

**October 2012**

*Authorization of Lay Ecclesial Ministers for Ministry:  
A Report for the Canon Law Society of America*



Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate  
Georgetown University  
Washington, DC

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## ***Authorization of Lay Ecclesial Ministers for Ministry: A Report for the Canon Law Society of America***

### **Executive Summary**

This report presents the findings from a survey of selected archdioceses and dioceses in the United States about their practice regarding the authorization of lay ecclesial ministers for ministry. The study was commissioned by the Canon Law Society of America (CLSA). The original questionnaire was designed by the Center of Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) in collaboration with CLSA committee members. CARA then programmed the questionnaire into an online format and hosted the survey on its website.

CLSA identified 75 potential respondents from lay ministry offices and lay formation programs around the country that were thought to be representative of U.S. dioceses. CLSA then mailed an invitation to participate in the survey to these potential respondents. The invitation included instructions for accessing the online survey that could be accessed through the CARA website. Several follow-up mails were sent to non-respondents, yielding a total of 45 respondents, representing a 60 percent overall response rate.

### **Major Findings**

- Assurance that the lay ecclesial ministry has proper training and formation is the most important aspect of the authorization process for lay ecclesial ministry, with two-thirds (67 percent) of respondents saying this particular aspect is “very important” in their arch/diocese.
- Almost four in ten (38 percent) respondents say their arch/diocese has no process for authorizing lay ecclesial ministry. However, just over four in ten (42 percent) say that their arch/diocese has established an Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministry as a means of structuring the authorization of lay ecclesial ministry.
- Over nine in ten (93 percent) respondents say there is a diocesan official who is responsible for lay ecclesial ministers.

- Religious education for children/youth and pastoral associates are the two most common authorized ecclesial ministries, with half of respondents (51 percent) having these in their arch/diocese. The least common authorized lay ecclesial ministry is evangelization, followed by bereavement ministry. Less than a quarter of respondents say these types of lay ecclesial ministries are authorized in their arch/diocese.
- Two-thirds of respondents (67 percent) say that the arch/diocese recommends potential lay ecclesial ministers to pastors who inquire, but just under half (44 percent) say that there is no involvement of the arch/diocese in placement of lay ecclesial ministers in parish positions.
- Nine in ten (89 percent) respondents say their arch/diocese does not provide a process for transferring lay ecclesial ministers from one parish to another.
- The most used types of communication between the arch/bishop and lay ecclesial ministers are gatherings for the arch/bishop and lay ecclesial ministers (58 percent) and membership on diocesan councils and/or commissions (58 percent). Fewer than one in ten respondents (7 percent) say their lay ecclesial ministers communicate through one-on-one meetings with the arch/bishop.

### **Elements in the Authorization Process for Lay Ecclesial Ministry**

#### ***Certification***

- Almost eight in ten (78 percent) respondents say their arch/diocese has its own formation program for lay ecclesial ministry, and of those that do, almost eight in ten (77 percent) say that there is an arch/diocese sponsored certificate program with no degree offered. Between a quarter and a half (26 to 46 percent) say there is some sort of degree program offered.
- One in five (20 percent) says their arch/diocese requires certification for all lay ecclesial ministers. In arch/dioceses that do require certification, the most common reason why certification can be waived is previous experience or other qualifications.
- According to almost four-fifths of respondents (78 percent), their arch/diocese subsidizes the formation of lay ecclesial ministers, but the subsidy policy is diverse among respondents.
- One in five (20 percent) respondents say their arch/diocese participates in a national certification process for its lay ecclesial ministers; half as many (9 percent) say they participate in a regional certification process.
- Although almost nine in ten (87 percent) say their arch/diocese offers ongoing formation for lay ecclesial ministers. A quarter (27 percent) say certification for lay ecclesial

ministry expires and two in five (42 percent) say their arch/diocese requires ongoing formation.

### ***Appointment***

- Fewer than one in twenty (5 percent) respondents say that “most or all” of their parish lay ecclesial ministers serving in the arch/diocese have an official appointment to their position by the arch/bishop. One in ten (9 percent) say that “most or all” have a contract for their position.
- Very few (3 percent) parish lay ecclesial ministers are mostly hired by the arch/bishop or another arch/diocesan official and two thirds (67 percent) are mostly hired by the pastor of the parish in which they serve.
- Over one quarter (29 percent) of respondents say “most or all” or “many” of their lay ecclesial ministers are serving in a volunteer capacity.
- Eight in ten (80 percent) respondents say a formal interview by the pastor is included in the appointment process for parish lay ecclesial ministers, but fewer than three in ten (27 percent) say the process includes a formal interview by the arch/bishop or his delegate.
- One in five (20 percent) say the appointment process includes a formal letter of appointment, with two thirds (67 percent) saying that these letters include relevant employment and personnel policies and terms of appointment.
- Two in five (40 percent) respondents say that there is no commissioning ceremony or public installation of lay ecclesial ministers.
- If a ceremony does take place, it is most likely to take place after certification (31 percent) or independent of hiring (31 percent) and it is most common that the arch/bishop presides (47 percent).

### ***Announcement***

- The most common forms of announcement of parish lay ecclesial ministry appointments are the parish bulletin (71 percent), parish website (53 percent), or arch/diocesan newspaper or magazine (49 percent).
- Less common forms of announcement are the arch/diocesan website or parish social media (24 percent each) or the arch/diocesan clergy newsletter (20 percent).

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**Introduction**

In summer 2012, the Canon Law Society of America (CLSA) commissioned the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) to conduct a study to further understanding of how the authorization process for lay ecclesial ministry is implemented in arch/dioceses in the United States. Authorization for lay ecclesial ministry is spelled out in the U.S. Bishops' 2005 statement on lay ecclesial ministry, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, but no research exists on the implementation of this aspect of lay ecclesial ministry.

CARA collaborated with CLSA committee members on the development of a questionnaire. CARA then programmed the questionnaire into an online format and hosted the survey on its website. CLSA identified 75 potential respondents from lay ministry offices and lay formation programs around the country that were thought to be representative of U.S. dioceses. In early September, CLSA mailed a letter of notification to the arch/bishop of each selected arch/diocese along with an invitation to participate in the survey to the selected potential respondents. The invitation included instructions for accessing the online survey that could be accessed through the CARA website. Several follow-up mailings were sent to non-respondents to encourage a high response. A total of 45 participants responded by the cut-off date of October 4, representing a 60 percent overall response rate.

**Interpreting this Report**

Percentages presented in this report reflect only "valid" responses. In other words (following standard academic procedure in the social sciences), those who left a particular question blank are excluded from percentage calculations. A copy of the questionnaire, along with the percentage of respondents who selected each response, can be found in Appendix I. The percentages of respondents who did not answer each question are also shown beside each item, calculated separately out of 100 percent. Responses to all open-ended questions can be found in Appendix II.

Most questions are dichotomous “yes/no” questions or multiple answer “check all that apply” questions. Tables showing results of dichotomous “yes/no” questions usually include two columns. For each question, the first column lists the percentage of respondents who marked “yes” and the second column lists the percentage of respondents who marked “no.” Tables showing results of multiple answer questions usually include one column. Each row of the table represents one multiple choice option and the column entry lists the percentage of respondents who selected that specific option.

Two groups of questions uses four point response scales (e.g. “not at all”, “only a little”, “somewhat” “very”). These scales allow half the responses to be interpreted as relatively more “negative” (“not at all” and “only a little”) and half as relatively more “positive” (“somewhat” and “very/very much”). To compare the full scale of responses, readers are encouraged to refer to the questionnaire in Appendix I. Tables summarizing these types of responses usually include two columns. For each question, the first column lists the percentage of those who marked either of the two most positive response categories (e.g., “somewhat” and “very”). These can be interpreted as representing the percentage of respondents expressing agreement or positive evaluation. Examining the most positive response can also distinguish important contrasts in level of support. Thus, the second column lists only the percentage of respondents giving the most positive response. Readers may also wish to compare the difference between the two extreme responses (e.g., “not at all” and “very”). These comparisons and others may be drawn by referring to all percentages for each question, presented on a copy of the questionnaire in Appendix I.

One question is a single answer multiple choice question. The table showing results of this question contains one column. Each row of the table represents one multiple choice option and the column entry lists the percentage of respondents who selected that specific option, with all entries in the column summing to 100 percent.

## Rationale for the Authorization for Lay Ecclesial Ministry

Assurance that the lay ecclesial ministry has proper training and formation is the most important aspect of the authorization process for lay ecclesial ministry, with two thirds (67 percent) of respondents saying this particular aspect is “very important” in their arch/diocese.

<i>How important are each of these aspects in the authorization process for lay ecclesial ministry in your arch/diocese?</i>		
<i>Percentage Responding</i>		
	<b>“Somewhat” or “Very”</b>	<b>“Very” Only</b>
Ensures adequate ecclesiastical oversight of ministry	85%	52%
Assurance that the lay ecclesial ministry has proper training and formation	84	67
Public validation and support for the lay ecclesial minister	74	55
Grants the lay ecclesial minister the right to serve in a public ministry in the Church	74	48
Strengthens the relationship between the lay ecclesial minister and the arch/diocese	73	52
Other	50	33

- Approximately three quarters (73 to 74 percent) of respondents say that the authorization process is “somewhat” or “very” important because it gives public validation and support for the lay ecclesial minister, grants the lay ecclesial minister the right to serve in a public ministry in the Church and strengthens the relationship between the lay ecclesial minister and the arch/diocese.
- Over half (52 percent) of respondents say that the authorization process is “very” important because it ensure adequate ecclesiastical oversight of ministry. More than eight in ten (85 percent) say this oversight is at least a “somewhat” important aspect of the authorization process.
- Half of respondents (50 percent) gave other reasons why the authorization process is “somewhat” or “very” important. The full set of “other” reasons mentioned by respondents is listed in Appendix II.

