apprehension about federal funding: “I’d like to set up a transitional apartment program without becoming ensnared in government regulations.” The other would add one program per year beginning with a feeder program from their homeless shelter to transitional housing.

In terms of assistance for growth, direct service networks echoed some of the same complaints as the faith-based nonprofits, such as “limited resources, time, and manpower,” as well as needs concerning infrastructure. These include marketing and fundraising plans, development help, and support staff and administration. In their conversations regarding difficulties with funding, one network representative specified, “when you write to funders, they want to fund bricks and mortar. No one wants to fund administration.” Another explained that the network needed a
fundraising plan “rather than rely on special events and grants.” Finding ways to recruit younger volunteers was a major concern of one organization; “some volunteers are as old as those they serve.”

Intermediaries:
One of the three intermediary networks spoke of obstacles to growth. This organization claimed that it cannot maintain its current support of direct service providers due to lack of resources. Its representative asked how to develop new revenue streams when detailing aspirations of expanding the network’s television ministry and outreach to other counties with prison programs. However, after describing the decline of the organization’s donor base and income, this person also mentioned having an investment portfolio from which to draw upon “to seed projects if we can define opportunities for investment.”

Regarding the idea of shared staff, all three intermediaries reacted positively. Two of these three organizations were fairly enthusiastic about the idea; one representative responded that he was “absolutely interested” and the other replied “I hope to find ways we can network to share staff and expertise.” The third network viewed the concept in the context of providing shared staff to its members and gave “a qualified yes on sharing staff for planned giving.” He explained that it depended on the size of the organization because “some larger organizations with sophisticated resources see each other as competitors. However, smaller organizations with less sophisticated resources, especially those comfortable with sharing, would look favorably on shared staff.”

G. FAITH IMPACT & MEASUREMENT

Nonprofits
Small:
The role that faith plays in both small nonprofits was approached from two angles: its impact on services and how and whether this impact is measured. Concerning the effect of faith-based orientation on service provision, one representative explained that this aspect is more visible in the organization’s operations than in its services. He felt faith to be a “powerful tool in the process,” reporting that it impacts staff’s attitude and approach to conflict. Prayers are a part of staff and board meetings. He described the faith-based aspect of the nonprofit’s services as weak but mentioned that they place Bible quotes in Meals on Wheels bags. The representative from the other nonprofit in this group did not name specific examples of the organization’s faith-based nature impacting service provision other than to claim that faith "creates a healthy base." Instead, she spoke of faith's importance in a more general sense; “Faith is a values-based ingredient,” she explained. "It's something that's not merely talked about, but walked about in daily life."

In terms of measurement, both nonprofits in this group admitted that the impact of their organizations' faith-based nature is difficult to quantify. One representative simply reported that the inability to measure the contribution of faith on their services is a capacity issue with no measurement tools in place and no resources to develop such tools. The other representative explained that it is "hard to measure the attitude and the gratitude." However, she feels that the number of repeat cases, which come back to faith-based organizations when nothing else works, are an endorsement of their services.
Medium:
The impact of faith and its measurement were discussed by the medium budget nonprofits as well. Two of the four organizations in this group specifically addressed how the organizations' faith-based nature informs service provision. One focused on its importance with clients and staff, relating that some staff members have accepted pay cuts ranging from 25 to 80 percent to come work for the organization. He explained, "faith is integral. There wouldn't be mentors if it wasn't an expression of their faith." This representative also stated that prospective employees' spiritual orientation is a consideration: "we are sectarian in our hiring."

The second representative detailed the role of faith in service provision by stating that it is based on a belief in a loving creator, while bridging and celebrating a diversity of faiths. Program participants share what faith means to them individually, as a group, and discuss how faith informs healing. Consciousness of the faith dimension and spirituality of each individual is encouraged, and a very clear, non-denominational creed hangs in the space where programs are conducted. "We all may express our relationship to God in different ways, but there is a conscious faith dimension." Even though a third group member did not specify the ways in which faith affects service provision, she did assert, "God makes the difference. We're not afraid to say that. We don't bite our tongues."

