



Religious
Coalition
for Reproductive
Choice

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

PRO FAITH. PRO FAMILY. PRO CHOICE.

The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) is a broad-based, national, interfaith movement that brings the moral force of religion to protect and advance reproductive health, choice, rights and justice through education, prophetic witness, pastoral presence and advocacy.

RCRC values and promotes religious liberty which upholds the human and constitutional rights of all people to exercise their conscience to make their own reproductive health decisions without shame and stigma. RCRC challenges systems of oppression and seeks to remove the multiple barriers that impede individuals, especially those in marginalized communities in accessing comprehensive reproductive health care with respect and dignity.

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MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

Dear Friends,

As I write this, we are on the verge of a cultural watershed moment. Continued acts of police brutality, nationwide protests, and calls for defunding have brought institutionalized anti-Black racism into sharp focus. The global COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a public health crisis — which conservative lawmakers have exploited to threaten reproductive freedom — and revealed huge gaps in our social safety net. Meanwhile, we approach a presidential election this November that will alter the course of our nation.

The intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, etc. and their material impact on our lives are more apparent than ever. And more than ever, the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) is committed to bringing our prophetic voice to the sacred and urgent work of reproductive freedom advocacy — and doing so with compassion, hope, and faith.

RCRC occupies a unique space in the reproductive health, rights, choice, and justice movements because we draw on the moral power of diverse faith communities. We have proud roots in the Clergy Consultation Service on Abortion — the underground network of religious leaders that operated before *Roe v Wade*. These brave people of conscience took risks to ensure that others could have the spiritual counseling they needed, and, if they chose, a referral to a safe abortion provider.

This past year we focused on deepening our partnerships and community. We understand that no one does this work alone and that harnessing our collective power through collaboration and trust-building is the key to creating impact. All of the program work you will see detailed throughout this report is underscored by meaningful, in-depth collaboration with other like-minded faith and justice organizations. We aim to build a lasting movement.

In 2019, we continued to **change hearts and minds** with our Compassionate Care trainings. We implemented an updated curriculum that includes tools to address systemic oppression, added a new roster of trainers, and held our first-ever non-clergy workshop for direct services staff. We also **empowered faithful leadership** by investing in religious leaders across the country, holding fellowships and convenings to equip them with the tools and connections needed to advocate for reproductive freedom in their congregations and communities.

We **transformed the narrative** with our Clinic Blessing program, where we work with spiritual leaders and organizations in local communities to lead interfaith, inclusive rituals of blessing in healthcare facilities that provide abortion. We **took action** in support of reproductive freedom and other critical social justice issues by organizing and participating in rallies, protests, and prayer vigils across the country.

We have rooted our work for reproductive freedom in the principle that every individual is imbued with dignity and moral agency, capable of making decisions for themselves, and with the conviction that our work for the flourishing of all is indeed sacred.

This is a time of immense grief and struggling, and at RCRC, we also see it as a collective call to compassion. There is so much work to be done, and we have the opportunity to show up for one another and live out our values as never before.

As people of faith, we dare to dream of a world that we have not yet seen but we believe we can create together. We are grateful for you joining our ministry of love and reproductive freedom, to dream and create alongside us.

In Solidarity,

Rev. Katey Zeh

Interim Chief Executive Officer

RCRC PROGRAMS

Changing Hearts and Minds



Through our **Compassionate Care** program, RCRC trains professionals in ministry, healthcare, social work, and other direct care services to

provide judgment-free emotional and spiritual support during times of reproductive decision-making and crisis. We do this to help ensure that individuals are supported in ways that honor their human dignity, by focusing on their lived experiences, spiritual beliefs, moral values, hopes, and needs.

In 2019, we began implementing our newly updated Compassionate Care curriculum, which now includes tools for addressing systemic oppression (in addition to one-on-one compassionate conversations).

We held workshops in locations around the country, including Texas and two in the Mississippi Delta that included over fifty trainees. We also held RCRC's first ever non-clergy workshop, comprising direct services staff that included: clinic staff, escorts, abortion hotline staff, social workers, attorneys, and more.

2019 also saw us recruiting and training ten new Compassionate Care facilitators. These facilitators represent a range of religious backgrounds, ages, genders, gender identities, geographic regions, races, and sexual orientations — enabling RCRC to enhance our effectiveness in reaching diverse audiences.



