



Catholic Charities of Idaho

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ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF BOISE

Economic Security

Given our Christian mission, Catholic Charities of Idaho and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Boise represent the voice of the most vulnerable in Idaho. Our legislative priorities are in the areas of affordable housing, food/nutritional security, equitable and affordable healthcare, economic security, and immigration reform.

About Economic Security

The recent economic downturn has led to rapidly increasing unemployment and underemployment rates. More families are facing financial difficulties with many turning to the state for financial assistance through government programs such as Unemployment and Food Stamps (now entitled the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). Foreclosure and bankruptcy rates are at extreme highs, and families are struggling to pay for necessities, often having to make difficult choices between adequate health care, nutritious food, and paying bills. Workers are being forced to take pay cuts, accept jobs that do not pay a living wage (meaning a wage that sustains a decent standard of living without government assistance), and thus give up their economic security.

Economic Security Statistics

- Unemployment in Idaho increased by 63% over the last year, and in October 2009, Idaho's unemployment rate was 9%.
- 13% of all Idahoans have an income below the poverty level.
- Over the past two decades, the poverty rate among working families in Idaho has increased by 50%.
- Almost half (43%) of all children in Idaho live in low-income families (defined as income below 200% of the federal poverty level).
- Women in Idaho earn 50% of the average man's wages. This is less than \$12,500 per year and the lowest wages in the country for women.
- On average, it costs \$5,817 a year to send an infant to full-time child care and \$5,360 to send a four year old. Full-time care for an infant in a child care center costs 26% of the median income for single parent (female headed) households.
- Over the last year, foreclosure rates in Idaho increased by 239%. Idaho's foreclosure rate ranks 6th in the nation with one in every 241 housing units undergoing a foreclosure filing.

Catholic Social Teaching

Families are essential units in our society. Poverty threatens not only the dignity of life and the ability to meet basic human needs, but family well-being as well. The economic security of families must be promoted and strengthened, and every individual should be granted the opportunity to adequately provide for themselves and for their family. Church teachings emphasize our responsibility to protect the rights to work for a just wage under safe conditions in addition to preserving and defending the basic human rights of every individual and family.

About Catholic Charities of Idaho

The mission of Catholic Charities of Idaho is to advance the dignity of individuals, families, and communities by strengthening families, advocating justice, and engaging the community to serve the common good. These three principles guide the work of Catholic Charities of Idaho throughout the state of Idaho. Catholic Charities of Idaho offers services to all people regardless of religion, age, gender, disability, race/ethnicity, income, or background.

About the Catholic Diocese of Boise

United with our Bishop and in communion with the Universal Church, we the People of God in Idaho are called to build up the Kingdom of God by: proclaiming the presence of God in word and sacrament; calling each other to conversion and to joyful sharing of the Good News by word and deed; nurturing and supporting vital faith communities; being a prophetic voice which affirms the good values of society and challenges what is destructive; discovering, celebrating and integrating the gifts of each individual, community and culture; recognizing and responding to those in need.

For a list of resources used in this publication, please contact:

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