## Structuring the Authorization for Lay Ecclesial Ministry

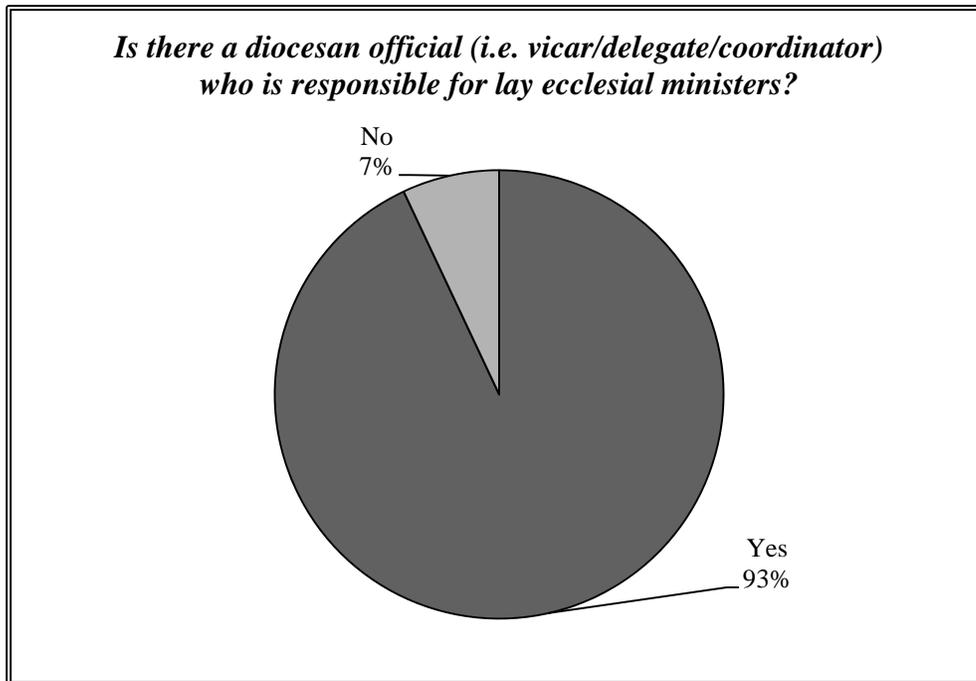
Almost four in ten (38 percent) respondents say their arch/diocese has no process for authorizing lay ecclesial ministry.

<i>Which of these steps has your arch/diocese established for structuring the authorization of lay ecclesial ministry?</i>	
<i>Percentage Responding</i>	
An Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministry	42%
The arch/diocese has no process for authorizing lay ecclesial ministry	38
A written arch/diocesan policy on authorization for lay ecclesial ministry	27
A pastoral letter or statement from the arch/bishop on lay ecclesial ministry	24
Other	33

- Over two in five (42 percent) respondents say their arch/diocese has an Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministry.
- About one quarter (24 to 27 percent) of respondents say their arch/diocese has a pastoral letter or statement from the arch/bishop on lay ecclesial ministry and/or a written arch/diocesan policy on authorization for lay ecclesial ministry.
- One third (33 percent) of respondents provided “other” steps that their arch/diocese has established for structuring the authorization of lay ecclesial ministry. Many of these respondents describe some sort of formation program or process. The full set of “other” responses mentioned by respondents is listed in Appendix II.

## Diocesan Official Responsible for Lay Ecclesial Ministry

Over nine in ten (93 percent) respondents say there is a diocesan official who is responsible for lay ecclesial ministers.



Respondents described a range of responses concerning which diocesan official is responsible for lay ecclesial ministers, including:

- All directors of ministry offices are responsible for specific groups of lay ecclesial ministers
- Bishop
- Director of Religious Education
- Director of the Office for Lay Ecclesial Ministry
- Office of Ministry Formation
- Vicar for Ministers

The full set of responses to this question is provided in Appendix II.

## Authorized Lay Ecclesial Ministries

Religious education for children/youth and pastoral associates are the two most common authorized ecclesial ministries, with over half of respondents (51 percent) having these in their arch/diocese.

<i><b>Which of these are authorized lay ecclesial ministries in your arch/diocese? Percentage Responding</b></i>	
Pastoral associate	51%
Religious education for children/youth	51
Youth ministry	47
Adult faith formation/RCIA	40
Liturgical and/or music ministry	36
Young adult ministry	33
Pastoral care of the sick	27
Bereavement ministry	24
Evangelization	20
Other	36

- Just under half of respondents (47 percent) say youth ministry is an authorized lay ecclesial ministry in their arch/diocese.
- Approximately one-third of respondents (33 to 36 percent) say liturgical and/or music ministry and young adult ministry are authorized lay ecclesial ministries in their arch/diocese.
- Two in five (40 percent) respondents say adult faith formation/RCIA is an authorized lay ecclesial ministry in their arch/diocese.
- Between about a quarter to a fifth of respondents (20 to 27 percent) say pastoral care of the sick, bereavement ministry, and evangelization are authorized lay ecclesial ministries in their arch/diocese.
- A full list of other authorized lay ecclesial ministries listed by respondents is included in Appendix II.

## Placement of Lay Ecclesial Ministers

Two thirds of respondents (67 percent) say that the arch/diocese recommends potential lay ecclesial ministers to pastors who inquire, but just under half (44 percent) say that there is no involvement of the arch/diocese in placement of lay ecclesial ministers.

*In what ways does the arch/diocese assist in placement of lay ecclesial ministers in parish positions?  
Percentage Responding*

Arch/diocese recommends potential lay ecclesial ministers to pastors who inquire	67%
No involvement of the arch/diocese in placement	44
Arch/diocese maintains a list of authorized lay ecclesial ministers for parishes	29
Arch/diocese is responsible for all HR related to lay ecclesial ministry	20
Arch/diocese maintains a placement office for lay ecclesial ministry openings	9

- Just under one in three (29 percent) respondents say the arch/diocese maintains a list of authorized lay ecclesial ministers for parishes.
- One in five respondents says their arch/diocese is responsible for all HR related to lay ecclesial ministry, but only one in ten (9 percent) says their arch/diocese maintains a placement office for lay ecclesial ministry openings.

## Transfer of Lay Ecclesial Ministers

Nine in ten respondents (89 percent) say their arch/diocese does not provide a process for transferring lay ecclesial ministers from one parish to another.

<i>Does your arch/diocese provide a...</i>	<b>“Yes”</b>	<b>“No”</b>
...grievance process for lay ecclesial ministers?	60%	40%
...process for termination of a lay ecclesial minister?	56	44
...process for transferring lay ecclesial ministers from one parish to another?	11	89

- Three in five respondents say their arch/diocese provides a grievance process for lay ecclesial ministers.
- Over half (56 percent) of respondents say their arch/diocese provides a process for termination of a lay ecclesial minister.

## Communication with Lay Ecclesial Ministers

The most used types of communication between the arch/bishop and lay ecclesial ministers are gatherings for the arch/bishop and lay ecclesial ministers and membership on diocesan councils and/or commissions (58 percent each).

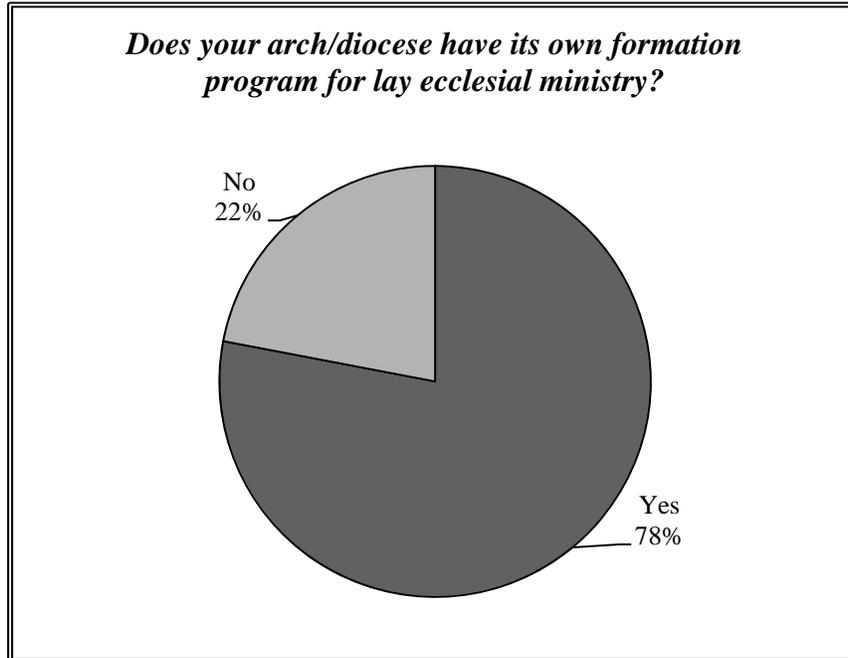
*Which of the following does the arch/bishop use in his communication with lay ecclesial ministers?  
Percentage Responding*

Gatherings for the arch/bishop and lay ecclesial ministers	58%
Membership on diocesan councils and/or commissions	58
Consultation at diocesan meetings involving parish life	33
Meetings with the arch/bishop during his parish visits	31
Individual consultation on pastoral issues	29
Consultation at regional meetings involving parish life	27
Newsletters	22
Regular one-on-one meetings	7
Other	33

- About a third of respondents (31 to 33 percent) say the arch/bishop communicates with lay ecclesial ministers by consultation at diocesan meetings involving parish life and/or meetings with them during his parish visits.
- Just under three in ten (29 percent) say the arch/bishop communicates by individual consultation on pastoral issues.
- Over a quarter (27 percent) say communication between the arch/bishop and lay ecclesial ministers occurs through consultation at regional meetings involving parish life.
- More than one in five respondents (22 percent) say the arch/bishop communicates with lay ecclesial ministers through newsletters.
- Less than one in ten says their lay ecclesial ministers communicate through one-on-one meetings with the arch/bishop.
- One third (33 percent) state other means of communication, which are included in Appendix II.

