

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

**Statistical Overview of the
Catholic Permanent Deacons' Formation
in the United States**



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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

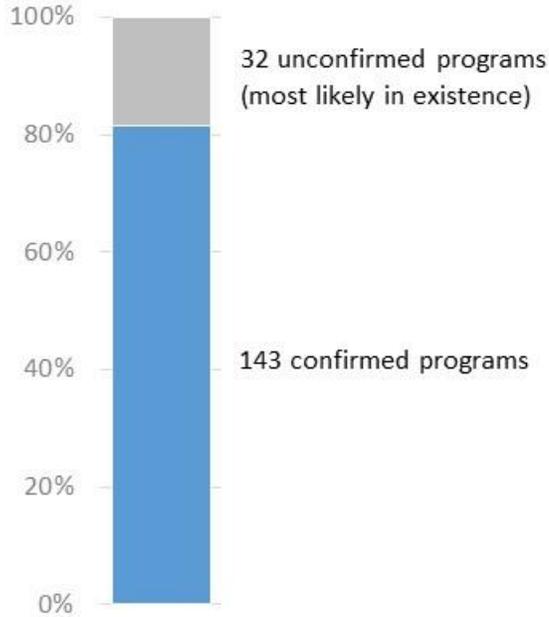
In 2021-2022, CARA identified a total of 175 confirmed and unconfirmed programs.

There were 143 confirmed programs, in 2021-2022 (as compared to 159 a year earlier). This includes 136 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.

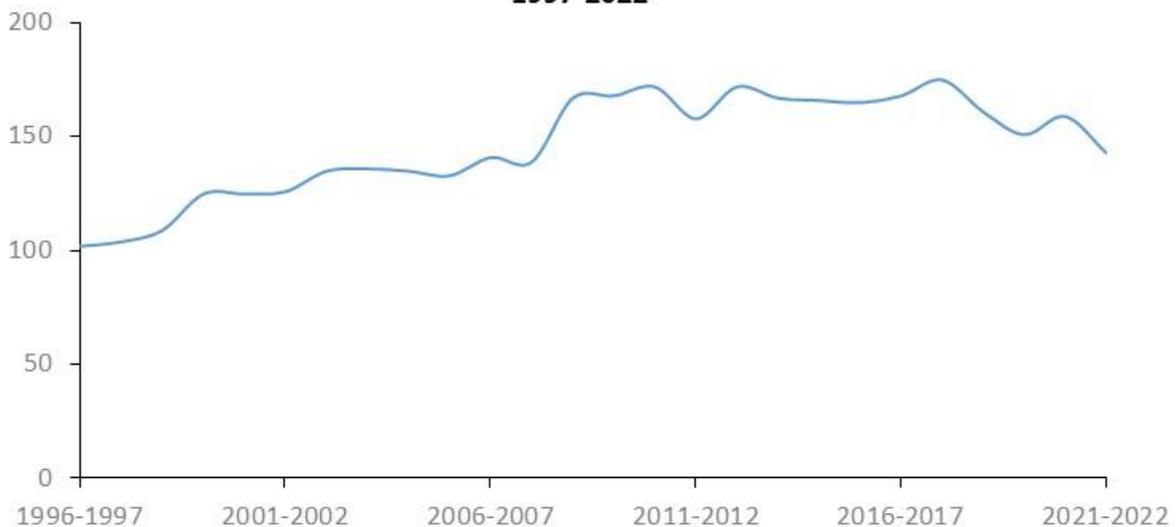
The confirmed and active programs were located in 46 states and 134 arch/dioceses, in the United States.

There were 32 unconfirmed programs (most likely in existence), in 2021-2022 (as compared to 16 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, 2021-2022



Number of Confirmed Permanent Diaconate Formation Programs, 1997-2022



Place of Instruction

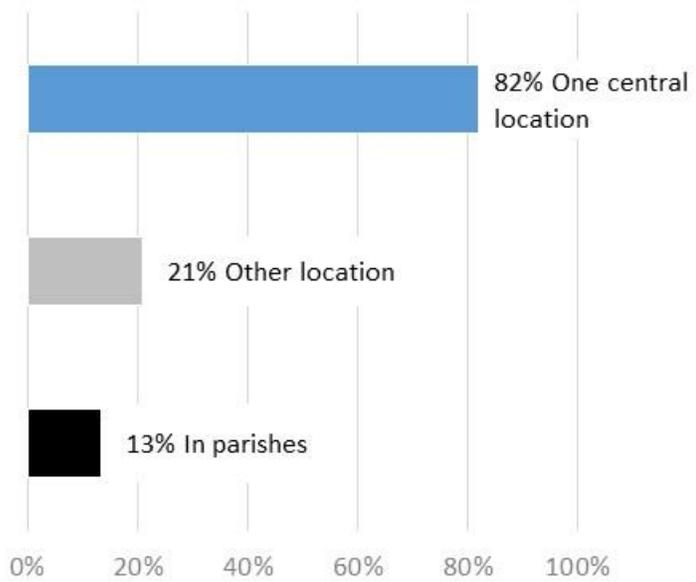
Permanent diaconate formation programs meet at different types of locations.

Four in five programs (82%) met in one central location, in 2021-2022 (and 81% a year before). Since 2008-2009, the percentage of these programs averaged 78% and ranged between 75% and 82%. If the trend continues, 82% of programs $\pm 3\%$ will meet in one central location, in 2026-2027.

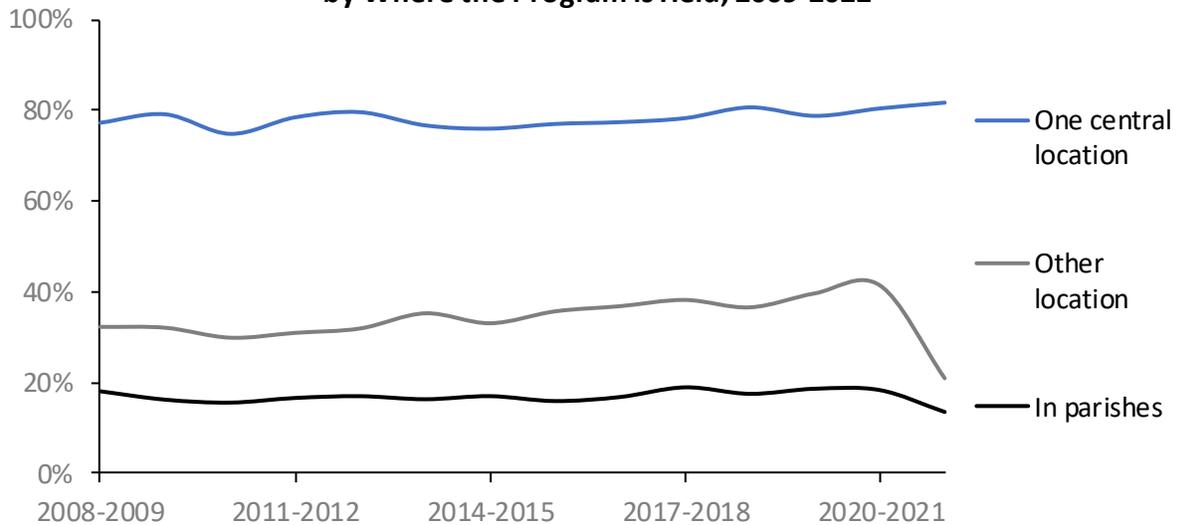
One in five programs (21%) met in another location (than a central location or in parishes), in 2021-2022 (and 42% a year before). This may be a temporary drop related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Since 2008-2009, the percentage of these programs averaged 34% and ranged between 21% and 42%.

