

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 and outside the United States to overcome oppression and injustice. In 2022, National SDOP entered into partnership with the projects below. Projects included those focused on literacy, worker-owned cooperatives, advocacy, youth-led initiatives, skills development, farming, worker rights, immigration/refugee issues and capacity building. 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.

NATIONAL SDOP PROJECTS

Intersection of Change, Baltimore, MD, \$15,000 to help cultivate the entrepreneurial leadership skills of the project's high school aged youth by providing firsthand experience operating an art-based business. Through this collective, youth learn how to run a successful business as a team by creating and selling high quality art products that cooperatively generate income for youth participants.

Castlepoint Neighborhood Organization, St. Louis, MO, \$15,000 for a project on how to grow plants and produce. Castle Point residents will maintain the garden and decide what materials are needed to grow quality produce. They will also collaborate on how to make low-cost nutritional meals that are tasty.

New York City Network of Worker Cooperatives, East Elmhurst, NY, \$15,000 to enable the group to provide an in-person, bilingual workshop for the 13-member Advocacy Council on public speaking and storytelling. This will include oral and written storytelling, public speaking training, and practice.

RestoreOKC, Oklahoma City, OK, \$15,000 for this community owned grocery store. Four major cities are studying the store as it is breaking the stereotype that low-income families do not purchase fresh produce. The project has partnered with Hunger Free Oklahoma to add Double Up Bucks which allows Food Stamp buyers a \$1/\$1 match. For every dollar project members spend on any SNAP qualifying food item, they get a free \$1 to use toward fresh fruits or vegetables. They need \$15,000 to supplement the first year.

Institutional Rescue & Recovery Coalition (IRRC), Chicago, IL, \$15,000. This project is comprised of a group of low-income physically challenged and long-term care residents. They are seeking to build their membership, to conduct community organizing training and leadership development and learn to better advocate for themselves.

Food Depot to Health, South Euclid, OH, \$15,000. This is a food wellness initiative in which project members seek to grow, produce, harvest, and prepare healthy foods. There are nineteen group members, and they all work in the gardens and in the preparation of healthy meals for their families and community.

Metropolitan Tenants Organization, Chicago, IL, \$15,000. These low-income group members, some of whom have disabilities seek to obtain and provide advanced training for getting out of poverty with the goal of eliminating generational poverty, through skills development.

5 Points Neighborhood Association (5PNA), Milwaukee, WI, \$15,000 to assist project members in transforming a 20-year-old vacant and abandoned lot into critically needed community space to create a vibrant educational, recreational, garden, WIFI hotspot, and open market. The completed space will be used as a meeting place for community/educational workshops and intergenerational programming. It will also provide onsite training in landscaping, community internet access and technological, and skill trades training.

Arise Chicago, Chicago, IL, \$15,000 to train domestic worker leaders as contract specialists to educate and support nannies, home cleaners, and care workers on the new contract law in Chicago. Specialists are facilitating training, conducting outreach, and providing one-on-one support to domestic workers to create their first contract and negotiate with employers.

Laundry Workers Center, NYC, NY, \$15,000. This grant would directly benefit Worker's Justice Project's Liberty Cleaners. The grant will be utilized to continue and expand digital literacy and technology training for group members.

Coalition for Restaurant Safety and Health, Philadelphia, PA, \$15,000 for this immigrant worker group seeking to create a safer and more equitable restaurant industry where all workers experience economic stability.

Why Not Prosper, Philadelphia, PA, Philadelphia, PA, \$15,000. The grant will be used to support this group comprised of formerly incarcerated women with its Health Advocacy project which works to advocate for quality health care for current and formerly incarcerated women.

Worker's Justice Project, Brooklyn, NY, \$15,000 to support the grassroots' organizing, leadership development, and ongoing work of this coalition to improve workplace conditions for low wage workers in New York City. They organize an immigrant women workforce in the retail laundromat and food service industries, which are composed of small workplaces where workers often feel isolated.

Education And Training Institute, New Brunswick, NJ, \$15,000 for this group of domestic worker leaders to create an expansion of the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights Campaign. They plan to roll out a strategy of outreach to domestic workers across the state to share campaign strategies, build campaigns in other areas and recruit others to their state-level legislative campaign for a Domestic Worker Bill of Rights. Last year, group members fought for and negotiated \$20/hr. wage in their Lakewood domicile.