## Elements in the Authorization Process for Lay Ecclesial Ministry: Certification

Almost eight in ten (78 percent) respondents say their arch/diocese has its own formation program for lay ecclesial ministry.



Of those respondents who say that their arch/diocese has its own formation program for lay ecclesial ministry almost eight in ten (77 percent) say that there is an arch/diocese sponsored certificate program with no degree offered.

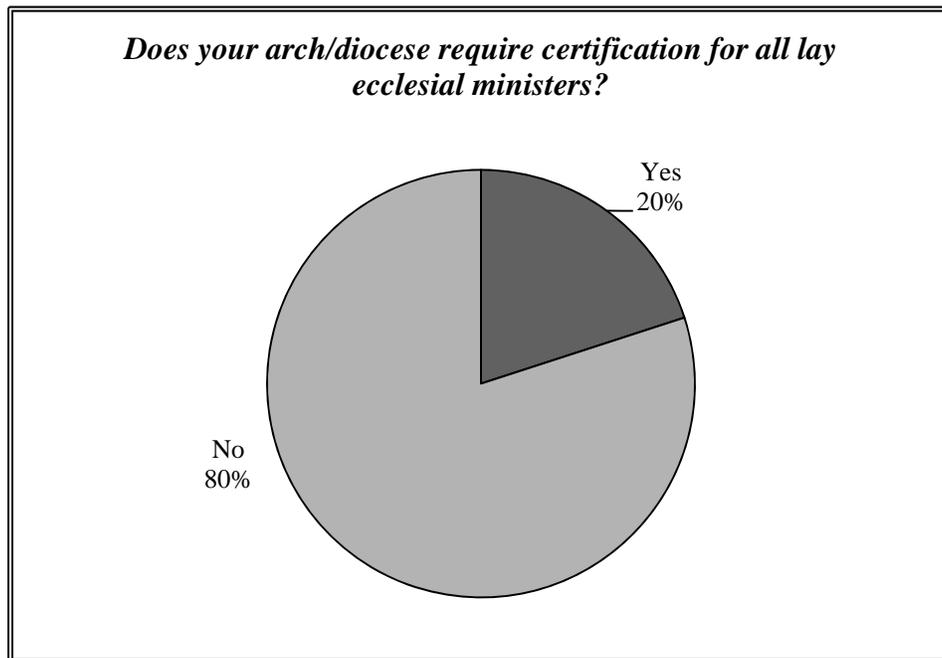
*If your arch/diocese has its own formation program for lay ecclesial ministry, what program(s) are offered?*

*Percentage Responding*

Arch/diocesan sponsored certificate program, no degree offered	77%
Degree program associated with a Catholic college or university	46
Combined certificate/degree program	46
Degree program associated with a Catholic seminary or School of Theology	26

- Less than half (46 percent) of respondents say their arch/diocese offers a degree program associations with a Catholic college or university and/or a combined certificate degree program.
- One quarter (26 percent) say their arch/diocese offers a degree program associated with a Catholic seminary or School of Theology.

One in five respondents (20 percent) says their arch/diocese requires certification for all lay ecclesial ministers.



Of those respondents who say that their arch/diocese does require certification, the most common reason why certification can be waived is previous experience or other qualifications. Two in three respondents cite this reason for waiving certification.

***If your arch/diocese does require certification for all lay ecclesial ministers, for what reason(s) can certification be waived?***

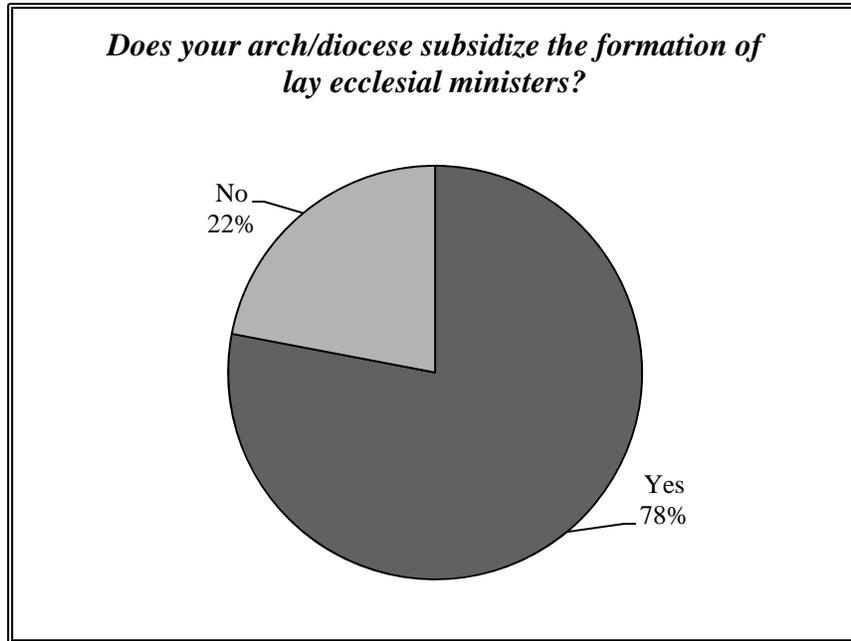
*Percentage Responding*

Previous experience or other qualifications	67%
Service that predates diocesan policy on certification	44
Current enrollment in a formation program	33
Recommendation by the pastor	33
Pastoral need	33
Other	0

- One third (33 percent) of respondents say that certification can be waived if the lay ecclesial minister is enrolled in a formation program, if there is a pastoral need, or upon recommendation by the pastor.
- Over two in five (44 percent) respondents state that certification can be waived if the lay ecclesial minister's service predates diocesan policy on certification.

## Subsidy for Formation of Lay Ecclesial Ministers

According to more than three in four respondents (78 percent), their arch/diocese subsidizes the formation of lay ecclesial ministers.



The subsidy policy is diverse among those respondents who say their arch/diocese subsidizes the formation of lay ecclesial ministry, but no respondents indicate that the arch/diocese pays the full cost for formation.

***If your arch/diocese subsidizes the formation of lay ecclesial ministers, what best describes the subsidy policy for lay ecclesial ministry formation?***

*Percentage Responding*

Arch/diocese pays the full cost for formation for lay ecclesial ministry	0%
Arch/diocese pays half, parish or lay minister pays half	9
Arch/diocese pays a third, parish pays a third, lay minister pays a third	20
Other	71

- A fifth of respondents (20 percent) say that the arch/diocese pays a third and the parish pays a third to subsidize the formation of lay ecclesial ministry.

- One in ten respondents (9 percent) indicates that the arch/diocese pays half the cost for formation for lay ecclesial ministry.
- Seven in ten (71 percent) respondents listed other subsidy policies, which are detailed in Appendix II. An example of some of these other policies is listed below:
  - 50 percent reduction in University tuition; additional scholarship funds are possible from diocesan foundation.
  - Diocese pays a portion of Certificate education / pays all costs for local formation programs in each vicariate.
  - Diocese pays a third, lay minister pays two thirds.
  - For the Spanish speaking LEM Formation Program, Emaús, the Diocese pays the full cost. The English speakers are subsidized at about half of the total cost of running the program.
  - In some cases, full scholarships are available; in other cases, a combination of grants and loans are offered.
  - Parishes are encouraged to provide tuition assistance, diocesan scholarships are available.
  - Tuition is waived by the diocese if the student is a good candidate, but lacks money for tuition.

## Aspects of Certification for Lay Ecclesial Ministers

One in five (20 percent) respondents say their arch/diocese participates in a national certification process for its lay ecclesial ministers and only one in ten (9 percent) say they participate in a regional certification process.

<b>Aspects of Certification</b> <i>Percentage Responding</i>	<b>“Yes”</b>	<b>“No”</b>
Does your arch/diocese participate in a regional certification process for its lay ecclesial ministers (e.g. Minnesota Catholic Education Association Certification process)?	9%	91%
Does your arch/diocese participate in a national certification process for its lay ecclesial ministers (e.g. The Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers)?	20	80
Does your arch/diocese accept a lay ecclesial minister who has a certification for lay ecclesial ministry from another arch/diocese?	83	17
Does your arch/diocese charge a fee for certification?	16	84
Does certification for lay ecclesial ministry expire after a given time period?	27	73
Does your arch/diocese <u>offer</u> ongoing formation for lay ecclesial ministers?	87	13
Does your arch/diocese <u>require</u> ongoing formation for lay ecclesial ministers?	42	58

- Over eight in ten respondents (83 percent) say their arch/diocese accepts a lay ecclesial minister who has certification for lay ecclesial ministry from another arch/diocese.
- Less than one in six (16 percent) respondents says that their arch/diocese charges a fee for certification.
- Just over one quarter (27 percent) of respondents state that certification for lay ecclesial ministry expires after a given time period.
- Although almost nine in ten (87 percent) say their arch/diocese offers ongoing formation for lay ecclesial ministers, only a quarter (27 percent) say certification for lay ecclesial ministry expires.
- Two in five (42 percent) say their arch/diocese requires ongoing formation.

