
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1717 Session of
2019

INTRODUCED BY COX, DeLUCA, HERSHEY, KAUFFMAN, STRUZZI AND
ZIMMERMAN, SEPTEMBER 12, 2019

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, SEPTEMBER 12, 2019

AN ACT

1 Establishing the Pennsylvania Office for Faith-Based and
2 Nonprofit Community Organizations and an advisory commission;
3 and providing for their powers and duties.

4 TABLE OF CONTENTS

5 Chapter 1. Preliminary Provisions

6 Section 101. Short title.

7 Section 102. Legislative policy and declaration.

8 Section 103. Definitions.

9 Chapter 3. Pennsylvania Office of Faith-Based and Nonprofit

10 Community Organizations

11 Section 301. Establishment.

12 Section 302. Powers and duties of office.

13 Section 303. Executive director.

14 Chapter 5. Pennsylvania Advisory Commission on Faith-Based and

15 Nonprofit Community Organizations

16 Section 501. Establishment.

17 Section 502. Membership.

18 Section 503. Powers and duties of advisory commission.

1 Chapter 7. Miscellaneous Provisions

2 Section 701. Responsibilities of Commonwealth agencies.

3 Section 702. Effective date.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 CHAPTER 1

7 PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

8 Section 101. Short title.

9 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Pennsylvania
10 Office of Faith-Based and Nonprofit Community Organizations Act.

11 Section 102. Legislative policy and declaration.

12 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

13 (1) This Commonwealth benefits from a rich diversity of
14 faith-based and nonprofit community organizations that
15 provide crucial aid to many Pennsylvania residents, including
16 assistance for the needy, children, families and
17 neighborhoods.

18 (2) Committed volunteers in faith-based and nonprofit
19 community organizations bring unique skills, services and
20 resources to bear in assisting Pennsylvania residents.

21 (3) Many faith-based and nonprofit community
22 organizations lack the organizational resources to
23 effectively engage government agencies in collaborative
24 projects to help meet the needs of Pennsylvania residents.

25 (4) It is beneficial to encourage communication between
26 governmental entities and faith-based and nonprofit community
27 organizations, recognizing the importance of sharing
28 information about and encouraging the best practices of
29 faith-based and nonprofit community organizations.

30 (5) There are many opportunities for faith-based and

1 nonprofit community organizations to partner with
2 governmental entities to help deliver vital services in our
3 communities, such as giving ex-offenders a second chance at
4 work.

5 (6) The Commonwealth is required to spend Federal grants
6 in accordance with Charitable Choice provisions contained in
7 the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity
8 Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-193, 110 Stat.
9 2105), the Community Services Block Grant Act (Public Law 97-
10 35, 95 Stat. 511) and Substance Abuse and Mental Health
11 Services Administration programs and the similar Equal
12 Treatment regulations that govern other federally funded
13 social services, aimed at providing funds to faith-based
14 organizations on the same basis as any other nongovernmental
15 provider without impairing the religious character of the
16 organizations and without diminishing the religious freedom
17 of beneficiaries of assistance.

18 (7) Pennsylvania residents can benefit from a
19 comprehensive and coordinated effort to improve and
20 strengthen faith-based and nonprofit community organizations
21 in this Commonwealth by identifying and removing any
22 unnecessary administrative barriers to fair competition for
23 government funding and leveling the playing field for faith-
24 based and nonprofit community organizations so that
25 government may choose the most effective partner to provide
26 the public services.

27 (8) The effort to support faith-based and nonprofit
28 community organizations in Pennsylvania should be facilitated
29 by having a prominent office with a direct relationship to
30 the Governor.

1 Section 103. Definitions.

2 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
3 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
4 context clearly indicates otherwise:

5 "Advisory commission." The Pennsylvania Advisory Commission
6 on Faith-Based and Nonprofit Community Organizations established
7 in this act.

8 "Office." The Pennsylvania Office of Faith-Based and
9 Nonprofit Community Organizations established in this act.

10 "Organization." A neighborhood, faith-based or other private
11 charitable organization which is organized as a nonprofit
12 corporation or nonprofit unincorporated association under the
13 laws of the United States or this Commonwealth which is
14 authorized to do business in this Commonwealth as a nonprofit
15 corporation or unincorporated association under the laws of this
16 Commonwealth.

17 CHAPTER 3

18 PENNSYLVANIA OFFICE OF FAITH-BASED
19 AND NONPROFIT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

20 Section 301. Establishment.

21 The Pennsylvania Office of Faith-Based and Nonprofit
22 Community Organizations is established within the Governor's
23 Office. The office shall be administered by the Governor's
24 Office.

25 Section 302. Powers and duties of office.

26 The office shall have the power and its duty shall be to:

27 (1) Facilitate coordination of State government efforts
28 relating to faith-based and nonprofit community organizations
29 and develop other opportunities for organizations to partner
30 with State government to help address social needs in this

1 Commonwealth.

2 (2) Provide a point of contact for organizations to
3 receive information, assistance and referrals related to
4 faith-based and nonprofit community organization programs
5 within State government, including the development of an
6 Internet website, and assist all Commonwealth agencies to
7 develop relationships, as appropriate, with faith-based and
8 nonprofit community organizations.

9 (3) Assist organizations in identifying and applying for
10 Federal grants.

11 (4) Promote and share innovative and model faith-based
12 and nonprofit community organization programs, initiatives
13 and best practices among organizations as identified by the
14 advisory commission.

