



ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON

PASTORAL ASSOCIATE GUIDELINES

Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries

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Guidelines for Pastoral Associates

I. Pastoral Associates

A. Title

The title Pastoral Associate is used to describe those Lay or Religious full-time and part-time, salaried/stipend persons who are members of the parish staff, sharing responsibility for the daily pastoral care of the faithful.

B. Profile

Persons who serve the parish faith community as Pastoral Associates, and who by formation and education are qualified for this role, may be lay or religious, male or female, single or married. They bring to the parish their competence and compassion, which finds expression in a wide range of services, that are both pastoral and professional.

Pastoral Associates should be persons of strong faith, witnesses to the Good News of Jesus Christ, blessed with a deep love of the Catholic Church, knowledgeable in its teachings and committed to its mission. By their lives, their attitudes, and their ministry they can enrich the parish community even as they, themselves, are enriched through the gifts of those with whom they work or to whom they minister.

C. Role Description

As a member of the parish staff, the Pastoral Associate participates in the pastoral care of the parish community. In addition to general responsibilities, the Pastoral Associate performs the various ministries assigned, and supports other staff members as they strive to make adult faith formation an integral focus of parish life.

It is expected that a written agreement, developed by both the Pastor and the Pastoral Associate, identifies the responsibilities of the Pastoral Associate.

1. General Responsibilities

- a. Participates in the liturgical life of the parish, particularly at Sunday Liturgy.
- b. Collaborates with the parish staff in providing pastoral care to the parish community.
- c. Shares regularly as a member of the parish staff, in staff meetings, in parish and cluster planning, as an Ex-Officio member of the Parish Pastoral

Council, and as a resource to both paid and volunteer leadership in various areas of parish life.

- d. Exercises pastoral care for particular aspects of parish life as noted in the Agreement.

2. Potential Areas of Responsibility

The work of the Pastoral Associate may embrace a wide variety of needs of the parish community. The Pastor and Pastoral Associate, after consultation, may periodically modify responsibilities to reflect changing situations and unexpected events. In addition to the general responsibilities, the Pastoral Associate may be assigned some of the following specific, though not exclusive, areas of pastoral care:

a. Evangelization

To contribute to the development of an evangelizing community by animating parishioners to share the Good News of Christ in the home, work-place, and the neighborhood.

b. Worship and Spirituality

- To work creatively and cooperatively towards the formation of a lively, faith-filled worshipping community.
- To work collaboratively with the Pastor and others in forming a pastoral team for liturgical planning.
- To assist with liturgical functions, to lead prayer services, and to provide other devotional opportunities.
- To organize rehearsals and celebrations (e.g. wedding, baptism).
- To lead Wake Services and Burial Services as needed.
- To administer the Eucharist as an extraordinary minister as needed.
- To be involved in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.
- To be responsible for the training and formation of liturgical ministers.
- To organize and implement programs of spiritual enrichment.
- To be available for pastoral conversations and spiritual support.

c. Parish Outreach

To discern, create, and promote ways through which the parish can reach out in service to its own members and to those outside the parish community. This includes the formation of a community that welcomes its own as well as newcomers.

- To train parishioners to serve as parish visitors for the ministry of pastoral care to the sick and homebound.
- To do home visitations/census.

- To visit hospitals and nursing homes.
- To reach out to the alienated and the unchurched.
- To represent the parish at community gatherings and in ecumenical and interreligious organizations.

d. Healing and Assistance Ministry

- To facilitate opportunities for healing when a parish is in crisis.
- To support and participate in Archdiocesan programs whose purpose is to keep children, youth, the elderly, and the disabled safe.
- To support and assist all reporters of abuse.
- To facilitate the development of a comprehensive intake and management process to screen and support ministry volunteers who serve children, youth, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

e. Adult Enrichment

- To provide formation opportunities for laity by assisting them in understanding and living out more fully their Baptismal call to holiness and service in the Church and in the world.
- To conduct sacramental catechesis.
- To organize Scripture study groups.
- To develop prayer groups and to organize days of recollection and retreats.

f. Family Life

- To foster responsible parenting and to minister to families.
- To encourage peer ministry in the areas of marriage enrichment, parenting and family life.
- To provide pre-baptismal catechesis, as well as ongoing support to young families.
- To work with single persons, new families, the bereaved, single parents, the divorced/separated/remarried, offering support and counseling service, pertinent information, and assistance.

g. Peace and Justice

- To promote awareness of the Church's social teaching.
- To call attention to pertinent legislative issues.
- To provide education in social justice areas.
- To organize projects to aid the needy.

h. Organization and Administration

- To work with the pastor in carrying out the ordinary administration of the parish.
- To create an environment where volunteers are invited into ministry in a way that enables them to grow in an understanding of their faith, and to live out more fully their Baptismal call to serve.
- To encourage and support the work of the Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Finance Council.

i. Youth Ministry

- To serve the spiritual, social, and developmental needs of the youth in the parish in collaboration with existing youth programs.

j. Catechetical Ministry

- Though it is not the norm, in some parishes the Pastoral Associate is responsible for the religious education program. When this is the case, the PA/DRE is also expected to register with the Office of Religious Education.

k. Marriage Preparation and Annulment Work *

- To prepare engaged couples for the Sacrament of Matrimony according to the *Archdiocesan Pastoral Associate Guidelines and Policies*.
- To serve as sponsor for marriage nullity cases being presented before the Metropolitan Tribunal.