Struggle for Miami's Affordable and Sustainable Housing (SMASH), Miami, FL, \$15,000 for this community land trust developer created by BIPOCs (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) affected by slumlords, gentrification, and climate change. SMASH fights for it group members and other Miami renters that are rent cost-burdened, and those living in substandard housing by building their power, equipping them with real-estate development skills, and having them design, build and own housing they envision.

Afghan Cattle Cooperative (ACC), Bristow, VA, \$30,000 to raise and sell cattle to improve the lives of families within the cooperative who are currently living below the poverty level. Funding will be used to purchase and sell herds of cattle for breeding and to supplement income because women cannot work outside of the farm due to language barriers. ACC members will contribute their time and skills to raising livestock and teaching their children animal husbandry and related life skills.

Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission, Fresno, CA, \$15,000 for this group of low-income community residents affected by violence and gang activity. Group members of the affected communities are seeking to address constructive ways to reduce outward expressions of anger and retaliation through gun violence. They have partnered with Advance Peace to develop the use of music as an alternative form of expression. Giddyup Evolution will provide training opportunities and studio recording time for participants to write and record their musical expressions of life in their communities. Along with one-on-one counseling, members hope to reduce the need for violent expression. Once the music is produced and recorded, the group will sell CDs and use the money for future recording sessions.

Ciudad Nueva Community Outreach, El Paso, TX, \$15,000 to assist this low-income group in its quest to create a jobs and technology training center. The residents of the neighborhood, facing gentrification, wanted a way to ensure that businesses and housing would remain stable or grow in the neighborhood. The primary goal of the project is to purchase computers and related equipment to be used in space provided by Ciudad Nueva as a computer lab and technology training center for community members. A second goal is to hire trainers and coaches to educate community residents on computer skills and how to promote their business opportunities.

Asian Pacific Self-Development and Residential Association, Stockton, CA, \$15,000 to help this group of Cambodian refugee families living in the deteriorated and unsafe apartment complex of Park Village. The families won the right to self-manage the apartment complex and purchased the building for \$1.00 from HUD. A non-profit housing developer was appointed to oversee the property during renovation and train the residents in property management. However minimal training was provided, and for-profit developers began to take advantage of the residents. APSARA decided it needed an independent organizer and trainer to allow the residents to proceed with their efforts to become the sole owners of the property. There are significant legal and management obstacles that residents must overcome to complete the property purchase. The training will help board members gain skills in organizing, financial planning, developing strategic plans, and leadership so that they can move toward managing and controlling the property.

MID COUNCIL (SYNOD & PRESBYTERY) SDOP PROJECTS

SOAR Career Solutions, Duluth, MN, \$3,000. The project is to support the development of a support group led by and for individuals who are re-entering the Duluth community after incarceration. SOAR re-entry case managers will coordinate a minimum of twelve planning sessions with clients who have been involved with the criminal justice system. Case managers will help clients identify the purpose, goals, activities, and outcomes they want to achieve through the support group.

3MB-Men Mentoring Men & Boys, Cleveland, OH, \$3,600.63 for this male mentoring program for low-income men and boys of all ages. The teenage boys in the program who are 13 years old and up provide homework help for younger members and community service projects as a part of their membership of this brotherhood program. 3MB Services is a project where the above-mentioned teens will provide services to needy people in the community such as senior citizens and persons with disabilities. The young men

will provide services such as raking leaves, shoveling snow, washing cars, light clean outs, painting, and possible moving assistance. Donations will be accepted from the service recipients but not required. 3MB Services will give each young man a weekly stipend for their services. The young men will be required to open a bank account and learn about saving and budgeting.

Omaha Black Doula Association, Omaha, NE, \$14,000 (Synod level). Black Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) in Omaha are facing maternal morbidity and infant mortality at a disproportionate rate. Although there is no quick fix for the city's infant mortality rate, improving nutrition may play a key role in preventing some of these deaths. The grant funds will help group members actively address food disparities in their community through establishing community gardens.

Omaha Black Doula Association (OBDA), Omaha, NE, \$1,724.81 (Presbytery Level). Part of being a doula long term is making sure that their needs are met in all aspects of their lives, so that they have the emotional and physical ability to be there for others. This project is needed to fill the cup that is always pouring. OBDA plans on a Retreat Day to withdraw, recharge, and give tools to help in the daily pouring of a doula.

