

## Youth 71Five Ministries

**Case Name:** *Youth 71Five Ministries v. Williams*

**Case Action:** Case filed on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

**Significance:** Being religious should never disqualify an organization from a program to help those in need.



**Background:** Youth 71Five Ministries (71Five Ministries) is a Christian, youth-mentoring ministry in Medford, Oregon, that has been serving the youth in its community for 60 years. The ministry helps at-risk youth from the ages of six to twenty-four by providing free mentoring, education, support, and recreational activities. For years, 71Five Ministries has participated in Oregon’s Youth Community Investment Grant Program, a program designed to support existing services for youth who are at risk of disengaging from school, work, and community. But things changed with the 2023-25 grant cycle when the state rescinded grants that had been awarded to the ministry, costing them over \$400,000. Oregon removed 71Five Ministries because it requires all employees and volunteers to share the same Christian beliefs they do. All employees and volunteers are expected to communicate and introduce the Gospel of Jesus Christ to young people and their families. 71Five Ministries is simply asking for the same public benefit other organizations are receiving to serve kids in need.

### Key Points

- Religious organizations are free to hire employees and volunteers who share the same faith as they do.
- The government cannot exclude organizations from public benefit programs just because they are religious.
- 71Five Ministries is simply asking the state to participate in the state-wide grant program to help at-risk youth while maintaining its Christian character.

### Key Facts

- For years, 71Five Ministries has participated in the state’s grant program. But for the first time, the state prohibited faith-based organizations from participating if they required employees and volunteers to share their faith.
- The ministry lost over \$400,000 in grant money because it was disqualified from receiving state funds.

**The Bottom Line:** Every religious organization has the right to hire people who share their faith.