## Elements in the Authorization Process for Lay Ecclesial Ministry: Appointment

Less than one in ten (8 percent) respondents say that “most or all” or “many” of their parish lay ecclesial ministers serving in the arch/diocese have an official appointment to their position by the arch/bishop.

<i>What proportion of parish lay ecclesial ministers serving in the arch/diocese have: Percentage Responding</i>		
	<b>“Many (51 – 74 %)” or “Most or all (more than 75%)”</b>	<b>“Most or all (more than 75%)” Only</b>
A written job description	51%	19%
A periodic, written evaluation of their ministry	21	2
A contract for their position	17	12
An official appointment to their position by the arch/bishop	8	5
A set term of appointment with provision for renewal	4	2

- About half (51 percent) of respondents say that “most or all” or “many” of their parish lay ecclesial ministers have a written job description, but fewer than one in five (17 percent) say that that “most or all” or “many” have a contract for their position.
- Two in ten (21 percent) say “most or all” or “many” their parish lay ecclesial ministers have a periodic, written evaluation of their ministry.
- Fewer than one in twenty (4 percent) say “most or all” or “many” have a set term of appointment with provision for renewal.

## Hiring of Lay Ecclesial Ministers

Half of respondents (51 percent) say “most or all” or “many” of their parish lay ecclesial ministers were hired by the pastor of the parish in which they serve. Three in ten respondents (29 percent) say “most or all” or “many” of their lay ecclesial ministers are serving in a volunteer capacity.

<i>What proportion of parish lay ecclesial ministers serving in the arch/diocese are: Percentage Responding</i>		
	<b>“Many (51 – 74 %)” or “Most or all (more than 75%)”</b>	<b>“Most or all (more than 75%)” Only</b>
Hired by the pastor of the parish in which they serve	51%	19%
Hired by another arch/diocesan official	17	12
Hired by the arch/bishop	8	5
Serving as a lay ecclesial minister in a volunteer capacity	29	12
Serving in a part-time paid ministry position	21	2
Serving in a full-time paid ministry position	4	2

- One in six (17 percent) say “most or all” or “many” of their parish lay ecclesial ministers were hired by another arch/diocesan official.
- Fewer than one in ten (8 percent) say “most or all” or “many” were hired by the arch/bishop.
- Just over two in ten (21 percent) of respondents say “most or all” or “many” of their parish lay ecclesial ministers are serving in a part-time paid ministry position.
- Less than one in twenty (4 percent) say “most or all” or “many” are serving in a full-time paid ministry position.

## Aspects of the Appointment Process

Eight in ten (80 percent) respondents say a formal interview by the pastor is included in the appointment process for parish lay ecclesial ministers, but fewer than three in ten (27 percent) say the process includes a formal interview by the arch/bishop or his delegate.

***Which of these are included in the appointment process for parish lay ecclesial ministers?  
Percentage Responding***

Verification of safe environment training	91%
Criminal background check	89
Formal interview of the applicant by the pastor	80
Investigation of previous employment or contact with previous employers	67
Arch/diocesan review of the applicant's qualifications for the position	29
Formal interview of the applicant by the arch/bishop or his delegate	27
Formal letter of appointment from the arch/bishop or his delegate	20
Formal letter of appointment from the pastor	20
Oath or profession of faith	11
Letter from the pastor to the arch/bishop, proposing the lay ecclesial minister for authorization	9

- About nine in ten respondents (89 to 91 percent) say a verification of safe environment training and/or a criminal background check are included in the appointment process for parish lay ecclesial ministers.
- Two thirds (67 percent) say an investigation of previous employment or contact with previous employers is included.
- One in five (20 percent) say a formal letter of appointment from the archbishop or his delegate and/or from the pastor are included in the appointment process for parish lay ecclesial ministers.
- Only about one in ten (9 to 11 percent) say an oath or profession of faith and/or a letter from the pastor to the arch/bishop, proposing the lay ecclesial minister for authorization are included in the appointment process.

## Letter of Appointment for Lay Ecclesial Ministers

One in five (20 percent) say the appointment process includes a formal letter of appointment, with two thirds (67 percent) saying that these letters include relevant employment and personnel policies and terms of appointment.

*If the appointment process includes a formal letter of appointment,  
does this letter include:  
Percentage Responding*

	<b>“Yes”</b>	<b>“No”</b>
Relevant employment and personnel policies	67%	33%
Term of appointment	67	33
Rights and obligations attached to the position	60	40
Limits on the exercise of authority	43	47

- Six in ten (60 percent) respondents say the formal letter of appointment contains rights and obligations attached to the position.
- Just over two in five (43 percent) say the appointment letter includes limits on the exercise of authority.

## Commissioning Ceremony

Two in five respondents (40 percent) say that there is no commissioning ceremony or public installation of lay ecclesial ministers.

<i>If the arch/diocese has a commissioning ceremony or public installation of lay ecclesial ministers, where does this take place?</i>	
<i>Percentage Responding</i>	
There is no commissioning ceremony	40%
At the arch/diocesan cathedral	29
At the parish(es) where the lay ecclesial minister(s) will be serving	13
Other	18

- One in three (29 percent) respondents say the commissioning ceremony takes place at the arch/diocesan cathedral.
- Fewer than a sixth (13 percent) say the commissioning ceremony takes place at the parish(es) where the lay ecclesial minister(s) will be serving.
- About one in five (18 percent) list other places where the commissioning ceremony takes place. The full list of these other responses is included in Appendix II. A sample of these responses are shown below:
  - A parish chosen by the director.
  - At graduation from the ministry formation program, then by a letter from the bishop every three years following the completion of continuing education requirements.
  - In the last two years we have held the commissioning in parish churches.
  - Pastoral administrators are commissioned/installed at the parish or mission which they will serve

If a ceremony does take place, it is most likely to take place after certification (31 percent) or independent of hiring (31 percent).

<i><b>If the arch/diocese has a commissioning ceremony or public installation of lay ecclesial ministers, when does this take place?</b></i>	
<i>Percentage Responding</i>	
After certification	31%
Independent of hiring (e.g. annual commissioning ceremony for lay ecclesial ministers)	31
Upon hiring	7

Fewer than one in ten (7 percent) say the ceremony takes place upon hiring.

If a ceremony does take place, it is most common that the arch/bishop presides (47 percent).

<i><b>If the arch/diocese has a commissioning ceremony or public installation of lay ecclesial ministers, who presides?</b></i>	
<i>Percentage Responding</i>	
Arch/bishop	47%
Pastor of the parish where the lay ecclesial minister will be serving	18
Arch/diocesan official (i.e. vicar/delegate/coordinator) who is responsible for lay ecclesial ministers	13
Other	4

- Fewer than one in five respondents (18 percent) say the pastor of the parish where the lay ecclesial minister will be serving presides over the commissioning ceremony or public installation.
- Over one in ten (13 percent) say an arch/diocesan official who is responsible for lay ecclesial ministers presides.

A full listing of the other responses is included in Appendix II.

## Elements in the Authorization Process for Lay Ecclesial Ministry: Announcement

The most common forms of announcement of parish lay ecclesial ministry appointments are the parish bulletin (71 percent), parish website (53 percent), and arch/diocesan newspaper or magazine (49 percent).

<i>Which of these are used by the arch/diocese to announce parish lay ecclesial ministry appointments? Percentage Responding</i>	
Parish bulletin	71%
Parish website	53
Arch/diocesan newspaper or magazine	49
Parish social media	24
Arch/diocesan website	24
Arch/diocesan clergy newsletter	20
Letter or visit from the arch/bishop to parish	11
Arch/diocesan social media (e.g. Facebook or Twitter)	7
Other	18

- About a quarter (24 percent) of respondents say the arch/diocese uses parish social media and/or an arch/diocesan website to announce lay ecclesial ministry appointments.
- One in five (20 percent) say they use an arch/diocesan clergy newsletter.
- One in ten (11 percent) say a letter or visit from the arch/bishop to the parish is used to announce parish lay ecclesial ministry appointments.
- Fewer than one in ten (7 percent) use arch/diocesan social media to announce parish lay ecclesial ministry appointments.
- About one in five (18 percent) list other modes of communication, which are detailed in Appendix II.

## **Benefits and Challenges of Authorization**

Two final open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire allowed respondents to reflect on their experience and expand on the answers they had provided to earlier questions. The first question asked respondents to describe the greatest benefit of authorization for lay ecclesial ministry. The second question asked them to discuss the greatest challenge of authorization for lay ecclesial ministry. Respondents were free to write as much as they wished in response to these two questions. The section below analyzes responses to each of these questions in turn. Complete transcriptions of all responses to these two open-ended questions are provided in Appendix II.

### **Greatest Benefit of Authorization for Lay Ecclesial Ministry**

Overall, the greatest benefit to authorization seems to be associated with the idea that authorization is a way of formally acknowledging an individual's ability and position in the church, parish, or community. Some words that were used repeatedly by respondents in their response to the question "In your opinion, what is the greatest benefit of authorization for lay ecclesial ministry?" include, but are not limited to: affirmation, authenticity, acknowledgement, recognition, experience and knowledge.

