

# FAITH IN ACTION

Publication of The National Congress for Community Economic Development



## Words Plus Deeds: Does Bush Budget Add Up?

By Mary Nelson, Bethel New Life, Inc.



In his State of the Union Address, President Bush said, "Our government will continue to support faith-based and community groups that bring hope to hard places." Yet, in his proposed 2006 budget the President eliminates 20 successful community development programs. These are the programs that Bethel New Life, a 25-year-old faith-based community development corporation on Chicago's west side, has used to help revitalize our community, and the consequences of these cuts will be critical.

Thanks to Bethel New Life, over 200 low-income seniors now have a safe and

comfortable home because of the adaptive re-use of a closed down inner city hospital campus on Chicago's west side. We have also created a community health center, children's day care, cultural and performing arts center, and 170 new jobs. This development has stabilized the lives of families, raised property values and decreased crime.

This would not have been possible without the significant government investment the President has now asked Congress to eliminate. For Bethel New Life and the 3,600 community development nonprofits repre-

sented by the National Congress for Community Economic Development (NCCED), federal dollars are an essential part of the strategy to assist low-income and minority communities, and encourage investment from foundations and businesses.

Despite the nation's success in building strong urban and rural markets, the FY 06 budget slashes \$1.8 billion in community economic development funding— 33 percent of total community economic development funding. If Congress approves this proposal, it will put at serious risk all of the genuine progress made in community development over the last 40 years.

As a faith based organization, we understand that where one puts their treasures is an indication of where one's heart is. Likewise, budgets indicate priorities. The President's priorities do not reflect the rhetoric of continued government support to bring hope to hard places. What they do reflect, however, is which way the nation's moral compass is pointing, and it is not a direction we really want to go.

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# Faithful Gathering

by Susan Shorters, NCCED Staff

It was a veritable Faith-Based United Nations as over 40 representatives from the Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and other faith communities came together for the NCCED Faith-Based Academy's National Faith-Based Summit in October 2004. The focus? An assessment of where faith-based community economic development (CED) is today, and where it's headed in the future.

Panel discussions addressed five key areas: 1) religion; 2) community; 3) philanthropy; 4) business; and 5) government. Presenters representing each area discussed the trends, challenges, opportunities and future direction of the faith-based sector. After each panel, summit attendees engaged in interactive exchanges to share their experiences and identify important issues facing the faith-based economic development community. The strongest trend identified by summit participants is the move toward economic development. "It's good to provide hous-

ing," noted panelist, Reverend Norman Bullock, president of Churches United for Economic Development, "but the future must focus more on economic development to address the business of community." "Think economic viability," added Michael Abdelaaty, President of LARIBA - American House Finance.

Other future trends considered by summit participants included an increase in partnerships between faith-based organizations and other entities. For example, participants cited an increased willingness of the business community to invest as a full partner with faith-based organizations, as well as an increase in government's view of faith-based community development as a viable avenue for poverty relief efforts. On the social side, participants noted rapidly changing demographics in communities where faith-based organizations operate as a major trend – requiring the organizations to make adjustments so that they can better address the needs of

people from a variety of racial, religious and ethnic backgrounds.

While challenges remain, the outlook that emerged from the summit is one of widening horizons and new opportunities for meaningful faith-based community economic development. Partnership and collaboration were cited as viable strategies for revitalizing communities – especially as resources shrink and needs expand.

The faith community has a long and rich history of bringing revitalization to those who need it most. "Transforming hopelessness and despair into hope and justice," is the way panelist Lula Ballton describes it. There is no reason to believe that these efforts to turn faith into action will let up any time soon. The energy, commitment and success stories of the summit participants offered a clear indication that faith-based community economic development will be around for a long time to come.

## Preaching the Faith: NCCED's Faith-Based Academy

by Susan Shorters, NCCED Staff

Moving from ministry to managing housing and commercial projects can be quite a challenge. That is why the National Congress for Community Economic Development (NCCED) has been proud to sponsor the NCCED Faith-Based Academy.