15 (5) Seek financial support for the faith-based and
16 nonprofit community organization efforts of State government
17 and for faith-based and nonprofit community organization
18 programs and services.

19 (6) Provide technical assistance, education, information
20 and other support to organizations, including facilitating or
21 providing grant-writing training, organizational development
22 and other technical assistance and training to help
23 organizations develop increased capacity to provide services.

24 (7) Promote greater public awareness of and support for
25 organizations by providing information regarding faith-based
26 and nonprofit community organization initiatives to faith-
27 based, volunteer, private and neighborhood organizations,
28 businesses, philanthropic institutions and Commonwealth
29 agencies whose mission may be enhanced by increased awareness
30 of such initiatives.

1 Section 303. Executive director.

2 The Governor shall appoint an executive director and such
3 other staff as may be necessary to manage the office and perform
4 or oversee the performance of the duties of the office.

5 CHAPTER 5

6 PENNSYLVANIA ADVISORY COMMISSION ON FAITH-BASED
7 AND NONPROFIT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

8 Section 501. Establishment.

9 The Pennsylvania Advisory Commission on Faith-Based and
10 Nonprofit Community Organizations is established within the
11 office and shall serve in an advisory capacity to the office in
12 matters regarding faith-based and nonprofit community
13 organizations and charitable services in this Commonwealth. The
14 advisory commission shall be administered by the office.

15 Section 502. Membership.

16 (a) Public official members.--The advisory commission shall
17 consist of the following members or their duly authorized
18 designee, who shall serve by virtue of the public office they
19 hold:

- 20 (1) Secretary of Human Services.
- 21 (2) Secretary of Labor and Industry.
- 22 (3) Secretary of Corrections.
- 23 (4) Secretary of Education.
- 24 (5) Secretary of Agriculture.
- 25 (6) Secretary of Community and Economic Development.
- 26 (7) Secretary of Aging.
- 27 (8) Secretary of State.
- 28 (9) Adjutant General.
- 29 (10) Attorney General.
- 30 (11) Executive Director of Pennsylvania Commission on

1 Crime and Delinquency.

2 (12) Executive Director of the Governor's Office of
3 Citizen Service (PennSERVE).

4 (b) Nongovernmental members.--The advisory commission shall
5 also include 15 nongovernmental members. Eleven of these members
6 shall be appointed by the Governor. The President pro tempore of
7 the Senate, the Minority Leader of the Senate, the Speaker of
8 the House of Representatives and the Minority Leader of the
9 House of Representatives shall each appoint one nongovernmental
10 member. Nongovernmental members include representatives from the
11 faith-based community, neighborhood organizations, business
12 community, not-for-profit providers of health and social
13 services and other community leaders throughout this
14 Commonwealth.

15 (c) Voting.--

16 (1) The members appointed under subsection (a) shall not
17 hold voting privileges on any matter brought up for
18 consideration by the advisory commission.

19 (2) The members appointed under subsection (b) shall
20 hold voting privileges on all matters brought up for
21 consideration by the advisory commission.

22 (d) Terms.--

23 (1) The terms of the members under subsection (a) shall
24 be concurrent with their holding of public office.

25 (2) Members appointed under subsection (b) shall serve
26 for terms of two years and shall serve until their successors
27 are appointed.

28 (e) Chairperson.--The Governor shall appoint one
29 nongovernmental member of the advisory commission to serve as
30 chairperson and one to serve as vice chairperson of the advisory

1 commission for a term of two years at the pleasure of the
2 Governor. The vice chairperson shall preside at meetings in the
3 absence of the chairperson.

4 (f) Expenses of members.--Members of the commission shall
5 receive no compensation for their services except that such
6 members may be reimbursed for actual travel and related expenses
7 in accordance with Commonwealth policy.

8 Section 503. Powers and duties of advisory commission.

9 The advisory commission shall have the power and its duties
10 shall be to:

11 (1) Identify innovative and model faith-based and
12 nonprofit community organization programs, initiatives and
13 best practices which the office may promote and share with
14 organizations.

15 (2) Advise and assist the Governor and the office in
16 identifying obstacles that may prevent greater utilization of
17 faith-based and nonprofit community organizations by State
18 government to help meet the needs of residents of this
19 Commonwealth and to assist all Commonwealth agencies in
20 ensuring that their operations help to promote utilization of
21 faith-based and nonprofit community organizations.

22 (3) Advise the Governor and the office in the
23 establishment of policy regarding matters affecting faith-
24 based and nonprofit community organizations and shall report
25 periodically to the Governor by providing information and
26 recommendations for consideration.

27 (4) Assist the office in periodically convening
28 conferences for purposes such as technical assistance,
29 education, information and other support to organizations,
30 including facilitating or providing grant-writing training,

1 organizational development and other technical assistance and
2 training to help organizations develop increased capacity to
3 provide services.

4 CHAPTER 7

5 MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

6 Section 701. Responsibilities of Commonwealth agencies.

7 All Commonwealth agencies under the jurisdiction of the
8 Governor shall cooperate and provide such information, records
9 and materials as might be necessary for the office and advisory
10 commission to carry out their responsibilities. In addition, all
11 Commonwealth agencies shall designate a contact person to act as
12 a liaison with the office.

13 Section 702. Effective date.

14 This act shall take effect in 60 days.