

Religious Freedom and Faith-Based Organizations: Neither Privileged nor Privatized in American Public Life

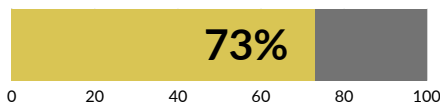
1. Religion Matters

Economic impact: Religion contributes \$1.2 trillion annually to the U.S. economy



7 of the 10 government-funded **refugee agencies** are faith-based

1 in 7 **hospitals** are faith-based; 20% of all **hospital beds** are faith-based



73% of **addiction recovery programs** are faith-based

Crime: 12,000 faith-based programs assist prisoners and 7,000 programs assist victims.

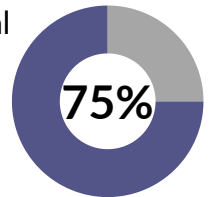


55% of **food banks** are faith-based.

All data is sourced from FaithFacts.com (Sept. 2024)

58% of religious people vs. 39% of unaffiliated people **volunteer**, while 62% of religious people vs. 46% of non-religious people **donate to charity**.

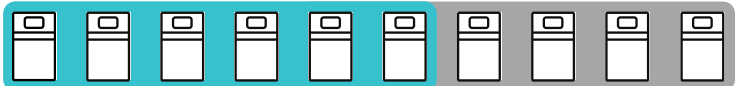
Disaster relief: 75% of the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster are estimated to be faith-based.



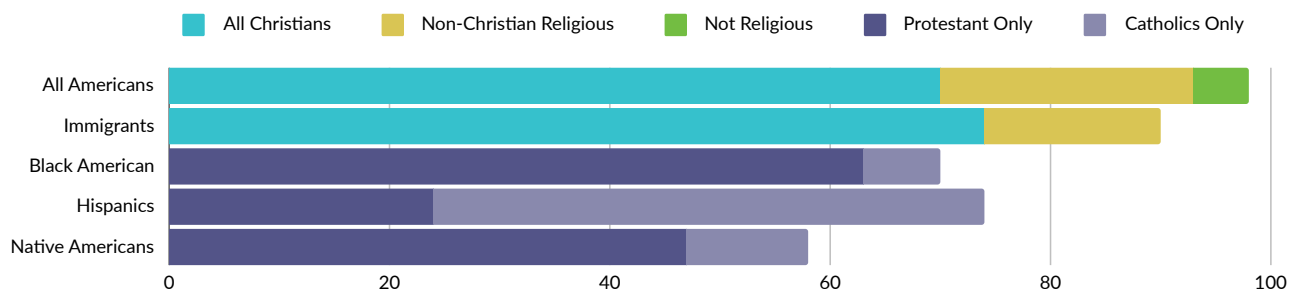
Adoption: 45% of Catholic Charities' adoptions and 32% of Bethany Christian Services' adoptions are "hard-to-place."

Education: 3.8 million children are in religious k-12 schools and 2 million students are in religious higher education.

"Our society relies on religious communities to take care of people, to do addiction counseling, to do job training, to do hunger and homelessness work, to do refugee resettlement. We just don't often tell the story of them doing that work. And I think that that's a big problem."
 -Eboo Patel, NYTimes, 2023



About 60% of the total beds in **emergency shelters** are in faith-based organizations. The Salvation Army houses 10 million people annually.



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2. Priorities for the Next Administration

Equal Opportunity: Empower the White House Partnership Initiative

The partnership is the federal government's commitment to ensuring that faith-based organizations of all religions have equal opportunity with secular organizations to partner with government to provide needed services.

- Empower the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships and its counterpart Centers (in HHS, USAID, Ed, HUD, USDA, etc.) with an authoritative voice and expanded staff.
- Focus the Office and Centers on improving federally funded services, elevating the role of faith-based and community organizations, and protecting the freedoms faith-based charities and houses of worship need, not solely on generating support for the administration's policies.
- Reinvigorate the role of the Office and Centers to educate—inside and outside the federal government and to states and localities—about the level playing field rules and about the vital contributions made by faith-based and small community organizations.

Equal Protection: Lead a Federal Fairness for All Initiative

Americans, including our diverse religious communities and immigrant communities, hold diverse convictions about human sexuality. Federal law should affirm equal civil rights so that people and organizations with their varied beliefs and practices can live side-by-side without legal penalty. In seeking to win others to their views, people should use examples and persuasion, not legal coercion.

The law should protect LGBTQ persons while also protecting religious people and organizations that hold diverse views and practices. Both/and laws and regulations will ensure that all rights are protected and that faith-based and community-based organizations can continue to partner with the government to make their best contributions to the common good.

Fairly protecting all of our nation's diverse, even conflicting, convictions and practices concerning religion and sexuality embodies and extends key American principles that support pluralism:

- A deep commitment to respect each others' rights to their convictions and ways of life; the foundational freedoms of religion, expression, and association;
- A diverse and thriving civil society through which people can peacefully live out their beliefs and make their distinctive contributions to others;
- A government that protects, supports, and partners with civil society organizations, thus respecting personal and organizational freedom and strengthening civic pluralism.