* Only certified Pastoral Associates who have fulfilled the competency requirements in Marriage and Canon Law may do this work. The Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries oversees the competency requirements.

II. Qualifications of a Pastoral Associate

In order that the Pastoral Associate meet the expectations and responsibilities of the role the following qualifications are essential:

A. Faith Commitment

1. Manifests a deep faith in God.
2. Participates actively and regularly in the worship and sacramental life of the Church.
3. Demonstrates great love for the Church and commitment to Church teachings.
4. Witnesses to a spirituality of communion by working collaboratively with others in the parish and cluster.
5. Committed to engage the gifts of all of the baptized for the Mission of the Church.

B. Personality

1. Has a healthy self-image.
2. Possesses leadership ability.
3. Is cooperative.
4. Takes initiative.
5. Is flexible.
6. Manifests a hospitable attitude.
7. Relates well with others.
8. Possesses a sense of humor.
9. Is compassionate.

C. Ministerial and Spiritual Formation

1. Has the education, training, and experience required to meet the ministry needs of the specific parish.
2. Possesses organizational and administrative skills.
3. Committed to ongoing formation and education.
4. Involved in spiritual direction, annual retreat, and other ongoing formation opportunities.
5. Willing to participate in appropriate workshops, seminars and programs offered by the Archdiocesan Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries.

D. Academic Competence

Pastoral Associates should have the level of education considered necessary for effectiveness in the general and specific aspects of their ministry. Ordinarily this would include one or a combination of the following:

- MA in Theology or Pastoral Ministry.
- Masters in Divinity.
- MA in non-related field plus 12 academic credits in core theology.
- BA/BS in Theology or Religious Studies.
- BA/BS in non-related field plus 12 academic credits in core theology.

The required core courses in the Catholic tradition are Scripture, Christology, Ecclesiology, and Sacramental Theology.

III. Process for Hiring a Pastoral Associate

The Pastor in consultation with the Parish Pastoral Council, engages as Pastoral Associates only those persons who are qualified according to these Archdiocesan Guidelines.

All Pastoral Associates are to be registered with the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries. (Appendix C)

A person seeking to be engaged as a Pastoral Associate registers with the Office for Pastoral Ministries. In addition to a completed application form (Appendix A), a resume and cover letter will be on file and an interview will be held with a staff member of the Office.

The Office for Pastoral Ministries will discern in advance of any placement process, the potential for a person to be certified as a Pastoral Associate according to the *Pastoral Associate Certification Policies and Procedures*.

A. Procedures to be followed relative to announcing parish openings for Pastoral Associates and applying for these positions.

1. Opportunities

a. Indicating a Parish Opening

A Parish/Pastor wishing to engage a Pastoral Associate submits to the Office for Pastoral Ministries the following information: (Appendix B)

- Name of Pastor.
- Name of Parish.
- Description of ministry opening.
- Specific qualifications required.
- Starting date.
- Contact: Name, address, and phone number of person to receive applications of qualified candidates.
- Deadline date for applications.

b. Publicizing a Parish Opening

- Openings will be listed with the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries.

2. Engaging a Pastoral Associate

The engaging of a Pastoral Associate by a parish, either for the first time or as a replacement, should include:

- Consultation between the pastor, pastoral staff and both the Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils about the position and the engagement process.

- A determination of the amount allocated for stipend/salary and benefits of the position according to Archdiocesan policies for religious and laity.
- Sending notice of the opening to the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries
- Receiving/screening applications.
- Interviewing qualified applicants.
- Notifying the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries when a person has been engaged.

The Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries has the responsibility for assisting and coordinating this process of engaging a Pastoral Associate and to oversee the eventual certification.

3. Applications

a. Registration of Applicants (See Appendix A)

All persons seeking to be engaged as Pastoral Associates are expected to interview with the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries. They are asked to submit their resume and a cover letter, and complete an Application Form. (See Appendix A).

b. Requests for Information about Openings

A person desiring information about a Pastoral Associate opening may request this information from the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries.

c. Referrals

The Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries will send to interested parishes the applications and resumes of those persons who meet the specifications of the parish ministry opening and are registered with the Office.

The parish arranges for interviews of acceptable candidates and initiates the process for screening/engaging a Pastoral Associate.

