

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. In 2017, National SDOP entered into partnerships 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

Women in Agriculture Association, Atlanta, GA, \$15,000 - A cooperative owned farmer's association promoting its locally grown farm products within the community. The group's objective is to provide an environment where they and their community can access fresh locally grown foods. They will be educated in growing vegetables and developing a relationship with farmers and farming.

Union Popular de Vendedores Ambulantes (UPVA), *Popular Union of Street Vendors*, Los Angeles, CA, \$15,000 - La Union Popular de Vendedores Ambulantes is an organization of street vendors which fights to defend their rights to overcome poverty and homelessness through self-management and a cooperative economy. The UPVA organizes to fight harassment, discrimination, criminalization and police abuse against street vendors.

Southside Worker Center, Tucson, AZ, \$15,000-- This group of low-income members seeks to train emerging leaders in leadership skills to address issues such as wage theft and fair labor practices. The project will provide stipends for people who will lead the training as well as food and childcare for the training sessions. The day worker center is one of the few places in Tucson where day laborers may congregate and it provides a venue for employers to connect with the workers.

Youth on the Move, Pine Apple, AL, \$15,000 --This youth-led after school project prepares low income youth in Wilcox County, AL to meet the challenges of living in a severely depressed county. The SDOP grant will provide programs focused on health and safety issues, musical training and resumé writing. With assistance from adult leaders, the young people participate in job interview training and financial planning sessions. A Farmer's market is operated during the summer months selling produce grown by the youth and other farmers in the area. Future programs will include learning basic construction, electrical and plumbing skills.

Coalition for Police Accountability, \$15,000, Oakland, CA, --This grassroots-led campaign ensures that the selection and standards for commissioners to a Citizens'

Police Review Board be community driven. The SDOP grant will help establish an organizing committee, develop an organizing plan, and conduct community outreach, particularly in targeted neighborhoods where violence and police abuse is prevalent. A primary focus will be on youth. Organizers hope it will bring about greater accountability to low income residents, especially people of color. Also, the project seeks to revitalize and further empower its leadership and membership.

Youth Rise Organizing Institute, \$15,000 Austin, TX, --This low- income group provides leadership development, mentorship, and internship opportunities for young people of color who have been impacted by parental incarceration and deportation. The grant will enable group members to learn how to recruit and engage other youth, participate in coalition meetings, strategize with allied groups about making change, and tour their activist cultural work to spark dialogue and build allies in the community. Across programs, Youth Rise prioritizes cultural production as both a tool for healing and creating change through public sharing of original performance and visual arts work.

Rochester Refugee Resettlement Services, Inc., \$14,800 - Rochester, NY, --Building on the historical hospitality for refugees in Rochester, this project addresses a current fundamental need - obtaining a drivers' license. Refugees have little or no access to a car or an instructor. Using donated vans and volunteer instructors the SDOP grant will assist the group members with gas, insurance and repairs on the cars used for street practice and instruction.

Brandworkers, Long Island City, NY, \$15,000 --This member led organization of workers in the local food production industry has organized to fight for dignified jobs and a just food system. The SDOP funding will support the growth in membership and support organizing efforts. A high percentage of the industry workers are immigrants and people of color who work under poor conditions that result in injuries & low wages. The workers have organized to demand changes in workers' rights for themselves and are training others as leaders for this cause. They are leading the campaign to help increase workers' salaries, benefits, and improvements in their general working environment

Strength of Love Farms, Baltimore, MD, \$15,000 for this urban farm that is owned and maintained by returning citizens and community members. It also addresses the issue of a food desert in the neighborhood. The project is in an area with an extremely high rate of incarcerated men and the lowest access to fresh food in the Baltimore area.

ReFresh Community Garden Leadership Program, New Orleans, LA, \$15,000 for this community led project. The low-income project members plant and harvest produce to feed themselves and their family as well as sell produce to the public via a farmer's market. Community gardeners have taken on leadership roles to train, mentor and assist other gardeners in effective planting and growing techniques. Katrina created a

food desert in Mid-City New Orleans and severely lowered the economic vitality of the community.