Empowering Faithful Leadership



In partnership with Faith in Women in Mississippi, RCRC launched our **“Leaders of Moral Courage” Fellowship** in 2019. This fellowship is designed to equip faith leaders and people of faith in the South (all of whom serve in professional positions in mental health, public health, and sex education) with the skills they need to promote messages of human and reproductive dignity.

The Fellows developed individual projects, which include: addressing mortality among Black women; the implications of reproductive education on LGBTQ communities; the integration of sex education and reproductive services; and effective strategies for engaging local politicians around reproductive dignity and freedom.

From this inaugural Leaders of Moral Courage Fellowship, RCRC is developing a curriculum and guidebook on how to develop the parameters of a fellowship, the recruitment process, potential Fellowship projects, and more. We plan to expand the fellowship to other local communities and congregations in the Central and South regions in the coming years.



In 2019, RCRC held convenings across the country, attended by over 300 stakeholders, which included ordained and lay religious leaders, religious scholars, representatives from RCRC’s affiliates, and members of individual congregations. These gatherings established relationships and imparted tools to help participants support reproductive freedom and dignity in their congregations and communities.

In April, we worked with our Kentucky RCRC affiliate and local faith and community organizations in Kentucky to do strategic planning around addressing the challenge of having only a single abortion care clinic in the entire state.

In November, we co-sponsored *Christian Supremacy and the Erosion of Justice* with the First Unitarian Church of Indianapolis. This event was an educational forum on the intersections of religion, reproductive oppression, and other justice issues.

Transforming the Narrative



Through our **Clinic Blessings**, RCRC works with spiritual leaders and organizations in local communities to lead interfaith, inclusive rituals of blessing in healthcare facilities and clinics where abortion services are provided.

We affirm that the care and compassion given to pregnant individuals honor their full personhood — a personhood which cannot and must not be diminished for any reason.

We affirm the work of abortion care as sacred.

In 2019, we partnered with the Texas Freedom Network, Whole Woman’s Health Alliance, and local partners to bless Whole Woman’s Health clinics in Austin, TX and McAllen, TX.

In November, we issued our inaugural “**Dignity to Decide**” Award to honor outstanding work in helping to educate, challenge, and change the public narrative on reproductive freedom.

We honored scholar-activist Dr. Mary Hunt, for the ways her research and teaching bend the thinking of religious leaders toward prophetic action, and the ways her speaking and writing act as public witness and bring justice to the forefront of the public square.

We also honored journalist Dr. Cynthia Greenlee, for her work in going above and beyond to educate audiences on what underlies reproductive oppression, and inspiring and challenging the public to action. We recognize this important work as a companion to the work of scholars.

Taking Action



In 2019, RCRC joined and helped to organize rallies, protests, and prayer vigils at the U.S. Supreme Court, on Capitol Hill, and at state capitols in Texas and Arizona (with local community partners). We fought for the importance of reproductive freedom, against the oppression of white Christian supremacy and religious refusals, and other critical justice issues of our time.

