



## Why Project Access For Faith-Based Nonprofits?

The goal of Project Access is to build strong, sustainable faith-based community organizations that will adopt and integrate the best practices of organizational effectiveness into their program operations.

Faith-based community organizations have long been a source of hope and assistance for vulnerable populations. Often, however, they are small, understaffed, inexperienced and volunteer-led but their faith and commitment to their mission give them credibility with their community that traditional nonprofits do not have. For some neighborhoods, the local faith-based institution is the one beacon of stability.

Project Access can help when these groups lack the organizational infrastructure or resources to bring their programs to scale and to meet the ever-increasing demands for their services. As funding is cut for traditional nonprofits, faith-based community organizations are being asked to do more.

The Cleveland Foundation and its Project Access partners believe with the proper support and training, these organizations can compete for local, state and federal resources and reach more families and individuals in today's critical times.

## What Do People Say About Project Access?

"Project Access has given me the courage to share with the church board and the church why the mission of outreach is important. The church has increased individual giving to the programs and we have more people volunteering."

"I have become a better leader, motivating, supervising and providing accountability."

"My board is becoming more cohesive, more engaged and is improving in fundraising involvement. There is more ownership."

"It has allowed us to evaluate our programs with greater sophistication and accuracy, making it possible to meet the requirements of more demanding funders."



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Project Access is a collaborative project of the Cleveland Foundation and the Board of County Commissioners.

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PROJECT ACCESS



Strengthening faith-based organizations in our community

# What Is Project Access?

Project Access is a collaborative project of the Cleveland Foundation and the Board of County Commissioners, designed to strengthen the organizational effectiveness of faith-based community organizations.

A strong partnership among local universities and other organizations brings together experienced trainers and coaches to work with leaders of faith-based nonprofits. These partners include Business Volunteers Unlimited, Center for Nonprofit Policy & Practice at Cleveland State University's Levin College of Urban Affairs, Mt. Pleasant Community Zone, the Foundation Center (Cleveland), the Mandel Center for Nonprofit Organizations at Case Western Reserve University, Neighborhood Leadership Institute, United Black Fund of Greater Cleveland, United Pastors in Mission and Benchmark Consulting Group. The training model was developed specifically for Project Access by MTEC. Program implementation is managed by Cooper & Associates.



## Who Can Apply?

Project Access is available to faith-based community organizations that:

- Are located in and serve residents of low-income neighborhoods in Cleveland or inner-ring suburbs
- Have a 501(c)(3) tax exemption or a fiscal agent
- Have been in operation a minimum of two years and have a functioning board of directors
- Have a minimum annual operating budget of at least \$20,000 but less than \$500,000
- Have at least two staff members (paid or volunteer)
- Can show evidence of providing services to at least one of six targeted populations:
  - 1) at-risk youth
  - 2) elderly in need
  - 3) disabled
  - 4) homeless
  - 5) prisoner re-entry
  - 6) families transitioning from welfare to work

Interested organizations that meet the above criteria are encouraged to contact the Cleveland Foundation for more details and an orientation schedule.

## When Is The Training Offered?

Project Access staff conducts mandatory orientation sessions throughout the community and selects participating organizations in February and March. Training runs for a period of nine months beginning in March and concluding in November.

## What Are The Benefits?

Project Access is a comprehensive program designed to strengthen organizations in five core areas including leadership development, organizational development, program/services development, resource development, and community engagement. Participants will receive organizational assessments, trainings and seminars, peer-to-peer networking opportunities, individualized coaching and technical assistance. In addition, grant dollars will be available to further strengthen the organizational effectiveness of faith-based groups.

## What Are The Results?

Evaluation reports show a statistically significant improvement in all five core areas among organizations participating in Project Access. Surveys of program participants confirm an extremely high level of satisfaction as well.