Two of the four medium budget nonprofits also concurred that measuring the influence of faith is problematical. One representative described seeing a visible change in those served, such as an increase in pride, although she admitted it is a challenge to measure; "I can verbally tell you; I can see it."

A different representative in this group agreed that the impact of faith is difficult to measure or document. She said that the evidence is largely anecdotal and, therefore, hard to quantify. In attempting to describe the existing evidence, she cited that the clients of her organization "have the profiles of high school dropouts, yet their subsequent education level, career choices, and service records indicate impact." Another sign of impact is the degree to which clients give back to the community after becoming involved in this nonprofit's programs. This representative elaborated that often the measurement of outcomes does not account for or show quality of impact versus the quantity of clients served. She criticized the manner in which "the presentation of statistics, such as the number of people helped by a particular program, can determine funding...One person seen on one day is one served, whereas [some nonprofits] serve one person over years."

Large:
The significance of faith and the values the representatives of the six large budget nonprofits associate with their organizations’ faith-based nature were reiterated throughout their conversations. The following are several statements of the meaning these representatives attribute to the role their faith plays in their lives and work:

- “Faith is the basis on which I operate.”
- “It's how I relate to other people.”
- “My faith colors everything I do. To any dialogue, I bring the values of my faith.”
In addition, several members of this group described benefits they feel a faith-based identity brings. One representative attributed a cohesive influence to being faith-based, specifying that it “shows what we stand for, gives clients, volunteers, and staff something to align with, and [is a] great uniter of people, organizations and individuals.” Another felt that being faith-based increases the resilience of nonprofit employees by providing a sense that one is “not in this alone.” This representative has found that people “burn out more quickly without faith” and that the tenure of executive directors is longer in faith-based organizations. However, one respondent stressed that an organization’s faith-based or secular orientation does not determine the caliber of its service: “We’ve all met a quality of caring to put us to shame in secular organizations.”

In verbalizing how being faith-based versus secular impacts the work and services of a nonprofit human services provider, five of the six representatives from this category offered descriptions and examples. One simply voiced that being faith-based creates a God-centered message to their work. Three of these five cited that respect for and the dignity of those they serve are furthered in some way through the faith aspect of the organization. One explained that “the dignity of human persons is elevated by our actions.” Another generally referred to the dignity of the person, expanding upon this by saying “faith is filtered through how services are delivered with respect and dignity.” The third specified that its staff “all bring respect for the individual person” to their work. The last of these five explained that, although his organization is non-sectarian, they inform what they do with Jewish values: “We do what we do to enhance the Jewish community and the broader Jewish mission to add to the whole community.”

Five of the large budget nonprofits characterized the impact of faith on the organization itself. One reported that they “start meetings with prayers of different faiths.” Four related that the faith aspect of their organization is more present in the context of the organization but not very visible in their services. One participant explained that the faith-based component is “more a function of the organization as an employer than a service provider. [We] focus more on staff and volunteers knowing about our faith-based identity than clients.” Another nonprofit, which works with children, responded that because their “hands are tied with children to parental permission,” the faith-based dimension of the organization is restricted to its mission, staff, motivation, and Board. This emphasis on faith within the organization rather than with clients was echoed by another member of this group, who cited that the impact of faith could largely be seen in the faith-based foundation of the organization and reminding himself and his staff of all faiths about scriptural-based activity and motivation.

Two of the six nonprofits reported that the role of faith in the organizations and their services is negligible. One representative declared that, in her organization, “there is weak delivery of the faith-based component. Most programs can’t be differentiated from those provided by a secular organization.” The staff members of another large budget nonprofit believe it would be best to leave the faith part out of the organization’s name.

Only two nonprofits in this category listed ways in which the impact of programs is measured. One representative mentioned having a full-time evaluator and the other specified that “each client fills out a satisfaction survey indicating the importance of the program and/or organization.” This same representative explained that the impact of faith is apparent and perhaps measurable when “those surveyed say they come to the organization’s programs because
of the way they are treated by faith-based organizations” and when a client feels or says “they care about me as a person.”