One in ten programs (13%) met in parishes, in 2021-2022 (and 18% 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, 2021-2022



Percentage of Permanent Diaconate Formation Programs, by Where the Program is Held, 2009-2022



* Data for 2010-2011 is interpolated.

Language of Instruction

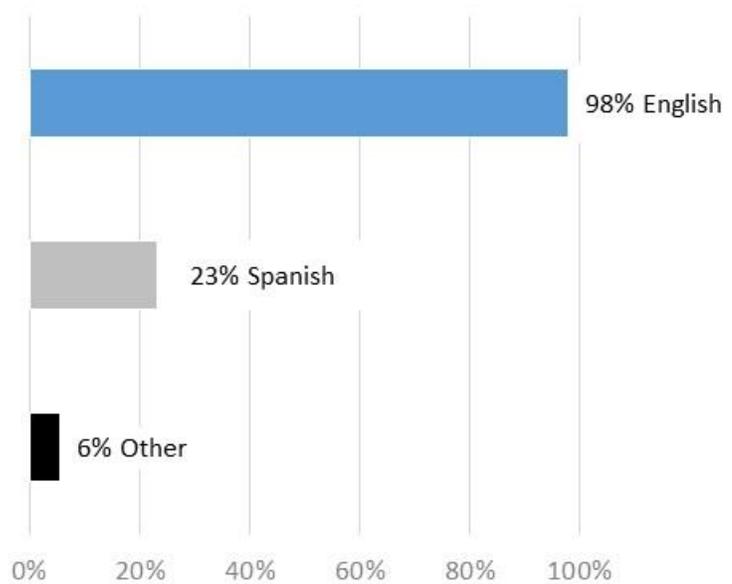
Some programs offer formation in both Spanish and English. Some programs provide separate tracks in English and Spanish within the same program and others conduct some of their classes in Spanish. Finally, some provide instruction in other languages or train candidates to serve particular ethnic or cultural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

Virtually all programs (98%) used English as the primary language of instruction, in 2021-2022 (as compared to 99% 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 $\pm 4\%$ will provide instruction in English, in 2026-2027.

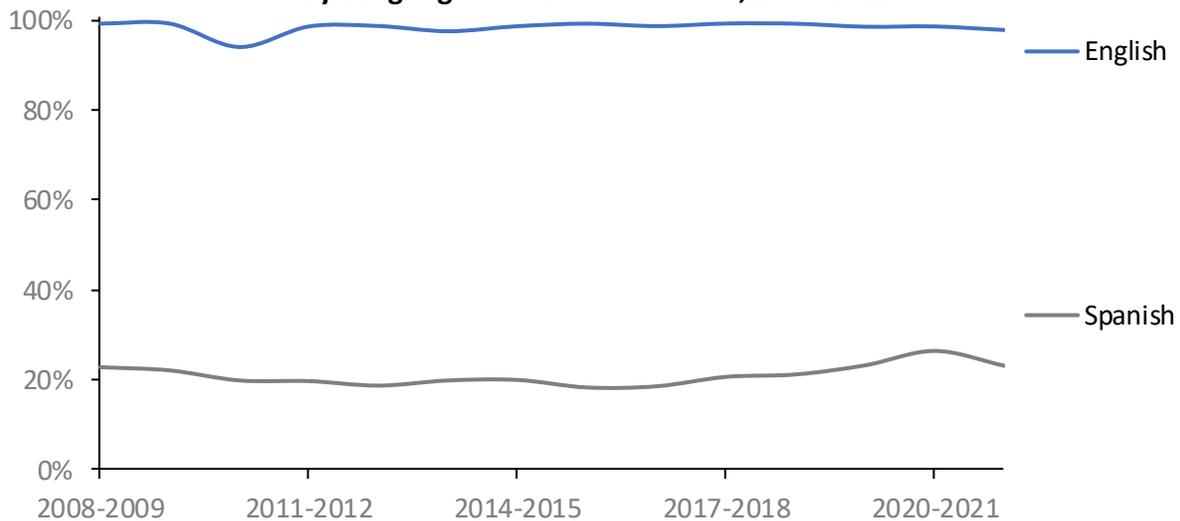
One quarter of programs (23%) were in Spanish, in 2021-2022 (and 26% a year before). Since 2008-2009, the percentage of these programs averaged 21% and ranged between 18% and 26%.

One in ten programs (6%) were in some other language of instruction (Vietnamese, Ukrainian, or Yup'ik), in 2021-2022 (and 3% a year before). Since 2008-2009, the percentage of these programs averaged 4% and ranged between 3% and 6%.

Percentage of Permanent Diaconate Formation Programs, by Languages Used in Instruction, 2021-2022



Percentage of Permanent Diaconate Formation Programs, by Languages Used in Instruction, 2009-2022

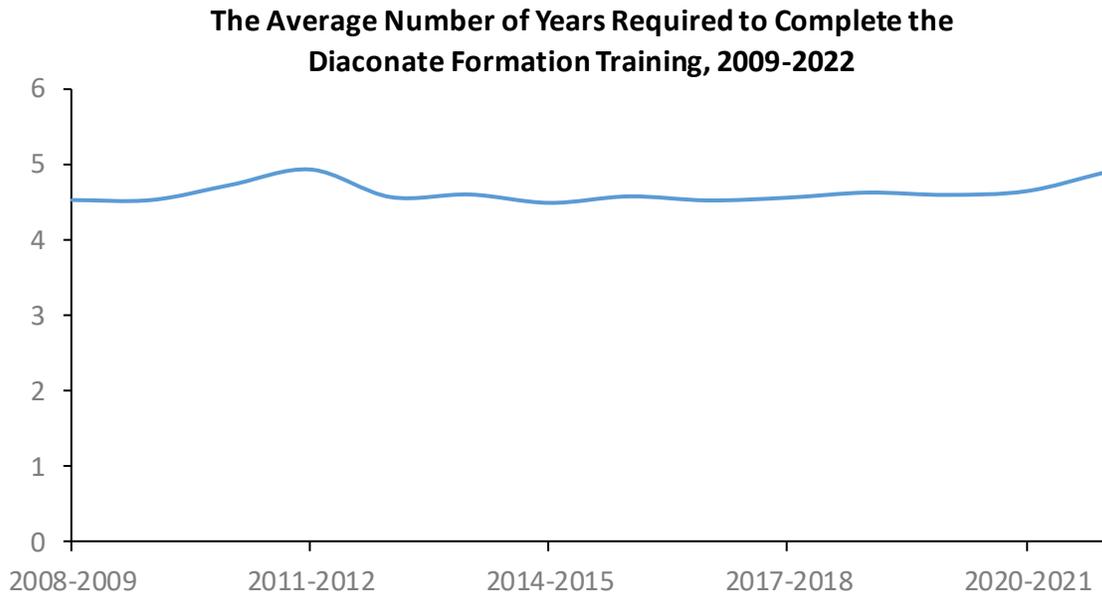


* Data for 2010-2011 is interpolated.

