IRB Boards and Qualitative Research: Bonus Handouts #2
Informed Consent

Presented By: Jo Anne Schneider, PhD

Provided By:
Principal Investigators
Association™
Maintaining Vital Connections Between Faith Communities and Their Organizations: Brief Summary

The Faith and Organizations project has received funding from the Lilly Endowment to assist faith communities in maintaining connections to the non-profits they create. We seek faith communities and organizations to participate in the project. Participation would involve hosting a researcher who would 1) develop a history of the faith community's social welfare, health, senior services and education activities through non-profits, 2) interview key people involved with stewardship of organizations, and 3) observe meetings and events associated with faith community connections to their organizations. We are seeking congregations, higher level religious institutions (Yearly Meetings, archdiocese, synods, conferences, Federations), and faith based organizations to participate in the project. Organizations can also participate in a second phase of the project that would involve testing a self-assessment instrument on stewardship and a small number of interviews and focus groups. For more information, contact Jo Anne Schneider at jschneider@ubalt.edu or 410.837.6145 or see the project website at: http://scpp.ubalt.edu/~faithandcommunities

Background: Scholars of social welfare in the United States have long recognized that much of the U.S. social welfare and health systems was founded by faith communities and religions also played a key role in education. Faith communities continue to have ties to the organizations they founded today, as well as starting new initiatives. However, in some cases the relationship between founding faith communities and organizations have become attenuated or unclear. Despite faith community interest in strengthening the connection between faith and works for religious institutions, few studies have focused on faith community connections to the non-profits they create.

The Faith and Organizations project was created in order to remedy this situation by providing concrete data on the relationship between faith communities and their organizations as well as practical guidance and tools based on this research. The project is unique because it explores the role of specific religion's and denominations’ theology and religious culture in service activities, providing concrete products specific both to that religion as well as more general theologically grounded materials. To date, the project has completed a pilot study: home.gwu.edu/~jschneid. This new project continues work on this issue from the perspective of faith communities by exploring ways that practical theology plays out in stewardship of non-profits created by mainline Protestants, Evangelicals, Peace Churches, Catholics, Jews, and African American Christians.

We define stewardship as the faith community’s effort to maintain its practical theology of justice and charity in the activities of the non-profits affiliated with that religion or denomination. Practical theology means the every day actions that carry out that faith’s beliefs regarding justice, charity and social equity. This projects’ primary goals
involve 1) documenting ways that faith communities maintain connections to their organizations and 2) providing practical advice on ways to strengthen stewardship or discern appropriate actions regarding organizations no longer practicing the practical theology of that religion. The project explores three questions:

1. How do faith communities understand their practical theology, regarding work in the world, and how does that practical theology play out in stewardship of organizations?

2. How does stewardship differ among the various branches of Christianity (mainline Protestants, Evangelicals, Peace Churches, Catholics, African American churches) and Jews?

3. What strategies can a faith community use to address concerns regarding the faith base in organizations under its care or affiliated with that religion?

Products: As a research/practice project, this study will produce a combination of applied products for faith communities and organization boards as well as academic and practitioner publications. An advisory committee drawn from hosting faith communities and faith based organizations, the Faith and Organizations Project advisory committee, and dissemination partners will be developed early in the project and meet regularly during the research project to discuss preliminary findings and determine specific products from the project. Products may include a mix of, but are not limited to: 1) a formal report on the study, 2) one dissemination event on the project as a whole, 3) a self assessment instrument for faith communities and organizations on stewardship, 4) a series of brief publications and factsheets with best practices and guidelines for stewardship for faith community members and organizations, 5) webinar and/or seminar curricula on stewardship for specific audiences, 6) one book for practitioners and several applied articles, 7) brief video educational materials, 8) academic articles and presentations.
**Verbal Consent** (Maryland Quality of Life Survey)

I am calling to ask you to complete the Maryland Quality of Life survey. You have been chosen to be interviewed to answer questions about _____ who receives services funded under the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration. You will have a chance to share what you think about the services _____ receives and provide information that will help us monitor and improve services and supports for people with developmental disabilities. Nothing you say will change _____’s service at all. All answers are kept private. Your participation in the survey is voluntary. There will not be any changes in _____’s services if you decide not to participate. You can stop the survey at any time and you may skip any question.

“If you agree to participate, may I continue?”

**Written Consent to Contact and Participate in Interview Study** (Ask Me! Peer Interview Study)

**Consent for the Survey of Former Ask Me! Interviewers**

[Research company] is doing a survey about being an interviewer and how that may have affected my life. I know that I do not have to do the survey, but I want to tell what a job as an interviewer meant to me.

I understand that [Research Company] will be the only one to know that I did the survey, and they will not anyone else. I understand that all of my answers will be voluntary and confidential. Only [Research Company] will know what I say. They will only tell how many interviewers said one thing, and how many said another. I understand that what I say will not affect any job or service I have. What say will also not give me any direct benefit, but it might help future interviewers in Maryland and other places.

I know I can call (research organization executive director) at (phone number) if I have any questions. I voluntary give [Research Company] my name and how I want them to contact me.

___ Call me to set up a face-to-face interview;
___ Call me to interview me by telephone;
___ Email me the URL address so I can click on it and do the Web survey on the Internet.

Signed:
Printed name:
Date:
Telephone number:
Best days to call:
Best time of day to call:
OR
Email address:
Consent Form, Phase II, Faith and Organizations Project

Thank you for agreeing on behalf of (insert agency or faith community name here) to participate in Phase II of the Faith and Organizations Project study Maintaining Vital Connections Between Faith Communities and Their Organizations. As outlined on the enclosed summary of the project, the study is designed to assist faith communities and the organizations they create to better understand their relationship in order to develop practical assistance for both founding faith communities and agencies. Additional information is available at http://scpp.ubalt.edu/~faithandcommunities.

Phase II of the project is designed to develop a self-assessment instrument for organizations and faith communities in order to help them understand and potentially improve their relationship. This part of the research follows on a more comprehensive study of organizations that has contributed to creation of the self-assessment and other materials from the project. Organizations that participated in phase one are also participating in Phase II. For organizations just joining the study now, participation will include: 1) interviews with one or two key leaders of your organization and founding faith community; 2) completion of the self-assessment instrument with the assistance of a trained researcher, 3) participation in a focus group regarding the process of filling out the self-assessment instrument in order to help us refine this tool, and 4) a focus group of selected people at your agency and faith community about some other questions related to the project. Agencies and faith communities that participated in phase I will not be asked to do the initial key leader interviews as they have already completed this part of the study.

Participation in the study is voluntary and all information gathered is confidential. (Researcher name) will be your primary contact for the study. S/he can be reached at (phone/email). S/he will work with your agency to determine which individuals should participate in the various parts of the study, determine the best time and place for focus groups, interviews, and discussion of the self-assessment instrument, and otherwise facilitate your participation in the study. All activities associated with the study will be conducted at a time and place convenient to you and your agency/faith community participants.

If you have any other question about the study, please contact the principal investigator, Dr. Jo Anne Schneider, at jschneid@ubalt.edu. The study is hosted by the University of Baltimore. Any questions and concerns regarding confidentiality or the research process that can not be addressed by the PI should be addressed to:

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The project staff hopes to work with you, your organization, and your faith community in completion of this project and development of practical tools and other materials to share its findings. Agency and faith community representatives will be invited to at least one meeting in the spring to share outcomes and we hope to work closely with you to make participation in the project the best possible experience for you.

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