

Churches Helping Churches giving grants during pandemic

By [Lynda Edwards](#)



Photo: James Franco

Rev. Mashona Walston, the senior minister at First Church in Albany, NY, and Ian Leet, prepare for a drive-in service on Sunday, Aug. 2, 2020 (Jim Franco/special to the Times Union.)

4 pm CDT, Friday, August 21, 2020

Churches Helping Churches, a national Christian-based group, is a racially diverse religious coalition that is a financial lifeline for hundreds of congregations hit hard by the pandemic.

CHC focuses on urban low-income congregations of predominantly people of color or immigrants. According to CHC research, about 10 percent of those congregations are not sure they can survive the loss of donations and volunteers caused by the pandemic.

"In Phase I (April to July 2020) of Churches Helping Churches, we brought faith organizations together to raise over \$1.2 million to help low-income churches all over

the nation. Hundreds of churches received a \$3,000 grant to help them survive through the COVID-19 crisis. From churches on Native American reservations to churches in urban centers," the CHC website states. "In Phase II of CHC, we'll continue to encourage stable churches to build relationships with at-risk churches in their community and help through financial and tangible resources."

CHC supplies best practice guidelines for partnerships - big, stable churches seeking struggling churches. CHC will also be providing at-risk churches with \$5,000 grants to continue community service projects. According to the coalition, all grants are administered by the nonprofit National Christian Foundation which has been overseeing gifts and donations by religious organizations since 1982.

The coalition is spearheaded by the **National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference** (40,118 evangelicals), a cluster of youth ministries known as Pulse, the National Latino Evangelical Association, Urban Ministries Inc. (the nation's biggest independent, Black-owned and -operated Christian media company), Movement.org (a national group that tries to persuade corporate leaders to help marginalized members of their communities, and the American Bible Society.

Other partners are the **Church of God in Christ**, the biggest Pentecostal congregation in America, founded by two Black pastors in 1897 and partnered with the historically conservative National Association of Evangelicals, the Prison Fellowship, and Center for Public Justice (a think tank with some controversial views on how religious freedom affects healthcare insurance).

This week, some coalition members noted the unusually wide-ranging political and social viewpoints represented by the coalition when CHC announced a new anti-racist movement to tackle police reform and mass incarceration.

"This is an unprecedented coalition of Biblical Christians from all demographics, who are coming together to address racial injustice in strategic and tangible ways," said Justin Giboney, coalition member said in a statement. "We're putting partisanship aside to pursue justice as is dictated in the Bible. The American Church is sending a clear, unequivocal message in opposition to injustice and in support of Black and Brown people who've suffered for too long in America."

Prayer & Action Justice Initiative issued a statement that read in part:

"We mourn the loss of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd and all others who have lost their lives due to racialized violence. The Church must take these injustices personally and take initiative to expel racial hatred and partiality from our society...we will pursue justice and righteousness in society on His behalf (Isaiah 59:15-16; Micah 6:8; Luke 4:18). Right doctrine without righteous conduct is unfaithfulness (James 2:14-26). Accordingly, to be silent or inactive on racism is immoral."

To learn more about Churches Helping Churches, visit <https://www.churchrelief.org/>

Online: <https://www.mysanantonio.com/7dayarchive/article/Grants-ready-for-churches-hit-by-pandemic-15496987.php> [Accessed 9.8.2020].