



**June 2022**

# **Walking in Solidarity with those on the Margins**

A Report on Listening Sessions held for those in the Catholic Campaign for Human Development Community as part of the 2021-2023 Synod on Synodality



Catholic Campaign for  
Human Development

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# Introduction & Process

Since its founding in 1970, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) has held close to the values of listening to and empowering those on the margins of our society. In response to the invitation of Pope Francis and the Synod on Synodality, from March to May 2022 CCHD embarked on a process of listening and discernment with our over 12,000 current and former funded groups, diocesan coordinators and local committees, current and former interns, and lay Catholics involved in CCHD's work. Members of CCHD's community were provided opportunities to reflect on three questions as a local community, with their CCHD diocesan coordinator, or directly with national staff through an online form and five virtual listening sessions. In total, CCHD received 74 unique pieces of feedback representing current and former funded groups as well as individuals from around the country who are part of the CCHD community.

Although the three questions asked of participants were framed around the relationship between the Church and those social concerns our communities face, many of the responses shared focused on concerns within the Church. In an effort to be nimble to the Spirit present in this process, CCHD staff choose to allow these conversations and responses to be as free-flowing as possible, and while staff has tried to thematize them under the original three questions, repetition of content did arise. Rather than edit any duplicated content, staff has chosen to synthesize the feedback in its integrity. While the synthesis presented here is not statistically representative of the more than tens of thousands of individuals and community organizations who have been part of the CCHD community, CCHD staff is confident that the contributions received in this listening process provide a snapshot into the realities many communities are facing and provide some important insights into how CCHD and the Church at large can better walk alongside our most marginalized brothers and sisters. What follows is an initial summary of the main reflections brought forth from the listening process.

# Executive Summary

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## What community concerns and opportunities weigh on your heart?

*“It’s kind of like we’re expecting our neighbors who are overwhelmed and have had generations of systems put upon them to suddenly then wake up in the morning and be able to participate fully.”<sup>1</sup>*

Participants shared many pressing issues that weigh heavy on their hearts and the hearts of their community members – racism, climate change, community safety, affordable housing, and mental health concerns were a few of the most frequently mentioned – but almost everyone mentioned issues relating to division, polarization, and a lack of willingness to address structural issues as one of their main areas of concern. Several participants noted how it often feels like “we” as a society and Church are more willing to address the symptoms of poverty rather than the root causes. Participants were almost unanimously in agreement that the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many of these issues and created new barriers to addressing them: *“We are all being urged to return to a sense of normalcy, however, there are no national policies and solutions that are being proposed that benefit our communities.”<sup>2</sup>* Participants shared examples of how their communities are working to address issues of grave concern. This included, most notably, embracing an equity lens when addressing issues such as housing, environmental justice, police reform, access to education, and the digital divide. Outstanding concerns remained around how to address issues related to mental health, addiction, and the growing economic disparities and structural inequalities within communities.

## How is the Catholic Church walking with your organization and members?

*“My faith as a Catholic woman is through this work and I’m so proud of that. I’m proud that the Catholic Church has that rich history on justice.”<sup>3</sup>*

Overwhelmingly, participants valued their relationship with CCHD and the Church at large. It is clear to both those who are members of a CCHD-funded group or a diocesan staff member or CCHD Intern, that

the Church has a long history of walking with marginalized communities. One participant from a CCHD-funded economic development organization remarked: *“I think, without the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, I don’t know where our organization would have been. They took a chance on us when even our local government did not.”*<sup>4</sup> When participants reflected on how the larger Church was walking with their organizations, most had mixed experiences. Many have experienced tension between local parishes welcoming their organization’s work and those which would not. Parish closures and reorganizations were sources of great pain and concern for participants, with many concerned these actions would impact the local Church’s ability to walk with their communities. Most participants feel that local dioceses and parishes are not equipped to support their communities - especially the marginalized - and fail to respond authentically to the serious concerns facing their communities. As one participant, a priest in the CCHD network, remarked: *“We tend as Church to speak about community issues but do little to address the tools needed by pastors to address these issues. We tend towards masking the issues rather than addressing them head-on.”*<sup>5</sup> Most poignantly, nearly every participant noted the profoundly negative impact polarization and division within the Church are having on their work: *“It feels like more and more our primary identity is not as a child of God but as a series of political ideologies.”*<sup>6</sup>

