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**FDA Office of Shared Services**

YOUR SOURCE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND  
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

**EQUAL  
TREATMENT &  
CHARITABLE  
CHOICE AT  
FDA**

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## EQUAL TREATMENT AND CHARITABLE CHOICE AT FDA

On December 12, 2002, President George W. Bush signed Executive Order 13279, entitled *Equal Protection of the Laws for Faith-Based and Community Organizations*. This Executive Order established fundamental principles and policymaking criteria to guide executive branch agencies in formulating and developing policies that have implications for faith-based and community organizations to ensure the equal protection of the laws for these organizations in programs receiving Federal financial assistance. It further assures that all eligible organizations are able to participate in Federal programs and activities and compete for Federal financial assistance on equal footing.



The FDA recognizes that faith-based organizations are important contributors to FDA's mission and welcomes all qualified organizations to participate in bids for grants for social service programs.

### What are the Specific Objectives of the Faith-based Initiative?

- Organizations are eligible to participate in FDA programs without regard to their religious character or affiliation
- Religious organizations are eligible to compete for funding on the same basis, and under the same eligibility requirements, as other organizations
- The FDA is prohibited from discriminating for

or against organizations on the basis of religious character or affiliation in the selection of service providers.

### What are the Specific Requirements?

- All organizations that participate in federal grant programs are required to carry out eligible activities in accordance with all program requirements and other applicable requirements governing the conduct of FDA-funded projects. Any restrictions on the use of financial assistance shall apply equally to religious and non-religious organizations.
- Direct financial assistance from the FDA to participating organizations is not used to support inherently religious activities, such as worship, religious instruction or proselytization. If the organization engages in such activities, it must offer them separately, in time or location, from the programs or services funded with direct FDA assistance, and participation in religious activities must be voluntary for the beneficiaries of the FDA-funded programs or services.
- A religious organization that participates in federally funded programs retains its independence and may continue to carry out its mission, including the definition, practice, and expression of its religious beliefs.
- A faith-based organization may use space in its facilities to provide FDA-funded services without removing religious art, icons, scriptures, or other religious symbols.
- A religious organization that receives financial assistance from federally funded programs retains authority over its internal governance, religious terms in its



organization's name, may select its board members on a religious basis, and include religious references in its organization's mission statements and other governing documents.

- Religious organizations do not forfeit their exemption from the Federal prohibition on employment discrimination on the basis of religion set forth in 702(a) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Some FDA programs, however, have independent statutory nondiscrimination requirements related to religious discrimination. Therefore, organizations should consult with the appropriate grant program office.
- An organization that receives direct financial assistance from a federal agency may not, in providing program assistance supported by such funding, discriminate against a program beneficiary or prospective program beneficiary on the basis of religion or religious belief.



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