

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

**Statistical Overview of
Catholic Permanent Deacons' Formation
in the United States for 2022-2023**



July 2023

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CARA was founded by Catholic leaders in 1964 to put social science research tools at the service of the Catholic Church in the United States.

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Introduction

This report provides an overview of permanent diaconate formation programs in the United States. It is based on annual studies conducted by the Center for Applied Research in Apostolate (CARA) since 1996–1997 academic year.

The report is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on the characteristics of the permanent diaconate formation programs and describes how these programs differ, among other things, in their requirements for admission, program duration and number of required courses, the frequency with which candidates meet, tuition and fees, as well as the distribution of funding (between participants, parishes, and dioceses).

The second part of this report focuses on various characteristics of candidates (and aspirants) to permanent diaconate who are enrolled in the programs. It shows the number of candidates, aspirants, and anticipated ordinations to permanent diaconate in the years following the Second Vatican Council. The second part of the report also includes demographic information such as educational attainment, marital status, age, as well as racial and ethnic background.

Permanent Diaconate Formation Programs

Number of Programs

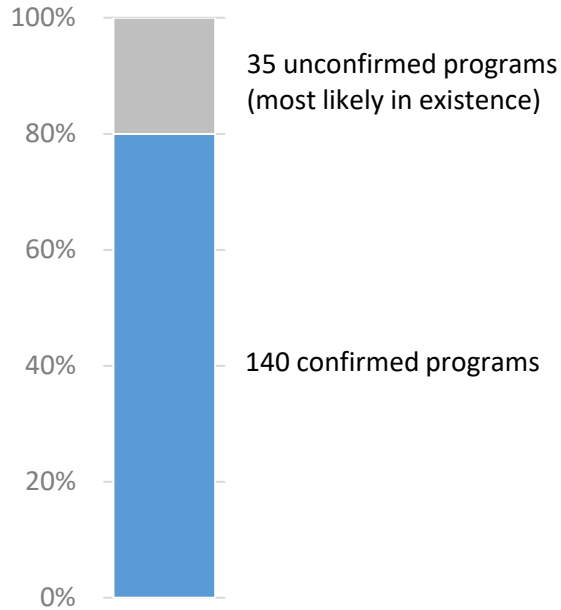
In 2022-2023, CARA identified a total of 175 confirmed and unconfirmed programs.

There were 140 confirmed programs, in 2022-2023 (as compared to 143 a year earlier). This includes 133 active and 7 dormant (i.e., on hold) programs. The number of confirmed programs averaged 146 and ranged between 102 and 175, since 1996-1997.

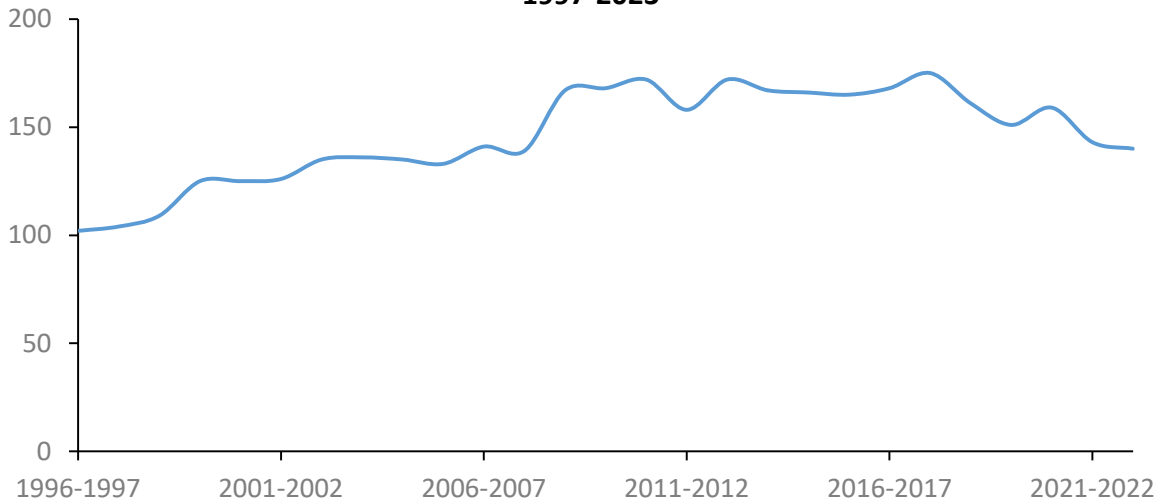
The confirmed and active programs were located in 46 states and 129 arch/dioceses, in the United States.

There were 35 unconfirmed programs (most likely in existence), in 2022-2023 (as compared to 32 a year earlier). These programs did not respond to the requests for updated information; thus, they could not be included in the analysis presented in this report.

Number of Permanent Diaconate Formation Programs, 2022-2023



Number of Confirmed Permanent Diaconate Formation Programs, 1997-2023



Place of Instruction

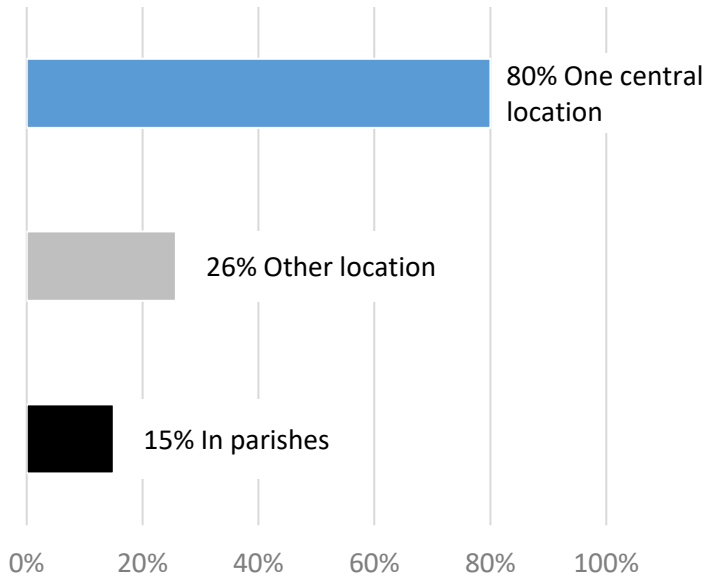
Permanent diaconate formation programs meet at different types of locations.

Four in five programs (80%) met in one central location, in 2022-2023 (and 82% a year before). Since 2008-2009, the percentage of these programs averaged 78% and ranged between 75% and 82%. If the trend continues, 83% of programs $\pm 3\%$ will meet in one central location, in 2027-2028.

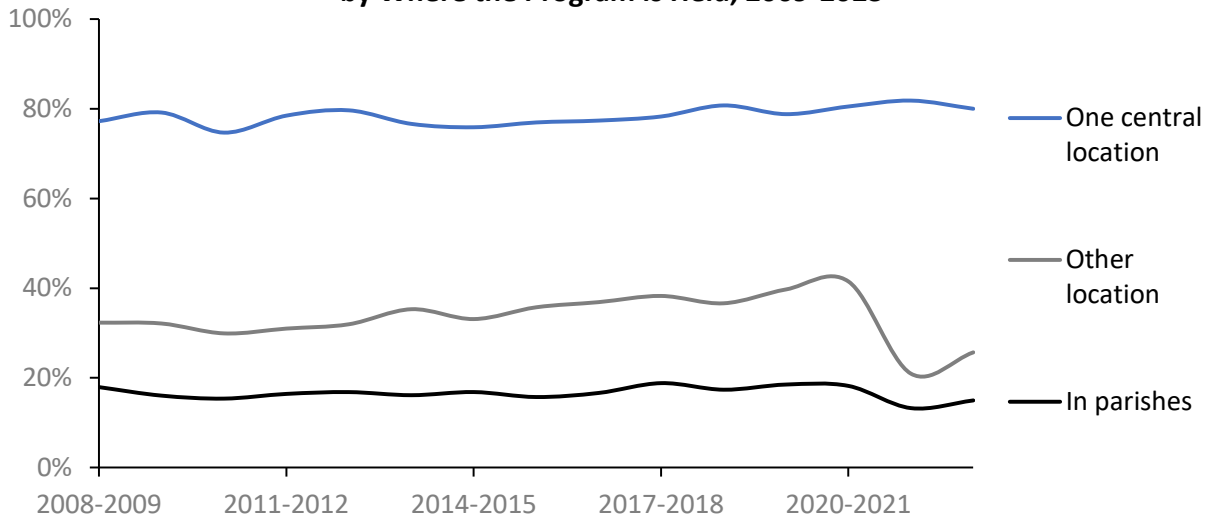
One quarter of programs (26%) met in another location (than a central location or in parishes), in 2022-2023 (and 21% a year before). Since 2008-2009, the percentage of these programs averaged 33% and ranged between 21% and 42%.