Some examples of responses to this question are:

- Authorization can more clearly define the relationship of the lay ecclesial minister to the bishop and therefore give public acknowledgement of the individual's competencies respect for the call and commitment to service of the lay ecclesial minister in the faith community, responsibility to the minister to be a representative of the Christ's mission in the world, and authority to make decisions and act on behalf of the Church.
- Trained and well-formed lay leaders in our parishes and schools. Recognition by clergy (pastors, bishop) and other diocesan personnel. Recognition by peers. Formal relationship with the bishop.
- Authorization benefits the faithful by assuring them that when they approach an authorized LEM to receive services from the Church, they can be confident that what they are receiving is aligned with the apostolic ministry and authority of the diocesan bishop.
- Competency. Respect. Accountability.
- It gives credibility to the person as well as assuring that qualified, formed people minister in parishes and dioceses.

- Parish Life Coordinators (Lay Ecclesial Ministers in our diocese) and some Pastoral Associates often serve in parishes without a resident priest. It is essential for their acceptance by the congregation to have authorization for their ministry.
- Recognition and affirmation by parish community as well as support from parish leadership.
- The lay faithful and the clergy can have confidence that the minister is adequately educated and formed for ministry. The minister has a greater sense of being trusted with their ministry by the bishop. The process of authorization aids in the education of all those concerned regarding the nature of lay ministry in the Church.

### **Greatest Challenge of Authorization for Lay Ecclesial Ministry**

There are two recurring themes in the responses to the question: “In your opinion, what is the greatest challenge of authorization for lay ecclesial ministry? One is the challenge of getting priests and parishes to be in support of and understand the need for authorization. The second major theme is associated with the actual organization and administration of authorization and the challenges that this brings.

Some examples of responses to this question are:

- Acceptance by both clergy and laity of the need for or even desirability of authorization.
- Consistent and systematic training. It was difficult to complete this survey because of the various types of ecclesial ministry development systems. The development system for school principals is entirely different from other ecclesial ministries. Our answers would have been completely different if we had excluded school principals from our responses.
- Getting to the point of authorization; that it would be a value and a practice in the local Church. Clergy acceptance and support.
- I believe that acceptance by parish members will prove to be the greatest challenge to authorization/commissioning of lay ecclesial ministers. This is not to say that parish members will not generally accept a lay person in a role of authority, but it is to say that we have not had a formal authorization/commissioning ceremony performed on a routine basis. I believe that because we have a wealth of vocations to the priesthood and have been able to juggle our priests to cover several parishes at once, parishes are not used to a lay person in authority, though we do have several Parish Administrators (Parish Life Coordinators) who are lay men and women.
- Not having a process. Not having resources i.e. Catholic College/University.

- The greatest challenge in our Archdiocese is getting pastors to support and send more lay people for this training.
- There is still not widespread understanding of "lay ministry" let alone "lay ecclesial ministry." Authorizing individuals to serve as public ministers in the Church doesn't really address this more fundamental lack of knowledge. For those who are interested, the fact that individuals are authorized may generate interest and lead them to explore the meaning of lay ministry. However, lay ministry and lay ecclesial ministry are still in the process of being defined. A solid understanding will follow when there is enough experience upon which to reflect.
- Understanding of their role.

## **Appendix I: Questionnaire and Response Frequencies**



## Authorization for Lay Ecclesial Ministry

The U.S. Bishops' 2005 statement on lay ecclesial ministry, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, defines lay ecclesial ministers as:

Those men and women whose ecclesial service is characterized by

- *Authorization* of the hierarchy to serve publicly in the local church
- *Leadership* in a particular area of ministry
- *Close mutual collaboration* with the pastoral ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons
- *Preparation and formation* appropriate to the level of responsibilities that are assigned to them. (p. 10)

The purpose of this study is to further our understanding of how the AUTHORIZATION process for lay ecclesial ministry is implemented in arch/dioceses in the United States. The study focuses on the authorization relationship between the hierarchy and the lay ecclesial minister in the parish – lay ecclesial ministry positions at the diocesan level are not addressed by this study.

*Co-Workers* defines authorization for lay ecclesial ministry as “the process by which properly prepared lay men and women are given responsibilities for lay ecclesial ministry by competent Church authority.” (p. 54)

**Responses=45      Invited=75      NR=Percentage that did not respond to each question.**

**Please use these responses for questions 1 to 6:**

**1=Not at all important      2=Only a little      3=Somewhat      4=Very important**

How important are each of these aspects in the authorization process for lay ecclesial ministry in your arch/diocese?

**1   2   3   4   NR**

- |    |    |    |    |    |  |
|----|----|----|----|----|--|
| 02 | 24 | 19 | 55 | 07 | 1. Public validation and support for the lay ecclesial minister                            |
| 05 | 12 | 17 | 67 | 07 | 2. Assurance that the lay ecclesial ministry has proper training and formation             |
| 10 | 17 | 26 | 48 | 07 | 3. Grants the lay ecclesial minister the right to serve in a public ministry in the Church |
| 05 | 10 | 33 | 52 | 07 | 4. Ensures adequate ecclesiastical oversight of ministry                                   |
| 07 | 19 | 21 | 52 | 07 | 5. Strengthens the relationship between the lay ecclesial minister and the arch/diocese    |
| 50 | 00 | 17 | 33 | 87 | 6. Other:  |

Which of these steps has your arch/diocese established for structuring the authorization of lay ecclesial ministry? (Check all that apply).

**✓      NR**

- |    |    |   |
|----|----|---|
| 38 | 62 | 7. The arch/diocese has no process for authorizing lay ecclesial ministry (SKIP TO ITEM 23) |
| 24 | 76 | 8. A pastoral letter or statement from the arch/bishop on lay ecclesial ministry            |
| 42 | 58 | 9. An Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministry  |
| 27 | 73 | 10. A written arch/diocesan policy on authorization for lay ecclesial ministry              |
| 33 | 67 | 11. Other: _____  |

12. Is there a diocesan official (i.e. vicar/delegate/coordinator) who is responsible for lay ecclesial ministers?

93   1. Yes   07   2. No   **NR = 62**

12a. *If yes*, what is the title of that position? \_\_\_\_\_

Which of these are authorized lay ecclesial ministries in your arch/diocese? (Check all that apply).

✓ NR

- 51 49 13. Pastoral associate
- 40 60 14. Adult faith formation/RCIA
- 51 49 15. Religious education for children/youth
- 47 53 16. Youth ministry
- 33 67 17. Young adult ministry

✓ NR

- 36 64 18. Liturgical and/or music ministry
- 20 80 19. Evangelization
- 27 73 20. Pastoral care of the sick
- 24 76 21. Bereavement ministry
- 36 63 22. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

In what ways does the arch/diocese assist in placement of lay ecclesial ministers in parish positions? (Check all that apply).

✓ NR

- 44 56 23. No involvement of the arch/diocese in placement
- 09 91 24. Arch/diocese maintains a placement office for lay ecclesial ministry openings
- 20 80 25. Arch/diocese is responsible for all HR related to lay ecclesial ministry
- 29 71 26. Arch/diocese maintains a list of authorized lay ecclesial ministers for parishes
- 67 33 27. Arch/diocese recommends potential lay ecclesial ministers to pastors who inquire

**Yes No NR**

- 11 89 00 28. Does your arch/diocese provide a process for transferring lay ecclesial ministers from one parish to another?
- 56 44 00 29. Does your arch/diocese provide a process for termination of a lay ecclesial minister?
- 60 40 00 30. Does your arch/diocese provide a grievance process for lay ecclesial ministers?

Which of the following does the arch/bishop use in his communication with lay ecclesial ministers? (Check all that apply).

✓ NR

- 22 78 31. Newsletters
- 07 93 32. Regular one-on-one meetings
- 58 42 33. Gatherings for the arch/bishop and lay ecclesial ministers
- 58 42 34. Membership on diocesan councils and/or commissions
- 33 67 35. Consultation at diocesan meetings involving parish life

✓ NR

- 27 73 36. Consultation at regional meetings involving parish life
- 29 71 37. Individual consultation on pastoral issues
- 31 69 38. Meetings with the arch/bishop during his parish visits
- 33 67 39. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## **ELEMENTS IN THE AUTHORIZATION PROCESS FOR LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTRY**

*Please respond to the following questions according to the general process for authorizing parochial lay ecclesial ministers in your diocese.*

**I. Certification** is a process that documents the attainment of specific standards and competencies required for the fulfillment of a specialized ecclesial ministry. It requires a process for assessing that a given candidate has the education, formation, and professional skills necessary to serve in a particular role. (p. 56)

**Yes No NR**

- 78 22 00 40. Does your arch/diocese have its own formation program for lay ecclesial ministry?  
*If yes, what program(s) are offered? (Check all that apply).*

✓ NR

- 77 23 41. Arch/diocesan sponsored certificate program, no degree offered
- 26 74 42. Degree program associated with a Catholic seminary or School of Theology
- 46 54 43. Degree program associated with a Catholic college or university
- 46 54 44. Combined certificate/degree program

**Yes No NR**

20 80 00 45. Does your arch/diocese require certification for all lay ecclesial ministers?

*If yes, for what reason(s) can certification be waived? (Check all that apply).*

✓ **NR**

44 56 46. Service that predates diocesan policy on certification

33 67 47. Current enrollment in a formation program

67 33 48. Previous experience or other qualifications

33 67 49. Recommendation by the pastor

33 67 50. Pastoral need

00 100 51. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Yes No NR**

78 22 00 52. Does your arch/diocese subsidize the formation of lay ecclesial ministers?

