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)

**Please answer the following questions as they apply to your arch/diocese:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please use these responses for questions 1 to 6:</th>
<th>1=Not at all important</th>
<th>2=Only a little</th>
<th>3=Somewhat</th>
<th>4=Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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

1. Public validation and support for the lay ecclesial minister  
2. Assurance that the lay ecclesial ministry has proper training and formation  
3. Grants the lay ecclesial minister the right to serve in a public ministry in the Church  
4. Ensures adequate ecclesiastical oversight of ministry  
5. Strengthens the relationship between the lay ecclesial minister and the arch/diocese  
6. Other: ___________________________________________________________

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

7. The arch/diocese has no process for authorizing lay ecclesial ministry (SKIP TO ITEM 23)
8. A pastoral letter or statement from the arch/bishop on lay ecclesial ministry
9. An Office of Lay Ecclesial Ministry
10. A written arch/diocesan policy on authorization for lay ecclesial ministry
11. Other: ___________________________________________________________

12. Is there a diocesan official (i.e. vicar/delegate/coordinator) who is responsible for lay ecclesial ministers?  
   1. Yes  
   2. No

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).
- Pastoral associate
- Adult faith formation/RCIA
- Religious education for children/youth
- Youth ministry
- Young adult ministry
- Liturgical and/or music ministry
- Evangelization
- Pastoral care of the sick
- Bereavement ministry
- Other: ____________________________

In what ways does the arch/diocese assist in placement of lay ecclesial ministers in parish positions? (Check all that apply).
- No involvement of the arch/diocese in placement
- Arch/diocese maintains a placement office for lay ecclesial ministry openings
- Arch/diocese is responsible for all HR related to lay ecclesial ministry
- Arch/diocese maintains a list of authorized lay ecclesial ministers for parishes
- Arch/diocese recommends potential lay ecclesial ministers to pastors who inquire

Yes No

28. Does your arch/diocese provide a process for transferring lay ecclesial ministers from one parish to another?
29. Does your arch/diocese provide a process for termination of employment of a lay ecclesial minister?
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).
- Newsletters
- Regular one-on-one meetings
- Gatherings for the arch/bishop and lay ecclesial ministers
- Membership on diocesan councils and/or commissions
- Consultation at diocesan meetings involving parish life
- Consultation at regional meetings involving parish life
- Individual consultation on pastoral issues
- Meetings with the arch/bishop during his parish visits
- 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

40. Does your arch/diocese have its own formation program for lay ecclesial ministry?
   Yes, what program(s) are offered? (Check all that apply).
- Arch/diocesan sponsored certificate program, no degree offered
- Degree program associated with a Catholic seminary or School of Theology
- Degree program associated with a Catholic college or university
- Combined certificate/degree program
Yes  No

☐ ☐ 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).
☐ 46. Service that predates diocesan policy on certification  
☐ 47. Current enrollment in a formation program  
☐ 48. Previous experience or other qualifications  
☐ 49. Recommendation by the pastor  
☐ 50. Pastoral need  
☐ 51. Other: __________________________________________________________

☐ ☐ 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).
☐ 52a. Arch/diocese pays the full cost for formation for lay ecclesial ministry  
☐ 52b. Arch/diocese pays half, parish or lay minister pays half  
☐ 52c. Arch/diocese pays a third, parish pays a third, lay minister pays a third  
☐ 52d. Other: __________________________________________________________

☐ ☐ 53. Does your arch/diocese participate in a regional certification process for its lay ecclesial ministers (e.g. Minnesota Catholic Education Association Certification process)?
☐ ☐ 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)?
☐ ☐ 55. Does your arch/diocese accept a lay ecclesial minister who has a certification for lay ecclesial ministry from another arch/diocece?
☐ ☐ 56. Does your arch/diocese charge a fee for certification?
☐ ☐ 57. Does certification for lay ecclesial ministry expire after a given time period?  
☐ 57a. If yes, what is the time period: ________ year(s)
☐ ☐ 58. Does your arch/diocese offer ongoing formation for lay ecclesial ministers?
☐ ☐ 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%)  3=Many (51-75%)
2=Some (25-50%)  4=Most or all (more than 75%)

What proportion of parish lay ecclesial ministers serving in the arch/diocece have:
1 2 3 4
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 60. An official appointment to their position by the arch/bishop
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 61. A contract for their position
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 62. A written job description
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 63. A set term of appointment with provision for renewal
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 64. A periodic, written evaluation of their ministry

What proportion of parish lay ecclesial ministers serving in the arch/diocece are:
1 2 3 4
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 65. Hired by the arch/bishop
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 66. Hired by another arch/diocesan official
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 67. Hired by the pastor of the parish in which they serve
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 68. Serving in a full-time paid ministry position
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 69. Serving in a part-time paid ministry position
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 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).

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

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

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

   - [ ] 81. Rights and obligations attached to the position
   - [ ] 82. Limits on the exercise of authority
   - [ ] 83. Relevant employment and personnel policies
   - [ ] 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).

- [ ] 85. At the arch/diocesan cathedral
- [ ] 86. At the parish(es) where the lay ecclesial minister(s) will be serving
- [ ] 87. Other:__________________________________________________________________
- [ ] 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).

- [ ] 89. After certification
- [ ] 90. Upon hiring
- [ ] 91. Independent of hiring (e.g. annual commissioning ceremony for lay ecclesial ministers)

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

- [ ] 92. Arch/bishop
- [ ] 93. Arch/diocesan official (i.e. vicar/delegate/coordinator) who is responsible for lay ecclesial ministers
- [ ] 94. Pastor of the parish where the lay ecclesial minister will be serving
- [ ] 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).

- [ ] 96. Arch/diocesan newspaper or magazine
- [ ] 97. Arch/diocesan clergy newsletter
- [ ] 98. Arch/diocesan website
- [ ] 99. Arch/diocesan social media (e.g. Facebook or Twitter)
- [ ] 100. Letter or visit from the arch/bishop to parish
- [ ] 101. Parish bulletin
- [ ] 102. Parish website
- [ ] 103. Parish social media
- [ ] 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.

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