### **Where do you need the Catholic Church to walk more closely with your organization and members?**

Nearly every participant desired for the local Church to more fully embrace Catholic Social Teaching and the priority for justice, especially for the poor and vulnerable. Many of the participants who were diocesan coordinators, local committee members, or current or former interns, all expressed a great deal of pain when reflecting on what they felt was a “deprioritization” of justice work within the Catholic Church. As one former CCHD intern remarked: *“The Church needs to not be a single-issue voter - we need to look beyond the issue and how can we care for the lives we want to save.”*<sup>7</sup> These concerns were shared by those participants from CCHD-funded organizations, of whom a majority expressed a desire for the Church to be a leader in breaking through the polarization and division: *“the tensions amidst clergy and the leaders in charge of the Archdiocese have often been a far greater hindrance to our organization and the people working for the social mission even when we have the Archbishop’s support.”*<sup>8</sup> Several participants acknowledged with deep gratitude the extent to which Catholic organizations of all

types have walked alongside their communities but expressed a desire for greater unity and collaboration at all levels of the Church so that the important work of community transformation could continue. A number of the participants shared that their organizations and communities would welcome the opportunity to work with the Church to strengthen collaboration and build unity: *“What is keeping us Catholics from this organizing work? Why is this engagement not happening? How can we (organizing groups) support the Church?”*<sup>9</sup>

### **Preliminary Takeaways**

It quickly became clear to CCHD staff that the role of the Church in the empowerment of our most vulnerable brothers and sisters could not be overstated. Many participants credited the support by the Church through a CCHD grant as being key to the ability of their organizations to achieve justice in their communities. Participants also expressed gratitude for the invitation to share their reflections with CCHD staff and to be included in the larger listening process, but more work needs to be done for the Church to walk in solidarity with our communities. Serious concerns exist around the division and polarization severely impacting the extent to which the Church’s commitment to justice can be lived out.

# Full Synthesis Report

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## What community concerns and opportunities weigh on your heart?

The first question asked of individuals and groups during our listening process was “What community concerns and opportunities weigh on your heart?” Society’s focus on addressing the symptoms rather than the root causes of poverty - “*chipping away*” as one participant put it<sup>10</sup> - was a major theme threaded through the conversations. Another major theme was the lack of authentic engagement and support by the Church, particularly in addressing the roots of poverty and inequality. The structural sin of racism was another persistent theme, connecting to many of the issues participants raised as concerns for their communities - and was also reflected in the ways they felt the Church’s lack of support.

Some saw the institutional Church focused on wealthier, middle-class parishes rather than its mission of serving the poor. One respondent said “*I worry that we will forget the poor*” as diocesan restructurings happen and that the Church in the United States is more concerned with “*meeting a white middle-class standard.*”<sup>11</sup> Others expressed concern that those on the margins were met by the Church with judgment rather than welcome: “*the mentally disabled and persons struggling with various addictions . . . are often struggling with acceptance in a faith-based environment.*”<sup>12</sup> Latino immigrants, Native Americans, and the LGBTQ+ community were other specific groups cited as marginalized by the Church. And even those embraced by the Church, like immigrants, can face a less welcoming reality at the grassroots. One person said that in “*closely experiencing parish life*” there can be “*rejection*” and a sense of “*giving what is left to immigrants.*”<sup>13</sup> In this way, Catholics of color - and all people of color - find themselves at arms’ length from the life of the Church, even if they are nominally central to some of its initiatives and the rhetoric of its leaders.

One person summed this up by saying: “*As a Catholic, what weights most heavy on my heart is that most Catholics are satisfied to give things to people in poverty like food and help with a homeless shelter while never asking what’s wrong with the system and sometimes even working against those of us who do try to change the system.*”<sup>14</sup> Another said that

the Church *“and other churches often have a minimal or non-existent response when it comes to any meaningful social change.”*<sup>15</sup>

Another person pointed out that the institutional Church does not always live up to its teachings on the dignity of work, with many people who work for the Church living near the poverty line. *“What a witness it would be to others [for the Church to address this], and it would lead the way for other sectors of the economy in showing what is possible!”*<sup>16</sup> Another comment followed this theme, pointing out that *“the lack of just pay and good jobs”* in the Church discourages young people from getting involved: *“How are we going to engage young people by depending on volunteers who are now in their 70s?”*<sup>17</sup>

Housing emerged as a significant concern for many across the country, and several connected the affordable housing crisis to systemic racism and environmental injustice. Gentrification has crowded out many low-income residents, while climate change has made some parts of the country increasingly available only to the very wealthy. These and other issues keeping people in poverty are often deeply intertwined with historically racist structures and practices, like redlining in urban areas, and so several participants suggested the need to view them through the lens of racial equity. Many cited the persistent othering of immigrants, especially the undocumented, and the need for comprehensive reform of the United States’ immigration system.

These larger issue areas were raised often, but several pointed to very specific needs of their communities, many of which recurred throughout our conversations. These included lacking access to quality education, childcare, transportation, safe community gathering places, technology (“the digital divide”), and quality health care. These have all been seen as symptoms of poverty as well as factors keeping people at the margins.

As the COVID-19 pandemic lingers, so do its deep effects on society - *“We are all being urged to return to a sense of normalcy, however, there are no national policies and solutions that are being proposed that benefit our communities.”*<sup>18</sup> Mental health, particularly in light of the pandemic’s isolating effects, was frequently cited as a “crisis.”

