

Public Policy Statement Regarding Poverty Issues in Idaho

The citizens of Idaho care about the wellbeing of their families and communities. We want a hopeful and prosperous future for our children, communities that are thriving and a state that is a great place to live, work and raise a family. While many Idaho families prosper, a number struggle to meet basic needs. The harsh realities of a slowly improving economy continue to affect nearly **sixteen percent of Idaho's families who are living in poverty**.

Catholic Charities of Idaho (CCI) and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Boise (RCDB) have a **vision to end poverty in Idaho**. Based on the principles of **Catholic Social Teaching**, we educate and advocate on issues directly related to poverty in Idaho. These issues include:

Hunger - Idaho's communities are stronger when families have **access to the safe and nutritious food** required to meet basic needs and fuel active lives. It is for this reason that the public sector must work together with the faith community, non-profit organizations, and private businesses to ensure that every Idaho family enjoys the security of having its basic nutritional needs met.

Healthcare - Social justice and compassion are important values that should guide the transformation of health care in America. We envision a nation with an **affordable health care system that leaves no person behind**. To achieve this vision, we must continue to work toward a health care system that delivers affordable, high value and clinical excellence across the continuum of care to every Idahoan.

Affordable Housing - Families able to find adequate, affordable housing participate in the economic development of their communities. A secure, comfortable and safe home lays the foundation for healthy and happy families. **Affordable housing options must remain a priority in Idaho communities** to ensure that this foundation stays intact.

Economic Security – Strong infrastructure and well-managed resources support values cherished by many Idahoans, including business ownership, quality of life, etc. **Protecting public systems** such as Education, Medicaid, and Supplemental Nutrition Programs (along with other necessary services) helps protect the values of our state, and ensures a secure quality of life for generations to come.

CCI and the RCDB believe firmly that we **all** need and deserve support: from family, friends, our community and our government. People in poverty make more progress when they are connected to the supports offered by faith communities, non-profit organizations, business communities and government. Our collective effort should be focused on creating a system that will efficiently and effectively connect people in poverty to these available supports. The end result will be neither "self reliance" nor "government dependence," but instead, will result in **individuals who contribute to the same community that assisted them** during their time of need.

It is a special grace to feel compassion for people. Our challenge is to channel this grace into service for the common good. CCI, in partnership with Bishop Michael Driscoll, community and faith-based organizations, and business leaders across the state, strives each day to provide help, create hope and promote justice. **We are a people of faith, empowering people in need to reach their spiritual, emotional and economic potential**.