

Portland organization loses CCHD grant over Planned Parenthood link

PORTLAND, Ore. - The Archdiocese of Portland earlier this year asked a local homeless advocacy newspaper to end its link to an abortion provider to continue receiving grants from a Catholic agency.

Street Roots refused to remove Planned Parenthood from a resource guide it offers homeless and poor people and so lost funding. The guide lists more than 300 service organizations in addition to Planned Parenthood, which offers some health care but also performs more abortions than any other organization.

The grant was from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the U.S. bishops' domestic anti-poverty program. Grants are awarded on the local level by archdioceses and dioceses and on the national level by CCHD's national office in Washington.

For five years, CCHD in the Portland Archdiocese funded Street Roots as part of the campaign's mission to support groups with low-income people seeking to lift themselves out of poverty.

The requested grant would have paid for printing the resource guide. The archdiocese said it only recently found out about the Planned Parenthood listing.

The newspaper is one of about 50 organizations nationwide that have lost Catholic grants for connections to activity the church considers immoral.

The archdiocese's grants of between \$5,000 and \$10,000 per year made up about 4 percent of the Street Roots budget.

The most recent grant of \$5,000 that did not go to Street Roots was not withheld from the needy but went to another organization that works to empower the poor and is not at odds with Catholic teaching, according to the archdiocese.

Applications are reviewed annually and previous giving patterns do not trump other considerations, the archdiocese said.

The newspaper claims it is the victim of a “witch hunt,” and Willamette Week, an alternative weekly in Portland, named the archdiocese “Rogue of the Week” for its decision.

Matt Cato, director of the archdiocese’s Office of Life/Justice and Peace, says he has always admired the homeless advocacy work done by Street Roots and had hoped the newspaper would change its resource guide.

When the paper refused to alter the listing, it chose the result that came, Cato said.

Bud Bunce, spokesman for the archdiocese, says CCHD simply cannot fund an organization that acts contrary to church teaching.