One in five programs (15%) met in parishes, in 2022-2023 (and 13% a year before). Since 2008-2009, the percentage of these programs averaged 17% and ranged between 13% and 19%.

Percentage of Permanent Diaconate Formation Programs, by Where the Program is Held, 2022-2023



Percentage of Permanent Diaconate Formation Programs, by Where the Program is Held, 2009-2023



* Data for 2010-2011 is interpolated.

Language of Instruction

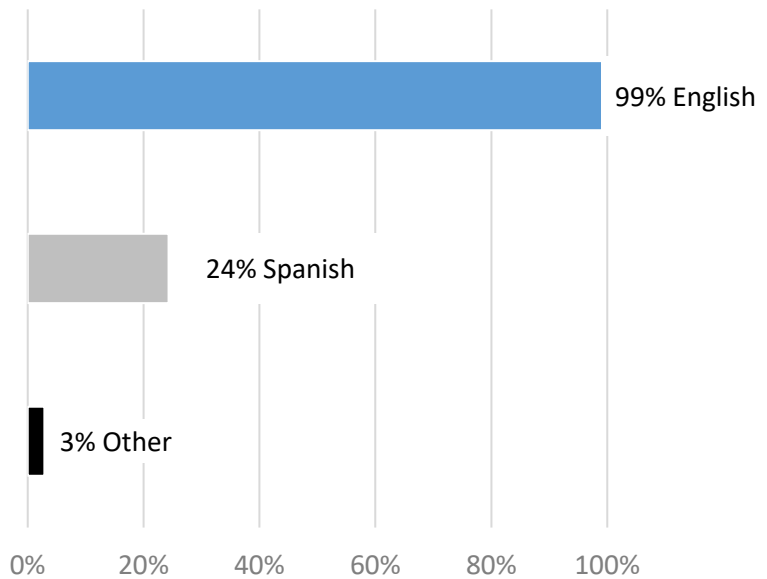
Some programs offer formation in both Spanish and English. Some programs provide separate tracks in English and Spanish within the same program and others conduct some of their classes in Spanish. Finally, some provide instruction in other languages or train candidates to serve particular ethnic or cultural groups.

Virtually all programs (99%) used English as the primary language of instruction, in 2022-2023 (as compared to 98% a year before). Since 2008-2009, the percentage of these programs averaged 99% and ranged between 94% and 99%. If the trend continues, 99% of programs $\pm 3\%$ will provide instruction in English, in 2027-2028.

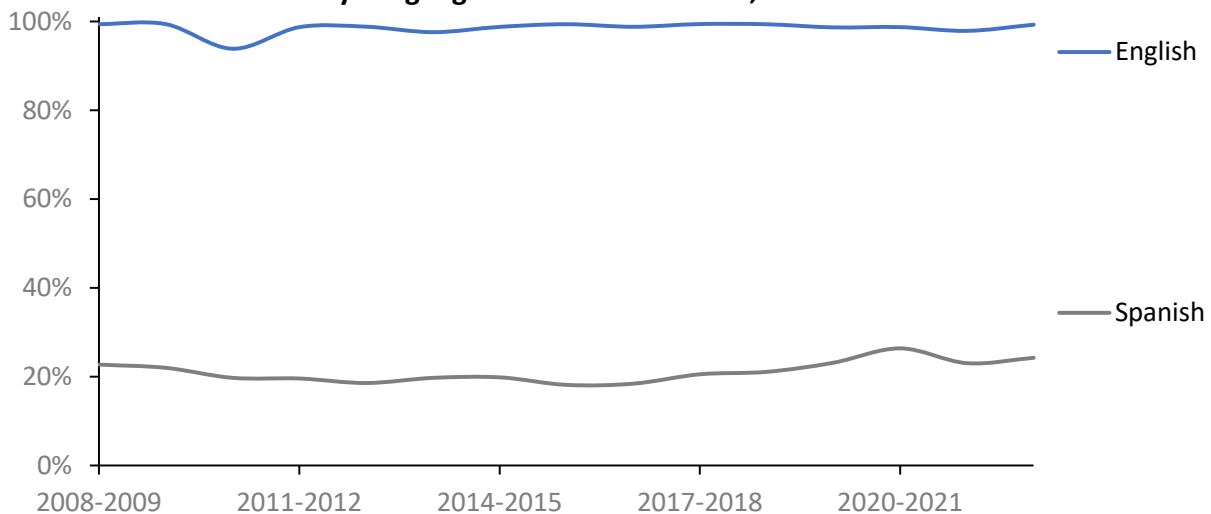
One quarter of programs (24%) were in Spanish as the primary language of instruction, in 2022-2023 (and 23% a year before). Since 2008-2009, the percentage of these programs averaged 21% and ranged between 18% and 26%. If the trend continues, 25% of programs $\pm 5\%$ will use Spanish, in 2027-2028.

One in ten programs (5%) were in some other language of instruction (i.e., Vietnamese, Ukrainian, Yup'ik, and Arabic), in 2022-2023 (and 6% a year before). Since 2008-2009, the percentage of these programs averaged 4% and ranged between 3% and 6%. If the trend continues, 12% of programs $\pm 3\%$ will use languages other than English and Spanish, in 2027-2028.

Percentage of Permanent Diaconate Formation Programs, by Languages Used in Instruction, 2022-2023



Percentage of Permanent Diaconate Formation Programs, by Languages Used in Instruction, 2009-2023

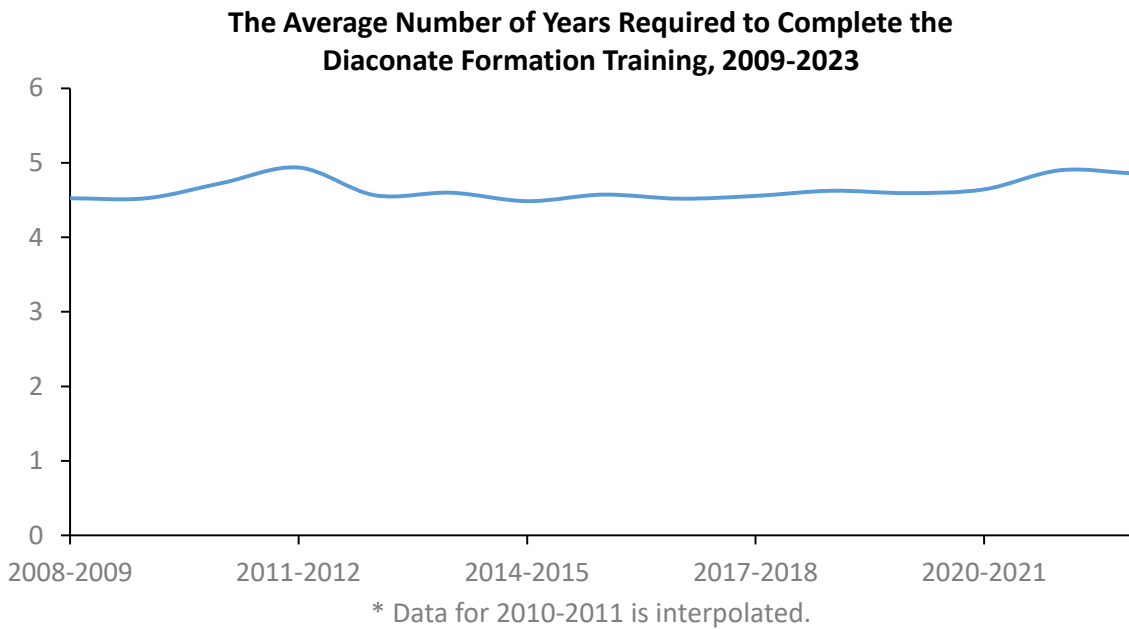


* Data for 2010-2011 is interpolated.