**Congregations**

**Small:**

Five of the six congregations in the small budget category commented on how faith informs their services. Their replies were oriented in two general directions: how faith affects the way they view their role as service providers and/or their work and how it shapes the work they do. In terms of faith influencing the attitude and views of those delivering services, the responses of the Reverends and Pastors from this category could be summed up with the words of one respondent: “We’re not doing charity work. We’re doing God’s work. It’s a core of faith that drives us.”

Regarding how faith shapes the services these congregations provide, a member of this category described “minister[ing] to the whole person in a specialized world. We encourage the development of the whole person.” Another Reverend simply stated that he sees the impact of faith as empowerment. The Reverend of one congregation explained how his faith and its values anchor him to at least a starting point of trust, “The first time someone asks for help, I help, no questions. The second time I expect to see them come to the service on Sunday morning. Third time I start asking serious questions, one on one – it eliminates those looking just for handouts from those with real needs.”

The question of how to measure the impact of the faith aspect raised a generally critical reaction from two of the three participants who responded. One Reverend explained her belief that for those involved in faith-based organizations, there are more important results than measurable outcomes: “Faith is the belief in things unseen. I do my part and the rest is up to God. Social service agencies are prompted by the bottom line. For the faith-based, God is the bottom line.” The second congregational representative described his view of why government funding and faith-based service providers do not share a compatible vision: “Government money equals a demand for instant demonstrable data. You’re sewing a seed. It takes a season to bear fruit. Social service agencies want immediate data, but with young people, the fruit won’t come until down the road. Many times we look for fruit before the season.” The third participant, who provided feedback on the issue of measurement, reported that his congregation is already obliged to account for where resources donated by the food bank are used. He stated, “we just have to deal with it if we want to get the resources.”

**Medium:**

The three congregations in this medium category discussed their faith’s impact on them as service providers. One explained that faith provides purpose and a purpose-driven life. “Providing services is good, but I really want to help those [I serve] realize their purpose and God’s purpose. You see God doesn’t waste even our hurts. The Church provides a person with purpose and that purpose fulfills. So we’re not just providing some service but helping people find purpose, and then they will turn around and serve others.” Another attested to her faith’s contribution to her perseverance: “faith is what keeps me...If I do the necessary leg work for the work God has called me to do, God will bless that work.”
All three nonprofits from this group commented in some way on measuring the impact of programs and their faith-based nature. Two representatives mentioned that measurement is difficult. One conveyed that his measuring tools are not as tangible. He cited the following as how he establishes the difference faith makes: “Testimony – the oral and living experience of service and faith impact and visible signs of change – someone walks with purpose or doesn’t look so lost.” When asked whether there is a need for more tangible measures, this representative answered “yes and no. God blesses every effort...The challenge to more concrete measurement is that it’s a new need and demand on our time and attention.” He explained that it is a function of resource capacity and having someone to manage the system. Then he mentioned the gratitude and tithing of those served as evidence that faith makes a difference. Another Reverend reported that “follow-up is a struggle...The way we approach follow-up strategies is with phone calls, letters, and visits. Is that another measurable outcome?”

Large:
The Pastor of the one congregation in the large budget category commented on his views of how faith informs his congregation’s service provision and the issue of measurement. In speaking of the impact of faith on services he said “we tell people we do this in Jesus’ name.” He further explained the rewards he feels are available when helping someone from a basis of faith: “When you tie those you help to a community of faith, and nurture and help them grow in spirit...it’s not the norm, but it’s worth it when it happens. It’s life altering.”

In response to the idea of measuring the impact of faith, this particular participant responded, “I don’t know how to measure that except by letters of thanks and the rate of return – people come back to us.” He continued by addressing measurement of program outcomes: “Faith-based organizations and churches have to be accountable. Churches can be somewhat lax, but we have to have systems to help account and demonstrate that we are a more minimal investment. We have far less overhead because we already have a system and reputation in place. We are trusted by the community...I’d say the grantors need to trust the faith-based institutions, with the expectation they have of everybody else to be financially accountable, but then set us free to meet the need.”

