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*Few congregations seek U.S. grants*  
*By Tribune Staff*

WASHINGTON A distinct minority of U.S. congregations, just 7 percent, sought government grants in the last four years, a new study shows.

**“Government grant activity is not tremendously important for congregations . . . even though they’re engaged in social services in a wide variety of areas,”** said John C. Green, a political science expert at the University of Akron and author of the study released Wednesday at the annual conference of the Roundtable on Religion and Social Welfare Policy at the National Press Club.

The research also showed that marriage counseling is the most commonly provided social service by U.S. churches. Two-thirds, or 68.5 percent, of congregations surveyed said they offered marriage counseling. More than 50 percent of respondents said they provided a food pantry (63.5 percent), family counseling (58.8 percent) and senior citizen services (58.3 percent).

Most congregations were not familiar with “charitable choice,” a provision of the welfare reform law that increased governmental funding of faith-based social services.

Just 6.5 percent of congregations said a representative of their congregation had attended an outreach conference that related to charitable choice. Green said this was one area in the study that showed a variation between religious traditions.