*If yes, what best describes the subsidy policy for lay ecclesial ministry formation? (Check only one).*

00 52a. Arch/diocese pays the full cost for formation for lay ecclesial ministry

09 52b. Arch/diocese pays half, parish or lay minister pays half

**NR = 22**

20 52c. Arch/diocese pays a third, parish pays a third, lay minister pays a third

71 52d. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Yes No NR**

09 91 00 53. Does your arch/diocese participate in a regional certification process for its lay ecclesial ministers (e.g. Minnesota Catholic Education Association Certification process)?

20 80 00 54. Does your arch/diocese participate in a national certification process for its lay ecclesial ministers (e.g. The Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers)?

83 17 07 55. Does your arch/diocese accept a lay ecclesial minister who has a certification for lay ecclesial ministry from another arch/diocese?

16 84 00 56. Does your arch/diocese charge a fee for certification?

27 73 02 57. Does certification for lay ecclesial ministry expire after a given time period?

87 13 00 58. Does your arch/diocese offer ongoing formation for lay ecclesial ministers?

42 58 00 59. Does your arch/diocese require ongoing formation for lay ecclesial ministers?

**II. Appointment** of an individual lay ecclesial minister for a specific ministerial role is also called “commissioning” in some dioceses. Appointment includes a delineation of the obligations, responsibilities, and authority of that position as well as the length of term, if specified.

**Please use these responses for questions 60 to 70:**

**1=Only a few (less than 25%) 2=Some (25-50%) 3=Many (51-75%) 4=Most or all (more than 75%)**

What proportion of parish lay ecclesial ministers serving in the arch/diocese have:

**1 2 3 4 NR**

87 05 03 05 11 60. An official appointment to their position by the arch/bishop

95 03 00 03 16 65. Hired by the arch/bishop

97 03 00 00 20 66. Hired by another arch/diocesan official

54 29 05 12 09 61. A contract for their position

07 07 19 67 04 67. Hired by the pastor of the parish in which they serve

14 35 32 19 04 62. A written job description

23 37 33 07 04 68. Serving in a full-time paid ministry position

76 19 02 02 07 63. A set term of appointment with provision for renewal

16 65 19 00 04 69. Serving in a part-time paid ministry position

43 36 19 02 07 64. A periodic, written evaluation of their ministry

33 38 17 12 07 70. Serving as a lay ecclesial minister in a volunteer capacity

Which of these are included in the appointment process for parish lay ecclesial ministers? (Check all that apply).

NR

- 29 71 71. Arch/diocesan review of the applicant's qualifications for the position
- 27 73 72. Formal interview of the applicant by the arch/bishop or his delegate
- 80 20 73. Formal interview of the applicant by the pastor
- 67 33 74. Investigation of previous employment or contact with previous employer
- 89 11 75. Criminal background check
- 91 09 76. Verification of safe environment training
- 11 89 77. Oath or profession of faith
- 09 91 78. Letter from the pastor to the arch/bishop, proposing the lay ecclesial minister for authorization
- 20 80 79. Formal letter of appointment from the arch/bishop or his delegate
- 20 80 80. Formal letter of appointment from the pastor

If the appointment process includes a formal letter of appointment, does this letter include:

**Yes No NR**

- 60 40 00 81. Rights and obligations attached to the position
- 53 47 00 82. Limits on the exercise of authority
- 67 33 00 83. Relevant employment and personnel policies
- 67 33 00 84. Term of appointment

If the arch/diocese has a commissioning ceremony or public installation of lay ecclesial ministers, where does this take place? (Check all that apply).

NR

- 29 71 85. At the arch/diocesan cathedral
- 13 87 86. At the parish(es) where the lay ecclesial minister(s) will be serving
- 18 82 87. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 40 60 88. There is no commissioning ceremony (SKIP TO ITEM 96)

If the arch/diocese has a commissioning ceremony or public installation of lay ecclesial ministers, when does this take place? (Check all that apply).

NR

NR

- 31 69 89. After certification
- 31 69 91. Independent of hiring (e.g. annual commissioning ceremony for lay ecclesial ministers)
- 07 93 90. Upon hiring

If the arch/diocese has a commissioning ceremony or public installation of lay ecclesial ministers, who presides? (Check all that apply).

NR

- 47 53 92. Arch/bishop
- 13 87 93. Arch/diocesan official (i.e. vicar/delegate/coordinator) who is responsible for lay ecclesial ministers
- 18 82 94. Pastor of the parish where the lay ecclesial minister will be serving
- 04 96 95. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**III. Announcement** is the means by which the community is informed of the lay ecclesial minister's authorization to serve. "The means used to announce an appointment to lay ecclesial ministry can follow the procedures used in announcing other similar personnel changes within the diocese." (*Co-Workers*, p. 58)

Which of these are used by the arch/diocese to announce parish lay ecclesial ministry appointments? (Check all that apply).

✓ NR

49 51 96. Arch/diocesan newspaper or magazine

20 80 97. Arch/diocesan clergy newsletter

24 76 98. Arch/diocesan website

07 93 99. Arch/diocesan social media (e.g.

Facebook or Twitter)

✓ NR

11 89 100. Letter or visit from the arch/bishop to parish

71 29 101. Parish bulletin

53 47 102. Parish website

24 76 103. Parish social media

18 82 104. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

105. In your opinion, what is the greatest benefit of authorization for lay ecclesial ministry?

106. In your opinion, what is the greatest challenge of authorization for lay ecclesial ministry?

Please provide the information below for the person completing this survey so we may contact you for clarifications about your responses:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position title: \_\_\_\_\_

Arch/diocese: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

If your arch/diocese has written policies and/or procedures pertaining to the authorization for lay ecclesial ministry that you would be willing to share, please attach copies to this survey.

**Thank you for completing this survey.**

**Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University**

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## **Appendix II: Responses to Open Ended Questions**

## Responses to Open-ended Questions Included in the Survey

How important are each of these aspects in the authorization process for lay ecclesial ministry in your arch/diocese? Other:

- Clarifies distinction between lay apostolate and ecclesial ministry
- Difficulty: few pastors are requiring our lay ministry training program for their ministers.
- No authorization process
- We do not to date have an official, ecclesial recognition of our lay ministers
- With the exception of pastoral administrators (PLCs) authorization is only at the parochial level

Which of these steps has your arch/diocese established for structuring the authorization of lay ecclesial ministry? Other:

- A 4-year formation process which concludes with public recognition by the Bishop
- A Mass to celebrate completion of the required formation program and a public blessing of LEMs.
- An Archdiocesan Lay Ministry formation process with a commissioning at the end of the program.
- Diocesan Formation Program
- For certain lay ecclesial ministry, diocesan authorization is needed; for others, diocesan formation and parish authorization is needed.
- Formal process for pastoral administrators; no diocesan process for other lay ecclesial ministers
- Formation Program culminating in authorization
- Graduation from a 3-year formation program or a degree from the seminary/school of theology
- I am calling the School of Lay Ministry the "Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministry"
- Kino Institute which provides classes and trainings for Lay Ecclesial Ministers
- No diocesan process; authorization is given at the individual parish level
- Note: Lay Ecclesial Ministry now in Office of Pastoral Ministries
- Parish Life Coordinators are appointed by the Bishop
- The creation of the Ministry Formation Institute

Is there a diocesan official (i.e. vicar/delegate/coordinator) who is responsible for lay ecclesial ministers? If yes, what is the title of that position?

- Administrator of the Institute for Lay Ecclesial Ministry
- All directors of ministry offices are responsible for specific groups of lay ecclesial ministers
- Archdiocesan Coordinator of Lay Ministry
- Associate Director for Christian Formation
- Bishop
- Diocesan Director of Pastoral Ministries

- Direction of Faith Formation
- Director of Adult Faith Formation
- Director of Deacon and Lay Ministries Formation
- Director of Ministry Formation
- Director of Office for Lay Ecclesial Ministry
- Director of Pastoral Services
- Director of Religious Education
- Director of the Office for Lay Ecclesial Ministry
- Director, Life Long Learning and Education, Director, Lay Ministry, Superintendent of Schools, Director of Religious Education, Director, Youth Ministry
- Director, Office for Lay Ecclesial Ministry
- Director, Office for Lay Ministry
- Director, Office of Evangelization and Catechesis
- I am responsible for the training of 200 lay ministers in our program; not for all lay ministers in the diocese.
- Ministerial Coordinator
- Office of Ministry Formation
- Program Director of Parish Leadership Formation
- Secretary for Catholic Education and Formation
- Three people are responsible, Episcopal Vicar/Vice Chancellor and the Director of the Department of Educational Services
- Vicar for Ministers

Which of these are authorized lay ecclesial ministries in your arch/diocese? Other:

- Campus Minister (university); Lay Ecclesial Minister for Healthcare
- Campus ministers, Catholic school teachers of Religion
- Hospital Chaplaincy;
- Lay Ecclesial Minister (Parish Life Coordinator)
- Lay matrimonial advocates
- Our diocese has not yet developed requirements that the above must complete the LEM Formation Program. We have certified LEMs who are currently serving in these capacities however.
- Parish Business administration
- Parish Business Administration, Campus Ministry, Catholic School,
- Parish Life Coordinator
- Pastoral administrator
- Pastoral Minister, Pastoral Coordinator, Outreach Coordinator
- Restorative Justice Ministry, Hospital Chaplains
- Some, but not all of those operating in most of these capacities, are formally authorized.
- We have ministers commissioned through our program doing all these ministries, but again only a fraction of the lay ministers functioning in the diocese have participated in our program.