Formed in 2000 as an information clearinghouse, resource center and convener for faith-based organizations both new and old, the Academy offers:

- Training;
- Information resources on best practices and tools; and
- Convenings for the faith-based community economic development (CED) industry.

With generous funding from the Lilly Endowment, NCCED launched an expansion of the Faith Based Academy. The expanded Academy will provide:

- A two-track training curriculum to conduct regional trainings for beginning and advanced faith-based practitioners;
- National Census of faith-based community economic development organizations;
- A National Faith Based Summit; and
- Enhanced faith-based website.

Faith-based organizations bring a wealth of resources to community development initiatives. Many are on the forward edge of the CED movement – working to revitalize communities; empower individuals and families; build affordable housing; and encourage economic development. With over 800 urban and rural faith-based organizations across the U.S., the Academy expects to provide them with the tools to move faith into action for years to come.

# Tools for the Faithful

By Nelly Lejter, Ph.D., School of Community Economic Development, Southern New Hampshire University

## Curriculum Project

Leaders of faith-based organizations will soon have access to an innovative, hands-on opportunity to develop skills, acquire tools, share experiences, and learn about best practices for promoting the social and economic development of their communities. The National Congress for Community Economic Development (NCCED) – long known for delivering faith-based workshops through its Faith-Based Academy – is developing a formal curriculum to deliver faith-based training to practitioners across the U.S. Called “Tools for the Faithful”, this curriculum will provide a comprehensive approach to faith-based community development.

## A Collaborative Effort

With Susan Shorters at NCCED, the project team gathered insights on training needs from faith-based practitioners during the curriculum’s planning stages. To develop the curriculum, NCCED collaborated with two of the field’s most experienced faith-based partners:

- The School of Community Economic Development (SCED) at Southern New Hampshire University has long-standing experience in the community economic development (CED) field. The curriculum team included SCED faculty, Dr. Christina Clamp and Dr. Nelly Lejter. Dr. Clamp has over 15 years experience in faith-based CED, and recently co-authored with David T. Reese, Faith-Based Community Economic Development: Principles and Practices. Dr. Lejter is associate dean of the School of Community Economic Development, and has significant experience in research and community development in the U.S. and abroad.
- Author and trainer, Joy Skjegstad, was also an integral part of the curriculum team. Author of the book, Starting a Non-Profit at Your Church (The Alban Institute), Ms. Skjegstad is a CDC director and trainer of faith-based organizations across the U.S. Ms. Skjegstad begun ministry at Park Avenue United Methodist Church in

South Minneapolis and in 1999 founded the Faith Communities Project, which helps ministries address key management issues such as fundraising and financial management.

## Beginners and Advanced Practitioners Are Welcome

While some faith-based organizations already have years of expertise in community development, others are just beginning. There is also a great degree of diversity among faith-based organizations: different faiths, different constituents, and neighborhoods with very distinctive characteristics. All these elements demand a curriculum that is flexible and takes into account these complexities. That is why the curriculum team decided early that it was important to develop content and delivery mechanisms suitable for a wide array of audiences.

Consequently, the team designed two “tracks” for the curriculum. Track I is oriented to organizations and leaders who are in the beginning phases of applying CED principles and practices in their communities. Track II is for more advanced practitioners and offers more specialized tools. In both cases, the curriculum is designed in a module format, so that it can be taught either in a sequence or as a stand-alone set of workshops.