Program Length

The Number of Years Required to Complete the Diaconate Formation Training, 2022-2023		
Average	Median	Range
 [#]	 [#]	 [#]
5	5	3 - 7

On average, diaconate formation training required 5 years to complete, in 2022-2023 (about the same as in a year earlier). Since 2008-2009, the training required, on average, 5 years to complete and ranged between 4 and 5 years. Shorter programs typically stipulate the prior completion of a lay ecclesial ministry formation program.



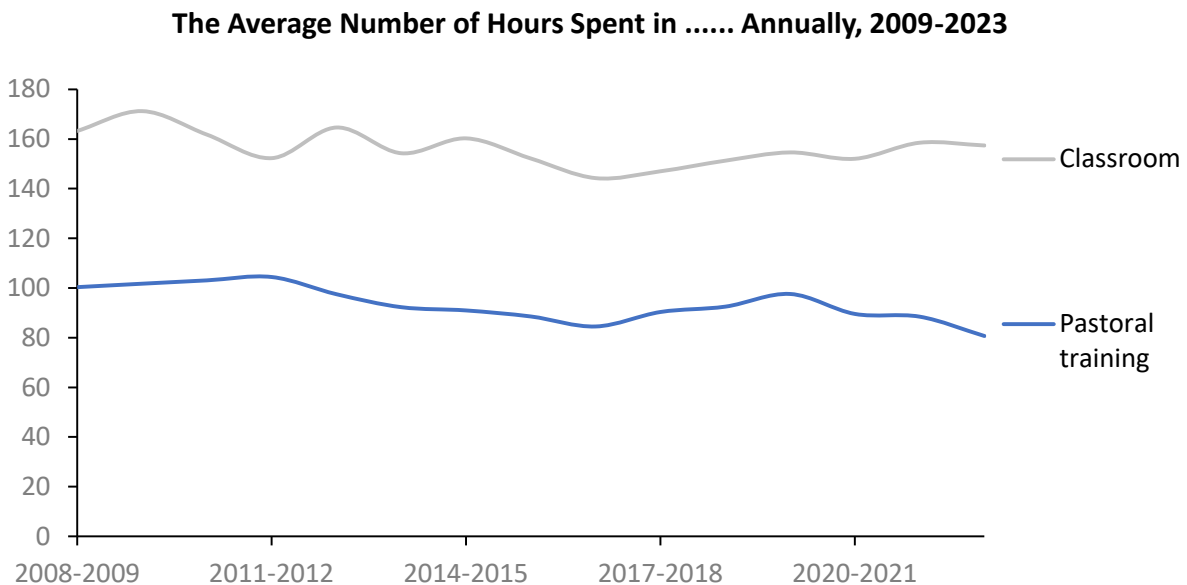
Length of Classroom and Pastoral Training

Permanent diaconate formation includes classroom instruction and pastoral training.

	Average [#]	Median [#]	Range [#]
Classroom	157	140	10 - 500
Pastoral training	81	54	0 - 500

On average, candidates spent 157 hours in classroom, in 2022-2023 (as compared to 158 hours a year earlier). In half of the programs, candidates spent between 10 and 140 hours while in the other half between 140 and 500 hours in classroom. Since 2008-2009, the time spent in classroom averaged 156 hours and ranged between 144 and 171 hours.

On average, candidates spent 81 hours in pastoral training, in 2022-2023 (as compared to 88 hours a year earlier). In half of the programs, candidates spent between 0 and 54 hours while in the other half between 54 and 500 hours in pastoral training. Since 2008-2009, the time spent in pastoral training averaged 94 hours and ranged between 81 and 104 hours.



Requirements for Admission to Candidacy

Typical admission requirements include a period of discernment, recommendation by the candidate's pastor, the support of the candidate's wife, letters of reference, psychological testing, and multiple interviews. Some permanent diaconate formation programs have educational and training requirements for admission to candidacy.

Three quarters of programs (72%) required high school/GED for admission to candidacy, in 2022-2023 (and 64% a year before).

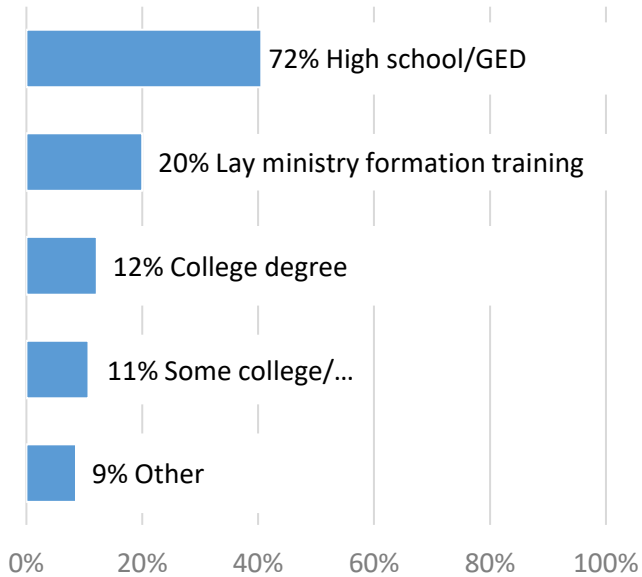
One in five programs (20%) required lay ministry formation training for admission to candidacy, in 2022-2023 (and 19% a year before).

One in ten programs (12%) required college degree for admission to candidacy, in 2022-2023 (and 12% a year before).

One in ten programs (11%) required some college education for admission to candidacy, in 2022-2023 (and 13% a year before).

One in ten programs (9%) had some other requirements for admission to candidacy, in 2022-2023 (and 6% a year before).

