

**REPORT OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**

Review and Funding Options for Faith-Based Services to Inmates

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



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REPORT TO THE SECRETARY OF PUBLIC SAFETY, AND THE CHAIRMEN OF
THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS AND SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEES

The 2005 Virginia General Assembly directed the Department of Corrections “to review and identify options for providing ongoing sources of non-general fund support for providing faith-based services to inmates. In conducting this review, the Department shall consult with organizations that provide such services to inmates as well as correctional systems in other states. A report on the results of this review shall be provided to the Secretary of Public Safety and the Chairman of the House Appropriation and Senate Finance Committees by September 15, 2005.”

By way of background, faith-based services are defined here as Chaplains providing formal liturgy, counseling, Bible studies and other religious activities in state prisons. Most major prison institutions (generally, populations over 400 inmates) have Chaplains serving at least 30 hours per week. These services and the majority of the funding are provided by the Chaplain Service of the Churches of Virginia, Inc.

However starting in December, 2002, the Department of Corrections’ Commissary Fund profits contributed a \$100,000 per year grant to faith-based services. (Chaplain Service received these monies as a result of a competitive procurement process). These grant funds were increased to \$300,000 in fiscal 2005, and to \$500,000 per year in fiscal 2006.

At the current rate of contribution to chaplain services and other expenditures, the Commissary Fund will be significantly depleted in a number of years. While drawing on the Commissary Fund may be a viable short term solution, it is not a suitable long term strategy.

Reductions to the Commissary Fund will have significant negative consequences. First, it could necessitate the DOC contractor, Keefe Commissary, to increase the DOC Commissary commission rate from 6.5% to a higher one. This will inevitably result in higher prices and possible inmate unrest. In addition, depletion of the Commissary Fund would result in reduction of monies available for inmate recreation and leisure time activities which, again, could cause unrest. Further, such depletion will reduce revenues for upgrading inmate law libraries which the Department is legally required to provide.

With respect to contacting other states about providing options of ongoing sources of non-general funds for faith based services, 15 other states were contacted (See attached list). 14 of 15 states finance faith-based services by state general funds. Only Maryland financially supported faith-based services through non-general funds. Maryland used a combination of commissary profits, and telephone profits.

The Department also contacted Prison Fellowship Ministries, Bill Glass Ministries, Good News Ministries, Franklin Graham Ministries, and the Department of Criminal Justice Services. None of these organizations had any sources of revenue for faith-based, Chaplain services.

Another source of non-general fund revenue is profits generated from telephone use. It is estimated that revenues here amount to about \$ 6 (six) million per year. It is strongly recommended that these non-tax revenues from telephone use be applied to Chaplain Services as it provides a more stable, and sizeable base than any other option.

STATES CONTACTED ABOUT HOW THEY FUND CHAPLAIN SERVICES

STATE	CONTACT	PHONE NUMBER
Alabama	Sandra Hill	334-353-3878
Arizona	Mike Linderman	602-542-3090
Connecticut	Anthony Bruno	860-692-7577
Florida	Alex Taylor	850-410-4360
Georgia	Dan Harvell	404-651-5765
Kentucky	Charles Williams	502-564-2220
Maryland	Nancy Williams	410-585-3328
New York	Mark Leonard	518-457-8106
North Carolina	George Dudley	919-716-3713
Ohio	Gary Sims	614-752-1739
Pennsylvania	Ulrich Kemm	717-737-6538
South Carolina	Gary Boyd	803-896-3978
Tennessee	Jim Cosby	615-253-8260
West Virginia	Robert Van Fossen	304-442-7213
Wisconsin	Chaplain Renke	920-324-6291