## A Full Toolkit

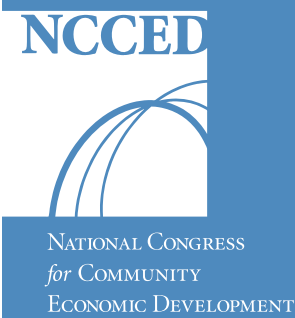
What good is a toolkit if it only has one or two tools? If those are the tools you need, great. If not, they can’t help you very much. That is why the NCCED Faith-Based Curriculum features a full set of knowledge tools to enhance the skills of faith-based practitioners in a wide variety of critical areas. These include:

- Spiritual Values and Motivations;
- Introduction to Community Economic Development and Faith-Based Models of CED;
- Knowing Your Community: Asset Assessment;
- Collaboration as a CED Way of Life;

- Ways to Get Involved in CED in Your Community;
- Fundraising and Organizational Capacity; and
- Faith-Based CED and Political Realities

All of the modules in Tracks I and II include handouts, practical exercises, worksheets, and suggestions for further reading. These “take away” tools will enable participants to apply what they’ve learned when they return to their organizations, and share their experiences with constituents.

**Coming to A Location Near You: The new curriculum will be available by spring 2005. NCCED will pilot the curriculum in a series of regional training sessions. Set your dial to NCCED’s website and stay tuned for more information.**



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# Spotlight: Walk a Mile Indiana

By Leigh Tivol, Indiana Association of Community Economic Development



State Sen. Teresa Lubbers (R-Indianapolis) recognizes the Walk a Mile program on the Senate floor as Walk a Mile organizers and participants, including IACED Board Member Therese Bath, look on.

## What Is Walk A Mile?

Walk a Mile is a national, nonpartisan educational program that links policymakers with their low-income constituents to learn more about each others' lives, gain new perspectives, and "walk a mile" in each others' shoes. The program seeks to foster participatory democracy by including those who are often left out or forgotten in public discourse. Policymakers who volunteer are paired with one of their constituents receiving some form of public assistance.

By developing relationships between those who create public policies and those affected by these policies, low-income constituents can become more knowledgeable about the policymaking process. At the same time, policymakers get to know public assistance recipients in their districts and learn about the real-life issues that they face.

## Walk A Mile In Indiana

In 2004, the Indiana Association for Community Economic Development (IACED) brought Walk a Mile to the state of Indiana. IACED is a statewide association dedicated to strengthening Indiana's communities by supporting local organizations engaged in community and economic development.

Twenty-six (26) policymaker/constituent matches were made around Indiana, organized by IACED and 21 local "liaison" organizations that assisted in recruitment and provided ongoing support to the low-income constituents. The 26 participating policymakers were made up of seven state senators, eight state representatives, 10 mayors, and one deputy mayor; 46 percent were Republicans; 54 percent were Democrats.

Walk a Mile was endorsed by 15 Indiana nonprofit and for-profit organizations, and received financial support from five funders: the National Congress for Community Economic Development (NCCED), the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Irwin Mortgage, the Great Lakes Capital Fund, and National City Bank. In-kind support was provided by AARP Indiana, City Café, Finish Line, Schlegel Greenhouse, and Target.

## What Did Walk A Mile Participants Do?

Over the course of a four-week period, from mid-November to mid-December 2004, Indiana Walk a Mile partners shared life experiences through:

### Policymakers...

- Visited their constituents at their homes and at their places of work, including at a stable, a Wal-Mart, and a restaurant.
- Stood in line with their constituents to receive services, including health care, rental assistance, and WIC.
- Went grocery shopping and rode the bus with their constituents.
- Struggled to feed their own families on a food stamp budget, especially during the Thanksgiving holiday.

- Saw their constituents face challenges such as inadequate health care, lack of childcare, and food insecurity.
- Went above and beyond to assist constituents who encountered a crisis during the program.

### Low-income constituents...

- "Shadowed" their policymakers and learned just how many meetings their policymakers go to in a single day.
- Faced challenges—such as lack of a telephone, or no transportation—as they tried to maintain contact with their policymakers.
- Saw the numerous demands that are placed on policymakers in terms of time, resources, and attempting to serve the competing interests of many worthwhile programs.
- Learned how the legislative process works, and how they can be part of that process.