While many expressed sadness at the lack of support from parishes in their community and their local bishops, those who did experience such support were grateful. Division within the Church was a common theme - one person described attacks on Pope Francis as *“disturbing.”*<sup>19</sup>



Many dioceses are undergoing reorganizations and parish closures, and this process worries those who see it as a potential “pulling-away” of the Church from low-income communities. For many, these local changes intersect uncomfortably with experiences of racism and oppression within the Church, particularly given how segregated parish communities are in some areas - *“there are lots of populations that we have dismissed as a society. The church should be a place that is not just welcoming, but that actually WANTS much more diversity in leadership.”*<sup>20</sup> In one listening session, a participant said that it feels like *“sometimes the Church is speaking in a whisper - which I find painful for some issues like racial equity and migration.”*<sup>21</sup> In another, one person remarked that division within the institution creates doubt about whether the Church is truly walking with those on the margins, *“it feels like more and more our primary identity is not as a child of God but as a series of political ideologies.”*<sup>22</sup> This theme of tension and polarization within the Church and wider American society recurred often throughout the Synod listening process in response to each of the three questions CCHD asked. One person stated that *“I think I could list a litany of serious concerns that communities are facing, but I think there has been a rise of extremism in America, a lot of inflammatory debate and dialogue - that is weighing seriously on my heart - we have become a tribalist church.”*<sup>23</sup>

But many were also grateful for how CCHD specifically has walked with their communities over the years, support which often was vital to creating change, and saw opportunities to build on this through the synodal process. Participants saw the potential for the process to stir up new energy around justice work, which was challenging for the Church precisely because it requires more effort.<sup>24</sup> As one person put it, *“My friends wonder why I’m still in the Church. But we can’t all leave! If social justice speaks to your heart, you can’t leave because you’re not hearing it. I want to be Church!”*<sup>25</sup>

## **How is the Catholic Church walking with your organization and members?**

The pressures of the global COVID-19 pandemic, along with parallel pandemics of racism, sexism, economic injustice, rejection of immigrants, and social polarization, were revealed in the Synod listening process through the witness of communities touched by CCHD. Participants had much to share when asked the second of our three key questions: How is the Catholic Church walking with your organization and members?

The many and substantial ways that the Church responds with direct material assistance and emergency aid have been especially evident to members of the CCHD community during the pandemic – often through creative and collaborative responses. The experience of a number of Synod respondents is reflected in the comment by one CCHD-funded organization that *“The Catholic Church has supported us more than we expected. The church has given us the opportunity to participate in their activities to promote our campaigns for vaccinations. They have also given us space to distribute food to families affected by the pandemic and to raise funds.”*<sup>26</sup> Many in the CCHD community relate that such crisis responses are often only possible or effective in marginalized communities when they build on the foundational relationships and trust built up over years of collaboration between Catholic parishes and community organizations to work for safe communities, better schools, affordable housing, employment opportunities, access to public transportation, and a healthier environment.

It was evident in our Synod listening process that the substantial heritage of Catholic civic engagement in many American towns and cities has also benefited many CCHD-funded organizations. In the words of one respondent *“Catholic parishes have always been at the heart of our organization, being the primary founding members and continuing to be the majority of congregational and individual membership, often providing office space, hosting community action meetings, and leading on our justice issues and community action.”*<sup>27</sup> Another funded organization characterized this collaborative response to hard times as *“a place to live your faith outside of Mass,”* pointing to the inclusiveness with which *“the Church does good community work within Catholic institutions and makes services available to those outside. Parishes support us as a whole with in-kind and monetary donations. Individuals also know that we are a place to connect to Catholic social teaching and the works of mercy.”*<sup>28</sup>

Yet, while many in the CCHD community have appreciated the great heritage of generous community engagement by Catholics, most recently evident in the pandemic, others have noted a pattern of Catholics responding more readily to symptoms rather than causes of social crises in ways that do not adequately address or even obscure systems that place too many community members in harm’s way. *“We tend as Church to speak about community issues but do little to address the tools needed by pastors to address these issues. We tend towards masking the issues rather than addressing them head-on.”*<sup>29</sup> By contrast, those whose

lives have been touched by CCHD expressed deep appreciation for the Campaign precisely as an expression of the Catholic Church addressing root causes of poverty and social disintegration while simultaneously raising up the leadership of those most directly affected in finding solutions. *“CCHD has provided steady investments in the grassroots work of engaging people in determining their futures, developing relationships across diverse cultures, expanding the pool of leaders who speak up for their communities, and securing significant commitments from decision-makers on the quality of life related to health care, education, housing, criminal justice. . . . Bishops have provided public support for the work of the organizations and on specific issues.”*<sup>30</sup> Throughout the Synod listening process, this deep investment in people and their potential by the Catholic Church through CCHD was consistently noted by our funded organizations. As a leader at one funded-organization states, *“CCHD has been a huge support in advancing our workers center for [immigrant] farm laborers. It has made an enormous difference... that Catholics have helped us to expand our voice and stood with us in our legislative advocacy campaign that successfully won us the right to obtain driver’s licenses.”*<sup>31</sup>