Garden Women's Group (GWG), Roseville, MN, \$19,140 for this Nepali-Bhutanese refugee immigrant community experiencing the stresses and strains so common to refugee immigrant communities. The Garden Women's Group (GWG) gathers six Nepali-Bhutanese women who live near one another and garden at the nearby community garden (Rice Street Gardens) and have common needs and interests in key issues of health and success for themselves, their families, and their larger community. The Garden Women's Group will focus on addressing needs for information, resources, skills, and practices that increase their garden productivity, personal and family physical and mental health, housing stability, and healthy family relationships.

Blazing Star Seed Cooperative, Omaha, NE, \$1,725.00. Seed Processing Days provide firsthand seed saving education to collectively process as much seed as possible for free distribution through community partners, group members coordinated growing efforts and their community seed bank.

New Neighbors Bakers & Makers, Hilliard, OH, \$7,818.62. The project is comprised of disadvantaged women, refugees and/or immigrants. Most of them are new to the U.S., having immigrated from Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Sudan, Afghanistan and elsewhere. They are potential entrepreneurs who make homemade baked goods and offer them for sale which helps them in their pursuit of economic equity in their community.

Alliance for Community Services, Chicago, IL, \$9,000. The Alliance is made up of, and led by, people with disabilities and other low-income community residents. The project's core mission is to bring together consumers of public services (Medicaid, disability services, SNAP, etc.) with public service workers (caseworkers, caregivers) as peers, to learn from each other and improve access to services that meet human needs. By organizing themselves, they seek to have a voice in health, education and welfare policies that directly affect their lives. The Alliance Steering Committee, all group members, and constituents, makes all organization policy and campaign decisions, and conducts most of the campaign activities. Members of the member organizations (all made up of and led by constituents) have input through regular meetings and forums.

Lincoln Park Community Services (LPCS), Chicago, IL, \$10,495. The project belongs to a self-supported organization comprised of previously homeless community residents (graduates). They seek to educate the community at large on homelessness; to tell their stories of overcoming the challenges thereof; to offset negative perceptions about unhoused people; and stay connected to the shelter. Members benefit directly by coming together for bi-monthly meetings and openly sharing common experiences which occur after leaving a communal setting to one of autonomy. They address these situations during and following meetings, offering mutual support to each other in maintaining long-term housing. Members control the project by developing, organizing, and planning events.

Ballet Folklorico Rosa Quetzal, Elk River, MN, \$10,000. Ballet Folklorico Rosa Quetzal is a Hispanic and Latino run traditional dance program for low-income youth in Wright County and surrounding areas. It particularly serves migrant Spanish-speaking youth, although the program is open to all, and cross-cultural experiences are encouraged. There is a need to upgrade some equipment, including buying a generator to run the sound equipment. This grant would provide this group with the capacity to expand its program.

PR²OMiSE: Peers Responding to Overlooked Matters in Social Environments, Detroit, MI, \$10,000. The project will be a community space developed by Prevost-Rutherford community members, youth groups, and the non-profit organization, PR²OMiSE: Peers Responding to Overlooked Matters in Social Environments. PRUG and PR²OMiSE will provide opportunities to address health, community building, recreation, and neighborhood beautification. PRUG will be situated on two vacant lots that were purchased by PR²OMiSE. PRUG will provide a gathering green space for relaxation and tranquility, will address and combat food security by providing access to fresh organic fruits and vegetables, provide outreach programs for youth and adults, serve as a space for

educational learning, and assist in community building. SDOP funding will help with creating a multi-use urban garden that will be more than just a space to grow but also an open and welcoming space that will encourage community relationships, address mental/physical health, revitalize the neighborhood, provide educational programming, and promote agricultural awareness. Group members will benefit by having access to fresh, organic food and to a gathering space for community building.

Tompkins Park Writers, Brooklyn, NY, \$1,800. The project is a writing group composed of low-income seniors who have experienced unique life journeys and are willing to share their stories with family and community members. The project would help group members in their self-empowerment through getting their book printed and in empowering other community groups to do the same by sharing their history.

Blossoms Floral Shop, Pittsburgh, PA, \$7,150. The project is a worker owned business cooperative. SDOP funds will assist it with obtaining a certified electrical rewiring and system upgrade to ensure a commercial cooler that is used to store and display fresh cut flowers is professionally installed and working. SDOP funding will also help with establishing quarterly service and maintenance required for the commercial cooler and electrical system. The SDOP grant will also be used to activate new domain names and a website for the business. These major goals should enhance the ability to be more effective in production and marketing. The team needs to continue enhancement of financial/ business and client service skills. Grant monies requested will be used to continue their transformation to be successful mobile entrepreneurs.