## The Success Of Walk A Mile

At the outset of the project, IACED hoped that bringing this powerful program to Indiana would produce rich new relationships, create greater understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing policymakers, and empower Hoosiers to participate more fully in the democratic process. Through the partnerships of all who participated in and supported this project, we believe that we have met that goal.

State Sen. Theresa Lubbers (R-Indianapolis) authored a Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR 8) "to recognize the success of the Walk a Mile program in educating policymakers and constituents alike on participatory democracy." Program participants were invited to gather on the Senate floor as Sen. Lubbers made her remarks. In turn, Rep. Ralph Ayres (R-Chesterton) sponsored the resolution in the House.

In addition, Walk a Mile has drawn attention to community economic development issues and organizations around the state. Media on Walk a Mile appeared in numerous papers, including the Indianapolis Star, Ft. Wayne Journal-Gazette, South Bend Tribune, Lafayette Journal & Courier, Columbia City Post & Mail, Warsaw Times-Union, Huntingburg Press, Huntingburg Herald-Tribune, Jackson County Tribune, Richmond Palladium-Item, and the Morgan County Reporter-Times. Stories also were broadcast on WIBC-AM and through the statewide Network Indiana radio group, among others.

**It's amazing how far we can go when we're willing to walk a mile in someone's shoes.**

## What's Your Story?

# Using Storytelling to Transfer Knowledge and Connect Generations, Peers, Communities

By Susan Shorters, NCCED Staff

**"When an elder dies, a library burns",** says the African proverb. Storytelling ignites passion in people. It is one of the oldest and most universal forms of sharing information. It captures and preserves experiences, and brings history to life for younger generations. In storytelling we have a powerful tool for imparting knowledge, inspiring action, and informing posterity.

That is why the community economic development (CED) industry must tell its story. Individual stories of how we came to do this important work. Stories of change and triumph in our communities. Stories of unsung heroes who turned neighborhoods around. And stories of a powerful movement that weeded out poverty and disenfranchisement, planted the seeds of affordable housing and economic development, and reaped restored and revitalized communities.

### Why must we tell and share these stories?

- If we don't, who will?
- If we don't, how will our children know?
- If we don't, how will we train up the next generation of leaders?
- If we don't, how will those outside our industry know about the work we do and be able to support it?

Yet, too often our stories and the power they have to inform and inspire die as time passes on. Veteran CED practitioners are retiring and some, sadly, are dying, and they are leaving their stories and the stories of the industry untold. Too often we hear about the charismatic founding director who has been at the heart of an organization for decades, but whose retirement leaves a void. It is a void that can be filled when we tell our story.

To help CED practitioners share their stories, NCCED launched a storytelling workshop at our 2001 Annual Convention. Attendees were so inspired by this inaugural workshop that they stayed more than an hour past the time it was scheduled to end. Since then, the Story Circles workshop has been a central part of NCCED's Annual Conventions.

Historian and author Stephen Ambrose once said, "The past is a source of knowledge and the future is a source of hope." In the CED industry – an industry whose history is rooted in transformation – we have an obligation to young people, residents in our communities, and ourselves, to pass on knowledge that will inform, inspire and give hope to our next generation of leaders. So make sure you share your story with others.

## The Art of Storytelling: An Innovative Example

Probably one of the most unique approaches to storytelling comes from well-known faith-based CDC, Bethel New Life, Inc. in Chicago. Bethel used the art of storytelling to weave a community fabric of history, knowledge, pride, and culture with *Steppin' Up*, an inspirational exhibition showcasing stories of transformation.

Using shoes, and the stories of the people who wore them, the exhibit symbolizes "what it would be like to walk a mile in another person's shoes" and illustrates the obstacles the wearers had to overcome to realize their dreams. This project also resulted in a play, "Deep Enough to Swallow Me Whole," starring community residents. NCCED Board member, and Bethel president, Mary Nelson, explains it this way: "community history allows us to look backward to move forward."