Sounds of Joy Performing Arts Program, Albany, GA, \$4,000 to assist this summer program of at-risk and disadvantaged youth who desire to excel in the Performing Arts. The program is designed to allow initiative for self-learning as well as instructing young people in voice, drama, dance and public speaking. Young people gather at the beginning of the summer and determine the programs they will pursue during the summer. Instructors and the Board then come alongside the young people offering appropriate instruction and supportive logistics.

Catawba Lands, Rocky Hill, S.C., \$15,000 to enable this group of families to learn how to grow food on their own land through hydroponic and permaculture methods. Currently many families are unable to acquire fresh healthy food due to lack of transportation as several live far from a store that sells fresh vegetables.

Created to Create, Miami, FL, \$15,000 for these economically disadvantaged youth and young adult group members seeking to help themselves and the community. Project members seek to reduce the rate of crime and juvenile incarceration through training and learning how they use their skills and talents to create residual income. This project will affect about forty youth and young adults.

MID COUNCIL (SYNOD & PRESBYTERY) SDOP PROJECTS

Detroit Presbytery

Dexter-Linwood Cordon Phase I, Detroit, MI, \$5,000 - The project seeks to transform vacant land into sustainable urban farming (Raised Beds) using green storm water infrastructure management. This will provide non-traditional opportunities for members to accomplish an urban farming environment. The project will offer opportunities to members to work to give necessary services, stabilize, revitalize and rebuild the neighborhood which will in the long term improve overall quality of life.

Lake Michigan Presbytery

Opportunities Unlimited for the Blind, Grand Rapids, MI, \$5,000, operates week-long residential summer camps for young people with visual impairments at Camp Optimist, Grand Rapids, Michigan. OUB hires young adults who are blind or have low vision as our summer staff. This is a cornerstone of the program, giving kids who are blind or visually impaired opportunities to hold their first job in a supportive environment that provides job training, and giving its campers the best mentors possible.

Western Reserve Presbytery

Urban Farmers to Entrepreneurs, Cleveland, OH, \$3,746.88 - The purpose of this project is to grow products for sale at farmers' markets and to restaurants. Presently, there are 11 people who have signed on for the growing/farming aspect of the project. The group leaders for the entrepreneurial adventures will self elect according to their interest and support the entire group by sharing resources and by collectively promoting produce produced within the group. Each urban farmer will decide what produce they want to grow based upon suggestions and guidance from the experienced urban farmers. Growers and the public may also attend educational workshops and bi-monthly meetings offered by the group.

Synod of Lakes and Prairies

Forest View Tenants Association, Iowa City, IA, \$20,000 - The Forest View Tenants Association is made up of residents of the Forest View Mobile Home Court in Iowa City who came together to address concerns in response to mistreatment of residents by Forest View owners and over policing of their neighborhood. They began meeting with the police chief about concerns that residents were being intimidated and detained without arrests and were successful in stopping this practice. In 2015 they heard

rumors about the trailer park being sold and they organized again to meet with owners and developers to protect their affordable housing needs as immigrants and low-income families.

Arabic Outreach Center, Des Moines, IA, \$11,600 - Members of this group have organized to reach out to their fellow Sudanese and other immigrant and refugee individuals and families, including Muslims, who speak Arabic to create a welcoming community. The SDOP funds will increase their ability to develop women's programming (conversational language skills, financial management, personal health and American legal systems). Also, language translation for hospital and clinic visits as well as parent-teacher conferences; Arabic language classes for children and English language classes for adults; youth programs for cultural art, music and homework tutoring; and job referrals and hiring experiences will be offered. The group will also provide space for community wide exchange of household items, groceries and clothing. Many of the families in the area qualify for free/reduced school lunch programs and often the biggest barrier to jobs and social services is the barrier of language and the difficulty to communicate.

