

Anti-poverty program distributes \$9.5 million in grants

WASHINGTON - The Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the U.S. bishops' domestic anti-poverty program, is awarding more than \$9.5 million in grants this year to support local projects that working to eliminate the root causes of poverty in the United States.

The grants totaling \$9,578,000 will be distributed to 314 projects in 46 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

"Overcoming widespread poverty in the richest nation on earth is a moral imperative," said John Carr, CCHD's interim executive director, noting that according to the U.S. Census Bureau report released in August, 36.5 million Americans live at or below the poverty line.

"The Catholic Campaign for Human Development invests in bottom-up, community empowerment strategies across the United States," Carr added in a Oct. 26 statement announcing the grants.

Funding for the grants CCHD distributes annually comes from a nationwide church collection that takes place in dioceses each year, usually the weekend before Thanksgiving. One-quarter of the local collection stays in the diocese and the rest is distributed nationally by the CCHD office in Washington.

Funded projects undergo a thorough review process and are selected based on need, without regard to religious affiliation.

For the last several years, the total amount of CCHD's annual grants has been in the \$9 million to \$10 million range.

Bishop Howard J. Hubbard of Albany, N.Y., chairman of the U.S. bishops' CCHD committee, said Catholics have been "generous in their efforts to help their poor and low-income neighbors through CCHD."

"We are grateful for their confidence," he said, but he also noted that the anti-poverty program is "challenged by the ever-increasing need for our help."

Among groups receiving CCHD grants this year were:

- Mississippi Poultry Workers' Center in Morton, Miss., \$30,000 for its work representing low-income Latino and African-American poultry workers in what is considered one of the country's most dangerous industries.
- Natural Home Cleaning Professionals in Oakland, Calif., \$40,000 for the worker-owned and -operated cooperative made up predominantly of immigrant women. The group, which uses environmentally friendly cleansers and practices, is hoping to expand.
- Albany Park Neighborhood Council in Chicago, \$35,000 to expand its program to secure more affordable housing in areas that are being gentrified. The council is an association of 22 religious, ethnic and educational groups that work collaboratively to develop community leaders and solve local problems.
- Women's Community Revitalization in Philadelphia, \$25,000 for efforts to help low-income families stay in their homes even when threatened with displacement by gentrification.
- Families United for Racial and Economic Equality in Brooklyn, N.Y., \$30,000 to continue to advocate for reasonable state regulation of their work as self-employed child care providers and to build a youth group to organize for improvements to the local school system.
- Disabled Rights Action Committee in Salt Lake City, \$25,000 for efforts to bring more than 1,000 housing units into compliance with accessibility laws and to promote legislation to fund emergency dental care for low-income residents.

The U.S. bishops established CCHD in 1970. It is one of the largest private funders of self-help programs initiated and led by poor people in the United States. Since its founding, CCHD has given more than \$300 million in grants to 7,800 projects.