

Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People

The Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People (SDOP) continues to work with low-income communities across the United States to overcome oppression and injustice. Projects include those which focus on literacy, worker-owned cooperatives, advocacy, youth-led initiatives, skills development, farming, worker rights, immigration/refugee issues, capacity building and more. Through your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing, over 5,000 projects in economically poor communities in the United States and around the world have had an opportunity to develop solutions to their own challenges since SDOP's inception. In 2018, SDOP entered into partnership with the projects below:

NATIONAL SDOP PROJECTS – Total \$158,000

Street Vendors Association of Chicago (SVAC), Chicago, IL \$3,000

The project received a technical assistance grant for marketing, recruitment and membership development. The actual project consists of vendors seeking to take turns to use kitchen facilities to prepare food items that they sell on the street. The kitchen will be directly managed and used by Street Vendors Association of Chicago (SVAC) members.

Dexter Linwood Cordon, Detroit, MI \$15,000

The project is to transform 8 blocks of vacant land in an underserved urban community into an urban garden and community green space. The project will assist the low-income group and its community residents by offering an aesthetic environment that brings the members and residents together. Additionally, the newly created storm water management system will reduce the storm water runoff that floods basements, provide water for the garden and save the members monies by providing drainage fee credits.

Daughters of Sarah, Milton, NY \$15,000

This rural community group assists project members and other women in overcoming challenges unique to the region. The women gather frequently to share concerns, problem solve and learn leadership skills. They have faced issues of poverty, prejudice and gender violence. They hold retreats and workshops and reach out to women in trouble.

Green Light NY: Driving Together (NYS driver's license campaign), Rochester, NY \$15,000

The project's main goal is to work in collaboration with the statewide Green Light Driving Together campaign to attain access to driver's licenses for all NY residents regardless of their immigration status.

Shutdown Academy, Baltimore, MD \$5,000

The Kids of Character Program is needed to assist Baltimore city youth obtain affordable enrichment opportunities that don't require them to compromise their character. The Kids of Character program is designed to incentivize, encourage, honor and recognize youth who are willing to demonstrate good character while working to improve their own circumstances, assist others in their own family and in their own communities. Participants will work to enhance their own personal development through exposure to activities that will create awareness and hopefully the creation of habits and practices that will position them to propel themselves, their family and their community, now and later in life. The group received a technical assistance grant.

Fideicomiso de la Tierra del Cano Martin Pena, San Juan, PR \$15,000

(A collaborative initiative with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and Presbyterian Hunger Program).

The Fideicomiso is a non-profit community land trust. Fideicomiso members collectively own land which is managed for the benefit of all District residents. This community land trust was designed by the communities to regularize land tenure and avoid gentrification as an unintended consequence of the Caño Martín Peña Ecosystem Restoration Project. As part of its mission, the Fideicomiso seeks to overcome poverty by recapturing the increase in land value and reinvesting in the communities.

The Gainesville Health and Wellness Center of West Alabama, Gainesville, AL \$15,000

Project members seek to plant a community garden and hire a personal trainer. With a substantial percentage of Alabamians overweight, the community decided to change the percentages. The garden and personal trainer will help them combat obesity, diabetes and heart disease. The community believes making lifestyle changes both in eating and exercising will make a difference in their lives. The project's Steering Committee will track progress through written reports from group members.

New-American Parent Support Group "NPSG", Clarkston, GA \$15,000

The project will provide this group of refugee parents from Africa, Middle East, Latin America and Asia with training, tools, and skills needed to live successfully and adequately raise children in the United States. Training includes civic education, job skills, ESL classes, health/wellness education and coping with family crisis/conflict resolution. Currently the parents do not have English language skills to learn to navigate the issues of American social and governmental institutions. Children often find themselves in the court system with no adequate advocates on their behalf. The group will strive to develop necessary skills to positively acclimate themselves and their families into American life. Training and empowering refugee parents will close the gaps in social, economic and educational opportunities.

Homes for All Nashville, Nashville, TN \$15,000

This project by a group of low-income tenants from several apartments is establishing

unions in each apartment complex to assist occupants who are being forced to move by owners. As the city of Nashville is experiencing unprecedented economic growth, the mayor's office has indicated Nashville will need to create 31,000 new low-income housing units by 2025. Some apartment owners are taking advantage of this by non-renewing leases, increasing rent, not accepting Section 8 renters, not making repairs and using the 30-day rule to evict without further notice. A tenant alone has very little authority but working as a group, they organize with strength in numbers. Tenants received an extension after meeting with the landlord.

Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP), Oxnard, CA \$15,000

The project is Radio Indigena 94.1 launched in 2017. There is a critical need to raise the quality of training and mentorship, as well as to increase the number of DJ's and programs, while incorporating more social media, including Facebook. There is also a need to increase outreach throughout the farm worker community, including using house meetings, a traditional farm worker organizing tool. The needs of the approximately 20,000 indigenous population are not met by commercial stations. Through this project the workers are addressing their own needs for culturally relevant programming, communications, and community education. The Community Advisory Council (of about 50 indigenous immigrants plans, organizes, and fundraises to support the radio and social media programs.

United Territories of Pacific Islanders Alliance Seattle (UTOPIA), Auburn, WA \$15,000

UTOPIA exists to build community, deepen partnerships and uphold human dignity within and outside the Asia/Pacific Islander (API) community. They do this through providing direct support for transgender people transitioning out of the sex industry, dialogues providing safe space to build understanding (for example, among LGBTQI and religious API communities) and educational workshops for high school students.

Welcome Back, Missoula, MT \$15,000 was awarded to this group of formerly incarcerated and recently returned citizens who have banded together to advocate for increased housing and job opportunities. Social stigma and bureaucratic policies make it very difficult for returning citizens to be reintegrated into the community. The group sought funding for training opportunities in advocacy and leadership skills to help expand the group's capacity and effectiveness.

MID COUNCIL (SYNOD & PRESBYTERY) SDOP PROJECTS - Total
\$113,521.62

Charleston Atlantic Presbytery

Twelve Steps Ministries Inc., Charleston, SC was awarded \$2,000 to enable low-income residents struggling with drug and alcohol addiction including some veterans. The project provides alcohol and drug intervention, transitional housing and self-esteem building assistance.

Stock the Pantry Mission, Charleston, SC was awarded \$2,000 to assist families and individuals with food insecurity needs.

Detroit Presbytery

Brightmoor Makers Entrepreneurial Incubator, Detroit, MI was awarded \$7,500 to ensure that young people between the ages of 18-24 have an opportunity to extend their considerable “hands-on” skills into actual business endeavors that will become a secondary source of income.

MAN SECURITY Project, Detroit, MI received \$3,407 to enable this low-income group that formed a security company. Group members will use the experience they have gained while volunteering in other security positions to generate sustainable income through this project. This grant will assist with building infrastructure, marketing, radios, uniforms, liability insurance, bonding, background checks and further training.

Hudson River Presbytery

Training Leadership Development Project, Yonkers, NY was awarded \$2,250 to enable this group of low-income families to hire a community organizer to assist them in advocating on issues pertaining to their low-income housing and on other tenant issues. Also, the grant will assist in making possible peer to peer training in community organizing by members already trained.

Together We can, Newburgh Time Bank, Newburgh, NY received \$5,536.75 to enable this group of unemployed, underemployed or retired community residents to contribute in meaningful ways to their society and community. The time bank also creates relationships with the community that strengthen the fabric of the community. Time bankers can also use their time and time banking experience as marketable skills and utilize the people they perform acts of service for as references when searching for paid work.

Long Island Presbytery

SoulJoy Wellness Challenge, Freeport, NY was awarded \$3,410 to help group members improve their health while focusing on faith and creating closer community. The group is comprised of participants of varying ages and fitness levels.

Minnesota Valleys Presbytery

Summer Nuer Youth, St. Cloud, MN was awarded \$2,400 to enable this group of low-income families, volunteers and counselors to enable the Nuer South Sudanese children to communicate in the Nuer language with their parents and grandparents. Doing so will also help preserve their culture and make it possible for the children to serve as interpreters for medical appointments.

New Hope Presbytery Self-Development of People Committee, Administrative Funds request for \$700.

Northern Waters Presbytery

New Hope for Families Project in Duluth, MN was awarded \$2,200 to assist this group of low-income families, volunteers and their foster children. They seek to raise public awareness of the shortfall of foster families and the growing need for foster homes.

Northern Plains Presbytery Self-Development of People Committee, Administrative Funds request for \$240.

Pacific Presbytery

El Comité CARECEN-TPS (Central American Resource Center), Los Angeles, CA received \$5,729 to support and resource their advocacy work in Congress on behalf of their community of Temporary Protected Status holders from Central America in the U.S.