Program Length

The Number of Years Required to Complete the Diaconate Formation Training, 2021-2022		
Average	Median	Range
 [#]	 [#]	 [#]
5	5	3 - 7

On average, diaconate formation training required 5 years to complete, in 2021-2022 (an increase of 6% since 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.



* Data for 2010-2011 is interpolated.

Length of Classroom and Pastoral Training

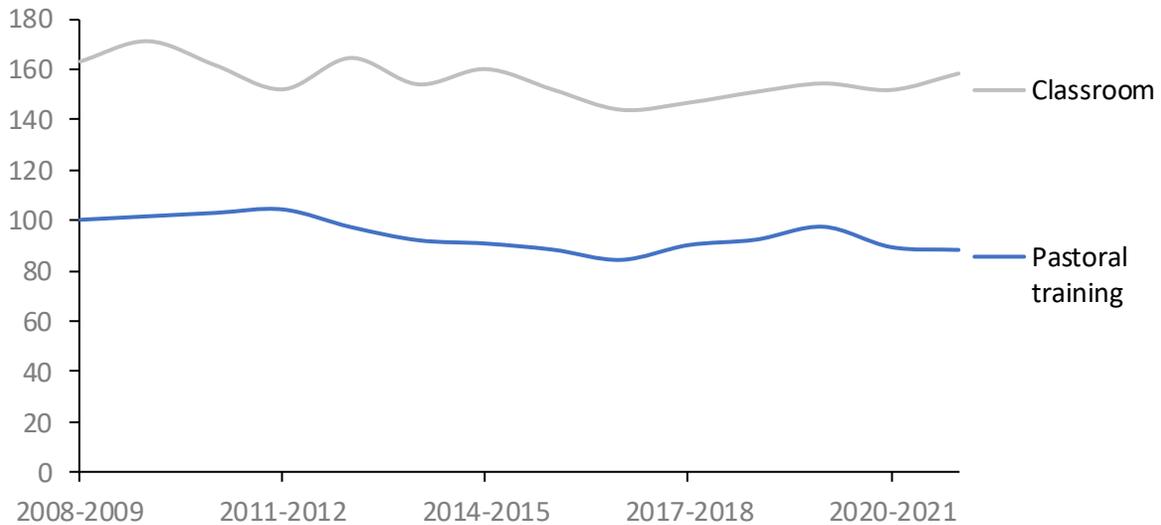
Permanent diaconate formation includes classroom instruction and pastoral training.

The Number of Hours Spent in Annually, 2021-2022			
	Average	Median	Range
	 [#]	 [#]	 [#]
Classroom	158	140	30 - 600
Pastoral training	88	56	0 - 550

On average, candidates spent 158 hours in classroom, in 2021-2022 (as compared to 152 hours a year earlier). In half of the programs, candidates spent between 30 and 140 hours while in the other half between 140 and 600 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 88 hours in pastoral training, in 2021-2022 (as compared to 90 hours a year earlier). In half of the programs, candidates spent between 0 and 56 hours while in the other half between 56 and 550 hours in pastoral training. Since 2008-2009, the time spent in pastoral training averaged 94 hours and ranged between 85 and 104 hours.

The Average Number of Hours Spent in Annually, 2009-2022



* Data for 2010-2011 is interpolated.

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.

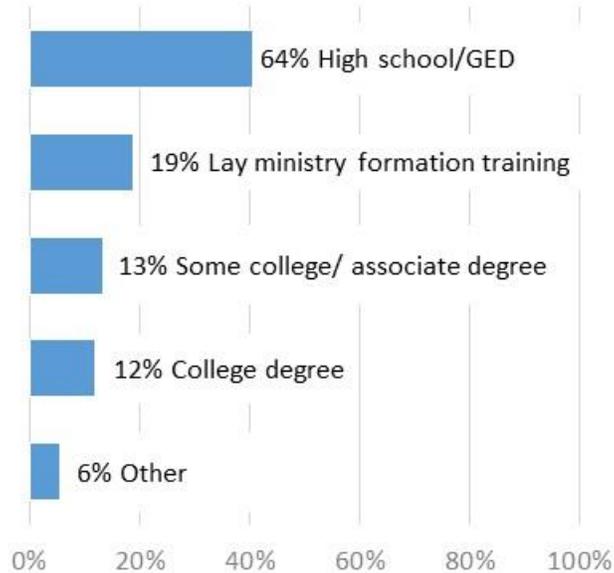
Two in three programs (64%) required high school/GED for admission to candidacy, in 2021-2022.

One in five programs (19%) required lay ministry formation training for admission to candidacy.

One in ten programs required some college education (13%) or completed college degree (12%) for admission to candidacy.

One in ten programs (6%) had some other requirements for admission to candidacy, in 2021-2022 (and 0% a year before).