One Accord/Bethesda Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, PA, \$6,360. The Practical Tenacity (Part 1) project is a collaborative initiative formed by a group of individuals sharing the common need for financial stability and business empowerment. Each member of this incubator project can be identified as a disadvantaged, under-served minority living at or below federal poverty levels; some may also qualify as seniors. SDOP funds will be used to assist with supplies, marketing materials, and training. Training will be open to other low-income members of the community who desire to change their financial condition.

Coalition for Restaurant Safety and Health, Philadelphia, PA, \$13,000. El Comite is a committee of immigrant workers that are seeking to create a safer and more equitable restaurant industry where all workers experience economic stability. The restaurant industry runs on demoralizing conditions and low wages. Many restaurant positions are filled by Latinx workers who are undocumented/struggle with the language barrier. This commonly excludes them from traditional public safety nets and government assistance. SDOP funding will be used to primarily support their work through stipends for themselves, assistance with transportation and interpretation needs for them to communicate with their allies, government officials, English-speaking supervisors as well as peers.

Bedford Central Presbyterian Church (BCPC) Seniors Ministry, Brooklyn, NY, \$2,000. The silver skills development project is a senior wellness program that is part of a seniors group based at Bedford Central Presbyterian Church. Group members are seeking to work with consultants to help improve the quality of their lives and the lives of other seniors living in the Bedford Stuyvesant/Crown Heights community. The program will be essential in helping group members improve their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual lives. Skills learned in the workshops will be used to create items for sale at a craft day at the end of the year.

Inspiring Minds, Brooklyn, NY, \$862.37. "IM Connected" is a program that emerged organically during the pandemic. The project is comprised of high school students seeking to address issues of depression and anxiety with which they are dealing. To address this issue, they came up with the "IM Connected Challenge", a call to action for high school students to design programs or activities that would connect them and their peers and solve issues in their community.

Farm & Faith Partnerships Project/Rural Advancement Foundation International – USA, Pittsboro, NC, \$9,463.70. North Carolina has several food deserts resulting in food insecurity in many low-income communities. Along with issues of food insecurity in rural NC communities, many socially disadvantaged farmers struggle because of limited access to markets, beneficial relationships, and financial resources. This results in higher rates of debt and lower rates of agricultural land ownership than white farmers. To address these issues, RAFI-USA's Farm & Faith Partnerships Project (FFPP) connects farmers of color with local congregations and communities for the purpose of strengthening local food systems and addressing food insecurity. With the SDOP funding, this group of farmers can prepare for a full growing season in 2023 and continue to donate fresh produce throughout their local community.

The Robin's Nest Transitional Home, Chester, VA, \$4,514. The project equips individuals and families who are employed, temporarily unemployed, and/or have suffered a crisis with the necessary tools needed to break the yoke of homelessness and attain permanent housing and self-sufficiency.

Karen Community of Louisville, KY, \$2,375.32. The primary objective of this project is to help preserve the Karen language as well as to pass on the mother tongue to the Karen children who risk losing this language as they grow older. This request is also a response to the rapid advancement of technology which allowed children to have easy access to devices which has had a significant effect on

the children's speech and learning focus. This program is needed because the Karen children are becoming distant from their culture, heritage, and roots, and all the while losing their native language. With this project, the Karen community can assist parents to enroll their children in the program and strive to improve communication while building connections and improving relationships between parents and children.

Black Market KY, Louisville, KY, \$2,375.32. Black market KY is a health food grocery store focused on combating "food apartheid" in the west end of Louisville, KY.

Mustard Seed Impact International (MSII), Hawthorne, CA, \$5,817.86. The project comprised mostly of immigrant African women is about training group members on mental wellness and trauma-informed care, including identifying signs and symptoms of depression and stress so they can help themselves and one another. The purpose of the project is capacity building of women to advocate for themselves and their families as well as in the community. They will receive training in mental health, entrepreneurship, leadership, and resource connections.

Faith Food Fridays, Vallejo, CA, \$20,000. The project is about public distribution of food boxes filled with fresh and non-perishable food items. This service has grown from one day a week feeding a hundred families to 3 days serving over six hundred families representing almost 2,000 individuals per week. Participants are made up of almost entirely black and brown people. In addition, a large contingent is disabled, seniors, non-English speakers or unhoused. The leadership team constantly seeks ways to improve services and food quality to recipients. In addition, a food justice community garden will soon be installed to provide learning opportunities to families on how to grow healthy fruits and vegetables for improved health.

