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## Chicago Catholic Charities slammed

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NCR Today

An estimated 1 million Latinos live in the Archdiocese of Chicago, but the archdiocese's human service arm, Catholic Charities, is failing them, according to a report from the Chicago NPR station.

Critics, including immigrant advocates, a state senator and at least one Chicago priest, say Catholic Charities should be doing more to help impoverished Latino families.

Even the agency's own internal report indicates that only 20 percent of their clients are Latino, when Latinos--not counting undocumented people--make up at least 28 percent of the area's poor.

It seems Catholic Charities is aware of its own failings. Last year they sought the opinions of priests in Chicago's heavily Latino neighborhoods about their services. And a Latino advisory committee last year called for more Spanish-language translators and publicity.

In typical church fashion, Catholic Charities head Father Michael Boland declined to comment for the NPR report. So did anyone else from the archdiocese. Instead Charities spokeswoman Kristin Ortman was quoted as saying the agency already works closely with Latino congregations and produces materials in Spanish "across all programs."

A quick check on their website under publications indicates four publications--Keenager News, Spirit Magazine, a white paper on senior poverty, and the annual report--all in English only.

Commenters on the NPR report include an anonymous employee who complains about agency cutbacks while top execs enjoy five-star privileges, a board member who is immediately cutting contributions and calling for change in leadership at the agency, and this from someone writing as "Catholic Conscience": "Same on Catholic Charities and its Irish mafia for such bigotry and prejudice."

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