Circle of Parents, Saint Paul, MN, \$4,000 - This project consists of a group of low-income parents who have been meeting on their own to bring Native families together. The Circle group was formed by parents to create a safe space for all parents: mothers, fathers, aunts and uncles, grandparents and other Native caregivers of American Indian children to share their strengths, offer support for challenges and learn about resources. The Native community struggles with homelessness, poverty, drug abuse and suicide, plus many more challenges of mobility, high incidents of out of home child placement, social disruption of their culture and traditional values. They hope to increase participation by providing space where they can meet up to two times a week, and have community get together about once a month. Bus cards, child activities and simple meals will be offered. Parents will participate in beading, sewing regalia, drum and dance, increasing knowledge of native language and meal preparation.

Minnesota Valleys Presbytery

South Sudanese Bead/Basket Project, Saint Cloud, MN, \$3000 - This project by low-income Sudanese refugees is focused on the making and selling of culturally traditional beaded baskets to generate income for themselves and it is a way to get families together and to help each other.

Northern Plains and Dakota Presbytery

Presbytery of Northern Plains and Dakota Self-Development of People Committee, Grand Forks, ND, \$250 administrative funds request.

Northern Waters Presbytery

Local Solutions to End Poverty: Candidate Forum and Accountability Session, Duluth, MN, \$1,200 - This group of about 20 low income Duluth residents is involved in the Local Solutions to Poverty's activities. The forum provides candidates a chance to hear directly from low-income Duluthians, and gives the community a chance to learn where the candidates stand on local efforts to promote fairness and economic stability for all people. Project members will benefit from this event as well as Duluthians living in poverty who are affected by the issues addressed during the LSEP Forum and Accountability Session. These events provide an opportunity to become educated on the issues and how government creates or influences these issues. The LSEP Accountability Session follows up the Candidate Forum 6 months later, to evaluate the steps elected officials have taken on the issues since their time in office.

Twin Cities Area Presbytery

Street Voices of Change, Minneapolis, MN, \$10,000 - Street Voices of Change creates a space where people experiencing homelessness, or those who have, can come together to share knowledge, build community, and create positive change in their community. Too often, the systems the homeless community encounters daily strips them of their humanity. Community organizing restores their collective voice and agency, moving them from invisible to visible. The goals of Street Voices of Change are to build community and turn that community into powerful action.

Chicago Presbytery

Vaughn and Friends Alumni Association, Chicago, IL, \$10,193.83 – This is a project comprised of low-income adults with and without cognitive disabilities who have come together to form a collective in seeking jobs and jobs training. They will provide assistance to each other through coaching and mentoring one another.

Chicago Presbytery Self-Development of People Committee, Chicago, IL - \$1,378.92 administrative funds request.

Baltimore Presbytery

Work with Dignity Earned Sick Leave Campaign, Baltimore, MD – \$7,200. This project by United Workers Association, a human rights organization led by the poor seeks to end poverty. The Work with Dignity Earned Sick Leave Campaign is aimed at ensuring that the Healthy Working Families Act succeeds at overcoming the Governor's veto and becomes law. This bill would permit more than 80% of low-wage workers the ability to earn sick leave to take care of themselves and their families. A disproportionate percentage are black and immigrant workers. Group members organize against structures that perpetuate poverty, structural racism and failed development.

Genesee Valley Presbytery

Alianza Agricola Project, \$3,828.55, Rochester, NY - Alianza Agricola is composed of and serves the needs of undocumented immigrant farmworkers in Western New York. Their primary aim is to advocate for legislation for access to driver's licenses for undocumented residents of New York. In 2015 the Upstate Network for Immigrant Rights identified the need for mobility and a means of identification as the most pressing needs. The New York program "Green Light: Driving Together" addresses these problems. Alianza Agricola works to further this program.