INTERNATIONAL SDOP PROJECTS

Bomba United Farmers' Cooperative Society Limited, Belize District, Belize, Central America, \$15,000. Project members seek to create wealth and employment opportunities for themselves and access expert and on time technical assistance in agricultural development. This will strengthen the agricultural knowledge of its membership. Project members strive for economic efficiency and sustainability to enhance the quality of life for themselves and the community.

Progress group Solis No. 2, Tole, Panama, \$15,000. Group members seek to support themselves through agriculture and providing opportunities for income and family sustenance. Crops that are produced will be for members' and their family's consumption and sale to nearby communities. The group also plans to start pig production. SDOP funding will go toward purchasing a plot of land to be held in common as well to the acquisition of pigs, food, medicine, and agricultural inputs including tools, a gas tiller, seeds, and fertilizers. Funding will also be used to pay modest stipends to the group members for preparing and working the plot.

Women's Meeting Space, Panama City, Panama, \$15,000. The project seeks to strengthen the capacity of Women's Meeting Space so group members can maintain their efforts to end violence against women, girls, and adolescents in the country. Violence every year steals life and innocence of thousands of girls and adolescents in Panama. With this project they want to guarantee the conditions that Women's Meeting Space needs to carry out prevention and promotion work for a life free of violence in the country. The project requires teams that can contribute to advocacy activities on issues of violence, and they also want to create a learning space through a training school for girls and adolescents; this will enable daughters and granddaughters of the members of the organization to develop knowledge and strategies for recognizing violence at an early age.

April 15 Group, Tole, Panama, \$15,000. The project is a group of farmers producing broiler chickens and hens to feed the group members and their families. The group will start with 150 broiler chickens and hens and within 12 months have produced \$1,200 thus paving a way towards sustainability.

Azuero Craft Women Group, Herrera Province, Panama, \$15,000. The project is to train women with little or no income, alone or with families that have been negatively impacted economically by the COVID 19 pandemic. Many of them lost their jobs because of the pandemic and those that work have been adversely impacted by the rise in the price of the basic food basket and the inflated cost of gasoline. Group members will undergo technical training and participate in workshops to help improve their skills and thus improve their income through self-managed marketing. Project members through this new technique will have access to new sources of income to sustain their families in this period of hardship. The benefit is to obtain income through the sale of handicrafts and take advantage of entrepreneurial opportunities that began to increase after COVID 19.

New Mexico Women's Training Centers, Comunidad de Nuevo México, Panama, \$15,000. This woman led project consists of providing adequate tables and chairs for their workshops and for project members, and the purchase of a stove with an oven for the bread and pastry workshops. The project will also focus on adapting the center's facilities for project members that are struggling to

make an income and those who have been impacted by the excessive cost of gasoline. This women's group will be the direct beneficiary of the project, but the training workshops and the bakery will benefit the women's group and surrounding community.

Villa Nueva JAAR, Darien, Panama, \$15,000. The project's focus is on solar power in order to improve the quality of life of its group members.

Sayab Farmers Cooperative Society Limited, San Antonio Village, Belize, \$15,000. This project seeks to reduce field and post-harvest losses to the Sayab Farmers' Cooperative while it provides a second opportunity for its membership in its quest to be active, producing, and sustainable. The project building will be purchased with resources provided by the partnership from Spanish Lookout Community (Pletts Home Builders) and used for food processing and packing of agriculture produce. The center will also provide economic alternatives for residents of the San Antonio Community who are at a strategic location close to training facilities, local markets and 3 hours from Belize City, the largest market for Belize. Sayab commits itself to co-invest with financial resources to include bathroom facilities and other in-kind investments.

Civil Society Coalition for Poverty Eradication (CISCOPE), Nigeria with \$9,000. The project is aimed at strengthening the livelihood activities of two hundred affected farmers. The farmers will obtain recovery and livelihood starter packs and agricultural processing machines to add value to their farm produce and thus increase their income and reduce the cost of labor within the local farmer cooperative groups. It will further support two hundred vulnerable female headed households, lactating mothers and the elderly with food and non-food items. The project will also build the capacity of sixty community leaders who are gate keepers; ward councilors who are political leaders; youth and women groups on how to develop a contingency and community development plan. Additionally, eight monthly sessions and an advocacy radio program will be held on one of the widely listened to radio stations in the state. Issues of flooding and preparedness, early warning and mitigation strategies and better ways of flood management and resilience building will be discussed.