**What's your story? Have you shared it? If not, do it.**

**Go ahead...tell your story and leave a legacy.**

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# Lights, Camera, Action

By Denise Blake, Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign

More people are leaving prisons across the U.S. to return to their families and communities than at any other time in our history. Nationally, over 600,000 individuals will be released from state and federal prisons this year – a fourfold increase over the past two decades. Many will have difficulty managing the most basic elements for successful reintegration—reconnecting to jobs, housing, and their families, and accessing needed substance abuse and health care treatment. Consequently, some of the most important and innovative work in prisoner reentry is currently being done at the community level, and yet nobody seems to have noticed.

That is why the Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign was created. The purpose of this vital outreach effort is to link stakeholders from various constituencies to public television and other media as a means to strengthen youth and families and build effective communities. Through videos, documentaries, forums and other outreach strategies, the Campaign works with communities across the U.S. to expand public awareness and dialogue, provide media-based resources, and work in partnership with key organizations engaged in local reentry initiatives. Central to the Campaign's success is its focus on issues that are of primary concern to policy leaders, faith- and community-based organizations.

Such issues are addressed in *Outside the Walls* – the Campaign's signature media project. *Outside the Walls* is a videotape that highlights successful reentry programs from across the nation. The video profiles each program – presenting a description of services, highlighting partnerships and collaborative efforts, and documenting outcomes that demonstrate why these program are effective.

## The Reentry Programs Featured In The Video Address Six Important Reentry Issues:

1. Education & Employment;
2. Health;
3. Housing;
4. Family;
5. Public Safety; and
6. Faith.

In addition to interviews with staff and partners of the reentry programs, *Outside the Walls* features a variety of viewpoints, including individuals who were formerly incarcerated, crime victims and their advocates, policymakers, parole and probation officers, departments of correction, government agencies, and community leaders.

Besides *Outside the Walls*, the Reentry National Media Campaign has other media tools and resources targeted specifically to communities of faith. For example, the Campaign worked with the National Religious Affairs Association (NRAA) of the National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice (NABCJ) to develop a new video aimed at black churches. Called *To Serve This Present Age: Reentering Through Faith*, it is an instructional video designed to enhance the black church community's growing awareness of the significant impact that crime and imprisonment have on families and communities. *To Serve This Present Age* highlights the active role that churches must play to help both those leaving prison and the communities that will be receiving them.

## The Video – Scheduled To Be Available In Spring 2005 – Addresses Five Critical Issues:

1. Reentry and Mentoring of Offenders;
2. Strengthening Marriages and Families;
3. Mentoring Children of Incarcerated Parents;
4. Disproportionate Minority Confinement, Disenfranchisement, and Detention Reform; and
5. Public Education, Training, and Civic Participation.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) supports the Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign as part of the foundation's Making Connections Media Outreach Initiative (MC-MOI). Making Connections is designed and managed by Outreach Extensions—a national organization specializing in educational and community outreach through media.

To find out more, visit <http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org>. To view a promo video of *To Serve This Present Age: Reentering Through Faith* and order a complementary copy of *Outside the Walls*, go to <http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org/faith.htm>.

The **Forum for Reentry and Community Economic Development** is a project of the National Congress for Community Economic Development (NCCED). With support from the Department of Justice Office of Community Capacity Development and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Forum conducts research and evaluation; collects and disseminates information; provides training and technical assistance; and increases awareness among the many disciplines and service systems that come in contact with former prisoners.

