

CATHOLIC CHARITIES FOUNDATION FUND



Foundation Case Study



BACKGROUND

“Our Catholic Church believes that it’s the responsibility of everyone to participate in our society and to promote the common good, especially to the most poor and vulnerable,” says Tracy Morrison, executive director of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Dubuque. “And Catholic Charities really brings that principle to life through our ministry to help the most poor and vulnerable.”

While social needs of the time have varied, Catholic Charities in this area has ministered to people since 1931. “We always rely on our foundation of treating people with dignity and respect, regardless of how they interface with Catholic Charities,” says Tracy. And while it’s a faith-based nonprofit, that aspect of integrating faith into the help people seek is optional. “There are other nonprofit and social service providers, thankfully, in all of our communities, but people often seek out Catholic Charities because faith is a big part of a person’s personal healing journey, regardless of what that may be. We always respect that faith is an important part to some, not all, and it’s always their choice whether they want that included as part of their journey.”

Catholic Charities does not rely heavily on government funding, says Tracy, which allows the organization to be flexible and nimble and quickly shift, depending on what the social needs are at that time. “The priorities of our state and federal government often don’t align with the priorities of the Church at any given time,” she says. Therefore, the organization relies largely on donations to provide social service ministries in the 30 counties it serves. “I have been with Catholic Charities for a good number of years and I continue to be in awe of people’s very sacrificial giving,” she says.

CHALLENGE

When talking with potential donors, Tracy says, “I offer them an opportunity to give to Catholic Charities in a variety of ways. Some donors like to give money to Catholic Charities knowing that people will immediately be helped by that money. Some people like to think more long-term and say, ‘I would like to help people now, but also in years to come’ and leave a legacy for themselves or their family.”

As these legacy funds that perpetually help Catholic Charities grew, the Catholic Charities Board of Directors had a desire to invest these funds in socially responsible ways that were consistent with the Catholic faith. “We didn’t have the ability or a capacity as a board to do that,” says Tracy.



SOLUTION

Through CFAD, Catholic Charities created the “Catholic Charities Foundation Fund,” an endowment that helps the organization carry out its mission each year. CFAD utilizes Catholic responsible investments. What this means is that CFAD applies investment screens to its portfolios in accordance with the Socially Responsible Investment Guidelines of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. CFAD avoids any investments in companies whose sources of revenue come from practices opposed to Catholic teachings.

“The partnership with CFAD really came at a critical time for us,” Tracy says. “We can feel good about our investments.” The endowment adds stability to Catholic Charities’ budget, as the organization receives annual distributions from its investments in CFAD to help continue all the various ministries it does each year. This in turn helps the organization pivot as needed to continue to offer services that reduce poverty and strengthen families and communities in accordance with Catholic social teachings. Tracy says, “Through our fundraising efforts and investments in CFAD, we can ensure that we have funding available long-term to help populations.”

The endowment, built and added to by donors, shows their values through their legacy giving. Tracy says, “Through our partnership with CFAD, we can ensure that the donor’s intent is being recognized, that their monies are being invested in socially responsible ways and that we are being the best stewards of their sacrificial gifts.”