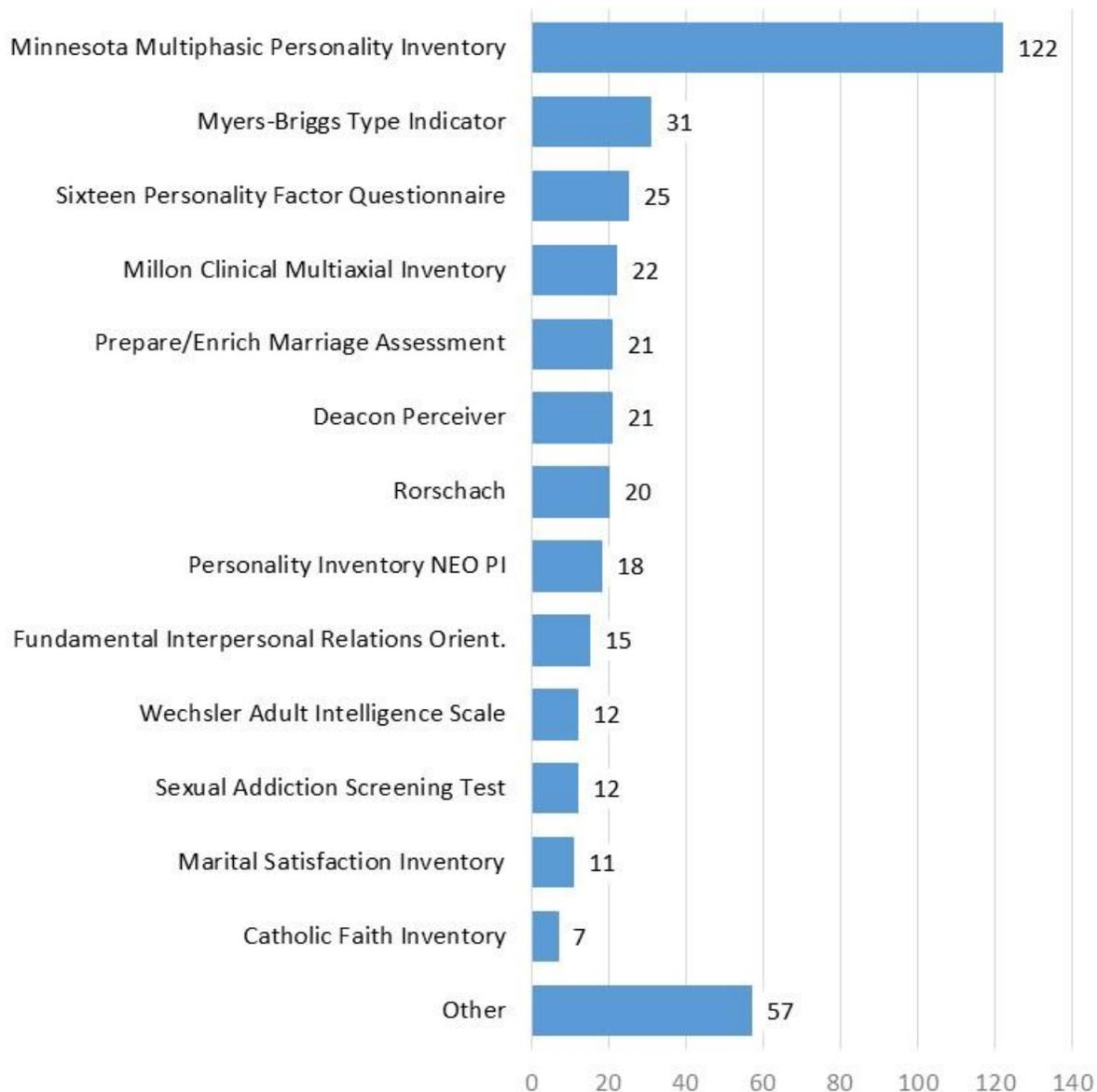
Percentage of Permanent Diaconate Formation Programs, by Requirements for Admission to Candidacy, 2021-2022



Tests Used in the Process of Admission to Candidacy

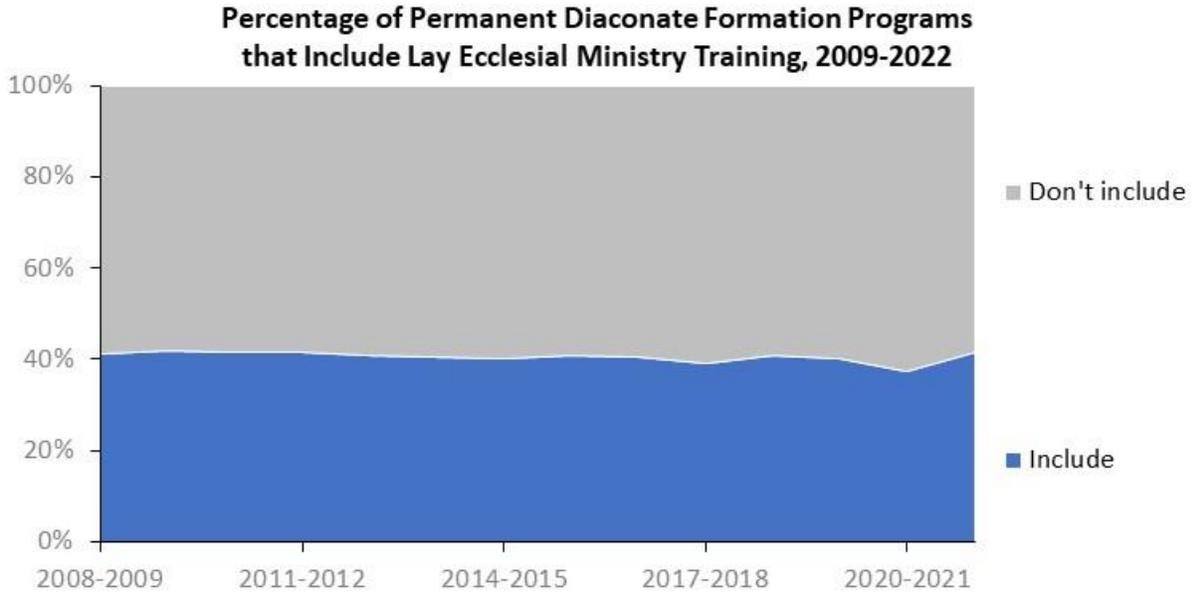
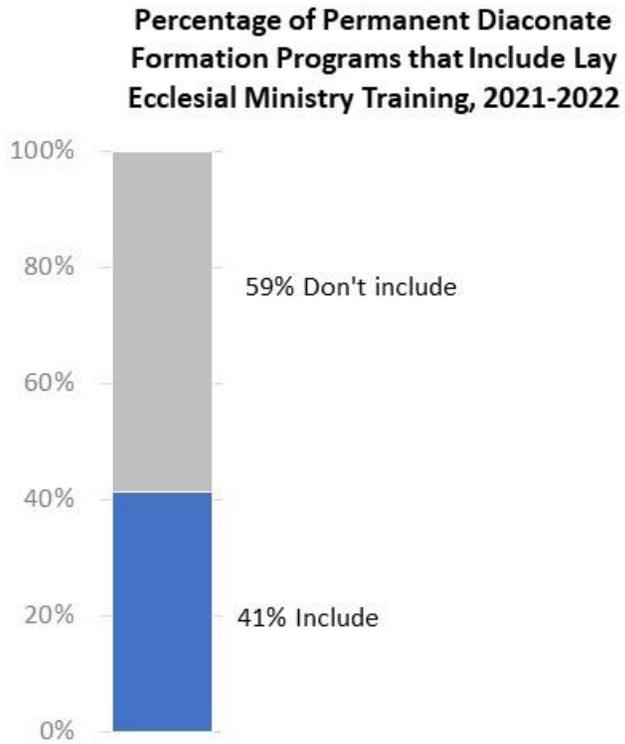
Permanent diaconate formation programs utilize various tests in the process of admission to candidacy. In 2021-2022, the four most common of those tests were: Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) (used by 85% of all programs), Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (22%), Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF) (17%), and Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory (MCMI) (15%).

