



Homeland Security

January 16, 2009

Dear Partners in Homeland Security:

As Deputy Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), I am well aware of the many ways in which frontline nonprofit organizations assist our citizens in becoming prepared for disasters. Every day, organizations like yours help meet the challenges that we as a Nation face when earthquakes, hurricanes, and other storms occur, as well as terrorist attacks that strike at the heart of a free nation. Your compassion and capacity to care for those who suffer are vital to our mission and inspiring to so many Americans. You are making a profound difference.

Faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs) are uniquely equipped for disaster preparation, response, and recovery in ways that complement the role of government, such as facilitating local preparedness and mobilizing volunteers, community revitalization and simply meeting human needs following disastrous life-changing events. As a result, the revised National Response Framework now allows for more effective collaboration between government and FBCOs. In addition, state, local, and tribal governments are collaborating with FBCOs as a key component of disaster relief efforts.

President Bush established the Faith-Based and Community Initiative to strengthen frontline nonprofits and expand partnerships across the Federal Government to solve the many problems that we as a Nation face. Since its inception in 2006, the DHS Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives has worked to make FBCOs central to disaster preparedness through events such as emergency preparedness workshops. Thus far, more than 1,500 FBCOs and Federal, state, and local emergency management officials across the Nation have participated.

Your partnership with DHS has contributed to a measurable and remarkable impact upon millions of lives in terms of emergency preparedness and community resilience. I hope the enclosed report will help illustrate the value this Administration has placed on the tremendous work of FBCOs. Your service to people in need strengthens our Nation's capacity to secure our homeland and face emergencies in the future. I thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul A. Schneider".

Paul A. Schneider