The active response of the Catholic Church standing with poor and marginalized people and recognizing their dignity in a tangibly transformative way through CCHD was mentioned by numerous Synod respondents as a lasting contribution that Catholics have made to their communities. One organization noted that CCHD *“took a chance on us when our local government wouldn’t . . . [and] has helped to create more open doors that have allowed us to grow.”*<sup>32</sup> Another community organization pointed to the distinctiveness of CCHD’s approach of “walking alongside” with “vision and understanding”, adding *“There are very few [funders] that actually understand organizing. But CCHD gets it, and has allowed us to send our organizers to training.”*<sup>33</sup> By this very practical and inclusive solidarity that Catholics have practiced through CCHD, many who have benefited from or been touched by CCHD have noted how clearly this work is rooted in our spiritual mission. One put it very simply, stating that *“CCHD is one of the true bright spots in proclaiming the good news.”*<sup>34</sup>

Yet, despite so much hope expressed by CCHD’s respondents to the Synod about the charitable generosity of Catholics in general and the transforming solidarity of CCHD in particular, much was also shared about a growing scarcity mentality and turn inward that they encounter in many Catholic communities, and outright opposition to collaborative

work for social justice they experience from too many Catholics today. One funded organization commented that *“We would not be where we are without CCHD, but parishes and parish members are disconnected from our work for affordable housing. Our Executive Director reached out to several parishes to run ads in the bulletins and said she was ignored or declined by all of them.”*<sup>35</sup> Reports of increasing Catholic disengagement from organizations and works funded by CCHD were accompanied by suggested causes ranging from clergy burn-out to excessive “siloeing” among Catholic charity and justice initiatives to a growth of ideological opposition to social justice work overall in the country that is also affecting the Church. In the words of one CCHD diocesan coordinator, *“Some segments of the Catholic community have been outstanding -- religious orders and lay people who have faith and determination are doing a great job enhancing the work. . . . However, tensions amidst leaders in the Archdiocese have often been a far greater hindrance to people working for social mission, even when we have the Archbishop’s support.”*<sup>36</sup>

More than one respondent expressed bewilderment and frustration at finding opposition to work for the common good within Catholic institutions and leadership that in previous times and other circumstances have been a source of support and encouragement. *“It has been a challenge to get positive support from our Archdiocese because some of the ‘wealthy’ contributors who are also ‘friends’ of the ‘powers that be’ have pressured diocesan leadership not to fully & whole-heartedly support [our] work.”*<sup>37</sup> Another leader of a funded organization crystallized the deep concern expressed by many Synod respondents across the board at what they perceive as a growing inclination of Catholics to turn away from collaborative works like CCHD that build social friendship and social justice. *“I’m filled with anger and grief with the Catholic Church’s lack of consistency and accountability in encouraging clergy to support organizing/justice work. Catholics used to be among the biggest supporters in organizing for justice. I am saddened that Catholics are failing to claim our moral vision, especially since many members of the laity want this engagement but are being blocked. We cannot even get a meeting with 98% of our priests.”*<sup>38</sup>

While apparent declining availability or enthusiasm for social action and work for justice in parts of the Catholic community have not extinguished the hope for future collaboration for the common good among community organizations that have long partnered with CCHD, they express uncertainty about how to help Catholics find and navigate

ways forward. As one Synod respondent characterized this paradoxical moment *“We engage with people of all faiths and no faith . . . here, everyone can work together and see the work of the Church in a bigger context. . . . We think that if [more] people knew of the work that CCHD is doing, it would meet a place in many people that feels disengaged and is spiritually starving.”*<sup>39</sup> The Synod listening process has opened up a space for both Catholics and our community partners to reflect together on the material, social, and spiritual hungers rising as both profound challenges and opportunities that lie before us.

### **Where do you need the Catholic Church to walk more closely with your organization and members?**

As is clear from much of this synthesis report, many of the themes, concerns, and hopes shared by those within the CCHD community were brought up frequently and energetically highlighting the extent to which the Church needs to walk more closely with our most marginalized brothers and sisters. When participants reflected on the third question, *Where do you need the Catholic Church to walk more closely with your organization and members?*, there was an overwhelming desire for the local and national Church to strengthen – and in many places restore – relationships with those working on the margins of our society. In particular many felt as though the Church has turned away from Catholic Social Teaching and expressed a great deal of pain around what they felt is a “deprioritization” of justice work. As one organizer from a CCHD-supported community organization shared, *“I was like 7 when Vatican II happened, and I just remember that the Pope said, ‘Open up the windows and let the air, and let the spirit in.’ So that has been in my soul ever since I was a little girl. I’m just so sad that there’s this reversal back, and that I feel like the church is turning inward instead of doing our work looking [outward] at the community.”*<sup>40</sup> This sentiment was echoed by the majority of participants who felt that local leadership lacked both an understanding of their work and the openness to walk alongside their communities: *“Unfortunately, most Catholic clergy we have encountered seem unfamiliar with Catholic Social Teaching, at least on labor and work. A few seem actively skeptical of CST as traditionally understood.”*<sup>41</sup> Almost every CCHD-funded organization represented in the Synod listening process expressed a similar concern around the polarization within the Church, noting the impact this has had on their work: *“I do think that the rancor and division that we see within the Church is, at the very least, causing people to be very unsure of if the Catholic church is walking with them.”*<sup>42</sup>

