



PEOPLE ACTING FOR COMMUNITY TOGETHER, INC. (PACT)

DIVERSE INSTITUTIONS WORKING TOGETHER FOR FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE

Overview and Structure

PACT is a coalition of 38 churches, synagogues, mosques, schools and community groups in Miami-Dade County working together to fight for social and economic justice. Founded in 1988, PACT is the largest grassroots organization in South Florida, representing more than 100,000 individuals.

PACT unites, organizes and trains leaders from diverse congregations, schools and community groups to build a powerful community voice. Individually and collectively, we empower ourselves, hold officials accountable, achieve systemic change, and promote fairness, justice and democracy in Miami-Dade County.

To win justice, PACT holds ‘direct action’ meetings, encouraging public officials to take action and holding them accountable by using the power of organized communities. Once PACT members achieve victory on a campaign, leaders put in place a series of checks and measures to ensure that progress is continuing to be made, and ensuring that officials remain accountable even after the original objective has been fulfilled. Issues are identified through an extensive listening process reaching approximately 1,500 members.

PACT is member driven at every level. Its board, which meets monthly, is made up of two representatives from each congregation. In addition, PACT has seven elected officers who also serve on the board. These individuals, and the issues PACT addresses, are determined democratically by vote at the annual assembly or convention. This ensures that PACT’s board is reflective of the diversity in Miami Dade County, and also that its leaders and Board members are internally accountable.

PACT’s member congregations are also diverse in size and religious affiliation. Meetings are frequently conducted in three languages, English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole. A majority of PACT’s congregations are in lower income areas and our campaigns focus on issues which affect low to moderate income people.

PACT is a member of the DART (Direct Action and Research Training) network of congregation-based community organizations, which enables partnership with over 20 similar county-wide organizations throughout Florida and the United States. Through DART, PACT is able to offer leaders in-depth training on a variety of issues including leadership, relationship building and networking every year. In Florida, the DART organizations comprise a group called FDOF (Federation of DART Organizations, Florida) enabling them to fight collectively on issues state-wide and mobilize even greater numbers of people.

Despite the organization’s reach, PACT has an experienced staff of only 5 full time organizers and extensively mobilizes volunteers from its congregations. Voluntary lay leaders are centrally involved in all aspects of the organization including issue development, fundraising and growth.

Accomplishments

PACT has a sixteen-year history of successful campaigns on a wide variety of issues. A few highlights are listed below:

Crack Houses	In 1990, PACT pressured the City of Miami to demolish more than 300 crack houses in low-income neighborhoods.
Homelessness	PACT helped to convince the county to create the Homeless Trust and to provide more county resources to help the homeless.
Affordable Housing	In 1994, PACT negotiated an agreement with two local banks that provided \$38 million for low-income affordable housing programs.
City Services	On several occasions, PACT has secured improved city services in low-income neighborhoods, including new street lighting in areas where there was previously not enough light, improved cleanup of garbage dumping sites, and repair of neglected streets.
Grocery Stores	When a major grocery store tried to pull out of a working-class neighborhood, PACT convinced them to stay and to improve the quality of their store.
Crime Prevention	PACT actions in 1998 secured a community oriented policing program for the Norland / Norwood section of Miami-Dade and also secured an increase in the number officers who can speak Haitian Creole. PACT actions in 2001 successfully targeted hot spots of drug-dealing and prostitution.
Education Reform	PACT successfully pressured the Miami-Dade County Public Schools to implement a phonics-based reading program called Direct Instruction. PACT also won \$7.25 million in state funding for the reading program.
Immigration Reform	In 1999, PACT prodded the INS to implement a mandatory two-day training program for all staff in this district to improve customer service and cultural awareness. PACT's action also resulted in staffing changes that are speeding up the immigration process for those who want to become citizens or permanent residents.
Public Transportation	In 2001, PACT launched a campaign seeking to double the number of buses in the Miami-Dade fleet. By increasing the number of buses, PACT hoped to address problems with overcrowding and long wait times for public transit. PACT successfully pressured the mayor and county commissioners to place the issue on the ballot for the November 2002 election, and then campaigned aggressively for passage of the plan. The <i>People's Transportation Plan</i> passed by a landslide, and the bus fleet improvements are on schedule.