Which of the following does the arch/bishop use in his communication with lay ecclesial ministers? Other:

- Annual Commissioning Liturgy
- Auxiliary bishops meet with lay ecclesial ministers and other staff during the annual parish visit
- Bishop's column in diocesan magazine; Emailed parish packets with information to include in bulletins, etc.
- Communications not directed solely at lay ecclesial ministers
- E-mail blasts
- Emails and other electronic postings
- Meetings with groups such as youth ministers, Directors of Religious education etc.
- No official communication as we do not have official lay ecclesial ministers
- No regular communications
- None
- NONE
- Paris Life Office meets with LEMs
- The above affirmatives apply to some of the LEMs.
- The Diocese of Fort Worth has held assemblies of parish staff people for over twenty years.

Does your arch/diocese subsidize the formation of lay ecclesial ministers? If yes, what best describes the subsidy policy for lay ecclesial ministry formation? Other:

- 50 percent reduction in University tuition; additional scholarship funds are possible from diocesan foundation
- A financial agreement exists between the diocese and College of Our Lady of the Elms which benefits MAAT students
- Archdiocese pays one third; school waives one third; lay minister pays one third
- Archdiocese provides personnel, office space, classroom space, administrative support for both our Masters and Bachelor's degree programs
- Decisions according to need. Some get full assistance other none
- Diocese pays \$500 per course for each of 10 University courses.
- Diocese pays a portion of Certificate education / pays all costs for local formation programs in each vicariate
- Diocese pays a third, lay minister pays two thirds.
- Diocese pays the tuition cost. Participant pays other fees and textbook costs
- Diocese pays two thirds, parish pays one sixth, lay minister pays one sixth.
- Diocese provides staff for program and oversight; either lay minister or parish pays the other portion. (1/2)
- For the Spanish speaking LEM Formation Program, Emaús, the Diocese pays the full cost. The English speakers are subsidized at about half of the total cost of running the program
- In some cases, full scholarships are available; in other cases, a combination of grants and loans are offered

- It varies on the position and the person.
- May be either b, c, or other depending on circumstances
- Parish may pay half; lay minister pays half
- Parish pays the tuition and the rest is funded through the ORE budget
- Parishes are encouraged to provide tuition assistance, diocesan scholarships are available
- Partial scholarships offered per ministerial office formation event - formal endowment for lay ecclesial ministry in process
- Subsidizes administration of formation program
- Suggested Sharing: Parish: 50%, Student: 25%, Diocese: 25% (if requested)
- The diocese provides all administrative costs and occasional tuition assistance to individuals, parishes sometimes pay part or all tuition costs.
- Tuition is waived by the diocese if the student is a good candidate, but lacks money for tuition.
- We pay a set amount and percentage varies

Does certification for lay ecclesial ministry expire after a given time period? If yes, what is the time period?

- The certification is valid for three years. During that time, LEMs must be engaged in continuing education and active ministry.
- Three years
- Three years for Eucharistic Ministers and Readers
- Three years for the basic program and five years for the advanced program.
- For some lay ecclesial ministers three years, for others five years
- Some after three years and some after seven years.
- Five years
- Five years
- Six years

If the arch/diocese has a commissioning ceremony or public installation of lay ecclesial ministers, where does this take place? Other:

- A parish chosen by the director
- At graduation from the ministry formation program, then by a letter from the bishop every three years following the completion of continuing education requirements
- Certification takes place with the Bishop at the Cathedral.
- Graduation/commissioning at end of 3yr formation program
- In the last two years we have held the commissioning in parish churches.
- Parish selected by Director which is centrally located for ease of travel access
- Pastoral administrators are commissioned/installed at the parish or mission which they will serve
- We have a commissioning ceremony at the end of the formation program, but there is no formal installation of parish based ministers.

If the arch/diocese has a commissioning ceremony or public installation of lay ecclesial ministers, who presides? Other:

- Volunteers are commissioned for specific ministry in the local parish

Which of these are used by the arch/diocese to announce parish lay ecclesial ministry appointments? Other:

- Announcements of Commissioning but not specific appointments.
- Archdiocese doesn't announce these, only in the parish is it announced.
- Blessing ceremony at Mass in parish in which LEM serves
- Means chosen by the parish which often includes introduction at week-end liturgies
- No official lay ecclesial ministers so no official appointment or announcement
- None
- None
- There is no formal announcement. The diocesan newspaper has covered the commissioning ceremonies.

In your opinion, what is the greatest benefit of authorization for lay ecclesial ministry?

- Authorization can more clearly define the relationship of the lay ecclesial minister to the bishop and therefore give: public acknowledgement of the individual's competencies respect for the call and commitment to service of the lay ecclesial minister in the faith community, responsibility to the minister to be a representative of the Christ's mission in the world, and authority to make decisions and act on behalf of the Church
- Being brought forth and publicly commissioned to serve one's faith community as a lay ecclesial minister is a very positive way of authenticating the call to discipleship in Christ that all the baptized share. Being able to witness and experience such caring service and generosity within parishes fosters a greater sense of community and brings with it many benefits and blessings.
- Communicates the importance of model of Church that calls forth gifts of all.
- Trained and well-formed lay leaders in our parishes and schools. Recognition by clergy (pastors, bishop) and other diocesan personnel. Recognition by peers. Formal relationship with the bishop.
- Affirmation of training and leadership
- As stated in *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, authorization is an important step in recognizing the lay ecclesial minister as competent for his/her position and provides an opportunity for recognition from the entire community.
- Assurance of proper training. Public recognition.
- Authorization makes the minister more than just a volunteer.
- Authorization benefits the faithful by assuring them that when they approach an authorized LEM to receive services from the Church, they can be confident that what

they are receiving is aligned with the apostolic ministry and authority of the diocesan bishop.

- Authorization for lay ecclesial ministry provides consistency of formation.
- Authorization if properly exercised indicates that there are functions in the life of the Church that the baptized can fulfill without leaving the lay state, and that the collaboration between laity, clergy and religious can have an officially recognized structure. When authorization carries with it a requirement of formation for ministry before a lay person can serve in the name of the parish or diocese, then it also promotes a better informed laity regarding their faith, rather than just warm bodies filling various ministry roles.
- Collaboration in the ministry of the bishop and pastors.
- Competency Respect Accountability
- Credibility and accountability in the community. A greater sense of sharing in the Gospel message of Jesus. A sense that the person hired to fill a position is a person on knowledge and experience, a person of prayer and commitment to mission. A person committed to on-going formation and education.
- Ensures that those serving the Church have the proper formation and skills necessary to faithfully and authentically lead those they have been charged to serve.
- Helps the Community and the Pastor to understand the value of well-formed ministers in the Diocese. Also validates the minister in the Call and Ministry.
- It assures the community that the lay ecclesial minister has the support of the Bishop and demonstrates the Bishop's confidence in the lay ecclesial minister's knowledge of the teachings of the Church and his or her ability to lead and serve the community.
- It gives credibility to the person as well as assuring that qualified, formed people minister in parishes and dioceses.
- It helps pastors and heads of diocesan offices to choose those who have been formerly trained for leadership positions.
- It provides a certain degree of credibility for the lay person. The completion of the program leading to the completion of a Theology Degree has more benefit than the fact that the person is authorized.
- It provides a connection between the lay ecclesial minister and the Bishop. It is a public recognition that the lay ecclesial minister serves on behalf of the Bishop.
- It takes place within Eucharist offered for the LEM and community with the intention of blessing and public recognition of their intention to serve the Bishop and assist in the diocese as called. It is a time for families to celebrate the four years of formal preparation that preceded this occasion.
- Lay Ecclesial Ministers are qualified people who are in charge of the day to day running of the parish which frees the priests time to do the sacramental ministry for which he was ordained. It gives the laity their rightful role to be a minister of faith to the people.
- Ministers have a strong sense of both ministry and Church teaching. Also they feel the support of the bishop.
- Not sure there is a "greatest benefit." Some possible benefits: standardization of training, attempts to insure qualifications of the person serving in a position has the qualifications needed. Public announcement of hiring is important. Sometimes

- people are hired in parishes and the people of God are the last to know. Closer cooperation between parish and diocesan offices – although pastors will tend to resist this. They are wary of anything that limits the scope of their hiring authority.
- Parish Life Coordinators (Lay Ecclesial Ministers in our diocese) and some Pastoral Associates often serve in parishes without a resident priest. It is essential for their acceptance by the congregation to have authorization for their ministry.
  - Pastors have not expressed any significant benefit beyond the encouragement to seek better formation.
  - Public acknowledgement
  - Public acknowledgement of both the role and the individual serving in that role
  - Public recognition and respect. Clear lines of accountability.
  - Recognition and affirmation by parish community as well as support from parish leadership
  - Recognition by the faithful of those entrusted with ministerial service to the people.
  - Situates LEM in right relationship to ordained ministry within the local Church. Attests to the preparation and formation of the ministers. Provides credibility.
  - Strengthens bond between the bishop and lay ministers at parishes
  - The assurance that the person receiving the certification has had the proper formation
  - The emphasis on highly qualified and well-formed lay leaders who understand their ministry in relation to the Bishop and the Church as a whole.
  - The greatest benefit of our Archdiocesan Lay Ministry program is that it provides a deeper level of education and training for the laity. It encourages and enables the lay person to exercise the gifts and talents God has bestowed on them and it helps build up the Church and spread the Gospel. The greatest benefit of authorization on a national level would be the establishment of some levels of standards for ministry in the United States. It would also help validate and support the "professional lay minister."
  - The lay faithful and the clergy can have confidence that the minister is adequately educated and formed for ministry. The minister has a greater sense of being trusted with their ministry by the bishop. The process of authorization aids in the education of all those concerned regarding the nature of lay ministry in the Church.
  - The most important benefit of authorization in a public manner is the fact that it clarifies for the parish community that the person has the authority to act on behalf of the arch/bishop. Its public nature helps everyone to feel comfortable with the fact that the person designated is in charge and parish members can bring their concerns and problems to that person.
  - The parish is assured of individuals who have been properly formed for ecclesial lay ministry.
  - To date we have no authorization process. However, we are moving in this direction. Greatest benefit: Assurance of quality person in the position Ability to interact with all parish ministers on a diocesan level to bring about solid on-going formation More job security for the individual minister A more unified approach to ministry in the diocese
  - We do not formally authorize ministers from the diocesan level. We do issue a certificate of completion for the formation program and that has proven beneficial for

pastors looking to hire a lay minister. The greatest benefit is quality control of formation program.