This division seemed to express itself most starkly in the willingness of local parishes to engage in the long-term work of justice. One participant from a CCHD-funded community organization put it bluntly: *“Do I know of a single initiative that all 26 parishes [in the diocese] are working on? Nope.”*<sup>43</sup> Some within the CCHD community shared how this division expressed itself along lines of race and class, where building solidarity among communities has proven difficult, *“In our community, there’s a kind of a classism where the members of the church are willing to provide service, but not necessarily serve with or work side by side [with those in their community].”*<sup>44</sup> Among those who work with and in communities of color, similar experiences of harm were shared where the local Church lacks a willingness to encounter and accompany those within their communities most vulnerable to poverty and discrimination, *“When I’m meeting with the team that is reviewing my application [for CCHD funding] it saddens me that I don’t see anybody that’s a person of color . . . I really feel like the questions that are asked sometimes may not necessarily be related and can cause harm because basically, they don’t have the experience of [our community], or [don’t] have the history of some of these inequities that have happened.”*<sup>45</sup>

Young people who have participated in the CCHD internship program expressed similar concerns around the division and polarization within the Church that left them feeling unaccompanied, *“I think the Church really needs to take a hard look at how the Church engages the single person, the working mom, and the nontraditional family. So often this runs into what your zip code is. . . . It was a tough transition for all of my jobs and life adjustments. As a working person, I feel like I am missing out on something – blaming myself for not being able to connect with my faith.”*<sup>46</sup> Just as with those from CCHD-funded organizations, young people expressed a desire for more emphasis and education around the Church’s social teaching, but in a particular way, they asked for a greater willingness for the Church to walk with them as they seek to live out their faith: *“I think that CST needs to be brought up, but in terms of walking with communities of young people, that ‘why’ is **so** important. We don’t enter into these difficult conversations. Even with issues such as racism, where the secular culture agrees with the Church, I think it is not explained well where the Church stands.”*<sup>47</sup> This is something those in our (arch)dioceses are seeing impact those who desire to work for justice as part of the Church: *“My social ministry leaders throughout the Archdiocese are burning out and unsure of how to preserve social ministry given the new priests who are entering their parishes. Young*

*leaders are giving up on the church as a positive force for social change.”<sup>48</sup>*

How do those within the CCHD community suggest the Church can walk more closely with them? By working towards a greater sense of unity and embracing the social teaching of the Church as central to our work to create communities where all can thrive, *“There needs to be more opportunity for collaboration to tackle problems together and build relationships in solidarity.”<sup>49</sup>* Several participants expressed extreme gratitude for the far-reaching and impactful work of the Church in providing support for communities but desired greater internal collaboration to make the Church a more accessible resource, *“there’s a lot of research that talks about all of the different services that are needed to make somebody successful when they’re transitioning from poverty or out of poverty, and when they’re returning to society. And when you look at all of those different things, every one of them is offered by a local Catholic organization, every one of them. We have programs for everything [and] they’re all offered by different Catholic organizations, and everybody is working sort of in their own silo.”<sup>50</sup>* This desire for the Church to work together extended beyond those who provide social services to those who are in parish and archdiocesan leadership. As a priest in the CCHD network explained, there is a sense of disconnect between what parishes are facing and what support the (arch)dioceses are providing, *“The Catholic Church, especially the leadership in Dioceses, namely Bishops, need to familiarize themselves with the real issues going on in segments of their respective Dioceses. Many of our Bishops tend to lose touch with the challenges pastors face in their parishes when it comes to community outreach.”<sup>51</sup>* This was echoed by many through a desire to see more unity in embracing the social teachings of the Church with specific requests for greater preaching, education, and engagement with Catholic Social Teaching particularly as it relates to addressing the systems and structures keeping people in poverty in our communities. Those from organizations supported by a CCHD grant also expressed a desire for CCHD to offer opportunities for community building and support among the community organizations we support.

