

## Meeting Human Needs, Transforming Broken Systems

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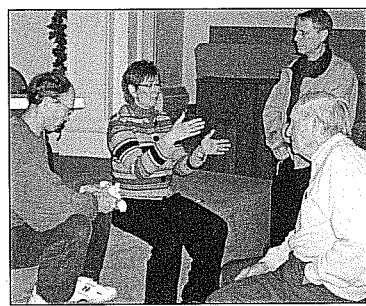
*“True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it is not haphazard and superficial. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.”*  
– Martin Luther King, Jr.

**The Golden Rule – remains the primary motivation for many faith-based nonprofits that meet the urgent needs of people across our state.**

The faith-based sector is one of the most diverse sectors in Colorado’s vibrant nonprofit community. The scope of the work of the faith-based sector is enormous. Every day, faith-based organizations feed the hungry, provide shelter for the homeless, mentor at-risk youth, build affordable housing, advocate for victims of domestic violence and child abuse, assist individuals overcoming drug and alcohol addictions, and meet the spiritual and human needs of prisoners.

The members of this sector are also as diverse as the services they provide. In Colorado, there are Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Roman Catholic, Protestant, non-denominational, non-sectarian, and faith-inspired nonprofits that work daily with the marginalized, vulnerable, and oppressed in our society. A desire to meet the needs of these Coloradans transcends any belief system and provides a powerful motivation to bring diverse peoples of faith together to promote the common good.

As countless Coloradans struggle to survive during the current economic downturn, the faith-based sector has been **providing emergency assistance**. Often overlooked, and just as important, however, the faith-based sector **provides critical leadership in fixing our broken and failing systems**. Indeed, a growing number of faith-based nonprofit organizations are engaged in issue advocacy. Their shared goal, as highlighted in the quotation from Martin Luther



*The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado*

King, Jr., is to develop long-term, effective solutions for the challenges that ail our state.

For example, faith-based nonprofits **provided critical leadership in the passage of Referendum C** in 2005. As a result of the downward ratcheting effect of TABOR (Taxpayers’ Bill of Rights) and the economic decline after 9/11, huge cuts were made in the social safety net. This was a moral issue for members of the faith-based sector and they worked together to pass Referendum C and restore state funding for programs that serve the poor, the sick and the marginalized.

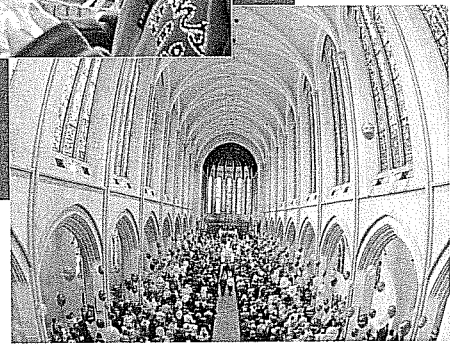
Today, the faith-based sector is **among the strongest proponents for payday lending reform in Colorado**. Faith-based organizations are advocating at the Colorado Capitol for a cap on payday loan interest

rates because they see first-hand the negative impacts of a credit system that can trap Coloradans in a vicious cycle of debt. Perhaps most importantly, the faith-based sector is working alongside other nonprofits, the business community, and civic leaders to **address our state’s fiscal crisis**. Faith-based nonprofits view the state budget as a moral document and believe the budget should reflect our core values and priorities as a state.



*Dry Bones Denver, Member since 2004 (below)*

The faith-based sector’s **modeling of meeting human needs and transforming broken systems** provides a vision for how Colorado’s nonprofit sector can have an even larger impact in our state.



*Saint John’s Cathedral, Member since 2009 (right)*



The Interfaith Alliance OF COLORADO

*The Interfaith Alliance of Colorado promotes social justice, religious freedom, and interfaith understanding by educating, organizing, and equipping progressive people of faith and goodwill for advocacy, dialogue and celebration. Founded in 1998, it has 14 congregational partners and more than 800 individual members across the state from 19 faith traditions. [www.InterfaithAllianceCO.org](http://www.InterfaithAllianceCO.org)*