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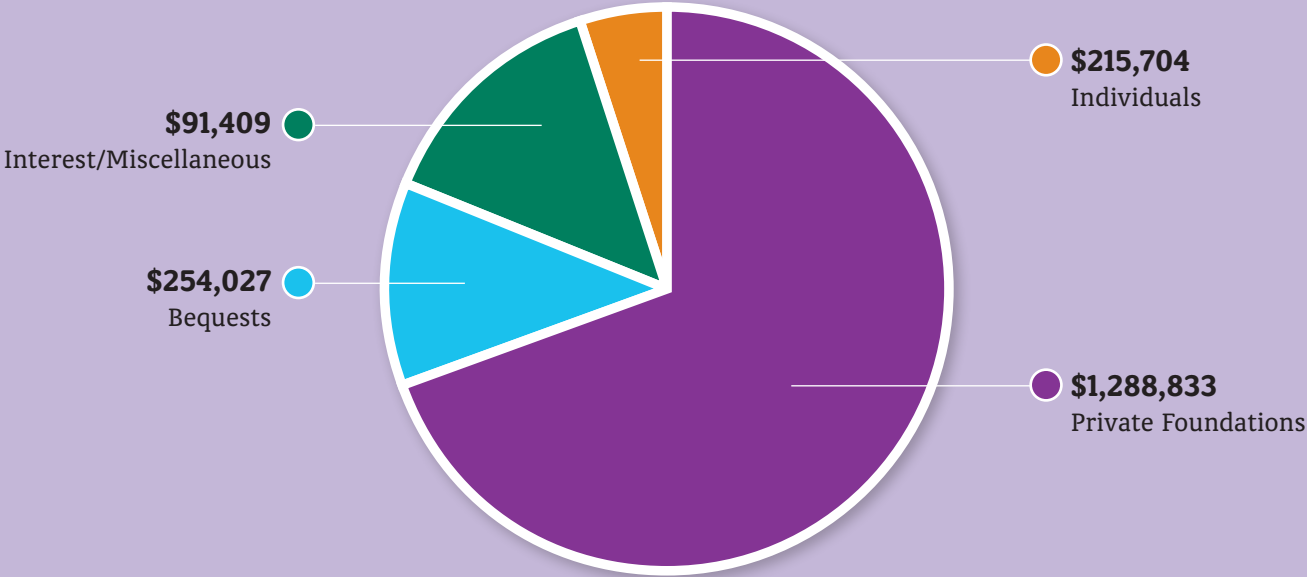


2019 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

2019 Support and Revenues

\$1,849,973

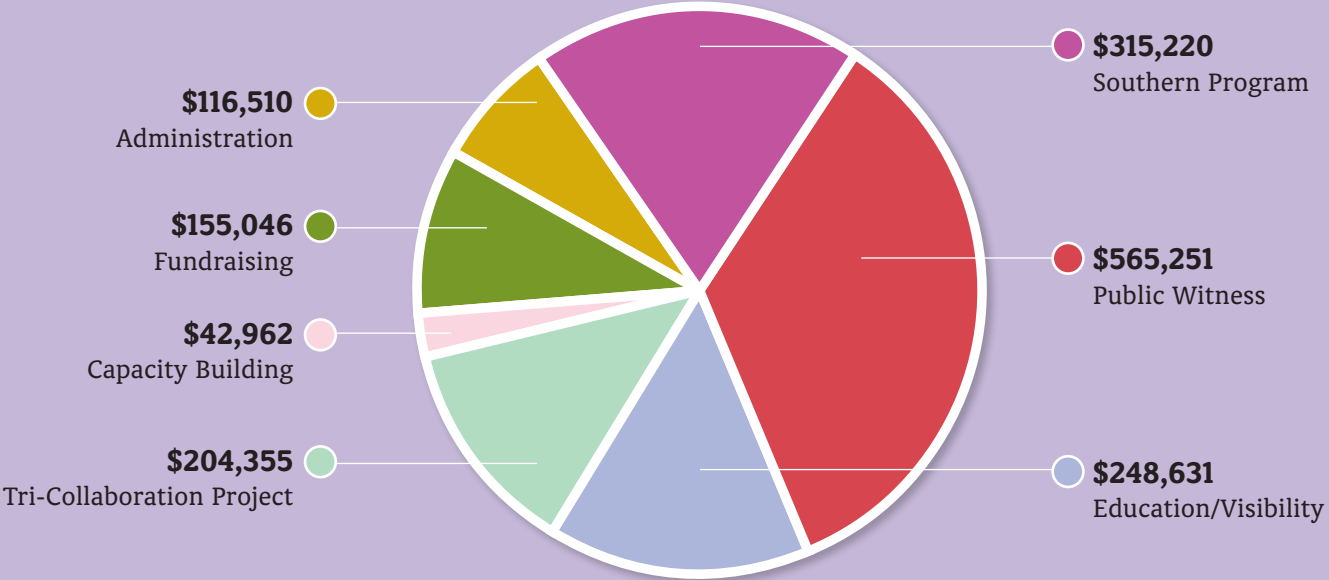
TOTAL PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUES



2019 Expenses

\$1,647,975

TOTAL EXPENSES



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(As of December 31, 2019)

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Clergy in Residence

Melanie Bui Larsen
Director of Operations

Carolyn Miller
Accountant

Rev. Katey Zeh
Interim Chief Executive Officer

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