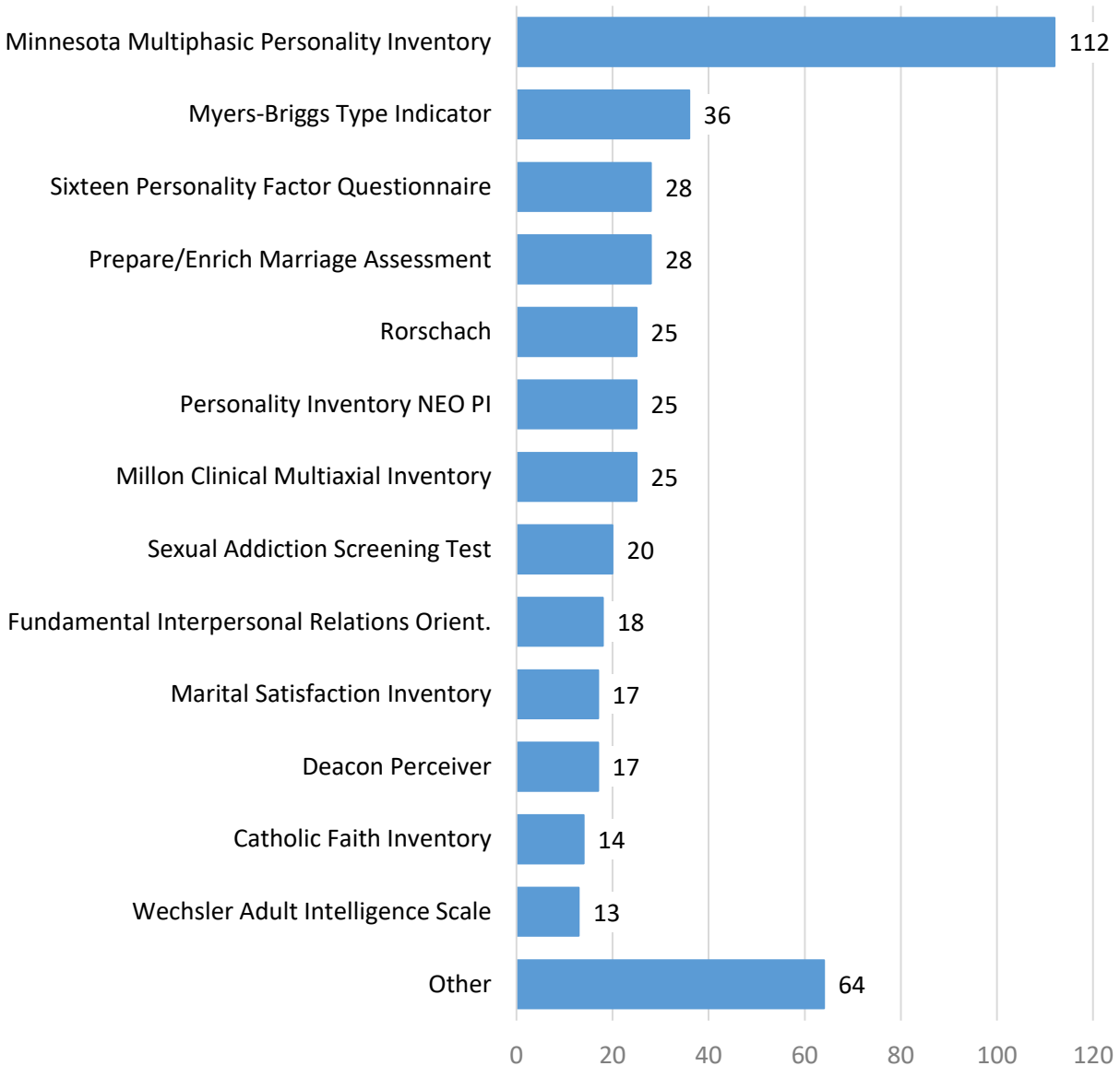
Percentage of Permanent Diaconate Formation Programs, by Requirements for Admission to Candidacy, 2022-2023



Tests Used in the Process of Admission to Candidacy

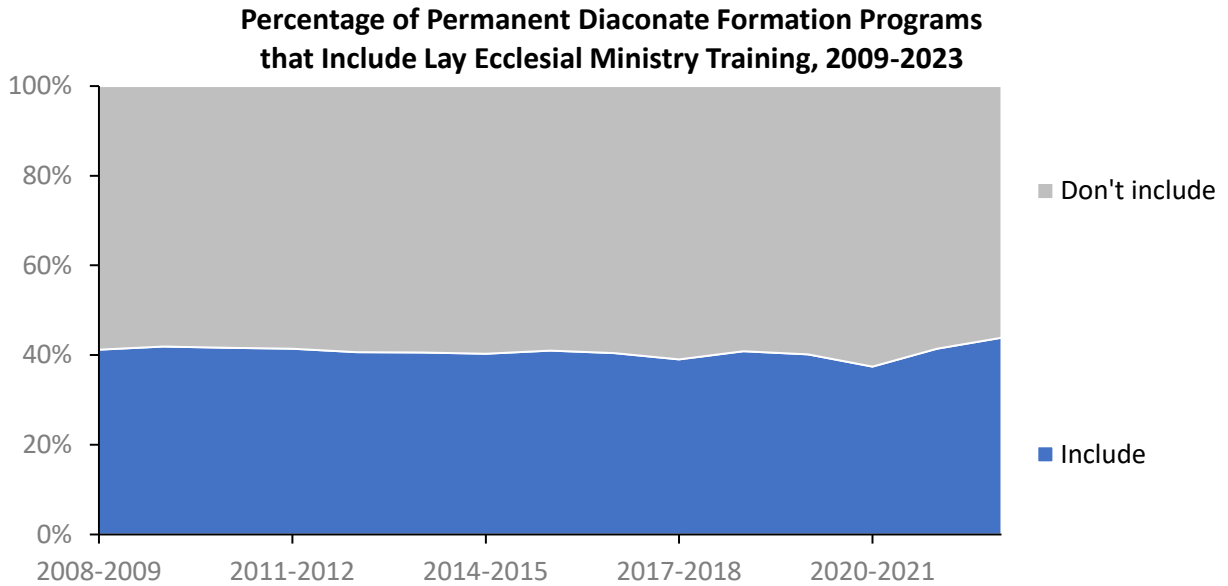
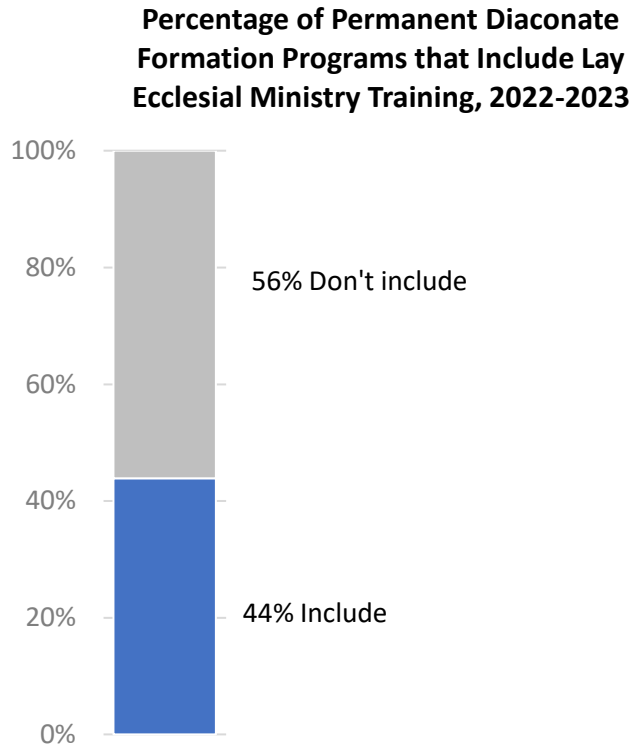
Permanent diaconate formation programs utilize various tests in the process of admission to candidacy. In 2022-2023, the five most common of those tests were: Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) (used by 80% of all programs), Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (26%), Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF) (20%), Prepare/Enrich Marriage Assessment (20%), and Rorschach (18%).

Number of Permanent Diaconate Formation Programs, by Type of Tests Used in the Process of Admission to Candidacy, 2022-2023



Inclusion of Lay Ecclesial Ministry Training

Two in five permanent diaconate formation programs (44%) included lay ecclesial ministry training, in 2022-2023 (as compared to 41% a year before). Since 2008-2009, the percentage of these programs averaged 41% and ranged between 37% and 44%. If the trend continues, 44% of programs $\pm 5\%$ will included lay ecclesial ministry training, in 2027-2028.