Networks

Direct Service Providers:
Some of the ways in which the faith-based nature of the participating direct service networks impacts the organizations and their services echoed ideas raised by representatives of nonprofits and congregations. Faith’s influence on the identity of organizations is one concept, which was repeated by the networks in this category: “Faith has a big impact. It’s who we are, not only what we do.” The idea that faith is a foundation upon which the organization and the motivation and behavior of its employees and volunteers are built was also reiterated by several respondents in this group: “We don’t just talk the talk; we walk the walk.” “We’re sending [clients] to families who care. They’re not there to get a paycheck.” One network explained that faith is often a motivating factor for volunteers: “A lot of volunteers feel they have an obligation through religion to reach out and help others, not just of their own faith, but whoever needs their help.” A focus group observer responded by asking whether this organization was ever concerned that volunteers might proselytize. The representative replied that when volunteers are trained they
are told proselytizing is unacceptable. But, the network tries to accommodate the spiritual needs of their clients: “If a client requests a Catholic, we’ll try to find a Catholic volunteer.”

Another network restated the belief heard from a small congregation that faith-based organizations take a more holistic, long-term approach to their clients: “Secular organizations tend to look at service as the issue at hand, whereas faith-based service providers are concerned with the whole person.” A different representative mentioned that faith impacts whom they hire.

Only one representative from this category cited a specific method of measurement used to determine the impact of faith and of the services they provide. This network employs surveys to measure client satisfaction. Otherwise, members of this group concentrated on their frustrations with the conflict between their organizations’ faith-based nature and the attitude and requirements of government funding. The network, which uses client surveys to measure the efficacy of its services, pointed out that funders “tend to look at what is measurable, which is not synonymous with what’s of importance.” One respondent believes that her organization lost a government grant even though it was highly rated because it is faith-based. Another representative criticized the required exclusion of prayer from their services regardless of the clients’ preference: “In the [network], when a family is in church eating a meal, they’re not allowed to pray even if they would in their own home because it’s seen as we’re forcing our religion on them.”

Intermediaries:  
The intermediary networks shared some of the same views as their direct service counterparts regarding the impact of an organization’s faith-based orientation on its services. Two of these representatives perceived a more “intentionally holistic approach” to clients among faith-based organizations. One spoke of clients not being viewed as merely a person with a particular problem but as a whole person with medical, educational, and spiritual needs. The other asserted that “end of life care is a good example. Most people in long-term care see a specific challenge. Faith-based organizations work at better, holistic end of life care.”

Two of the representatives in this group asserted that faith-based organizations adhere more closely to and are more driven by their mission. One intermediary cited the following as the differences between secular and faith-based organizations: “These [faith-based] are very mission driven organizations, which don’t make choices or business decisions that are incompatible with their mission. They don’t cut services or veer away from their mission, spreading themselves thin for money.” Another discussed a greater degree of compatibility among its network’s faith-based members. This representative explained that it is easier for faith-based organizations to work together because they share values and backgrounds: “the common values and heritage of these organizations allow them to get past impediments they might not otherwise.”

In addressing the measurement of the impact of faith and faith-based services, one representative admitted that the evidence of impact is “anecdotal. I don’t know how I could demonstrate it, and I don’t know if it’s worth the time or money to try. It’s like a photo of a sonic boom. If we had the right tools to measure it, we could see it. Just because you don’t have the right tools doesn’t mean it’s not there.” This same respondent asserted that there is a “faith-based differential.
When you walk into a faith-based organization, you might not be able to measure it, but you know it when you’re there.”

One focus group observer raised the issue that government funding comes with measurement demands. Two intermediaries responded somewhat critically to this subject. One stated “I don’t see new money coming through the government’s faith-based initiative. There are significant challenges to small organizations to account for, measure, and demonstrate program impacts, and I don’t see anything but traditional measures.” The other representative addressed the potential for compromise of the organizational mission as another problem faith-based organizations face in seeking government money: “Whether it’s a soup kitchen or a halfway house, as a faith-based organization, the way you do what you do is about connecting people to their faith. It’s a slippery slope if they’re going to accept government funds.”

