



National Congress for Community Economic Development

Policy on Faith-based and Community Development and Related Issues

Drawn from the Overall Strategy and Platform of the Association

The National Congress for Community Economic Development (NCCED), founded in 1970, is the trade association for the community development industry, representing the interests of 3,600 urban and rural community development corporations (CDCs), many of which are faith-based, and other community-based groups committed to neighborhood revitalization. Community development corporations embody the economic and social conscience of communities and serve as resident agents for the delivery of houses, jobs, and businesses required for healthy persons in healthy neighborhoods. CDCs originated through the collaboration of governmental, grassroots, and other private sector organizations. Over the past three decades, CDCs have developed 550,000 units of affordable housing, 71 million square feet of commercial and industrial space, and 247,000 private sector jobs. In 1998, CDCs serviced portfolios with an estimated \$1.9 billion in loans to 59,000 small businesses.

NCCED has a long and productive association with faith-based organizations. In fact, faith groups have been a major force in the community development movement and today constitute one of its fastest growing segments. In the last thirty years, NCCED helped to shape the faith-based sector of community economic development. NCCED's 1998 industry census indicated that at least 14 per cent of CDCs are faith-based and the number is growing. The importance of faith-based efforts is recognized in the NCCED Faith-based Initiative, which works with religious, nonprofit, corporate and governmental entities. Faith-based community development is an integral part of NCCED's strategy for strengthening community-based economic development. Respectful of faith, NCCED remains faith neutral, as must government, as it collaborates with persons and groups of all faiths, races, ethnicities and national origins in promoting the general welfare of all citizens.

NCCED in pursuit of its community and faith-based agenda:

- Encourages collaboration among faith-based and community groups and between those organizations and other nonprofit, corporate and government entities for the sake of whole communities and for the lessening of unproductive competition for limited public and private funds. NCCED affirms the linkage and partnership of faith-based institutions with community-based organizations and has done so throughout its history.
- Promotes public policies that support increased investment in long-term community economic development and in affordable housing preservation and production as integral parts of community revitalization. NCCED advances programs that move persons from dependency to self-reliance, resulting in whole persons in vibrant and resource-rich communities.
- Believes in equal opportunity for faith-based and community-based organizations to participate in general public programs and is convinced that a level and enlarged playing field requires: a) the expansion of current federal funding levels for community improvement, b) the securing of additional funds, especially for capacity building among new and existing players, and c) the removal of any federal, state or local legislative or regulatory barriers that exclude faith-based providers and CDCs from public program participation. All three measures are appropriate to the spirit of the "charitable choice" concept gaining currency in public policy discussions.
- Endorses the inclusion of community and faith-based organizations in the formation of social and economic policy on all levels of government, and advocates programs that favor community-governed development organizations, including those that are faith-based, in the awarding of grants and other government incentives.
- Supports the prudent use of public funds by faith and community groups and the formation of nonprofit [501(c)(3)] organizations to operate publicly funded programs, and urges faith-based groups to avoid sectarian use of tax dollars.

NCCED offers its experience and energy in shaping creative policies to promote economic well-being; livable wages; entrepreneurial opportunities; quality public education; affordable and accessible health care, and safe, attractive and affordable housing. The association stands ready to provide models, best practices, and technical assistance to help faith-based and community organizations achieve the capacity to make real differences in the lives of people.