## 2005 FORUM EVENTS

March 14-15	NCCED Policy Summit	Washington, DC
March 21-24	Department of Justice/Community Capacity Training Workshop	Atlanta, GA
April 11-12	CDC Tour	New York, NY, Philadelphia, PA
May 17-18	Reentry and Public Housing	Providence, RI
June 13-14	Family Strengthening and Prisoner Reentry Connections	Raleigh, NC
June 20-24	Neighborhood Reinvestment Conference	Boston, MA
July 6-7	Faith-Based	Chicago, IL
August 23-24	Department of Justice/Community Capacity Training Workshop	Los Angeles, CA
September 18-21	NCCED Annual Convention	Washington, DC

To register for these events or for more information on the Forum for Reentry, contact Cheryl Ann Holmes, Program Manager, [cholmes@ncced.org](mailto:cholmes@ncced.org) or 202.289.9020.

# Loaves and Fishes: Starting Where You Are and Using What You Have

By Mary Nelson, Bethel New Life, Inc.

The shrinking pool of federal and state dollars will likely shrink even more with the FY 06 budget cuts. And so we are continually being faced with having to do more and more with less and less. It is times like these that we feel like the disciples with five loaves of bread and two fishes to feed thousands. So what do we do? We keep in mind the lessons the disciples learned and take four simple steps:

## 1) Discover God's Abundance.

Skills, resources, connections and hope all exist in our midst. The thing to do is to look at what we have and use what we've got. That's called "asset based community development (ABCD)". It's an approach rooted in an asset, rather than a liability (problem) paradigm. Both people and community assets can be carefully identified through an asset mapping process. The process works, and it energizes people and organizations to start with what they have.

In the low-income community served by Bethel New Life on the west side of Chicago, we discovered a lot of seniors in need of assistance and a lot of good caregivers right near them. Now Bethel employs 200 caregivers to help seniors stay in their own homes rather than sending them to expensive nursing facilities. Bethel has also developed a center with day care, employment, and commercial enterprises at the transit stop located in the community – providing residents with easily accessible services. All of this was done with assets available to us right in our own community!

## 2) Be Good Stewards.

We must be good stewards of what we have. One way to do that is to be clear about what we do and why we do it. A clear mission and priorities are like guide-

posts in the desert; they help us to see if our activities and projects align with our desired outcomes.

Bethel New Life was guided by the question, "What's most important in helping people move out of poverty?" We answered that question with a renewed focus on employment services, job creation, financial education, home ownership, and other asset-building vehicles, and the results have been greater effectiveness and better use of what God has given us.

## 3) Don't Go It Alone.

Poet and writer, John Donne said, "No man is an island, entire of itself." This applies to CDCs, too. We have to look around to see if there are partners who might be able to help us achieve our outcomes. Who can we collaborate with in our communities? City colleges, churches, corporations, hospitals, and other groups are all potential partners.

For example, the Raleigh Jobs Partnership in Raleigh, North Carolina, involved employers, the community college and churches. The employers needed skilled workers, the churches recruited people looking for jobs, and the community college provided pre-employment training. By not going it alone, the Raleigh Jobs Partnership created a win-win for everybody.

## 4) Explore New Possibilities.

Taking the same old path doesn't always get us to new places. Once you are clear about your mission and priorities, be open to exploring new ways of doing things.

Exploring new possibilities led Bethel New Life to combine economic development, community improvement and environmental cleanup to turn a Brownfield into a gold mine for the community. For example, the newly opened Bethel Center is a "green" building with a "living roof", light dimmers, and recycled material. This "environmentally correct" building now houses five commercial storefronts, Bethel Employment Services, and Bethel Infant and Child Care Center for 106 children.

These four approaches are not a substitute for fully funded programs. Money is still essential to carrying out the projects that are key to assisting low-income and underserved communities. Yet faith-based organizations can add to their resources by applying the "loaves and fishes" approach. When we follow God's command to "feed the hungry" by starting with what we have, God has a way of making clear to us how five loaves and two fishes really can feed the five thousand. We need to think, pray, involve others and then act.

For additional reading on asset mapping, two excellent resources are: [Building Communities from the Inside Out](#) by John McKnight and Jody Kretzman (Acta Publishers) and [The Power of Asset Mapping](#) by Luther Snow (The Alban Institute).

