



## Toolkit Items

**Tool Name:** Mississippi – Statewide Coalition Model

**Definition:** This is an example of how each of the state-level CNCS entities got involved and supported a statewide faith-based initiative.

**Purpose:** This is an example of a strategy that can be used when considering leveraging efforts across agencies and programs.

## **Example: Role of CNCS in Statewide Efforts Mississippi Faith-Based Coalition for Community Renewal**

**Background:** The Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service met in Jackson, MS in the spring of 2000, at the invitation of board member Juanita Doty. In preparation for the board meeting, a number of faith and community leaders met to prepare to welcome CNCS to Mississippi. Following a reception with the board, these leaders decided that there was value in continuing to meet and explored ways in which to begin engaging the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. They began meeting regularly and named their emerging effort the Mississippi Faith-Based Coalition for Community Renewal. The Chair named by the group was Reverend Ronnie Crudup, an AmeriCorps\*VISTA grantee.

Marsha Meeks Kelly, State Commission Executive Director, R. Abdul Azeez, State Office Director, and Dr. Clarence Lovelady, Learn and Serve Director each participated in the early formation of the Coalition and supported the efforts of the group to host a statewide conference to build awareness among faith-based and community-based organizations.

Dr. Clarence Lovelady, the Learn and Serve Director, served as co-chair of the Statewide Faith-Based Conference held in April of 2001. Three primary groups of representatives participated in the meeting including the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, each of the five cabinet Faith-Based and Community Centers, as well as the Corporation for National and Community Service. The event was planned simultaneously with the National Association of Black Mayors, who was also meeting in Jackson on the same weekend. Over 400 participants attended workshops and general sessions focused on best practices and changes emerging in funding opportunities for community based organizations (secular and faith-based).

In addition to leadership from Dr. Lovelady and support from the State Commission and State Office, a VISTA assigned to New Horizon, the AmeriCorps program directed by the Chair, Rev. Crudup, provided critical conference logistical support.

The FACES T/TA provider, the Center for Faith and Service, NCPC supported the event through consultants and brought 25 representatives from 12 state commissions (the champion states) who participated in the conference. In addition, they attended a learning lab to develop a template for implementation of the initiative in their respective states.

The event served as a great recruitment opportunity, reaching out to community organizations (secular and faith-based) to identify and recruit members and volunteers for all CNCS programs. It was also a very effective public awareness event, both with the media and the general public, and with the actual participants, who left with new contacts, new ideas, and an understanding of where to begin in the quest to find resources to support their service initiatives. Including CNCS grant opportunities. The Coalition continues to meet and serves as a coordination and communication mechanism to champion the Faith-Based and Community Initiative in the state of Mississippi.