Number of Permanent Diaconate Formation Programs, by Type of Tests Used in the Process of Admission to Candidacy, 2021-2022



Inclusion of Lay Ecclesial Ministry Training

Two in five permanent diaconate formation programs (41%) included lay ecclesial ministry training, in 2021-2022 (as compared to 37% a year before). Since 2008-2009, the percentage of these programs averaged 41% and ranged between 37% and 42%. If the trend continues, 39% of programs $\pm 2\%$ will included lay ecclesial ministry training, in 2026-2027.



Costs per Student

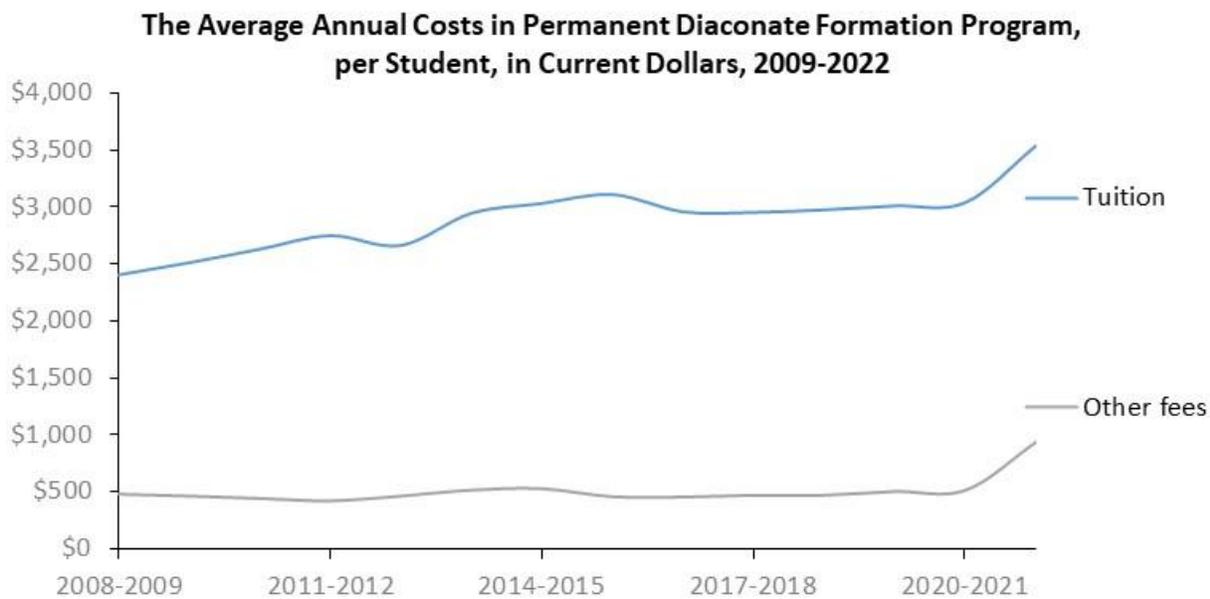
The table below shows the cost of permanent diaconate formation per student, in 2021-2022.¹

	Average	Median	Range
	[\$]	[\$]	[\$]
Tuition	3,035	2,250	150 - 20,000
Other fee(s)	515	388	50 - 2,000

* Responses equal to zero were removed from the analysis.

The average tuition was \$3,530 in permanent diaconate formation programs, in 2021-2022 (and \$3,035 a year earlier) and the median was \$2,500. Since 2008-2009, the tuition averaged \$2,891 and ranged between \$2,405 and \$3,530.

The average other fee(s) equaled \$930, in 2021-2022 (and \$515 a year earlier) and the median was \$400. Since 2008-2009, the other fee(s) averaged \$510 and ranged between \$425 and \$930.



Funding

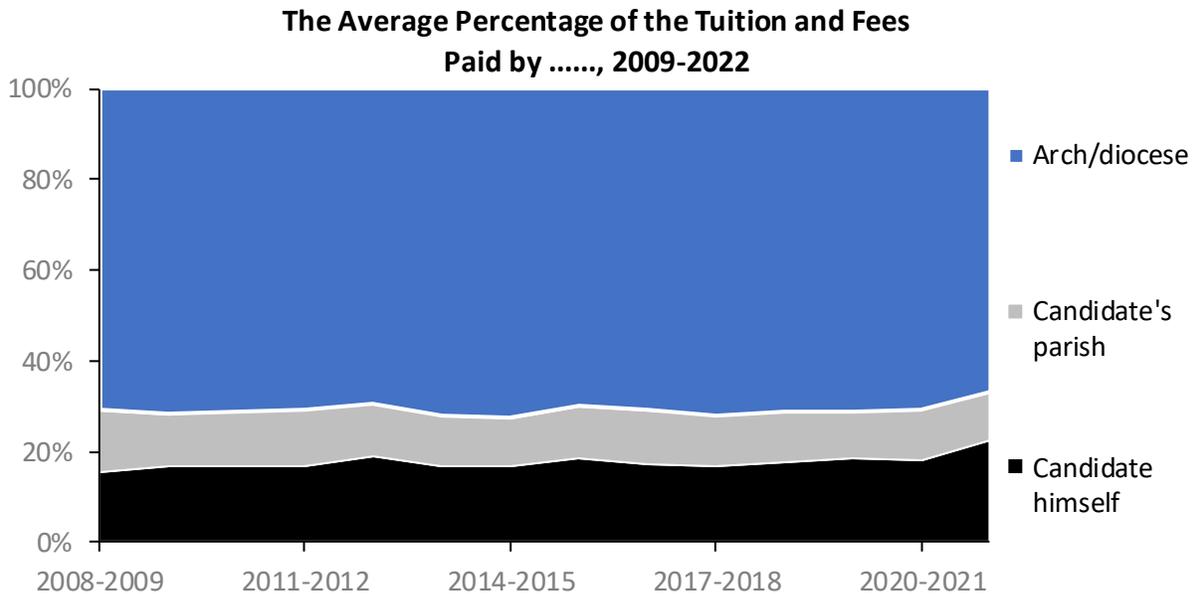
The table below shows the distribution of funding that covered the cost of permanent diaconate formation, in 2021-2022.

	Average	Median	Range
	[\$]	[\$]	[\$]
Arch/diocese	64	74	0 - 100
Candidate himself	21	4	0 - 100
Candidate's parish	10	0	0 - 99

Two in three cents on every dollar (64%) spent on permanent diaconate formation was paid, on average, by arch/dioceses, in 2021-2022 (as compared to 69% a year earlier). The median was 74%. Since 2008-2009, the amount covered by the arch/dioceses averaged 68% and ranged between 64% and 71%.

One in five cents on every dollar (21%) was paid, on average, by candidates themselves, in 2021-2022 (as compared to 18% a year earlier). The median was 4%. 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 (10%) was paid, on average, by candidates' parish, in 2021-2022 (as compared to 11% 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%.

