

**St. Vincent de Paul Society**  
**Voice of the Poor (VOP)**  
**Milwaukee Diocesan Ministry**

**Activities during 2006-2007:**

- *Focus on issues* that came from Vincentian visits with the poor, as well as from national VOP (USCCB) positions. We have one committee person monitor each issue and bring information to our meetings. This year we addressed these issues:
  - A. Housing – worked with an interfaith coalition to establish a Housing Trust Fund in the city of Milwaukee; Waukesha has now begun a similar effort based on Milwaukee.
  - B. Hunger – collaborated with Hunger Task Force in monitoring the local hunger needs and our meal program offered an event to raise awareness to the local needs.
  - C. Energy – met Michael Mueller, WE Energies, Manager of Low Income & Medical Condition Programs, regarding the best way to collaborate with the utility companies.
  - D. Minimum Wage – sent out education and action alerts on this issue.
  - E. Healthcare – been monitoring statewide efforts to improve healthcare to needy.
  - F. Immigration – promoted comprehensive immigration reform, collaborating with our archdiocesan social justice office.
  - G. Death Penalty – sent out action alerts and held educational events before last fall’s statewide referendum on the death penalty.
  
- *General Formation*
  - A. In March 2007, gave a workshop on VOP at a statewide lobby day that the Wisconsin Catholic Conference offers every other year
  - B. In May 2007, presented a general session on VOP at the North Central Regional Meeting in Oconomowoc, WI.
  
- *Archdiocesan Structure Diocesan*
  - A. Worked with the district councils to get representation on our archdiocesan committee. Seven of nine councils are now represented.
  - B. Developed a job description for conference contact people for VOP and a plan of action to recruit and train them. See description below. (October 20, 2007 will be our first formation event for these contacts.)

**Job Description for *Conference Contact – A Model***

Overview:

The Voice of the Poor Conference Contact promotes the justice concerns of the poor on the local level. The contact serves as a liaison between the Archdiocesan VOP and the individual Conference. Vincentian advocacy must be present in the public, political arena but always non-partisan. To speak with “one voice”, special attention needs to be given to emphasize official positions on issues (from the National VOP, US Catholic Bishops’ Office, or archdiocesan VOP), not an individual member’s special interest.

Primary responsibilities:

1. Receive and promote educational and action alerts
2. Consult with conference president to put VOP concerns on the conference agenda
3. Report to the archdiocesan VOP the results of conference action and share local concerns with the archdiocesan VOP
4. Attend a yearly formation session