A parish that has engaged a Pastoral Associate should inform the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries of this, so that no further applicants will be directed there.

IV. Hiring Process

When a person has been accepted by a parish as a Pastoral Associate, he/she and the Pastor sign an Employment Agreement Form (Appendix C).

A. CORI

A Pastoral Associate will agree to an annual Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check that meets Archdiocesan criteria as a final qualification for employment.

B. Agreement

1. Employment Agreement Form (See Appendix C)

2. Offer of Employment

Once a candidate has been accepted as a Pastoral Associate, he/she should be given a written confirmation of the employment offer. This agreement will contain the following data:

- The title of the position.
- The effective starting date.
- The salary per pay period.
- The basic hours of work.
- Benefits eligibility, including vacation and sick leave.

It is recommended that a copy of the job description and/or any unusual written requirements be attached to the Employment Agreement Form.

3. Compensation (See Appendix E)

These are to comply with current Archdiocesan policies for religious and laity.

4. Time-off

Provisions should be made in the agreement for holidays, vacation, retreat, and appropriate ongoing formation and education. It is recommended that the Pastoral Associate be provided the same amount of paid vacation time consistent with parish policies for other parish employees. An additional week is provided for retreat.

5. Professional and Spiritual Development

The parish will allow each Pastoral Associate a predetermined maximum dollar amount per year to be used for professional and spiritual development. The fee is to be paid by the parish directly to the institution sponsoring the program.

In addition, a parish will defray the expenses of an annual retreat.

C. Separation

1. Voluntary

Voluntary termination results when an employee makes the decision to leave the parish for whatever reason. It is expected that he/she will give thirty days notice of the intent to leave.

2. Involuntary

Involuntary termination is any separation initiated by the employing unit. This includes, but is not limited to, reductions in force, job restructure/elimination, institution closings, and terminations due to performance issues, gross and willful misconduct or public scandal.

All involuntary terminations must be reviewed by the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries prior to action being taken. Most involuntary terminations are unique to the individual and require some customization to the established process. The Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries may also involve the Archdiocesan Office of Human Resources to ensure compliance with state and federal legislation and the Archdiocesan Personnel Policies and Procedures. The Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries will also involve the Office of the Delegate for Religious to assure compliance with the appropriate Archdiocesan stipend policies.

V. Incorporating a Pastoral Associate into the Parish

After engaging a person as Pastoral Associate, the Pastor/staff arranges for the following introductions:

A. To the Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Finance Council

The Pastoral Associate's areas of responsibility in the parish should be made clear to Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Finance Council members.

B. To the Parish

This introduction may take place at each of the Masses.

- a. The Pastor introduces the Pastoral Associate to the congregation and explains the Pastoral Associate's role in the parish.
- b. The Pastor invites the congregation to welcome the new Pastoral Associate.

The Pastoral Associate may be invited to say a few words about the role and his/her commitment to service in the particular parish.

VI. Performance Appraisal Review

A performance appraisal process, (Appendix D) based on position responsibilities and performance characteristics, will be undertaken annually by the Pastor and Pastoral Associate. Ministry strengths and areas for ongoing development will be discussed. The effectiveness of collaboration between the Pastor, Pastoral Associate, and other members of the pastoral staff will be an integral part of the performance review. Agreed upon goals for the coming year will be established.

A. Annual Salary Increase

Pastoral Associates may be eligible for an annual salary increase based on the effectiveness of the employee's performance over the past year. Typically the increase is effective July 1 and is based on merit and not cost of living. Pro-rated increases are recommended if the Pastoral Associate has been in the position less than one year. There are several factors to take into consideration when determining the proper increase percentage. These include, but are not limited to:

- length of time in the position.
- equity relationship with other professional staff.
- performance evaluation level.
- see Compensation Guidelines for salary range and benefits (Appendix E).

The Archdiocesan Human Resource office can assist you in determining the appropriate salary increase.

VII. Continuing Formation and Education

Pastoral Associates carry out ministries that reflect the mission of Jesus and the Church. To insure continued development in carrying out these ministries in a way that reflects the values of Christian faith and life, the Pastoral Associate should make a retreat annually and is encouraged to receive regular spiritual direction and support. Pastoral Associates are expected to commit themselves to ongoing professional growth. According to the *Pastoral Associate Continuing Formation Policy*, 12 clock hours are required yearly.

VIII Meetings and Support Groups

- A.** Pastoral Associates are expected to attend the Pastoral Associate Meetings that are sponsored by the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries.
- B.** Pastoral Associates serving in each region are encouraged to form a support group. Each group will make its own determination concerning frequency of meetings, place, and agenda. The Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries will support this effort.

This support group is intended to foster good communications among the Pastoral Associates and the Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministries, provide opportunity to share resources and expertise, and be a means of general encouragement to one another in this most important ministry.
- C.** Pastoral Associates are urged to actively participate in meetings involving area parishes.