ROcovery Fitness Project, Rochester, NY, \$2,649.93 - ROcovery Fitness is open and free of charge to all in the Greater Rochester area seeking to recover from substance abuse and live an active sober lifestyle. The project will train two groups (Personal Trainers and Group Exercise Instructors) so that they can become certified to lead groups. This will both build self-esteem for those being trained and certified and result in possible job opportunities in these areas.

Hudson River Presbytery

Adelante Student Voices Project, Poughkeepsie, NY, \$2,600 - This project is comprised of around twenty-one low-income undocumented high school students seeking to pursue their education and increase community building amongst themselves. They plan to build a network consisting of undocumented high school students that will help them learn about and advocate for their rights and eventually help them get into college.

Project Genesis, God's Disciples, Peekskill, NY, \$2,000 - Project members of this group are comprised of economically disadvantaged youth from inner city Peekskill. They come together for community building, and to share their life experiences. Their goal is to help each other improve their lives as underprivileged young people so they can

pursue future goals with confidence. They meet weekly for a meal and discussion and attend each other's sporting events since their parents work long hours.

Proyecto Faro (The Lighthouse Project), Stony Point, NY, \$2,392.48 - This project consists of a group of low-income undocumented people seeking to find safety and sufficiency in communities of trust. Group members plan to hold community gatherings and other peaceful actions for immigration justice and to teach and equip fellow group members involved.

Florida Presbytery

Second Chance of Northwest Florida, Panama City, FL, \$1,884.80 - This project consists of group members with brain injuries and their families. Lunch preparation is part of the training program. Regaining the ability to prepare even the simplest of meals provides group members with a step forward toward increased independence. The members help prepare the lunchtime meal daily under staff instruction and supervision. Members will increase their life skill set to include greater cooking and nutritional skills while being provided a free warm and nutritious lunch.

Philadelphia Presbytery

Exploring Educational Opportunities-Black Male Leadership Initiative, Philadelphia, PA, \$8,000 - This is a project comprised of economically poor African American young men. They seek to advance themselves educationally, personally and economically through lectures, workshops and field trips. The project is meant to fill a cultural gap in learning and exposure that is perpetuated by poverty and racism.

African Women's Empowerment Program, Philadelphia, PA, \$8,000 - Project members seek to strengthen their ability as vulnerable African immigrant and refugee women with multiple and complex needs to move to independence and stability in the communities in which they reside. They plan to accomplish this goal by improving their access to basic needs, adult and financial literacy, parenting and life skills training to help set them and their families on an early pathway to self-sufficiency.

Charleston Atlantic Presbytery

Metanoia Community Development Corporation: Youth Entrepreneurship Program, North Charleston, SC, \$2,500. The project is a youth led entrepreneurship café located in the Metanoia Youth Entrepreneurship Center. Students are able to learn about the food service and hospitality industries. Metanoia is the only organization in the low country to offer an afterschool leadership program designed specifically for middle and high school students. The students will learn entrepreneurial education, financial

literacy and character education. The students will also gain valuable experience in the hospitality and food service industry.

Charlotte Presbytery

Operation Fresh Goods, Charlotte, NC, \$2,937 - The project is to develop a self-sustaining community vegetable stand by growing seasonal fresh vegetables to sell to the community. The community of Druid Hills is a neighborhood which is in a food desert with limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables. The majority of the community has income at or below the poverty level.

James Presbytery

Brookland Park Young Leader Project, Richmond, VA, \$6,113.00 – The project purpose is to determine and utilize the assets of the Brookland Park Community in a way that strengthens the community. While this is a lower income community, it is rich in assets. The greatest assets being the community residents who care enough to get involved. The project seeks to improve the lives of project members and their families.

James Presbytery Self-Development of People Committee, Richmond, VA, \$679.27 - administrative funds request.

Long Island Presbytery

Gospel Fit Challenge, Freeport, NY, \$5,000 - The project brings together community members who suffer from health disparities and works to equip them to overcome these issues. By increasing their health education and creating a supportive environment for behavior modification, the participants will have a greater opportunity for long term success. Program participants will be assessed before, during and at the end of the program to determine progress. Some group members will serve as team leaders and will meet together to determine the schedule and nature of the weekly sessions. Each of the participating team leaders will have responsibility for designing and executing one program module.