H. DONORS

A different set of questions was used for the donors’ focus group. The three attendees work in some aspect of development for local nonprofit organizations. Therefore, their responses and giving patterns are likely to be informed to some degree by their professional experience. The following is a list of the questions originally slated for discussion:

- Have you donated to faith-based organizations in the last three years?
- What determines your giving to an organization?
- What are your expectations as a donor?
- Are your expectations different for faith-based organizations?
- What would make you increase your donation to faith-based organizations?
- Final Comments

Have you donated to faith-based organizations in the last three years?

All three participating donors responded that they have donated to faith-based organizations in the last three years. The examples of faith-based organizations to which they have given included the childcare center at the donor’s church; the participant’s synagogue, the United Jewish Federation and its food pantry; the Catholic parish school and church missionaries.

What determines your giving to an organization?

The first respondent gives to the child care center at her church because it serves the community at large regardless of background or faith. She also cited an organization’s strand of programming as a deciding factor for her decision to contribute, explaining that childcare is “the biggest barrier to getting involved in the workforce.”

The second donor, who listed her synagogue, the United Jewish Federation, and its food pantry as the faith-based organizations to which she contributes, answered that personal tragedies and experiences get her to give to organizations: “Situations in my life dictate what I give to.”

The first donor stated that the faith-based nature of an organization matters first as a basis for her contribution: “it’s a question of how much of a philanthropist I can be. For me, it goes through a
personal process. I have to give to my church or a faith-based organization first, and then I give to others.”

The third respondent answered that for her, “faith isn’t an issue. I don’t necessarily give to faith-based organizations because of their faith base. I give to both secular and faith-based.” When asked whether membership factors into where they contribute, the same donor replied that she gives to her church because she belongs there.

The second participant does not view membership as a component of contribution. Her family has moved frequently and belonged to many synagogues. She supports both the one to which she currently belongs, as well as agencies and synagogues with which she used to be involved in other states. When asked why she continues to contribute to synagogues, where she is no longer a member, and to agencies, which are not in her current community, she explained that she was a Board member of these organizations and she continues to believe in what they do.

The third donor cited familiarity and the outcome or allocations of programs as the primary reasons she contributes: “If the school has a fundraising drive for a new gym, I specifically know the entire process. I can see the gym, and I can see the kids will use it.” When asked how she is solicited, she offered the example of missionary programs through her church, which are discussed during services.

In response to the comment “development people say people give to people, not to a cause,” one donor replied “I say that all the time at [work], but I don’t need a personal appeal.” Instead, she is more attracted to being able to see the result of her donations in the difference a program makes in peoples’ lives: “Can I see what my $5-10 is doing?”

Another said that it depends on the amount solicited. She further explained “any generic fundraiser that has some personal connection is much easier [to give to.] But for capital campaigns or a larger amount, it needs to be personal letter or face-to-face.”

When asked whether a personal request would encourage her to give five thousand dollars, one participant replied that a personal request would not convince her to donate. Instead, she spoke of three elements, which are more important to her: “I want to know my five thousand dollars have resulted in a significant difference. If the organization has namesake familiarity, I think it probably can get money other places. Overall, it’s a matter of what the cause is and how well they communicate it.”

What are your expectations as a donor?

All three donors provided some description of their expectations of organizations to which they contribute. One reported that she expects a level of proactive communication with the donor community in the form of letters or announcements of the outcomes of programs and that she be told without having to research or ask. She also expects to be invited into the process by way of open meetings to learn about challenges, successes, and accomplishments. She will request this communication from organizations that do not already provide it.
Another participant replied “I want to know my money is making an impact or difference, that it matters. Sometimes you don’t [know]. It’s a leap of faith.” When asked what she looks for, she explained, “that’s where familiarity comes into play. If you know [the organization] has been effective in past, you hope for future positive results.”

The third stated that her expectations are “different for different places where I donate money.” She offered examples to illustrate: With guide dogs for the blind, there is very concrete measurement of what contributions help to do, and she receives a quarterly newsletter detailing what funding has accomplished. She contrasted this with the following: “I don’t expect to see results from the American Cancer Society or Heart Associations because funding goes into research, which takes years and years.”

