


<p style="text-align: center;">GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH</p>	<p>Policy No. 200.10</p>	<p>Date 2/21/2025</p>	<p>Page 1</p>
	<p>Supersedes: None</p>		

Subject: Charitable Choice Policy

1. **Purpose.** For the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH or the Department) to enforce Charitable Choice requirements for faith-based organizations in accordance with the “Nondiscrimination and Institutional Safeguards for Religious Providers” requirements under the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant (SABG).

2. **Applicability.** DBH subrecipients that are faith-based organizations delivering substance use disorder (SUD) prevention and treatment services funded in whole or in part by the SABG.

3. **Authority.** Department of Behavioral Health Establishment Act, D.C. Code §§ 7-1141.01 et seq.; 42 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 54; 42 United States Code (USC) 300x-65, et seq., 42 U.S.C. 290kk, et seq.

4. **Policy.**

4a. Faith-based organizations shall not, in providing program services under SABG programs, discriminate against a program beneficiary or prospective program beneficiary based on religion, a religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to actively participate in a religious practice.

4b. Faith-based organizations shall not utilize SABG funds for inherently religious activities, such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization. If an organization conducts such activities, it must offer them separately, in time or location, from contracted services and participation must be voluntary for the program participants.

4c. Faith-based organizations shall inform program beneficiaries or prospective program beneficiaries at intake of their rights prohibiting religious discrimination and their right to a referral for services from an alternative provider if they object to the religious nature of the provider.

4d. Faith-based organizations shall, within one (1) week after the date of such objection, utilize the Access HelpLine to refer such a program beneficiary to an alternative provider, if the individual objects to the religious nature of the provider. The alternative provider must be reasonably accessible and have the capacity to provide comparable services to the individual.

4e. Faith-based organizations shall promptly report to the Department any instances necessitating referral to an alternative provider due to religious objections by a program beneficiary or prospective program beneficiary.

5. Reporting.

5a. Notifications of referral to alternative providers shall be submitted via email to dbh.bhblockgrant@dc.gov at the time of referral, using the subject line: Charitable Choice Referral.

5b. Notifications shall include the following information:

- (1) Provider reporting the alternative referral;
- (2) Service requested; and
- (3) Location of the alternative provider referral.

5c. The Department shall submit this information to SAMHSA annually.

6. Definitions.

6a. Access HelpLine. A DBH telephone line operated twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven (7) days a week staffed by behavioral health professionals who can refer a caller to immediate or ongoing care. The number is 1(888)7WE-HELP or 1-888-793-4357.


6b. Faith-Based Organization. Organizations that are described as “Faith-based” through their 501(c)(3) nonprofit charities status or articles of incorporation, which deliver services with a religiously oriented purpose.

6c. Program Beneficiary. An individual who receives SUD services under a program funded in whole or in part by SABG.

6d. Subrecipient. A non-federal entity that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a federal program.

Approved By:

**Barbara J. Bazron, Ph.D.
Director, DBH**

p.p.  Phyllis Jones 02/21/2025
(Signature) **(Date)**