Costs per Student

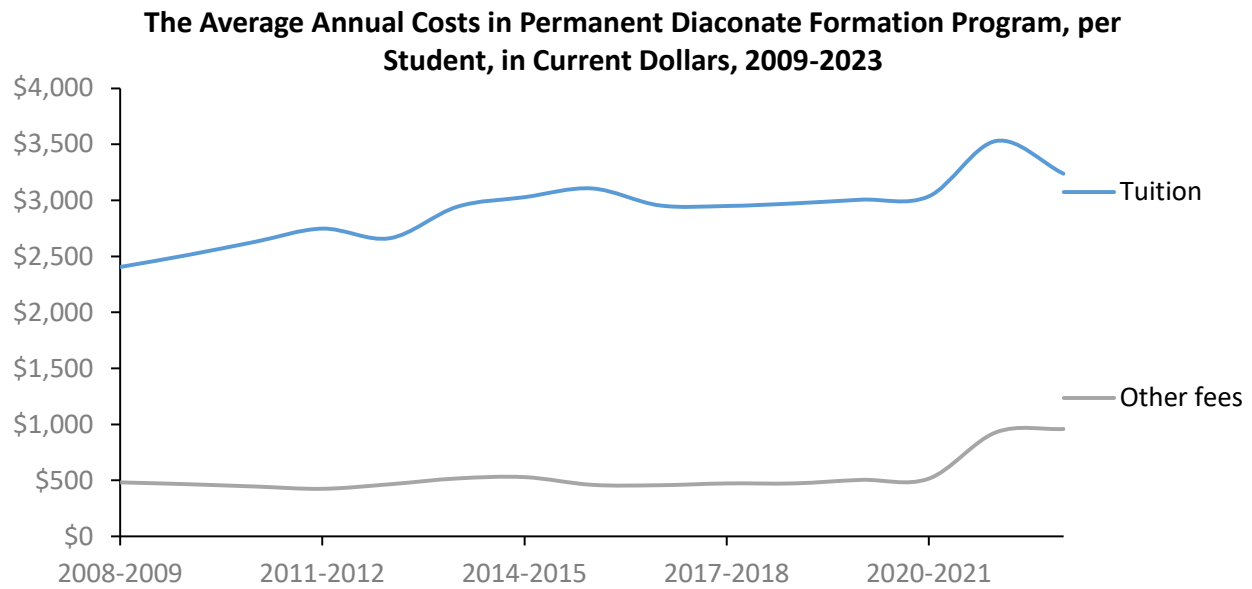
The table below shows the cost of permanent diaconate formation per student, in 2022-2023.

The Cost of Permanent Diaconate Formation, per Student, per Academic Year, in Current Dollars, 2022-2023*			
	Average	Median	Range
	[\$]	[\$]	[\$]
Tuition	3,238	2,500	150 - 10,000
Other fee(s)	960	500	100 - 6,000

* Responses equal to zero were removed from the analysis.

The average tuition was \$3,238 in permanent diaconate formation programs, in 2022-2023 (and \$3,530 a year earlier) and the median was \$2,500. Since 2008-2009, the tuition averaged \$2,914 and ranged between \$2,405 and \$3,530.

The average other fee(s) equaled \$960, in 2022-2023 (and \$930 a year earlier) and the median was \$500. Since 2008-2009, the other fee(s) averaged \$540 and ranged between \$425 and \$960.



* Data for 2010-2011 is interpolated.

Funding

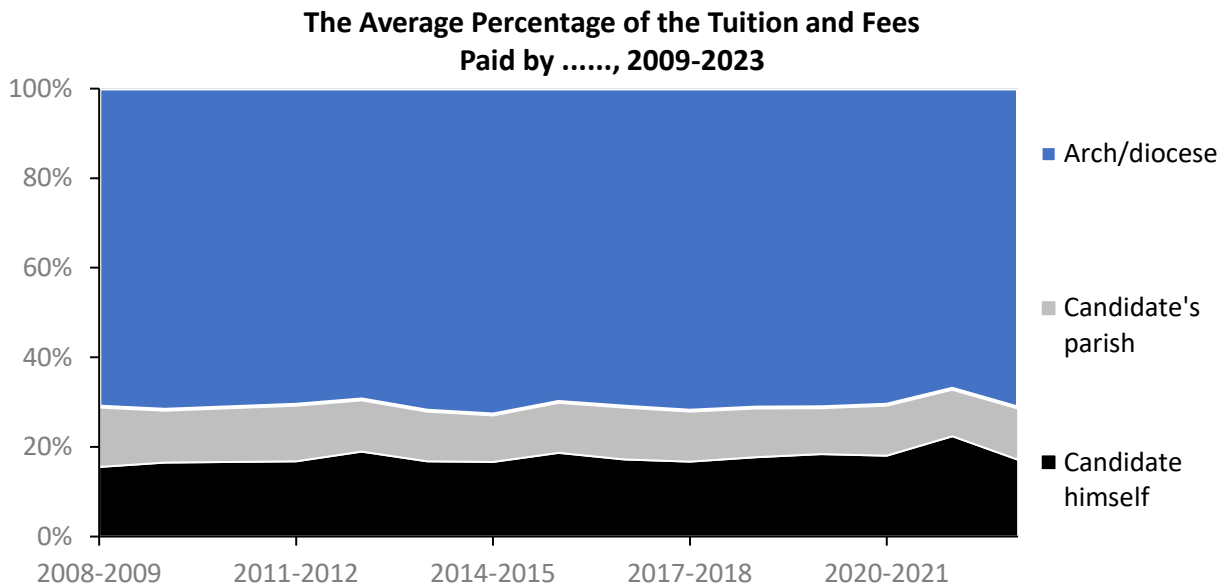
The table below shows the distribution of funding that covered the cost of permanent diaconate formation, in 2022-2023.

	Average	Median	Range
	[%]	[%]	[%]
Arch/diocese	_70	_86	_0 - 100
Candidate himself	_17	_0	_0 - 100
Candidate's parish	_11	_0	_0 - _99

Seven in ten cents on every dollar (70%) spent on permanent diaconate formation was paid, on average, by arch/diocese, in 2022-2023 (as compared to 64% a year earlier). The median was 86%. Since 2008-2009, the amount covered by the arch/diocese averaged 69% and ranged between 64% and 71%.

One in five cents on every dollar (17%) spent on tuition and fees for permanent diaconate formation was paid, on average, by candidate himself, in 2022-2023 (as compared to 21% a year earlier). The median was 0%. Since 2008-2009, the amount covered by the candidate himself averaged 17% and ranged between 15% and 21%.

One in ten cents on every dollar (11%) spent on tuition and fees for permanent diaconate formation was paid, on average, by candidate's parish, in 2022-2023 (as compared to 10% a year earlier). The median was 0%. Since 2008-2009, the amount covered by the candidate's parish averaged 11% and ranged between 10% and 13%.