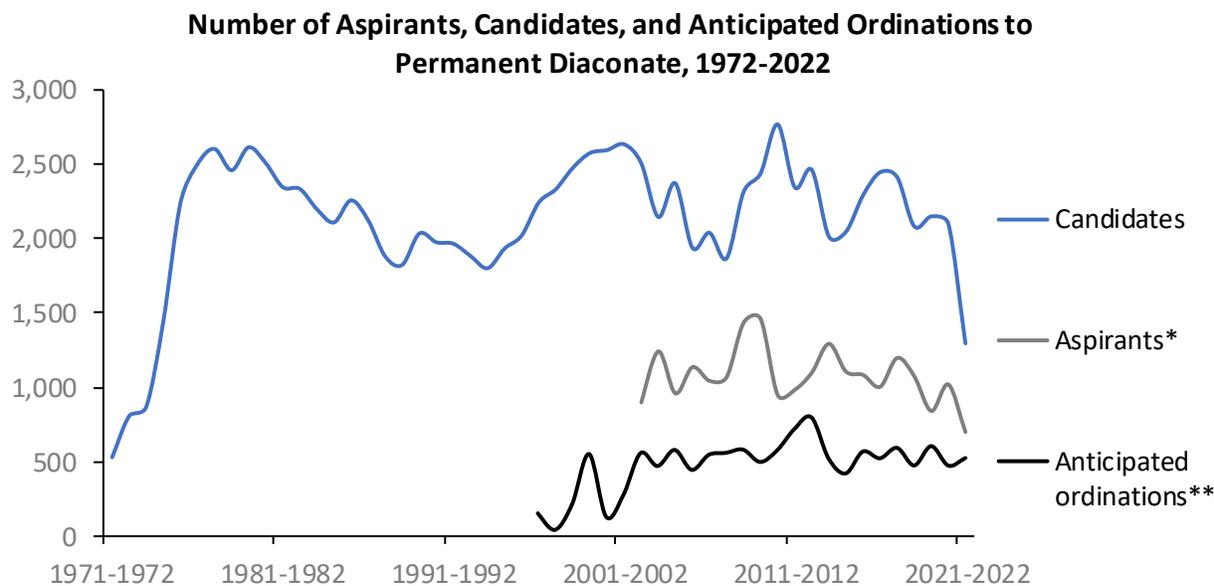


* Data for 2010-2011 is interpolated.

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.



* CARA first asked programs to report aspirants in 2002-2003.
 ** Data on anticipated ordinations for 2010-2011 is interpolated.

There were 1,298 candidates to permanent diaconate, in 2021-2022 (a decrease of 38% since 2020-2021). There were 699 aspirants to permanent diaconate (a decrease of 31% since 2020-2021). Both of these significant declines may be related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Finally, there were 525 anticipated ordinands to permanent diaconate. They constituted 40% 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, 2021-2022		
	Candidates ↓	Aspirants
	[#]	[#]
Center for Diaconal Formation at Seton Hall University, New Jersey	76	0
Diaconate Program at the Archdiocese of San Antonio, Texas	74	16
Diaconate Program at the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, Texas	47	49
Diaconate Program at the Diocese of Little Rock, Arkansas	45	0
St. Francis School of Theology for Deacons at Our Lady of the New Advent Theological Institute, Colorado	44	0

Educational Attainment

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

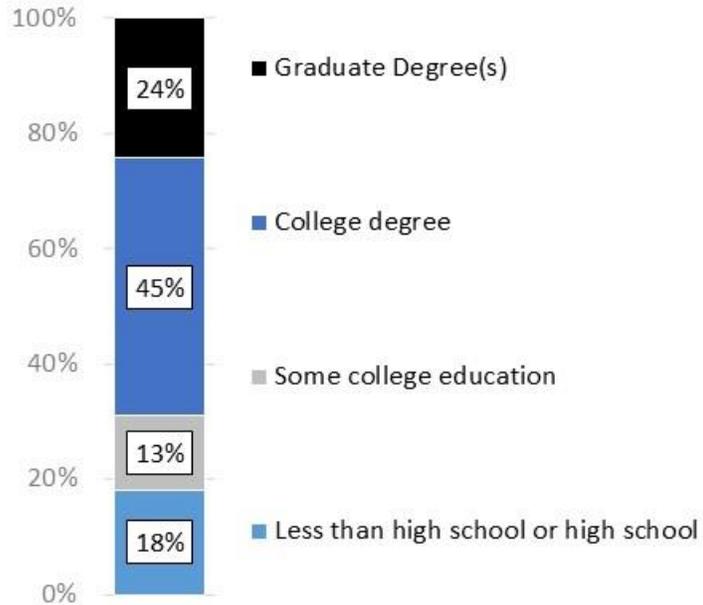
Two in five candidates had college degrees (45% of candidates in all programs), in 2021-2022 (and 39%, in 2020-2021). Their share in all programs averaged 38% and ranged between 35% and 45%, since 2002-2003.

One quarter of candidates had graduate degree(s) (24% of candidates in all programs), in 2021-2022 (and 25%, in 2020-2021). Their share in all programs averaged 26% and ranged between 24% and 30%, since 2002-2003.

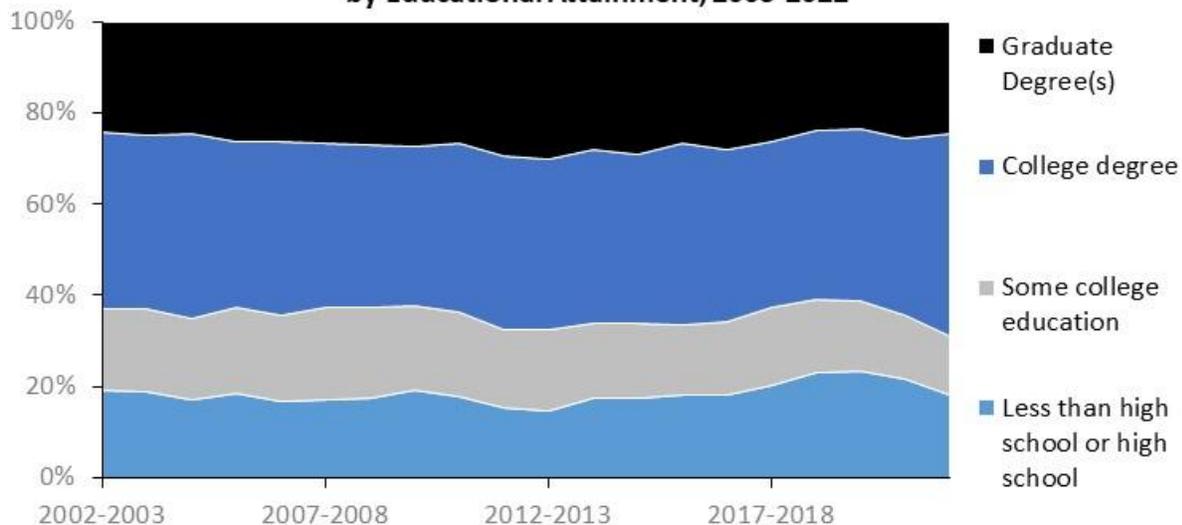
One in five candidates had less than high school education or a high school diploma (18% of candidates in all programs), in 2021-2022 (and 22%, in 2020-2021). Their share in all programs averaged 18% and ranged between 15% and 23%, since 2002-2003.

