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What is CCHD?

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development was founded in 1970 by the Catholic bishops of the United States as the Catholic Church's domestic anti-poverty program. For nearly 40 years, CCHD has helped make long-term changes in the economic condition of communities across the United States.

What differentiates the Catholic Campaign for Human Development from other Church charities programs?

CCHD is a complement to the direct-assistance mission of Catholic Charities agencies and other Church emergency relief programs. It helps make long-term changes in the economic condition of communities by supporting projects that address the root causes of poverty, such as racism, unemployment, and lack of education or economic opportunities.

What kind of initiatives does CCHD fund?

CCHD funds programs where poor and marginalized people are empowered to make decisions, seek solutions to local problems, and find ways to improve their lives and neighborhoods. Economic development initiatives help poor and low-income people develop new businesses, create new jobs, and develop assets that are owned by families and communities. CCHD also provides educational opportunities for Catholics to learn about poverty and interact with those affected by it, and reflect on a faith response to it.

How do initiatives get funded?

Agencies seeking CCHD funding submit their applications through their own dioceses. Diocesan staff evaluate the projects and submit recommendations to their local bishop for approval. A national team reviews all applications submitted and, in consultation with the dioceses that recommended them, makes recommendations to the Bishops' Subcommittee on the Catholic Campaign for Human Development. The Subcommittee decides which ones will receive national funding. Additionally, some projects are funded directly by the diocese from the 25 percent of the annual CCHD collection retained by the diocese to fund smaller initiatives.

Does CCHD fund Catholic initiatives exclusively?

No, but CCHD guidelines explicitly state that in order to apply for CCHD funding, the mission and actions of agencies seeking funding cannot be at odds with Catholic teaching.

Why doesn't CCHD fund Catholic programs or initiatives exclusively?

CCHD is deeply integrated into the life of the Catholic community. For example, in 2008, CCHD funded initiatives involved 683 Catholic priests, 776 Catholic parishes, 18 Catholic Charities agencies and 51 religious communities. Some of the programs funded include partnerships with other communities of faith and secular groups. As long as the mission and actions of the groups requesting funding are not at odds with Catholic teaching, the bishops believe Catholics can partner with others in the community to address the root causes of poverty and injustice, and advance the cause of human dignity and development.

What about recent allegations that CCHD funds groups openly in conflict with positions advocated by the Catholic Church?

CCHD is always examining ways to strengthen and improve monitoring efforts to ensure that all grantees comply with CCHD criteria. This is an ongoing process, involving both local dioceses and national CCHD staff. Others may bring to our attention concerns about groups or initiatives that CCHD is either considering for funding or currently funding. The CCHD Subcommittee and staff take seriously any allegation that groups are not in compliance with Catholic teaching or are participating in partisan political activity. CCHD immediately investigates each allegation in consultation with the local diocese and, if the allegations are confirmed, discontinues funding immediately, and pursues reimbursement of any funds already distributed.

Out of the 250 grantees for 2009, were any groups found non-compliant?

Out of 250 grantees in 2009, there were three credible allegations.

In one case, a group was found to be in support of abortion and had already been de-funded.

In the other two cases, the groups had taken actions in conflict with CCHD's guidelines after they were funded. Without the knowledge of the local diocese or CCHD, they produced voter guides that took positions on referenda opposed to Catholic teaching on same-sex marriage and, in one case, on parental notification and abortion. As soon as these facts were confirmed, and after consultation with the local diocese, the groups were de-funded, and all funds were returned. Charges against two other groups named were investigated and, in consultation with the local dioceses, the charges were found to be inaccurate or based on a misunderstanding.

In all five cases, prompt and decisive action was taken consistent with CCHD's policies and practices. In the past, funding also has been withdrawn promptly when allegations of political partisanship or mismanagement of funds were substantiated.

Can anyone find out who is being funded by CCHD?

CCHD is committed to transparency. Anyone interested can go online and find a list of recent grantees and other information about CCHD at www.usccb.org/cchd/grants or call the Catholic Campaign for Human Development at 202-541-3210.