In the end, the central request from organizations supported by CCHD was very straightforward: stronger relationships with the local Church in their community. Several participants lamented the ongoing parish closures that are leaving many unsure if the Church will continue to walk alongside their community, *“Given the decline in Catholic religious practice and resulting plans for parish consolidation in our region, we*

*are unsure what our local partnership with the Church looks like moving forward.”*<sup>52</sup> This concern was shared by nearly every portion of the CCHD community, as both Diocesan Coordinators and Local Committee members expressed concern about how parish closures will impact the ability of the Church to engage in the work of social mission. This growing concern left the request for stronger relationships with the local church even more important to those within the CCHD community, *“In addition to the financial support, we would love to have more connections to local Catholic parishes. We love to collaborate and look forward to deeper connections.”*<sup>53</sup> Just as Pope Francis has told us, those within the CCHD community were clear that this accompaniment is a relationship that requires the active participation of all in the community, *“If I come to walk with you, I have to walk at your pace. . . . I can’t say I am walking with you and then drag you along with me or tell you that you must walk this way. . . . When we choose to walk with people, are we meeting them and walking at the pace and at the place where they walk?”*<sup>54</sup> This invitation to journey together is something our CCHD community reminded us they want to do with the Church, as brothers and sisters seeking to end poverty in our communities.

### **For Further Reflection**

As a whole, the feedback shared with CCHD through our Synod Listening process has revealed a few overarching takeaways for further reflection by CCHD staff. First, it was clear that the importance of the Church standing in solidarity with our communities could not be overstated. The work of CCHD, Catholic Charities, and other Catholic organizations is helping communities throughout the United States respond to the complex issues facing their most vulnerable members. Yet, grave inequalities remain, and many in our communities are struggling to respond to the devastation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the racial and economic present in our communities. Perhaps equally dire are the concerns many in our communities are facing around the willingness of the Church to continue to engage in the vital work of justice.

As many participants shared, there seems to be an unwillingness to engage in the work to go beyond addressing the “symptoms” of poverty, to move beyond charity, and address its root causes. Those in the CCHD community spoke about encountering strong resistance to their work in many parishes and shared how the lack of unity between different organizations and aspects of the Church hindered their ability to serve the needs of their communities. Whether it was the divisive environment



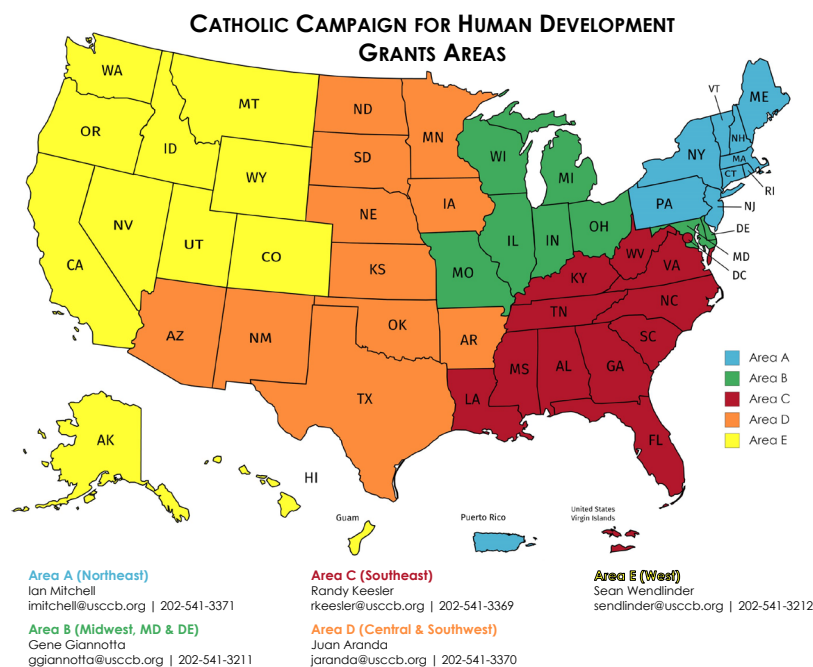
surrounding the social justice work of the Church or ongoing parish closures and reorganization, those who are part of the CCHD community – staff and members of community organizations, young people, diocesan coordinators, and local committee members – all expressed a deep desire for the Church to prophetically reclaim its teaching to empower the most marginalized and begin the work to restore relationships that have been broken in our communities. More than anything, those who participated in CCHD’s Synod listening process desired not only for the Church to walk alongside them but for the Church to invite them to walk alongside us.

# Appendix I

## Participation in CCHD's Synod Listening Process

From March to May 2022 CCHD embarked on a process of listening and discernment with our current and former funded groups, diocesan coordinators, and local committees, as well as current and former interns. Members of CCHD's community were provided opportunities to reflect on three questions as a local community, with their CCHD diocesan coordinator, or directly with national staff through an online form and five virtual listening sessions. In total, CCHD received 74 unique pieces of feedback representing current and former funded groups as well as individuals from around the country who are part of the CCHD community, including:

- 42 Community Development Organizations
- 6 Economic Development Organizations
- 13 Contributions from CCHD's Region A (Northeast & Puerto Rico)
- 27 Contributions from CCHD's Region B (Midwest, MD & DE)
- 18 Contributions from CCHD's Region C (Southeast)
- 8 Contributions from CCHD's Region D (Central and Southwest)
- 8 Contributions from CCHD's Region E (West)



3211 4th Street, NE, Washington, DC 20017 | [www.usccb.org/cchd](http://www.usccb.org/cchd) | P: 202-541-3210 | F: 202-541-3339

# Appendix II

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## About the Catholic Campaign for Human Development

### Mission & Identity

The [Catholic Campaign for Human Development](#) is the domestic anti-poverty program of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, working to carry out the mission of Jesus Christ “... *to bring good news to the poor ... release to captives ... sight to the blind, and let the oppressed go free.*” (Luke 4:18) It was founded in 1969 and established in 1970 to respond to both systemic poverty and racial injustice occurring throughout the country. Since beginning its work in 1970, CCHD has awarded **over 440 million dollars** in grants supporting **nearly 12,000** community-based, grassroots-led organizations.