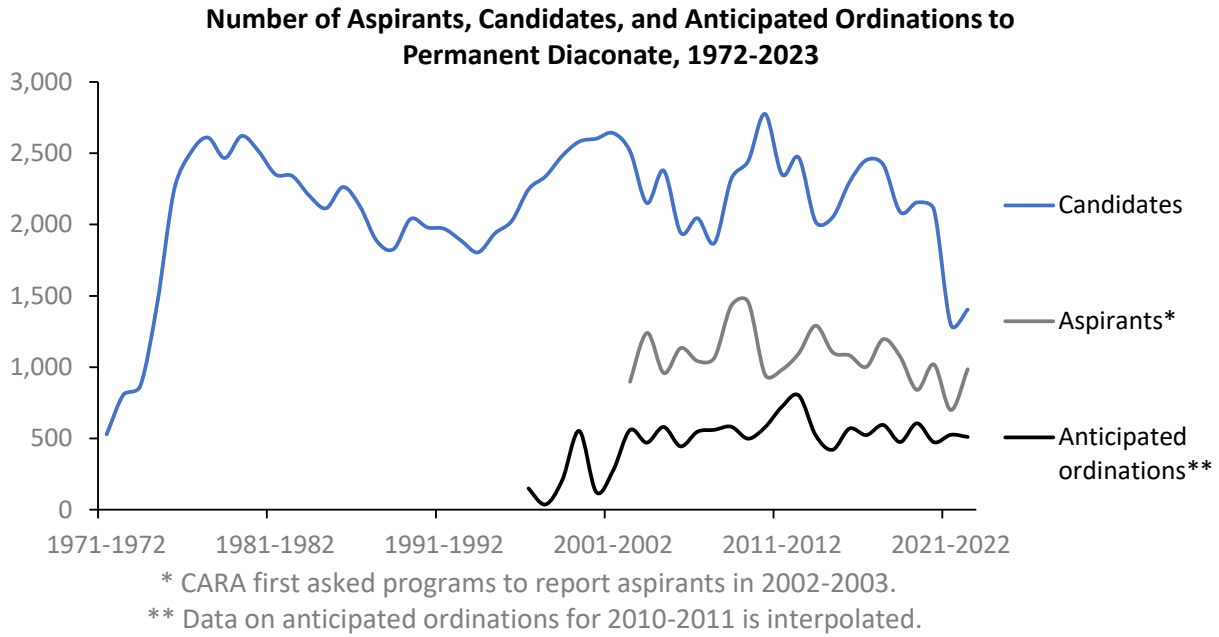


* Data for 2010-2011 is interpolated.

Candidates to Permanent Diaconate

Number of Aspirants and Candidates

The chart below shows the number of candidates, aspirants, and anticipated ordinations to permanent diaconate in the years following the Second Vatican Council. All three categories of deacons in formation follow the cyclic pattern found in many diaconate formation programs, which often accumulate aspirants for several years and then create a candidacy class that goes through formation together.



There were 1,404 candidates to permanent diaconate, in 2022-2023 (an increase of 8% since 2021-2022). They constituted 59% of all men in formation to permanent diaconate. There were 985 aspirants to permanent diaconate, in 2022-2023 (an increase of 41% since 2021-2022). They constituted 41% of men in formation. Finally, there were 510 anticipated ordinands to permanent diaconate, in 2022-2023. They constituted 36% of candidates to permanent diaconate that year. Their share was on average 22% and ranged between 2% and 40%, since 1971-1972.

Permanent Diaconate Formation Programs with Highest Enrollment, by the Number of Candidates, 2022-2023		
	Candidates ↓	Aspirants
	[#]	[#]
Diaconate Program at the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, Texas	89	33
Center for Diaconal Formation at Seton Hall University, New Jersey	76	0
Diaconate Program at the Diocese of Charleston, South Carolina	50	0
Diaconate Program at the Diocese of Little Rock, Arkansas	45	0
Diaconate Program at the Archdiocese of San Antonio, Texas	41	18

Educational Attainment

Candidates to permanent diaconate enter formation with varying levels of educational attainment.

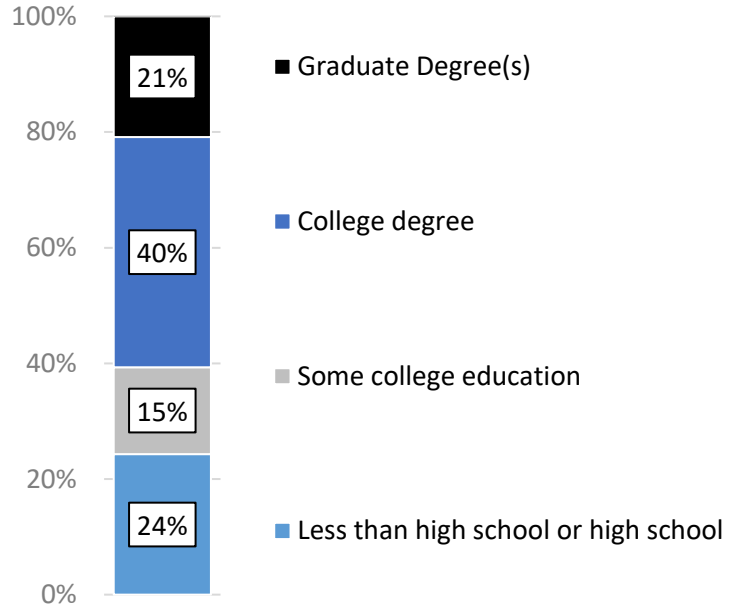
One quarter of candidates had less than high school education or high school diploma (24% of candidates in all programs), in 2022-2023 (and 18%, in 2021-2022). Their share in all programs averaged 19% and ranged between 15% and 24%, since 2002-2003.

One in five candidates had some college education (15% of candidates in all programs), in 2022-2023 (and 13%, in 2021-2022). Their share in all programs averaged 17% and ranged between 13% and 20%, since 2002-2003.

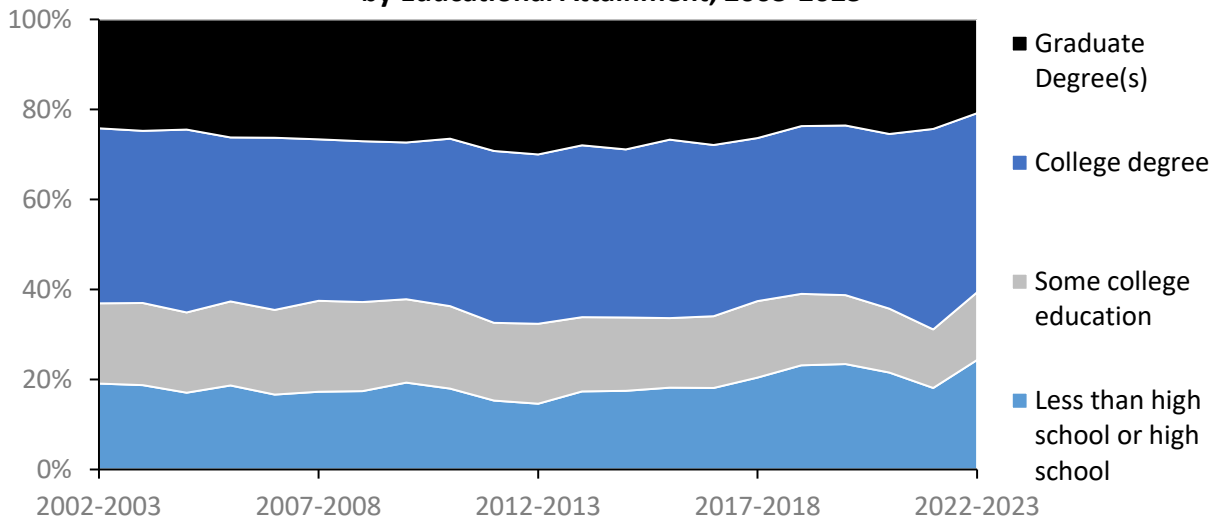
Two in five candidates had college degrees (40% of candidates in all programs), in 2022-2023 (and 45%, in 2021-2022). Their share in all programs averaged 38% and ranged between 35% and 45%, since 2002-2003.

One in five candidates had graduate degree(s) (21% of candidates in all programs), in 2022-2023 (and 24%, in 2021-2022). Their share in all programs averaged 26% and ranged between 21% and 30%, since 2002-2003.

Distribution of Permanent Diaconate Candidates, by Educational Attainment, 2022-2023



Distribution of Permanent Diaconate Candidates, by Educational Attainment, 2003-2023



Marital Status

Candidates to permanent diaconate are more likely than not to be married.