- We have none in our diocese.
- We offer a three-year comprehensive Formation Program (intellectual, spiritual, human, pastoral) accompanied by on-going assessment of a candidate's suitability for ministry. We follow the competency requirements put forth in the National Standards. Though most of our Commissioned Lay Ecclesial Ministers end up in volunteer positions, they are much better prepared in all the above areas. The benefit to the parish is that its ministers bring a deeper understanding of their ecclesial role.

In your opinion, what is the greatest challenge of authorization for lay ecclesial ministry?

- A change in Bishop may change the way authorization happens/is understood, thus leaving those already authorized in a difficult situation.
- Acceptance by both clergy and laity of the need for or even desirability of authorization
- Acceptance by the clergy.
- Appropriately authorizing lay ecclesial ministers who meet the criteria established by the Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers as recognized by the USCCB/CCA.
- Assuring that pastors actually follow the procedures in place for the hiring of lay ecclesial ministers.
- "Clericalization" of Laity
- Clericalization of the laity. Commissioning ceremonies can sometimes take on strange aspects of quasi-liturgical "rites." You can't certify someone as having the human and personal traits appropriate for ministry. All you can do is certify that they have achieved appropriate levels of training and education for the position. The human factors cannot be guaranteed, no matter how many certificates, letters and ceremonies are offered. What the Archbishop names, the Archbishop can "un" name. It co-opts lay people into the hierarchy of the Church. Some would see this as a good thing. Others, not. Newly ordained priests are often unsupportive of lay ecclesial ministers. We see a trend of fewer LEMs are being hired and being replaced with volunteer and Permanent Deacons. Authorization is a moot point if there are fewer people being hired. Pastors are more frequently hiring a parishioner with minimal or no qualifications because they feel comfortable with the person. Should this person be authorized? Are we "blessing" a less than positive situation?
- Consistent and systematic training. It was difficult to complete this survey because of the various types of ecclesial ministry development systems. The development system for school principals is entirely different from other ecclesial ministries. Our answers would have been completely different if we had excluded school principals from our responses.
- Cooperation of local pastors in the vastly remote parishes of this diocese ... and communication with the diocesan office and Bishop.
- Encouraging parishes to hire only qualified lay ecclesial ministers.
- Formal "authorization" other than simply appointing lay ecclesial ministers as parish or diocesan staff and "commissioning" of volunteers can be easily overblown. We have to avoid treating "authorization" of laity as though it were granting a "license" for ecclesial

ministry, giving the impression that once assigned a ministry role, the laity somehow have a right to it forever. In our diocese we seldom use the word "authorization" to speak of lay ecclesial ministry, so this entire survey was difficult to respond to. We use the language of "appointment" because it better calls to mind the needed delegation by the church authority in assigning the lay person to a particular ministry. "Authorization" tends to sound as though the "ministerial character" is a possession of the lay person, rather than an office they undertake at the delegation of a pastor. Anything beyond that is to treat the laity as though their role as ecclesial ministers is as permanent and as consecrated to serving the Church as the role of clergy. Freedom to change focus at will or to move out of ecclesial ministry to engage in a more secular occupation is a prerogative of the laity that religious and clergy seldom have. So the measure of ecclesial "authorization" ought to be proportionate to the often limited permanency of laity in ecclesial ministry, in an appropriate trade-off. It should not be treated the same as "consecration" to religious life or ordination to the clerical state, both of which entail permanency.

- Getting to the point of authorization; that it would be a value and a practice in the local Church. Clergy acceptance and support.
- Having all pastors buy in to the need for public displays of authorization.
- Having the staff or human resources necessary to properly to train and educate those serving as lay ecclesial ministers. When higher institutions of Catholic learning are not present there is on-line learning however the cost to engage is often times cost prohibitive, especially for those serving in mission dioceses.
- Having the total support of the priests and a clear understanding of the program and its benefits.
- Helping parishes through the transition from resident priest to a lay ecclesial minister serving day to day needs of the parish. Greater education processes and grieving processes need to be developed to assist parish during these times.
- I believe that acceptance by parish members will prove to be the greatest challenge to authorization/commissioning of lay ecclesial ministers. This is not to say that parish members will not generally accept a lay person in a role of authority, but it is to say that we have not had a formal authorization/commissioning ceremony performed on a routine basis. I believe that because we have a wealth of vocations to the priesthood and have been able to juggle our priests to cover several parishes at once, parishes are not used to a lay person in authority, though we do have several Parish Administrators (Parish Life Coordinators) who are lay men and women.
- Inability of pastoral leadership to see the connection between a comprehensive formation process for authorization for lay ecclesial ministry and its rightful and beneficial place in the parish/diocesan community. This lack of connection results in a second significant challenge, namely, inadequate resources--both in terms of the need for support for formation programs and the growing need in parishes for well-trained ministerial leadership.
- Individuals who serve at cross-purposes to the bishop. Conflicts between ordained and non-ordained ministers.
- Involving the diocesan offices in the hiring process.
- It is a process within which we are constantly growing and changing. We are not yet at the point where we actually use the term "authorization" but rather "blessing" with our

Ordinary. Our Bishop is a strong supporter of the LEM formation program yet he's carefully helping the People of God to understand more about the nature of lay ecclesial ministry. We are in the third year of our second cohort of LEMs and many people in the diocese still do not understand much about lay ecclesial ministry. All of this takes time and teaching so expectations and roles are clarified.

- Lack of understanding of significance of the role. Lack of HR policies on the role. Job security and lack of policies when positions are eliminated for budget reasons.
- Lay ecclesial ministry is still a new concept for most people. Lay people who are not professed religious who work in ecclesial ministry are often not understood.
- N/A
- Not every lay ecclesial minister fits every position. Directing people to the correct position that is in their area of skill is sometimes difficult. Our certification is a general certification...not for one particular position. Additional training is needed in each area.
- Not having a process. Not having resources i.e. Catholic College/University.
- Overcoming the discouragement and disillusionment accompanying the growing loss of members, parishes, and trust in the Church today is, I believe, one of its greatest challenges. This is not an easy or comfortable time to be Catholic and to be a lay ecclesial minister now may need even more affirmation that such service is needed, recognized and appreciated.
- Pastors have to invest in the training program. They should require the authorization of all ministers.
- Perception by some of another level of hierarchy
- Requires a significant investment of resources
- That authorization will not mean anything in reality.
- The greatest challenge has been articulating the concept and need for lay ecclesial minister authorization in a manner that is recognized and accepted by pastors, the laity involved and the archbishop.
- The greatest challenge in our Archdiocese is getting pastors to support and send more lay people for this training.
- The greatest challenge is convincing people, lay and clergy, the necessity of formation before authorizing one for lay ecclesial ministry. Some feel that the desire to serve is adequate and assume that requiring formation is too burdensome for the laity. This is a false assumption. It has been our experience that those who attend formation find it rewarding and enriching to their faith.
- The greatest challenge is to get lay people to take the classes to become qualified. To get the priests to share in the ministry, which includes the laity in the running of the parish and to be collaborative with each other. Comment: Just started the collaboration with Dodge City Diocese in forming "Church in Partnership" which is both Salina and Dodge City dioceses working together to form Lay Ecclesial Ministers. It is College Credited with Newman University in Wichita Kansas.
- The greatest challenge of authorization for lay ecclesial ministry would be transitioning to that way of doing things.
- The greatest challenge, even if the ecclesial minister is authorized, is the threat they pose to the clergy – priests more so than the deacons. In the Gary diocese the deacons have spent four years of their training in weekly classes with women and men who chose not

to be ordained. I think this makes a big difference in how the deacons and ecclesial ministers work together. Bison [Name] especially wanted the program to be structured so that the men preparing for diaconate studied for the first four years with women preparing for lay ecclesial ministry.

- The primary challenge is financial as many parishes cannot afford to pay a just wage to the LEM.
- The sense of entitlement to a paid position within the Church?
- There is still not widespread understanding of "lay ministry" let alone "lay ecclesial ministry." Authorizing individuals to serve as public ministers in the Church doesn't really address this more fundamental lack of knowledge. For those who are interested, the fact that individuals are authorized may generate interest and lead them to explore the meaning of lay ministry. However, lay ministry and lay ecclesial ministry are still in the process of being defined. A solid understanding will follow when there is enough experience upon which to reflect.
- Trust in the reality of lay ecclesial ministry as a collaborative work of the Spirit for the building up of the Kingdom, as opposed to a diminishment of the importance of / need for the priesthood, the diaconate and/or the religious life.
- Uncertainty over relationship of lay ecclesial minister to the bishop Overcoming liability issues.
- Understanding of their role
- We have a Rite of Commissioning which very few lay ecclesial ministers have pursued. There is a perception that this in some way parallels ordination which of course it does not. Since that perception exists many lay ecclesial ministers shy away from participating in a very beautiful Rite with the Bishop.