**Are your expectations different for faith-based organizations?**

All three donors replied that their expectations are not different for faith-based organizations. When asked how the faith-based nature of recipient organizations impacts their expectations as a donor, two participants responded unequivocally that it has no impact. The third also replied that the faith-based nature of an organization does not impact her expectations as a donor. However, she feels that secular organizations are not bound by as stringent a set of morals and values, and she expects programs and services of faith-based agencies to be in alignment with the beliefs of the organization: “If I gave to a faith-based organization to provide counseling to young teens, I would not expect that to involve family planning. I would be concerned if I found out they were providing family planning to young teens because it’s out of line with what a faith-based organization should be teaching teens.”

This issue of donors having a different set of expectations for faith-based organizations than for secular ones brought one of the focus group observers into the conversation. This observer explained that she holds faith-based organizations to a different standard than other organizations to which she contributes. “Whether I am getting results matters less with faith-based organizations because I’m giving to God. When I give to my temple I’m giving to God and God’s people. I’m saying thanks to God. I don’t expect to see outcomes.” She expressed that her choices in other philanthropy are much more conscientious and that when she is “saying thank you to her community,” she expects to see results.

Two of the participating donors responded to the comments of this observer. One replied, “I can see what you’re saying. It’s a leap of faith. It goes back to the familiar rather than unfamiliar. When you ask what [do you give to] and why, one [reason] is making a difference with my religion.” However, this particular participant also added that familiarity is important to her in both faith-based and secular recipients. The second respondent declared, “I thank God in other ways than money. It could be a difference of faith or expectations. I consider everything I do as far as contributions go as thanks for blessings whether it’s to secular or faith-based organizations.”

Another observer joined the conversation at this juncture asserting that there are different standards of accountability: “We know the standards of our church or synagogue, and they may not fulfill our personal expectations but we give anyway. If we give to a local tutoring program,
reporting mechanisms, outcomes. We’re probably apt to be less stringent on faith-based programs because they are more stretched. They generally have a more difficult time garnering resources, whereas secular or government programs tend to be able to command more resources.

What would make you increase your donation to faith-based organizations?

All three donors concurred that the level of their giving is controlled by economics. One replied that more take home pay would be required to increase her donations. The other donor agreed that her contributions would increase as her salary did. However, she qualified her response: “During the year, if someone makes an appeal that tugs at my heart strings or plays a chord that makes me feel like I should give more than I do, I will.”

When the members of this focus group were asked if they set a percentage for giving and whether they determine an amount analytically, their responses differed. One simply answered that she tries to give more each year. Another declared that her annual giving level is not established analytically. The third explained that she tries to be analytical when figuring out how much she will contribute to charitable causes in a given year: “The minimum is at least ten percent of the first fruits. If I’m earning more, I can do more than that. But that’s the minimum.” At this point, one participant was obliged to depart, leaving two donors to continue the discussion.

The subject was raised that these donors’ priorities for giving seem to be subject–related, such as giving to the blind. When asked what they would do if there were one faith-based and one secular organization and they were not familiar with either, participants agreed that they would look at both organizations’ programs to see which are making the most difference. Neither donor felt that knowing a program is administered by a faith-based organization would matter to them unless the service is faith-oriented.

Final Comments:

In the final comments of the focus group, one donor stressed that she gives to things she knows or that have impacted her life, and she sees similar inclinations in the donors with whom she works: “What happens to us, our personal history and experiences, has a tremendous impact on giving.” She also explained, “I will give to a faith-based organization that doesn’t require service recipients to be of that faith. I’m more amenable to looking at what they do if they serve anyone who comes through the door.”

Both donors felt that bulletins or newsletters are an effective way of being updated or informed of outcomes. They also stated that the visibility of their donation or being credited does not matter to them. However, one of these two qualified her response by explaining that it does matter to her husband. The other donor reacted with the following sentiment: “I get irritated by these expensive glossy brochures to show contributors when they could have spent that money better on so much more.” In a closing comment, one donor declared that she is not more likely to give toward project-based needs than to fund operating costs: “Whatever you need it for, use it.”
IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the focus group discussions, DKI recommends that The Forbes Funds consider the following opportunities:

EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY
A coordinated community education effort, targeting foundations, nonprofits, and the donor community, would address several of the challenges facing faith-based providers of social services. These organizations or projects are often perceived as providing services only to congregants and/or individuals of similar faith. However, the focus group discussions clearly point to a different reality. Aside from one particular exception, focus group participants did not discriminate in the provision of their services and, for the most part, did not consider faith as the key criteria for referrals and/or collaborations.