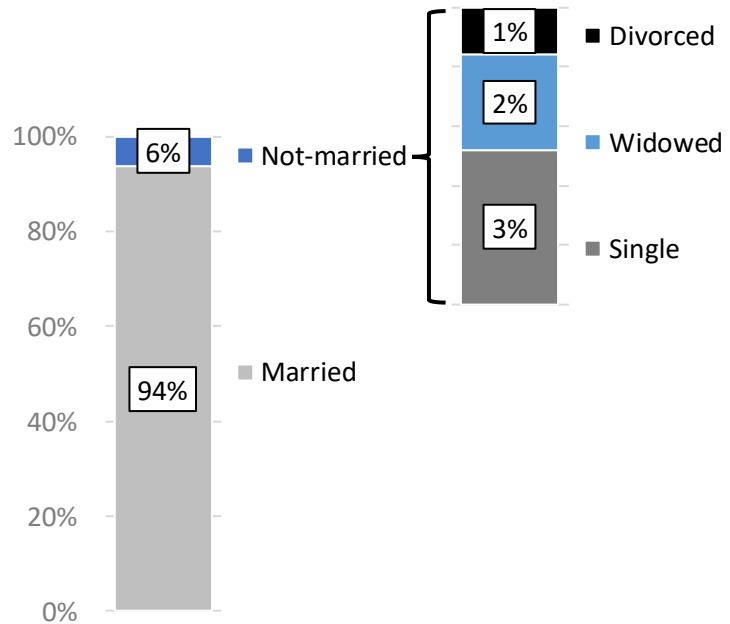
Nine in ten (94%) candidates were married, in 2022-2023 (and 95%, in 2021-2022). Their share in all programs averaged 96% and ranged between 94% and 96%, since 2008-2009. If the trend continues, they will constitute 94% \pm 1% of candidates in all programs, in 2027-2028.

Relatively few (3%) candidates were single, in 2022-2023 (and 3%, in 2021-2022). Their share in all programs averaged 3% and ranged between 2% and 4%, since 2008-2009. If the trend continues, they will constitute 2% \pm 1% of candidates in all programs, in 2027-2028.

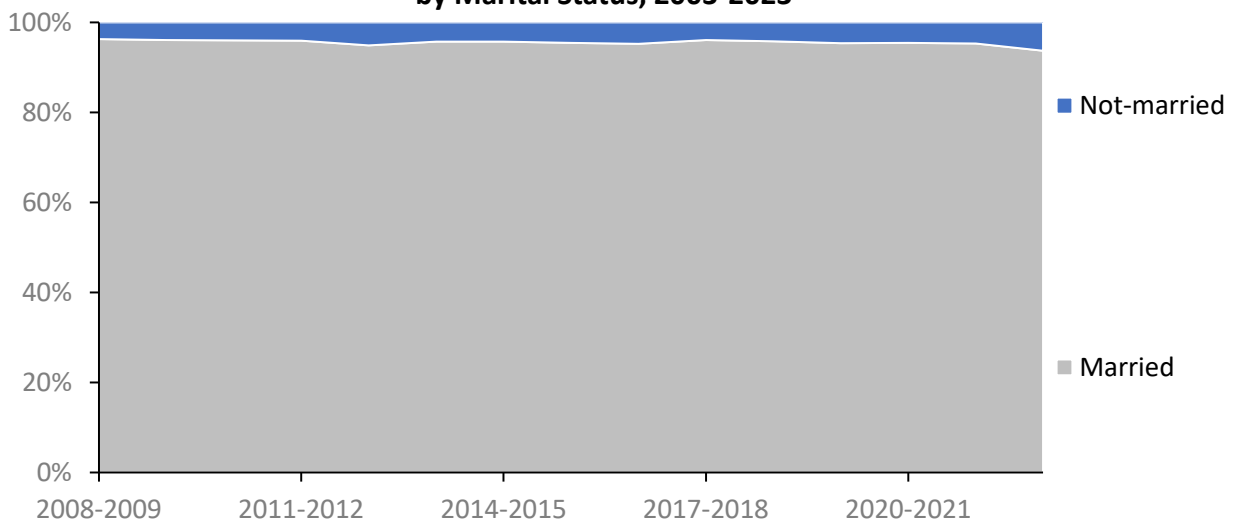
Relatively few (2%) candidates were widowed, in 2022-2023 (and 1%, in 2021-2022). Their share in all programs averaged 1% and ranged between 0% and 2%, since 2008-2009. If the trend continues, they will constitute 2% \pm 1% of candidates in all programs, in 2027-2028.

Relatively few (1%) candidates were other, in 2022-2023 (and 0%, in 2021-2022). Their share in all programs averaged 0% and ranged between 0% and 1%, since 2008-2009. If the trend continues, they will constitute 1% \pm 1% of candidates in all programs, in 2027-2028.

Distribution of Permanent Diaconate Candidates, by Marital Status, 2022-2023



Distribution of Permanent Diaconate Candidates, by Marital Status, 2003-2023*



* Data for 2010-2011 is interpolated.

Age

Candidates to permanent diaconate range in age from under 40 years old to over 60. According to Canon Law, married deacon candidates must be 35 or older to be ordained.

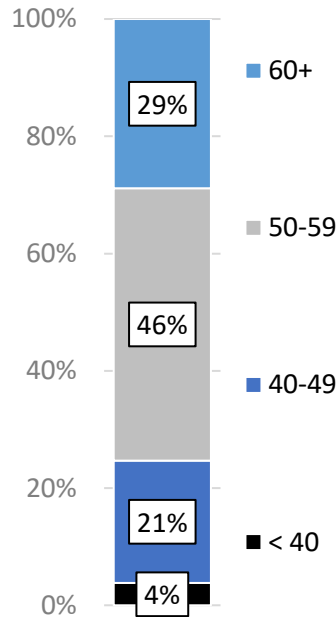
Candidates who are under 40 constituted 4% of candidates in all programs, in 2022-2023 (and 4% in 2021-2022). Their share in all programs averaged 4% and ranged between 3% and 7%, since 2002-2003. If the trend continues, they will constitute 4% ±2% of candidates in all programs, in 2027-2028.

Candidates who are 40-49 constituted 21% of candidates in all programs, in 2022-2023 (and 23% in 2021-2022). Their share in all programs averaged 27% and ranged between 19% and 37%, since 2002-2003. If the trend continues, they will constitute 17% ±5% of candidates in all programs, in 2027-2028.

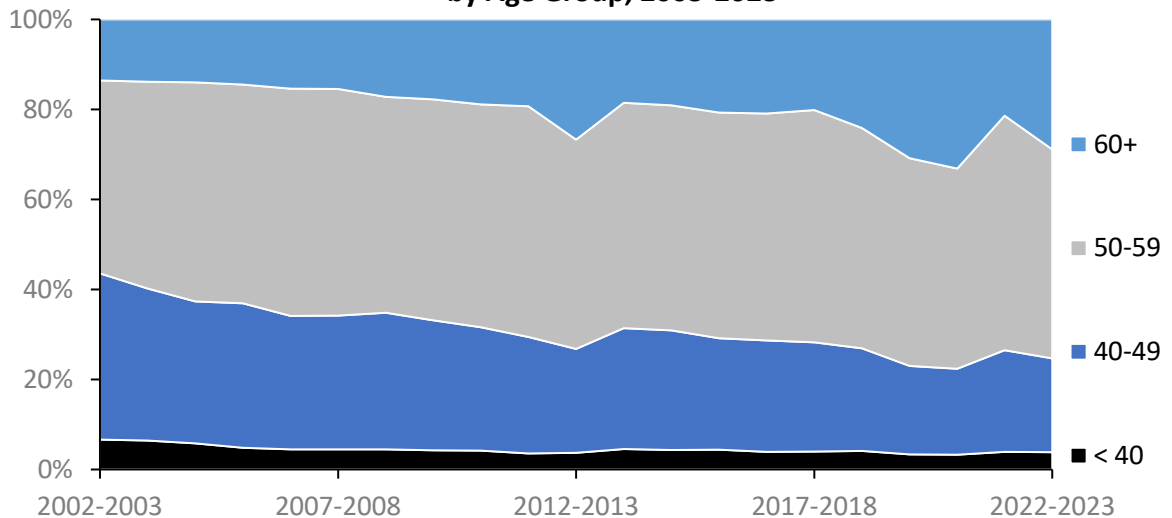
Candidates who are 50-59 constituted 46% of candidates in all programs, in 2022-2023 (and 52% in 2021-2022). Their share in all programs averaged 49% and ranged between 43% and 52%, since 2002-2003.