The belief that those who are directly affected by unjust systems and structures have the best insight into knowing how to change them is central to CCHD. Through grants given to more than 200 low-income, community-led organizations each year, CCHD works to break the cycle of poverty by helping low-income people participate in decisions that affect their lives, families, and communities. CCHD builds solidarity between those experiencing poverty and their neighbors.

CCHD has a complementary mission of [educating](#) on poverty and its causes. This strategy of education for justice and helping people who are poor speak and act for themselves reflects the mandate of the Scriptures and the principles of Catholic social teaching.

CCHD provides the Catholic faithful with concrete opportunities to live out the love of God and neighbor in ways that express our baptismal call and continuing Eucharistic transformation. The work of CCHD is made possible by the generous support of Catholics in the United States, especially through an annual parish collection held every November.

CCHD's grants to local anti-poverty efforts are screened, awarded, and monitored in close partnership with local Catholic dioceses. CCHD grants given to groups in a local community require the explicit approval of the bishop of that diocese. In addition, twenty-five percent of the annual collection stays within the local diocese to support initiatives that address poverty's root causes in the local community.

CCHD is an essential part of the Church in the United States' social mission, and a unique part of the Catholic community's broad commitment to assist low-income people, families, and communities.

### **Mission Statement**

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development is the domestic anti-poverty, social justice program of the U.S. Catholic bishops. Its mission is to address the root causes of poverty in America through the promotion and support of community-controlled, self-help organizations and through transformative education.

Founded in 1969, CCHD's pastoral strategy is the empowerment of the poor through a methodology of participation and education for justice, leading toward solidarity between poor and non-poor as impelled by the Church's biblical tradition, modern Catholic social teaching, and the pervasive presence of poverty in the United States. This ministry for justice is rooted in our baptism and faith commitment.

The grants, economic development, and education for justice programs of the Campaign, implemented in collaboration with local dioceses, are supported from an annual collection in U.S. Catholic parishes.

*- Approved by the USCCB-CCHD Committee, November 1992*

### **Catholic Campaign for Human Development Mandate**

The subcommittee is under the direction of, and acts in the name of the Committee on [Domestic Justice and Human Development](#) in advancing the social mission of the Church through the U.S. bishops' anti-poverty campaign The [Catholic Campaign for Human Development](#), in its mission of education, poverty awareness, capacity- and constituency-building, and in supporting and promoting its grants organizations of low-income communities.

This mandate includes the following areas of particular responsibility: On their own authority, approve grants in accordance with donor intent, and works collaboratively with the Committee on National Collections for the promotion and distribution of the annual appeal. Accountable to the standing committee for the use of funds related to the *Appeal*.

### **Key Mission Responsibilities**

Assists the standing committee to develop a national awareness of domestic poverty issues and the needs of those served by the *Catholic Campaign for Human Development*.

1. Promotes and supports community-controlled, self-help anti-poverty organizations, especially supporting, through its programs and grants, a sense of ownership among the poor to take on the challenges of bettering their lives and opportunities.
2. Acts in the name of the standing committee to coordinate, administer and approve the grant process for the [Catholic Campaign for Human Development appeal](#).
3. In collaboration with Committee on [National Collections](#), supports year-round promotion and outreach activities through established diocesan networks to realize an annual increase in collection revenues for the appeal.
4. Ensures accountability to the Committee on [Domestic Justice and Human Development](#) in the use of funds.
5. Reviews grantee reports to ensure that they fulfill requirements and develops annual reports to donors and to the standing committee.
6. Assists the Committee on [National Collections](#) to explore and support the development of other non-collection sources of revenue.
7. Assists the Committee on [National Collections](#) develop best practices for the promotion and use of funds.

### **Key Mission Relationships**

1. With the Committees on [Domestic Justice and Human Development](#), [National Collections](#), and other USCCB Committees at the request of the standing committee.
2. With bishops and diocesan offices for the Appeal.
3. With grantee dioceses, parishes, and local organizations.
4. With national and international organizations at the request of the committee.