One in ten candidates had some college education (13% of candidates in all programs), in 2021-2022 (and 14%, in 2020-2021). Their share in all programs averaged 17% and ranged between 13% and 20%, since 2002-2003. If the trend continues, they will constitute 12% \pm 3% of candidates in all programs, in 2026-2027.

Distribution of Permanent Diaconate Candidates, by Educational Attainment, 2021-2022



Distribution of Permanent Diaconate Candidates, by Educational Attainment, 2003-2022



Marital Status

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

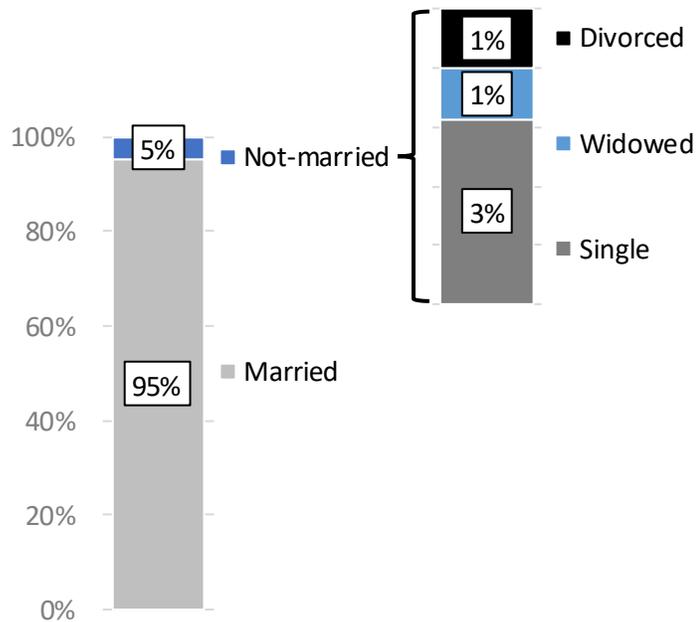
Virtually all (95%) candidates were married, in 2021-2022 (and 95%, in 2020-2021). Their share in all programs averaged 96% and ranged between 95% and 96%, since 2008-2009. If the trend continues, they will constitute 95% ±1% of candidates in all programs, in 2026-2027.

Relatively few (3%) candidates were single, in 2021-2022 (and 2%, in 2020-2021). Their share in all programs averaged 3% and ranged between 2% and 4%, since 2008-2009. If the trend continues, they will constitute 2% ±1% of candidates in all programs, in 2026-2027.

Relatively few (1%) candidates were divorced, in 2021-2022 (and 1%, in 2020-2021). Their share in all programs averaged 1% and ranged between 1% and 1%, since 2008-2009. If the trend continues, they will constitute 1% ±0% of candidates in all programs, in 2026-2027.

Relatively few (1%) candidates were widowed, in 2021-2022 (and 1%, in 2020-2021). Their share in all programs averaged 1% and ranged between 0% and 2%, since 2008-2009. If the trend continues, they will constitute 1% ±1% of candidates in all programs, in 2026-2027.

Distribution of Permanent Diaconate Candidates, by Marital Status, 2021-2022



Distribution of Permanent Diaconate Candidates, by Marital Status, 2003-2022*



* 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.

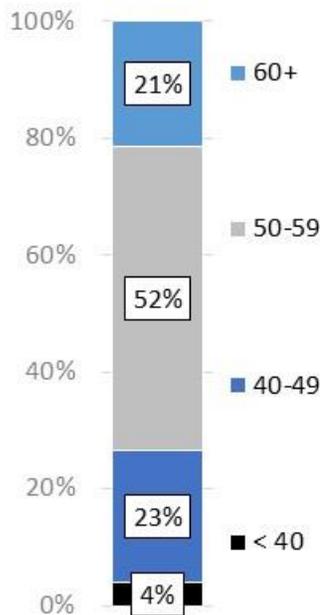
Candidates who are under 40 constituted 4% of candidates in all programs, in 2021-2022 (and 3% in 2020-2021). Their share in all programs averaged 4% and ranged between 3% and 7%, since 2002-2003. If the trend continues, they will constitute 3% ±2% of candidates in all programs, in 2026-2027.

Candidates who are 40-49 constituted 23% of candidates in all programs, in 2021-2022 (and 19% in 2020-2021). Their share in all programs averaged 27% and ranged between 19% and 37%, since 2002-2003.

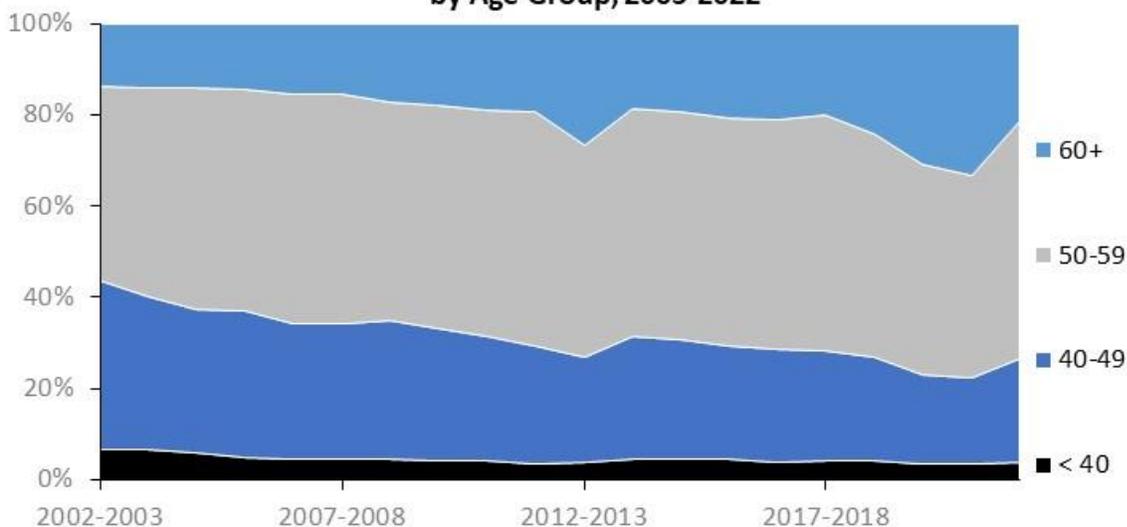
Candidates who are 50-59 constituted 52% of candidates in all programs, in 2021-2022 (and 45% in 2020-2021). Their share in all programs averaged 49% and ranged between 43% and 52%, since 2002-2003.