Current Issue Campaigns

Miami-Dade County suffers from numerous social problems, many of which are caused by an unjust distribution of power and a lack of accountability. PACT is currently addressing three issues which community members identified as of immediate concern: education, immigration, housing, and health care. Each issue is a symptom of this underlying lack of accountability and unjust distribution of power.

PACT's overarching goal is: *To build power to achieve justice.* This power comes directly from the grassroots leaders PACT identifies and trains. These trained grass roots leader then take responsibility for, and implement, PACT's individual project goals. Further details of each campaign are given below:

Expanding Access to Health Care

PACT believes that all residents should have access to basic health care, regardless of how much money they earn or whether or not their employer provides insurance. PACT recognizes that expanding access to health care is a complex issue and that there is no one overarching solution to this problem. There are, however, many partial solutions which can dramatically improve the situation for thousands of people. PACT's Health Care Committee has been working to design and build support for a comprehensive system to provide basic health care for all children in Miami-Dade County through a network of clinics in the public schools.

Improving the Quality of Public Education

PACT believes that all children can achieve at high levels and that, as a community, we have a responsibility to ensure that they are given the opportunity to do so. PACT's Education Committee focused intensively for many years on improving reading instruction at the elementary school level. Currently, the committee is working to get the school district to adopt a high quality induction training program for new teachers so that new teachers get the support they need to be effective in the classroom.

Increasing the Availability of Low-Income Affordable Housing

PACT believes that our community should have housing available and affordable for people of all income levels. PACT's Housing Committee is currently working with a coalition of organizations on a campaign to dramatically increase the supply of low-income housing in the county.

Ensuring Fair Treatment of Immigrants

PACT believes that all human beings, including immigrants, deserve to be treated fairly and that immigrants enrich the country. PACT's Immigration Committee is currently working to secure passage of the DREAM Act and other legislation that would allow young people a clear path to citizenship and the opportunity to pursue higher education.

Funding

The organizational budget has grown steadily over the organization's history and now stands at approximately \$500,000 in annual revenues and expenditures. PACT continues to receive broad-based support and is funded in four ways:

1. Membership dues from the participating congregations or organizations (5% of revenue)
2. Investments / donations from individuals and small businesses (5% of revenue)
3. Investments / donations from local corporations (15% of revenue)
4. Grants from a variety of private foundations and religious bodies (75% of revenue)

Although membership dues do not account for a large percentage of the organization's budget, they are the most important revenue source. Payment of membership dues shows commitment on the part of the member congregations and helps attract corporate and foundation funding.

Member Institutions

PACT's membership currently consists of 38 member institutions: 12 Catholic churches, 15 Protestant churches, 3 Jewish synagogues, 1 Islamic mosque, 5 public school parent groups, and 2 community based organizations. Together, those member institutions represent more than 100,000 individuals.

Those individuals, and PACT as a whole, reflect the wonderful diversity of Miami-Dade County. Approximately 51% of those individuals are Hispanic (including 29% Cuban and 22% non-Cuban); 35% are Black, non-Hispanic (including 19% Haitian, 12% African-American, and 5% Caribbean); 12% are White, non-Hispanic; and 1% are of other racial backgrounds.

PACT's current member institutions are:

All Nations Presbyterian Church	Immaculate Conception Catholic Church	Saint Louis Catholic Church
Auburndale Elementary School	Little Haiti Housing Association	Saint Mary's Cathedral
Church By The Sea	Masjid Al-Ansar	Saint Monica Catholic Church
Coral Gables Congregational Church	Mount Tabor Missionary Baptist Church	Saint Timothy Catholic Church
Corpus Christi Catholic Church	Norland Middle School	Saint Timothy Evangelical Lutheran Church
Ebenezer United Methodist Church	Norland United Methodist Church	Sellers Memorial United Methodist Church
Faith United Methodist Church	Notre Dame d'Haiti Catholic Church	Sierra Norwood Calvary Baptist Church
Fienberg Fisher Elementary School	Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church	South Hialeah Elementary School
First United Methodist Church of Miami	Parkway Elementary School	Temple Beth Am
Fulford United Methodist Church	Prince of Peace Moravian Church	Temple Beth Sholom
Grace Haitian United Methodist Church	Saint Francis Xavier Catholic Church	Temple Israel of Greater Miami
Holy Family Catholic Church	Saint James Catholic Church	Theos Family Church
Human Services Coalition of Dade County		Visitation Catholic Church

More Information

More information is available at www.miamipact.org or by calling the office at 305-643-1526.