

SDOP disburses nearly \$90,000 for self-help projects

Grant money from One Great Hour of Sharing helps oppressed and disadvantaged achieve self-sufficiency

by Margaret Mwale / Special to Presbyterian News Service



(Photo courtesy Youth Rise Texas)

LOUISVILLE – The Presbyterian [Committee on the Self-Development of People](#) (SDOP) approved grants totaling \$89,800 to fund five self-help projects in the United States and one in Belize. The national committee met recently to approve funding made possible through the [One Great Hour of Sharing](#) offering. SDOP enables members and non-members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to form partnerships with oppressed and disadvantaged people and help them achieve self-sufficiency.

The projects and grant amounts include:

Youth on the Move – Pine Apple, Alabama, \$15,000 — This youth-led after school project prepares low income youth in Wilcox County 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 plans include learning basic construction, electrical and plumbing skills.

Coalition for Police Accountability – Oakland, California, \$15,000 — 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 – Austin, Texas, \$15,000 (approved pending site visit completion) —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 over the course of the institute 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. – Rochester, New York, \$14,800—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, New York, \$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 members are workers at Amy’s Bread and Tom Cat Bakery. 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

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.

SDOP leaders say they are always looking for new community groups to forge great partnerships with and receives/reviews grant applications year-round. Potential community partners must meet SDOP’s funding criteria of group members directly controlling, owning and benefiting from the project.

Groups interested in being considered for the fall funding cycle, will need to submit an application soon. Visit (<http://www.youtube.com/user/selfdevelopment/videos>) then click on the “Visible Community, Maine” video for more on the application process. [Click here](#) for more information about Self-Development of People and its projects or to host a SDOP community workshop (information session).