

Catholic Conference of Ohio

9 E. Long St., Suite 201, Columbus, Ohio 43215

REQUEST TO THE OHIO BISHOPS REGARDING OHIO POVERTY

1. ENDORSEMENT BY THE OHIO BISHOPS OF THE CATHOLIC CHARITIES USA CAMPAIGN TO REDUCE POVERTY IN THE UNITED STATES IN HALF BY THE YEAR 2020,
2. INSTRUCT THE DEPARTMENT ON SOCIAL CONCERNS TO DEVELOP AND RECOMMEND TO THIS BOARD A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING THIS CAMPAIGN IN OHIO.

BACKGROUND

Catholic Charities USA's Campaign to Reduce Poverty in America is a multi-year, multi-faceted approach to alleviating poverty in the United States. The goals of Catholic Charities USA's ***Campaign to Reduce Poverty in America*** are:

1. To reduce poverty in the United States by 50 percent by the year 2020.
2. To call upon the government to do more to serve those who are poor, and to improve public policies that strengthen and support families.
3. To educate policymakers and the public about the struggles of those living in poverty and the good work of those who serve them in local communities.
4. To engage those who are most impacted by government policies to be active participants in developing solutions to reducing poverty.
5. To work with individuals and organizations across the country to address poverty in our country.

The national meeting of CCUSA is being held in Cincinnati this year from September 13-16. While each of our Catholic Charities agencies in Ohio has endorsed this campaign, we would like to be able to announce during this meeting that the Bishops of Ohio also endorse this campaign.

OHIO POVERTY STATISTICSⁱ

- In 2005 an estimated 1,392,000 people in Ohio were poor (12.3% of the population).
- In 2005 an estimated 304,000 families in Ohio were poor (9.7% of all families).
- In 2005 an estimated 13.6% of Appalachian Ohio, a 29-county area, was poor compared with 10.2% of the remainder of the State.

- In 2005 Cleveland was ranked as the poorest big city in the nation with over 31% living in poverty. Cincinnati (21%), Toledo (20%), and Columbus (17%) were also ranked high.
- Since the year 2000, the number of persons living in poverty in Ohio has increased by over 20% (240,000 additional persons).
- Ohio currently has the 8th highest unemployment rate in the United States.
- Poverty rates vary by circumstances: families with children, as well as families with no one working full-time-year-round, are at greater risk of poverty than are families with no children and families with at least one adult working fulltime-year-round.
- Poverty rates vary by characteristics: non-Hispanic whites, people with more formal education, and older adults are less likely to be poor than are minorities, people with less formal education, younger adults, and children.

OHIO IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

1. Develop a Campaign and “tool kit” regarding Ohio Poverty. Such a “tool kit” could include:
 - An Ohio Bishops’ letter of support;
 - A social analysis of Ohio poverty;
 - Incorporation of real-life stories of hope and challenge;
 - Catholic Social teaching principles, particularly building upon “Deus Caritas Est;”
 - An Ohio adaptation of the themes identified in the CCUSA Campaign of family stability, economic well-being, housing, healthcare and food;
 - A call to prayer, action, service, advocacy and “commitment” (Resources, community action, redirection of programs/services).
2. Develop and recommend a consultative process for both the Catholic Conference and each diocese that will help in strategic planning and offer ways our church can become more *intentional* in our efforts to reduce poverty. Such a process could garner the advice and involvement of parishioners, social services and health care boards, business and civic leaders, educators and community advocates.
3. Coordinate, adapt and promote the various excellent educational resources already developed by CCHD, CCUSA, USCCB, National Catholic Rural Life, Catholic Health Care, Catholic Committee on Appalachia, Justice for Immigrants, and CRS.
4. Expand and strengthen our parish outreach efforts related to pastoral ministry with the poor, legislative advocacy, education, Catholic Social Teaching, community organizing and public-private partnerships.

ⁱ 2006 US Census Report, and Ohio Dept. of Development, April 2007 Ohio Poverty Report