**NCCED would like to thank Lilly Endowment, Inc.  
for their generous support of the Faith-Based Academy.**

## Taking The Pulse Of The Non-profits

By Lester Salamon, Center for Civil Society Studies

Who checks the pulse of America's nonprofit sector? What are the current trends, what challenges are nonprofits facing, and how are they coping? The Listening Post Project was launched to get the answers.

Developed in 2003 by the Johns Hopkins University Center for Civil Society Studies, the Project helps inform practitioners, funders, policymakers, researchers and others about the significant factors affecting the nonprofit industry. The Project's intended results are to improve the capacity of community economic development practitioners to respond to change, and to increase public awareness of the challenges confronting nonprofits. NCCED and over 100 of its members have partnered with other non-profits from around the U.S. in this critical effort.

Nearly 20% of the NCCED members participating in the Project are faith-based organizations. A strong and growing sect of community development corporations, NCCED's recent research identified nearly

800 organizations across the U.S. that consider themselves to be faith-based. The faith-based organizations that are participating in the Project will offer a source of valuable information on the condition of the faith-based community development sector.

The Project, as its name implies, employs organizational "listening posts" to participate in regular "Soundings" (surveys). These organizations – representing various areas of the nonprofit sector – report on key trends and share their successes and challenges in dealing with such important topics as coping with budget cuts, accessing capital, and dealing with the rising cost of health care coverage. Executives from the listening post organizations also engage with their peers in Innovators Roundtables where trends and best practices are explored in greater depth.

Johns Hopkins compiles and summarizes the data and distributes it through regular reports and press releases. Over 50 newspapers, magazines, and radio programs

have reported Listening Post Project results, including the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Guardian of London, Chronicle of Philanthropy, Philanthropy Journal, and NPR's Marketplace. Over 40 nonprofit executives from the participating organizations have been interviewed for stories. The result is the most comprehensive snapshot of the nonprofit sector currently available.

The Listening Post Project is recruiting additional participants. If you are an NCCED member and would like to become a Listening Post, email [listeningpostproject@jhu.edu](mailto:listeningpostproject@jhu.edu). Please include your organization's name, address, a contact name and title, as well as the phone, fax and e-mail address. Be sure to identify yourself as an NCCED member. For more information about the Project, visit [www.jhu.edu/listeningpost](http://www.jhu.edu/listeningpost).

## Stand Up and Be Counted

By Kevin Kelly, NCCED Staff

Every three to four years, the National Congress for Community Economic Development (NCCED) conducts a national Census of community development corporations (CDCs) throughout the country. The Census collects data on the number of CDCs, the number of housing units and jobs they've produced, their most common sources of funding, and other information that can give an accurate portrait of the community economic development industry.

This year, for the first time, the national community economic development Census is collecting comprehensive data on faith-based CDCs across the U.S.

The data collected through this year's Census will give us a more complete picture of faith-based CDCs than we ever had before. The Census will focus not just on how many faith-based CDCs there are, but also on their connection with the religious institutions that created them, the type of work they do, and where they are located. These and many other variables will be com-

pared to provide an overall profile of faith-based CDCs and how they differ from, or are similar to, non-faith-based groups.

Previously, in the 1998 Census, NCCED included for the first time, questions to determine how many CDCs considered themselves to be faith-based and to ascertain their religious denomination. After the 1998 Census, NCCED assessed that there were probably more faith-based CDCs around the country than had been identified on our Census mailing list. As a result, NCCED conducted extensive research to uncover every possible faith-based CDC in the U.S. This led to an expanded list of faith-based CDCs – the most comprehensive national list that has ever been collected in one place.

This enhanced list was used in this year's Census, and will enable us to collect data from more faith-based groups than ever before. A report, based on the analysis collected from the Census, will be made public during the spring of 2005. Please check the website at [www.ncced.org](http://www.ncced.org) and future NCCED newsletters for a complete analysis of the findings from the faith-based component of the Census.