Given the openness of their service provision, the foundation, nonprofit, and donor communities would benefit from knowing more about this community’s faith-based providers. Misperceptions need to be identified and dispelled. A coordinated education effort, including articles, speaking engagements, targeted discussions, and perhaps even a media campaign, might help to educate community decision-makers about the depth and range of services available from the faith-based community.

AWARENESS
Many of the faith-based social service agencies do not have sufficient and potentially critical information at hand about the community’s secular human service providers. It could be beneficial to prepare a basic awareness campaign targeted at faith-based social service organizations that would point them to existing community resources. There are already coordinating centers in the region, such as the United Way of Allegheny County website www.uwac.org. This would be a good first step, particularly the United Way’s Help Connections link. Workshops and networking events or perhaps an annual “showcase” type session could introduce faith-based providers to helpful resources for their clients. At the same time, it would educate the community’s secular agencies about the services and needs of faith-based organizations, as well as those of their clients.

TRAINING
Faith-based organizations expressed a number of needs, which could be addressed through a variety of offerings:

- **Client Intake Evaluation** – The range of services provided by some nonprofits and congregations raised the challenge of appropriate client intake evaluation. Providers would benefit from training in making initial assessments and referrals beyond their own scope of services. It would be helpful to increase these skills and faith-based providers' knowledge of external resources where evaluations might be made.
Partner/Mentor – Connecting smaller congregational programs and nonprofits with larger, more sophisticated partners, which offer similar types of services or work in comparable communities, could increase the capacity of these smaller faith-based providers.

Financial Management – Many participants, particularly congregational service providers, discussed the need to improve their financial management knowledge and skills. A training curriculum, created in cooperation with the region’s financial and investment resources, could help these organizations develop the skills and tools necessary for greater control and understanding of their finances in today’s complicated financial, philanthropic, and legal environments. Such a curriculum could also be expanded to incorporate training in personal financial literacy for the clients and congregants of these organizations.

Grants – Additional information on available grants and training in and help with grant writing were suggested as potentially beneficial by focus group participants. Efforts to offer such assistance could provide the opportunity to collaborate with such existing community resources as the Nonprofit Leadership Institute at Duquesne University or with a university-based research project on the current availability of faith-based grant opportunities.

Measurement – The evaluation of program impacts and measurement of outcomes are problems for the participating faith-based providers. Perhaps faith-based providers could explore connecting with the Community Quality Institute as a cohort group in applying the Youth Standards process to their work. Alternatively, a local outcomes specialist could be enlisted from an institution such as the University of Pittsburgh’s Office of Child Development to develop specific, faith-based measurement tools and key indicators.

Buildings and Capital Expenditures
Several of the smaller nonprofits and congregations discussed their ageing buildings and the challenges they face regarding upkeep and capital improvements. Establishing a small, easy-to-access, quick-response grant fund for building repairs or emergency capital improvements would begin to address this challenge.

Capacity
- Assistance with information technology, such as systems for client tracking, would be a key service for faith-based providers. Making relevant software available, offering training on database creation and management, facilitating Internet access, and providing on-site assistance for congregation-specific information technology needs would all be invaluable to these providers. Some of the challenges consistently raised among the smaller nonprofits and congregational programs focused on tracking clients for program evaluation and measurement of outcomes. With limited technical capacity, client tracking has not been as well managed or as potentially valuable as it should be.

- Another area of capacity building revolves around pastors, who often carry overwhelming loads in fulfilling multiple roles as church leaders, counselors, fundraisers, organization managers, etc. Convening pastors from churches that offer social services with the purpose of providing each other with peer support, counseling, problem solving, and access to
additional resources could further empower, refresh, and re-invigorate pastors who are approaching burnout.