Philadelphia Presbytery

African Family Health Organization / African Women’s Empowerment Program in Philadelphia, PA was awarded \$16,000 to enable the program to provide community, hospitality and various services for those who often live in fear and isolation. Group members will provide for themselves and community residents ESL programs, access to resources related to financial assistance, education and employment connections. The African Women’s Empowerment Program (AWEP) seeks to improve access to basic needs, mainstream resources, financial literacy and parenting/life skills training for mothers and English as a Second Language. Language is usually a major barrier to enrolling for public benefits or getting children into school.

Pittsburgh Presbytery

Growing Prosperous Project in Pittsburgh, PA was awarded a \$8,000 grant to assist this group of low-income entrepreneurs with developing skills in marketing, sales and social media. Group members hope this income generating project will supplement their income.

Redwoods, San Francisco, San Jose Presbyteries

Youth Organizing for the future of Richmond, Richmond, CA received a \$22,475.95 grant to assist this group of low-income young people of color. Group members seek to build collective power by organizing themselves to address the violence and lack of safety in their community and school. They will take leadership roles in shaping campaigns and policy decisions that affect their lives and community. The youth's organizing leadership pipeline works to engage and empower youth with developing advocacy and leadership skills, so they can effectively advocate for themselves and their community.

Scioto Valley Presbytery

Service Worker Advocacy Project in Columbus, OH was awarded a \$5,000 grant to enable this group that has come together and developed advocacy skills to successfully avert shutoffs and restore power for themselves and others. Electricity shutoffs are a growing disaster for low-income households in mid-Ohio. Thousands of low-income households have their electricity cut off – young mothers with children, people dependent on breathing machines and diabetics needing to keep their insulin refrigerated. Loss of gas service is also a major problem with shutoffs resulting in not having heat in the winter.

Synod of Lakes and Prairies

Grandmothers United project in Minneapolis, MN. This group of low-income matriarchs and their families received a \$10,000 grant. The grant will enable the families to maximize their limited resources, so the matriarchs can raise their grandchildren and great grandchildren caught in cycles of poverty, addiction, mental health and homelessness due to the parents' crisis. The project will regularize the need to meet for peer support, offer a safe place to gather and increase resources available to project members.

The James Presbytery Self-Development of People Committee, Administrative Funds request for \$240.

Twin Cities Area Presbytery

Defend Glendale & Public Housing Coalition, Minneapolis, MN was awarded \$9,539.01 to assist its grassroots organizing campaign by low-income residents to avoid gentrification when residents learnt their residences were about to be demolished and sold to private developers. This would leave residents facing displacement and homelessness. The project members plan to stop the gentrification and their displacement.

Western Reserve Presbytery

City Rising Farm-Telling Our Story project located in Cleveland, OH received \$3,000 to assist these low-income group members in providing jobs for themselves and to teach other community residents skills needed to grow local produce. The group also seeks to build long lasting relationships with each other. City Rising Farm is an urban agriculture education program.

Treasures-Arts 4Peace in Cleveland, OH was awarded a \$1,393 grant to assist low-income members of this business cooperative increase their income through its "Arts4Peace Product line." The Arts4Peace product line consists of one of a kind art items created by group members. The items include original acrylic paintings, prints (framed and unframed), wood craft items, jewelry and miscellaneous handcrafted items made by members of the group and other items.

INTERNATIONAL SDOP PROJECTS - Total \$73,000

Sustainable Development in Liberia and Sierra Leone, \$20,000 -- Cooperative farming and livelihoods program in Liberia and Sierra Leone. A collaborative initiative with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Presbyterian Hunger Program and various ecumenical partners.

CE- MUJER, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, \$25,000 for this organization that provides leadership and technical training to Women's Federations and Associations throughout the Dominican Republic. This project will support technical training related to other projects in the DR.

The Presbyterian Church in Rwanda, Kigali, Rwanda. \$25,000 for assistance of agricultural projects, handicrafts projects, water supply and electricity, etc. using SDOP guidelines.

Seine Bight Village Council, Seine Bight Village, Belize, \$3,000.

This is a technical assistance grant to establish a strategic plan for guiding the village council in sustainable development in Seine Bight Village. The strategic plan will identify development activities which will enable the village council in attaining their community development mandate. The plan will also provide for continuity of work upon termination of present village council tenure. The development of a strategic plan is the specific objective of the project.

Find out more about the ongoing work of the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People (SDOP) at www.pcusa.org/sdop.