Candidates who are 60+ constituted 29% of candidates in all programs, in 2022-2023 (and 21% in 2021-2022). Their share in all programs averaged 20% and ranged between 14% and 33%, since 2002-2003.

Distribution of Permanent Diaconate Candidates, by Age Group, 2022-2023



Distribution of Permanent Diaconate Candidates, by Age Group, 2003-2023



Racial and Ethnic Background

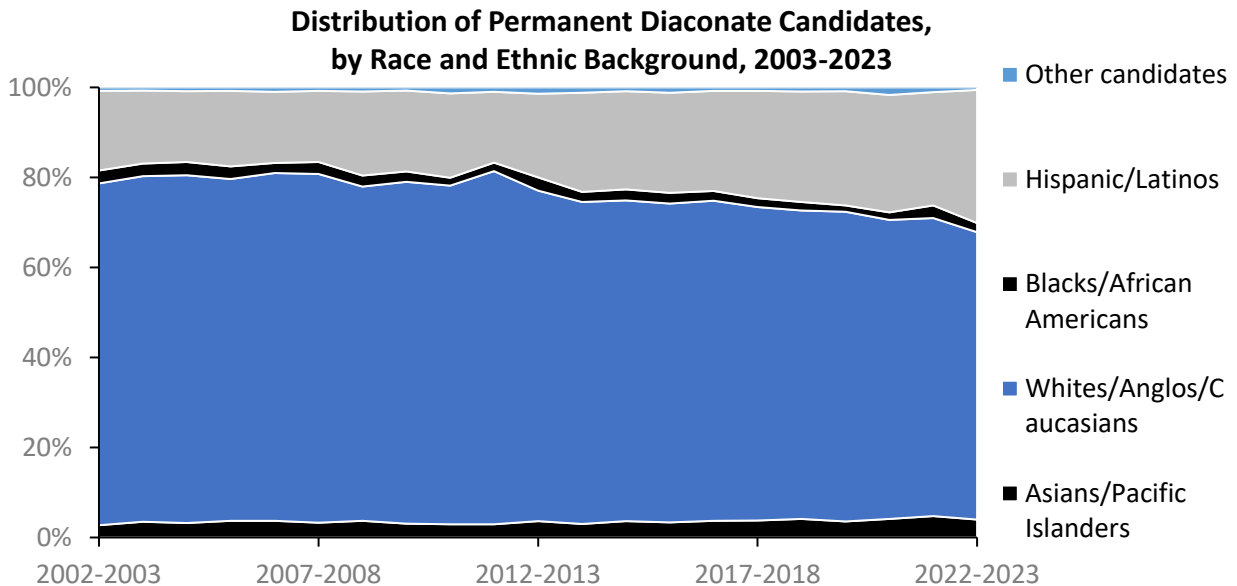
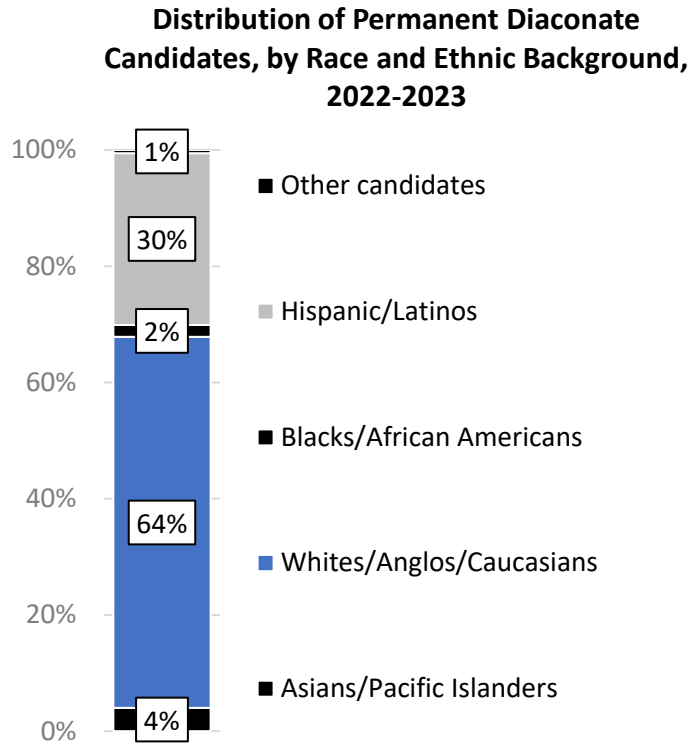
Candidates to permanent diaconate can be divided between: Asians, Whites, Blacks, Hispanics/Latinos and others (which includes Native Americans). The racial and ethnic distribution of candidates to permanent diaconate is gradually becoming more diverse.

Whites/Anglos/Caucasians constituted 64% of candidates in all programs, in 2022-2023 (and 66%, in 2021-2022). Their share averaged 73% and ranged between 64% and 78%, since 2002-2003.

Hispanics/Latinos constituted 30% of candidates in all programs, in 2022-2023 (and 25%, in 2021-2022). Their share averaged 21% and ranged between 16% and 30%, since 2002-2003.

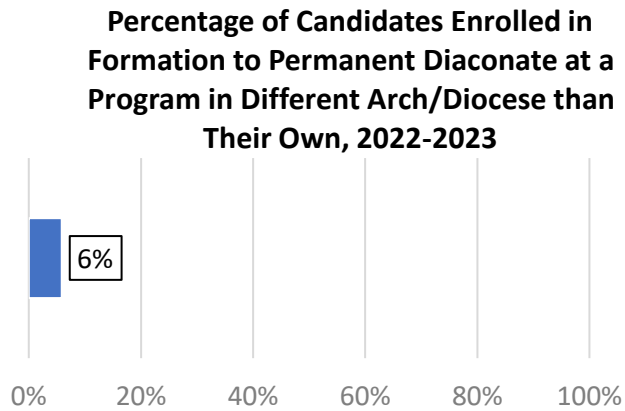
Asians/Pacific Islanders constituted 4% of candidates in all programs, in 2022-2023 (and 5%, in 2021-2022). Their share averaged 4% and ranged between 3% and 5%, since 2002-2003. If the trend continues, they will constitute 4% ±1% of candidates in all programs, in 2027-2028.

Blacks/African Americans constituted 2% of candidates in all programs, in 2022-2023 (and 3%, in 2021-2022). Their share averaged 2% and ranged between 1% and 3%, since 2002-2003. If the trend continues, they will constitute 2% ±1% of candidates in all programs, in 2027-2028.



Candidates from Other Dioceses

Diaconate formation programs vary considerably according to local needs and situations. Some dioceses or eparchies include deacon candidates from other dioceses or eparchies in their program, often to accommodate dioceses that are in the process of reorganizing or creating a new diaconate formation program. One in ten (6%) candidates was enrolled in formation to permanent diaconate at a program in different arch/diocese than their own.



Methodology and End Notes

CARA completed the first study of diaconate formation programs in 1996–1997 and updated the information at the beginning of each academic year since then.

The data are gathered in the fall of each year.

Tests for difference in proportions are only reported, if significance level is equal to or smaller than 0.05.

For the purpose of forecasting, confidence intervals are estimated using confidence level of 0.95. Forecasts are only included, if confidence interval is equal to or smaller than 5% of the forecasted amount.