Candidates who are 60+ constituted 21% of candidates in all programs, in 2021-2022 (and 33% in 2020-2021). Their share in all programs averaged 20% and ranged between 14% and 33%, since 2002-2003.

Distribution of Permanent Diaconate Candidates, by Age Group, 2021-2022



Distribution of Permanent Diaconate Candidates, by Age Group, 2003-2022



Racial and Ethnic Background

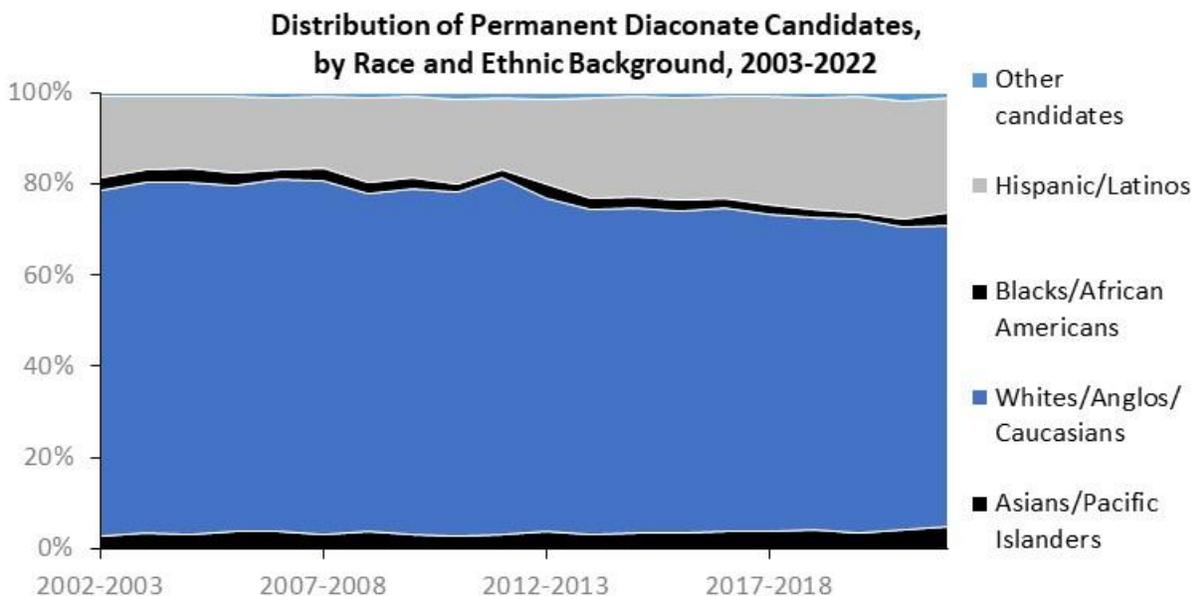
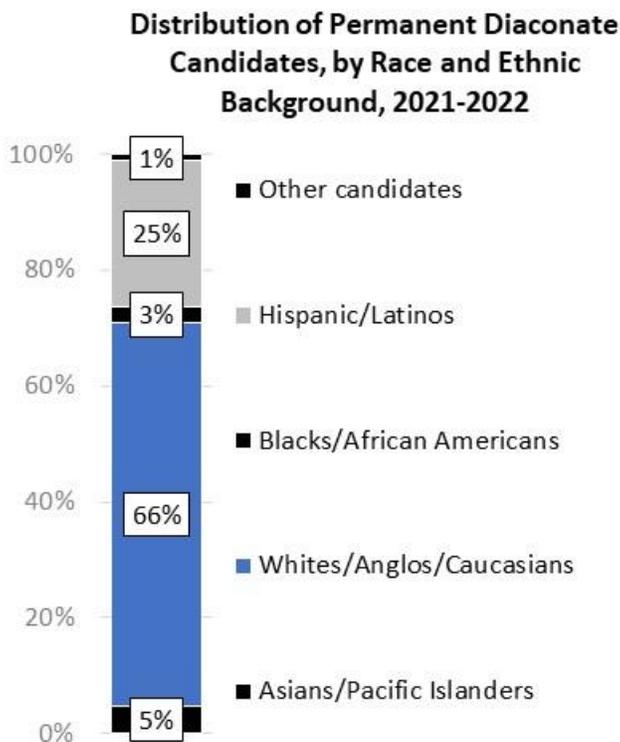
Candidates to permanent diaconate can be divided between: Asians/Pacific Islanders, Whites/Anglos/Caucasians, Blacks/African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, and others (including Native Americans). The racial and ethnic distribution of candidates to permanent diaconate is gradually becoming more diverse.

Whites/Anglos/Caucasians constituted 66% of candidates in all programs, in 2021-2022 (and 67%, in 2020-2021). Their share averaged 73% and ranged between 66% and 78%, since 2002-2003.

Hispanics / Latinos constituted 25% of candidates in all programs, in 2021-2022 (and 26%, in 2020-2021). Their share averaged 20% and ranged between 16% and 26%, since 2002-2003.

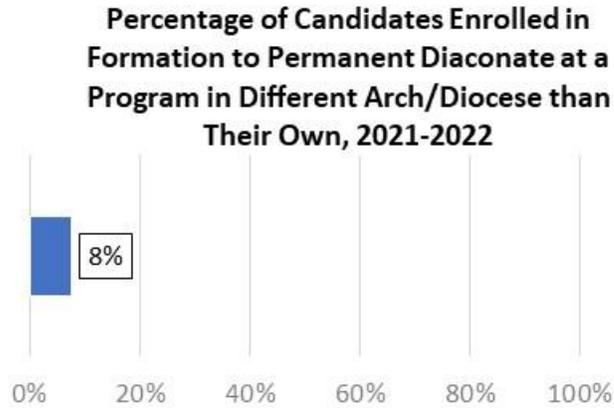
Asian/Pacific Islander constituted 5% of candidates in all programs, in 2021-2022 (and 4%, in 2020-2021). Their share averaged 4% and ranged between 3% and 5%, since 2002-2003. If the trend continues, they will constitute 4% ±1% of candidates in all programs, in 2026-2027.

Blacks/African Americans constituted 3% of candidates in all programs, in 2021-2022 (and 2%, in 2020-2021). 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 2026-2027.



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. In 2021-2022, one in ten (8%) 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.

¹ A few programs were excluded from this analysis, because the reported values were likely incorrect. The excluded programs reported a tuition cost increases from \$1,200 last year to \$40,000 this year, from \$3,000 to \$12,000, from \$200 to \$10,000, and from \$1,755 to \$25,840. And, the excluded programs reported increase in fees from \$0 to \$40,000, from \$0 to \$10,000, from \$0 to \$5,990 and from \$0 to \$6,000.