- The concept of shared staff was raised in several of the focus groups and met with a fairly consistent positive response. The areas that were mentioned as potentially conducive to staff sharing included development, technology, human resources, and administrative services. A feasibility study of shared staff as a solution to the problem of affording desperately needed expertise for these organizations is suggested.

**CRITERIA**

Before any of the possible solutions are in place, DKI recommends that The Forbes Funds establish criteria for participation, including how to address priorities. For example, should support be allocated according to budget size, geography, or service provided?
VI. APPENDIX

A. PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS & REPRESENTATIVES

1. Allegheny Valley Association of Churches – Reverend Dr. W. James Legge, Karen Snair
2. Auberle Development – Raymond Niedenberger
3. Catholic Charities – Sister Patricia Cairns
4. Christian Associates of South Western Pennsylvania – Reverend Dr. Donald B. Green
5. Dunamis Baptist Church of Wilkinsburg – Reverend Thelma Michell
6. East End Cooperative Ministries – Myrna Zelenitz
7. Faith Based Network – Earl Evans
8. Family Guidance, Inc. – Robert Jamison
9. First Baptist Church of Crafton – Reverend Marie Brown
10. Focus on Renewal – Fr. Regis Ryan
11. Girl’s Hope – Sister Donna Marie
12. Glassport Assembly of God – Pastor Wayne Schaffer
13. Good Hope Baptist Church – Reverend Bruce Foster
14. Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church – Reverend Carmen Cox-Hartwell
15. Interfaith Hospitality Network of the South Hills – Susan Donnan
16. Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers – Kathleen Matthews
17. Jewish Family and Children's Services – Aryeh Sherman
18. Jewish Residential Services – Deborah Friedman
19. Lutheran Service Society of Western Pennsylvania – Sylvia Lynn
20. Mt Ararat Baptist Church Male Mentoring Program – Reverend Mary Buckley
21. PETRA International Ministries – Minister Sheldon Arrington
22. Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation – John Stahl-Wert
23. Sixth Mt. Zion Church – Reverend Eugene Downing
24. South Hills Interface Ministries – Jerry Ellis
25. St. Mark AME Zion Church – Reverend Christopher Zacharias
26. St. Paul’s United Methodist Church – Dr. Ron Hoellein
27. Union Baptist Church – Reverend Dr. Peter Ward
28. United Way – Sharon Brentley, Barbara Kleyman, Alison Rudolph
29. Wilkinsburg Community Ministries – Aaron Mickens
30. Younity Ministries – Robin Kelly

B. OBSERVERS

1. Khanh Bui
2. Aradhna Dhanda
3. Reverend Ronald Peters
4. Reverend Sharon Washington
5. Sister Linda Yankoski
C. FOCUS GROUP PROJECT FACILITATORS & WRITERS

Robin Kaye

Robin Kaye is a Founding Partner in the management consulting firm of Dewey & Kaye, Inc. (DKI). Begun in 1992, DKI works with nonprofit organizations, foundations and government agencies. Robin's particular focus has been on the arts, providing consulting services for such government agencies as the Pennsylvania, Georgia Rhode Island and Connecticut State Arts Councils, for nonprofit agencies like Pittsburgh Filmmakers, Greater Pittsburgh Arts Alliance, and the Children's Festival Chorus; and foundations such as Alcoa Foundation, the Birmingham Foundation, and The Heinz Endowments. He has served as the planning consultant for the Waldorf School of Pittsburgh, and the Rosedale Block Cluster. Executive searches for arts and foundation clients have been part of his work at DKI, and he is frequently utilized as a facilitator for community conversations and discussions, such as the community’s involvement in the Warhol Museum’s *Without Sanctuary* exhibition.

Paige Hepple

Paige Hepple graduated summa cum laude from Slippery Rock University with majors in Professional Writing and French, a minor in International Studies, and certification in Nonprofit Management. She received an American Humancis Scholarship for a grant writing internship with the University's Institute for Community, Service-Learning, and Nonprofit Leadership and has written grants for the University's Summer Creative and Performing Arts Academy. Following a writing internship at the Women’s Shelter/Rape Crisis Center of Lawrence County, PA, she served as assistant to its Director of Development. Since August, 2003, she has been working with DKI.