## The Catholic Campaign for Human Development's Grant Programs

### Community Development Grant Program

CCHD's **Community Development Grant** program is focused on promoting the mission of Jesus Christ and moving forward the priorities of the USCCB; in particular, protecting human life and dignity, strengthening marriage and family life, and nurturing diversity. The Community Development Grant Program does this by supporting organizations that are led by people living in poverty and bringing individuals together to change structures and policies that perpetuate the cycle of poverty. CCHD-funded groups are led by people living in poverty and work to address the root causes of poverty by nurturing solidarity between the poor and non-poor and facilitating the participation of people living in poverty in decisions that perpetuate poverty in their lives. As part of such efforts, low-income people gain the ability to identify barriers, brainstorm solutions, and take action to change problematic structures and systems in their communities.

### Economic Development Grant Program

CCHD's **Economic Development Grant** program focuses on supporting **five types** of *Economic Development Institutions* (EDIs). EDIs are typically community-based organizations and businesses that create just workplaces, provide good jobs and develop assets for low-income people that are owned by families and communities. CCHD supports EDIs that have structures in place that encourage people living in poverty to hold leadership roles in and have ownership of the organization. CCHD supports economic development initiatives that significantly include the voice of the poor and marginalized in developing new businesses that offer good jobs and/or develop assets that will be owned and enjoyed by local communities.

- *Real Estate Initiatives* foster both ownership and leadership opportunities for low-income people. They may be for housing, business, commercial, or industrial uses. Legal structures, like community land trusts or limited equity cooperatives, are used to balance asset ownership and ongoing decision-making. Tenants often develop their own assets and participate in governance. The larger community benefits from a productive asset and enhanced civic participation. Typically, permanent affordability is maintained for future tenants and an organizational forum is built for a diverse group of community leaders.

- *Business Incubators and Marketplaces* provide a facility and ongoing support for small business development. They bring low-income entrepreneurs into a peer group relationship for the purposes of developing and operating their businesses. The member-businesses may reflect the local culture of the respective community. All businesses benefit from shared services that create efficiency in both planning and operations. Incubator businesses work together until they have reached a level of stability that allows them to leave the facility. Marketplaces rely on peer support and may also incubate businesses, but here, the emphasis is on developing a growing base of customers in one shared location.
- *Community Development Financial Institutions*, such as community development credit unions, loan funds, and community banks—commonly known as CDFIs—help low-income people, community-based organizations, and businesses by providing financing for community development. These organizations also often provide technical assistance to help borrowers prepare for loans and maintain their timely repayment.
- *Social Purpose and Training Businesses* combine on-the-job training with the operation of a profit-making enterprise. These EDIs provide employees with good income and opportunities to develop assets. Their focus is on the development of a business that has an integral, on-the-job training component that may open up the possibility of placement in other mainstream businesses once workers have acquired certain skills. Community-based organizations that work with disadvantaged populations experiencing multiple barriers to employment may develop these businesses to promote participatory control and decision-making.
- *Worker-Owned and Community-Owned Businesses* have ownership and organizational structures that create both income and assets for low-income people. Ownership may be held by workers, a community-based organization, or in a form that combines both. Over the past ten years, most of the applications received by CCHD for this EDI type have focused on paraprofessional healthcare, child care, cleaning, and craft production. In recent years, an increasing number of applications have been presented for temporary employment businesses.

# Endnotes

- 1 From a leader at a community development organization.
- 2 From a leader at a community development organization.
- 3 From a leader at a community development organization.
- 4 From a leader at an economic development organization.
- 5 From a priest in the CCHD network.
- 6 From a leader at an economic development organization.
- 7 From a former CCHD Intern.
- 8 From a CCHD diocesan coordinator.
- 9 From a leader at a community development organization.
- 10 From a leader at a community development organization.
- 11 From a former CCHD intern.
- 12 From a former CCHD intern.
- 13 From a CCHD diocesan coordinator.
- 14 From a CCHD diocesan coordinator.
- 15 From a CCHD diocesan coordinator.
- 16 From a CCHD diocesan coordinator.
- 17 From a former CCHD intern.
- 18 From a leader in a community development organization.
- 19 From a CCHD local committee member.
- 20 From a CCHD local committee member.
- 21 From a local committee member.
- 22 From a leader at an economic development organization.
- 23 From a former CCHD intern.
- 24 From a local committee member
- 25 From a local committee member
- 26 From a leader at a community development organization.
- 27 From a leader at a community development organization.
- 28 From a leader at a community development organization.
- 29 From a priest in the CCHD network.
- 30 From a leader at a community development organization.
- 31 From a leader at a community development organization.
- 32 From a leader at a community development organization.
- 33 From a leader at a community development organization.
- 34 From a former CCHD diocesan coordinator.
- 35 From a leader at a community development organization.
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- 37 From a leader at a community development organization.
- 38 From a leader at a community development organization.
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- 49 From a leader at a community development organization.
- 50 From a leader at a community development organization.
- 51 From a priest in the CCHD network.
- 52 From a leader at a community development organization.
- 53 From a leader at an economic development organization.
- 54 From a leader at a community development organization.



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