

# Interfaith Action Records

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Local History & Genealogy Division
<b>Creator</b>	Interfaith Action, Inc.
<b>Title</b>	Interfaith Action Records
<b>Date [bulk]</b>	Bulk, 1990-2011
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1965-2011
<b>Extent</b>	40.0 Cubic feet 40 boxes, 1 OS folder (OS5)
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>The Interfaith Action Records document a community-based organization established in 1994 to improve the quality of local neighborhoods and commercial districts while fostering individuals with the necessary skills to take action on issues within their communities. The collection includes corporate documents, such as mission statements, meeting minutes, and training material; financial records, including tax returns, financial statements, and grant information; correspondence; and numerous papers and photographs documenting the many public actions and initiatives developed and executed by the Interfaith Action community.</p>

### Citation

Interfaith Action Records, [Box#, Folder#], Local History & Genealogy Division, Central Library of Rochester and Monroe County N.Y.

## Historical Note

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Deeply troubled by growing violence, drug dealing, and the deterioration of their neighborhoods in Rochester, some 114 people met in 1994 and decided to create a multi-faith, multiracial organization to improve the quality of life for the city and county residents. Interfaith Action would become a source of unity that bridged the racial, ethnic, and economic diversity in the city and suburbs. Interfaith Action was an affiliate of the Pacific Institute for Community Organization (PICO), a national organizing network with 29 organizations in 65 cities.

Interfaith Action worked with congregations to identify, train, and mobilize diverse grassroots leaders and their constituencies. Interfaith Action and PICO train leaders in the art of building community, creating networks of relationships and developing close ties to families and neighbors. Interfaith Action's activities have encompassed a wide variety of projects, including improved street lighting and demolition of an abandoned building. Their efforts have also increased policing and prevented a gun shop from opening in a crime-ridden city neighborhood. In addition to winning approval for a new 40-unit senior housing project in a local community, Interfaith Action created a "Safe Kid Zone" in the city's Beechwood neighborhood by expanding police presence after school and establishing seven "safe havens" for children in crisis. To help School 25, which is located near a very busy intersection, Interfaith Action installed school traffic signs and flashing lights. Interfaith turned its efforts toward reducing drug trafficking and street crime by launching a unique community policing pilot project in the city's Maplewood and Edgerton neighborhoods. Although Interfaith Action employed a professional staff organizer and fund developer, its steering committee and congregation-based local organizing committees were run by and for the leaders, their congregations and communities. Interfaith Action ceased to operate in 2012.

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## Scope and Content

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The Interfaith Action Records, 1965-2011, comprise corporate documents, financial records, correspondence, public actions and initiatives, and photographs documenting the organization's operational materials and projects created to improve the quality of local neighborhoods.

Corporate documents are composed of mission statements, goals, meeting minutes, by-laws, and several papers concerning staff development, such as training leaders from participating congregations and the community using the Pacific Institute for Community Organizing (PICO) model. Additionally, this series contains staff reports, yearly achievements, and Interfaith Action's annual breakfasts.

Financial records include tax returns, financial statements, and several documents concerning funding, including research, proposals, and grants awarded and denied.

Correspondence, arranged chronologically, encompasses a range of topics including meeting announcements, follow-ups to public actions, employment postings, and communication between Interfaith Action and city officials and the community.

Public actions and initiatives, comprising an array of materials, includes research, proposals, petitions, questionnaires, meeting minutes, calling scripts, reports, and outcomes documenting several projects by Interfaith Action to improve local communities. One of their prime actions, Raise a Roof! Initiative, was created to revitalize neighborhoods on Rochester's west side. Through partnerships with the City of Rochester, local congregations, businesses, and the community, they were successful in reviving commercial districts, increasing homeownership, and beautifying neighborhoods through street cleanups, landscaping, and rehabilitation or demolition of abandoned properties. Some projects under this initiative included a 7.5 million-reconstruction development of Chili Avenue; a cleanup and redesign for abandoned Sebastian Park; and a renewal of Historic Jones Square and surrounding neighborhoods. Among several other projects, the public actions and initiatives series also includes documents concerning Interfaith Action's efforts to create a property management database, and the development of a Neighborhood Trust Fund, established to create affordable housing for families, seniors, and disabled individuals.

Photographs capture numerous Interfaith Action public actions and initiatives including the Peace Makers Garden, various neighborhood cleanups, property demolitions, housing summits, and Chili Avenue and Jones Square Park revitalizations. Also included are images from the organization's annual breakfasts.

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## Arrangement

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The collection is currently not arranged. However, materials encompass the following five suggested series: Series 1: Corporate documents; Series 2: Financial records; Series 3: Correspondence; Series 4: Public actions and initiatives; Series 5: Photographs.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Information

Local History & Genealogy Division

### Access

There are no restrictions regarding access to or use of this collection.

## Use

Permission to publish, reproduce, distribute, or use in any current or future manifestations must be obtained in writing from the Rochester Public Library Local History & Genealogy.

## Custodial History

The Interfaith Action Records were donated to the library by Brian Kane, former director of Interfaith Action.

## Processing Information

Processed April 1914 by consulting archivist Maria Soscia. This project was made possible by a grant from the Documentary Heritage Program of the New York State Archives, a program of the State Education Department.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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### Corporate Name(s)

- Bethel Christian Fellowship.
- Chili Avenue Business Alliance.
- Corpus Christi Church.
- Edgerton Landlord Association.
- Gateway Business Alliance.
- Grace United Methodist Church.
- Pacific Institute for Community Organizing (PICO).

### Function(s)

- Interdenominational cooperation

### Geographic Name(s)

- Rochester (N.Y.)--Church history
- Rochester (N.Y.)--Social conditions

- Social action--New York (State)--Rochester

### **Personal Name(s)**

- Brooks, Maggie, A., 1955-
- Dillio, Eileen
- Duffy, Robert J., Mayor, 1954-
- John, Susan V., 1957-
- Johnson, William A., Jr., Mayor, 1942-
- Kane, Brian A.
- Patrick-Maxwell, James
- Robach, Joseph, E., 1958-
- Sinkler, Roxie
- Witkowicz, Charlene A.

### **Subject(s)**

- Civic improvement--New York (State)--Rochester
- Community development--New York (State)--Rochester
- Community organizations--New York (State)--Rochester
- Crime prevention--New York (State)--Rochester--Planning
- Housing--New York (State)--Rochester
- Neighborhoods--New York (State)--Rochester
- Religion and social problems--New York (State)
- Religious pluralism
- Urban renewal--New York (State)--Rochester