

**Faith-based Community Partnership Proposal**  
**Draft—November 1998**

**Introduction**

“Is not this the fast that I choose? . . . Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him; and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.”

Isaiah 58: 6-8

“Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

Matthew 25: 40

“The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have more; it is whether we provide enough for those who have so little.”

Franklin Roosevelt

“The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life.”

Jane Addams

“The greatest single challenge facing our globalized world is to combat and eradicate its disparities.”

Nelson Mandela

The problems of poverty and homelessness are not new to us; however, they have always been of central concern to people of conscience and people of faith. How do we serve the needs of those around us . . . especially at a time when the gap between the rich and poor continues to widen within our communities? What does it mean that in Washington County over 20,000 persons live below the poverty line?

Our answers to these questions amount to a challenge to our community as many continue to face the task of making ends meet in terms of the essentials of a job with a living wage, a affordable home, adequate food, essential medical care, necessary transportation, safe childcare, and educational opportunities.

There are many networks, services and programs that presently respond to these needs, yet not only are the needs greater than our present abilities to respond to them, but in addition there is much that faith-based communities can contribute to developing a more comprehensive approach to these concerns.

In light of this, now is an opportune time for us to create and develop a community-based partnership among faith communities and service providers in Washington County to create a coalition of concern and a network of service that can better address the situation of poverty in our region. The Faith-based Community Partnership proposal is an attempt to begin this process, focusing on the essential needs people have and creating a network of concern, support, information and advocacy to respond in compassionate and effective ways.

**\*Note: This Religious Community Partnership proposal is a part a larger program of community-based partnership efforts which are a part of our agency's work.**

### **Goals of the Religious Community Partnership**

- To create an on-going partnership/network between CAO and religious communities throughout Washington County in order to:
  - Coordinate information and referral efforts
  - Communicate information and develop a deeper consciousness about issues of poverty, homelessness, housing and social service resources available in Washington County
  - Create the capacity to raise issues, develop volunteer and educational opportunities, and coordinate program/service efforts throughout the community related to low-income concerns and community partnerships.

### **Components of the Outreach Effort:**

- Create a small planning team made up of clergy and laity in order to develop and evaluate the program.
- Distribute information and referral directories/diskettes and informational bulletins/educational resources related to poverty to local congregations and organizations.
- Create an annual funding resource among religious institutions to help support emergency services throughout Washington County.
- Establish a network of religiously-based groups and institutions that can advocate for the needs of low-income people.
- Expand the present service-based efforts that are already in place (e.g. Neighborshare and WESTCO).
- Develop a forum in which to address new needs that arise for low-income people as Washington County continues to grow and change.

### **Possible Bulletin Inserts Topics**

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| January   | Homelessness and Shelters  |
| February  | I Need Help!--Information and Referral System (IRIS)   |
| March     | How the religious community is responding to poverty in Washington County (Neighborshare, Sheltering the Homeless Coalition and WESTCO partnerships) |
| April     | Early Childhood Education Programs   |
| May       | Emergency Services/Focus on Farmworker Issues  |
| June      | Childcare Resources  |
| July      | Transitional Housing and Tenant Education  |
| August    | Examples of Poverty in Washington County   |
| September | Statistics/Profile of Poverty in Washington County   |
| October   | Weatherization and Energy Conservation   |
| November  | Energy Assistance  |
| December  | Programs for Pregnant Women  |

### **Timeline**

#### November

Discuss with CAO staff/gather input  
Gather a Core Group from the religious community to explore/edit the proposal  
Establish timeline for Iris development  
Establish approach for developing I and R directory and diskette

#### December

Develop bulletin inserts for 1999  
Have Core Group review and evaluate partnership options  
Faces of Poverty story for denominational resources throughout the area

#### January

Distribute bulletin info materials throughout the county  
Develop and write a grant for a "Faces of Poverty" video resource for distribution throughout the county

#### February

Religious community gathering related to community needs and issues around poverty  
"What you do unto the least of these...." theme

March

1999 Community Resources Directory/and Diskette available (demonstration)

April

Begin developing traveling educational pieces related to display and speakers  
Draft funding appeal for religious communities (grant possibilities)

May

Home Fair at CAO—communication throughout church network

September

Promote educational, speakers bureau/distribute the "Faces of Poverty" video  
Get feedback and evaluate the program to date  
Begin plans for the next year

October

Children's Sabbath Observance

November

Housing Sabbath Observance