Pittsburgh Presbytery

Seeds of Unity by Saving Our Sisters Now, Pittsburgh, PA, \$7,000

This project is an incubator-training program center which will provide entrepreneurs with the expertise, network, and tools they need to be successful. It empowers the women in the group to self-sufficiently address the conditions of poverty and invest in their financial futures. The main purpose of this project is to incubate the group and provide a full array of travel industry specific training such as management, social media, building their Brand and self-development. As part of the group, project members will encourage each other and uplift each other to strive to succeed. Being part of the group will also help the women develop their interpersonal and leadership skills and to eliminate feelings of isolation.

Pittsburgh Presbytery Self-Development of People Committee, \$868.81 - administrative funds request.

Synod of the Trinity

Opening Closed Doors, McKeesport, PA, \$9,647 - This group is comprised of males who are friends from high school, community peers, sons and fathers with a collective responsibility to pull each other out of the hole of poverty and oppression. Each of the men is ready and prepared to educate themselves and become a better community member. Group members seek to mentor each other and learn basic skills in auto mechanics, carpentry and home maintenance thus promoting self-sufficiency.

Growing Prosperous, Pittsburgh, PA, \$15,000 - Group members involved with this project seek to learn the basics of digital marketing and to share resources and software to take their businesses and income generating projects to the digital market place. The main purpose of the project is to provide a comprehensive educational program in marketing and sales and increase the economic opportunities of the group by developing a system of collaborative resources for these low-income microenterprise business owners.

New Hope Presbytery

The Lighthouse Garden, Princeville, NC, \$7,000

The project is a community garden project designed to enable group members to have an improved nutritional diet.

Pacific Presbytery

Healing Arts Space Project, Los Angeles, CA, \$7,416.58

The project is a grassroots effort designed to empower youth through the arts. The youth who are primarily undocumented generate art pieces and produce shirts. The project will enable the youth to make an income for themselves thus contributing to their financial empowerment.

Sheppards and Lapsley

Small Steps Lead to Big Rewards, Pine Hill, AL, \$3,500

This group of low-income youth seeks to create programming that will enhance their learning and increase their community involvement. Students will receive academic remediation and participate in a prevention program to combat illegal drug use and prescription misuse.

INTERNATIONAL SDOP PROJECTS

Barranco Fisher Folk Cooperative, Barranco Belize, \$15,000 --This group of 15 young adult villagers designed this project to increase their capacity to work together as fisher folks by cultivating a conservation. The requested project is for fishing equipment for group members to increase their ability to compete fairly with better equipped fishing groups and to also have a means to process and store perishable products prior to taking them to market. The village of Barranco is extremely isolated and has a high poverty rate. The grant makes it possible for group members to create economic opportunities for themselves. Project members hope to double their income over the next year.

Small Scale Sustainable Development Liberia and Sierra Leone, \$19,200 for cooperative farming and livelihoods program in Liberia and Sierra Leone

CE- MUJER, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, \$10,000 for CE-MUJER, an intermediary partner in the Dominican Republic. It uses SDOP criteria to fund projects in the Dominican Republic.

Presbyterian Church of Rwanda, \$25,000 for the Church to provide assistance to agricultural projects, handicrafts projects, water supply and electricity using SDOP guidelines.

Sandy Beach Women's Cooperative, Hopkins Village, Belize, \$30,553 – The Sandy Beach Women's Cooperative started in 1984 and is the oldest women owned cooperative in Belize. It was from this cooperative that the first Bed and Breakfast was started in Hopkins Village in 1987 that enabled Hopkins Village to become a tourist attraction in Belize. The project is to continue a 6-year project to complete renovations of the property as a tourist destination. Activities include adding one cabana, office, washhouse and skilled workers to create and increase Internet linkages and social media tourist sites.

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