

Operational Plan Summary: 2021-2024

Every four years, every committee and subcommittee of the USCCB develops an operational plan for the coming years based on the USCCB's mission, the mandate of the committees, strategic priorities identified by the body of bishops, and related strategic and budgetary considerations. Overseen by the Committee on Priorities & Plans, each committee and subcommittee submits an operational plan, which are then combined to form the USCCB Strategic Plan and voted on for approval by the body of bishops. During each year of the strategic plan cycle, reporting is provided to the Conference from each committee and subcommittee on the progress being made.

Below is a summary of the objectives and activities for the operational plan for our subcommittee for 2021-2024.

Objective 1: Promote the use of competency-based certification and lifelong formation for those who minister in the name of the Catholic Church by U.S. dioceses, professional ministry organizations and ecclesial movements.

Activities for Objective 1

Review standards and procedures for certification submitted voluntarily by arch/dioceses and professional ministry organizations.

Dialogue with leaders of arch/diocesan programs and professional ministry organizations with certification standards and procedures approved by the subcommittee.

Consult with collaborating secretariats, approved arch/diocesan and professional ministry organizations and other appropriate partners in order to respond to the impact of Covid-19 on ministry.

Participate in workshops and symposia commemorating the 15th anniversary of the statement on lay ecclesial ministry, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*.

Promote the value of certification and the important impact of well-formed ministers during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Promote the work of the subcommittee and ecclesial ministry activities broadly

Consider financially sustaining efforts to support the work of certification, ministry best practices development, and promotion.

Regularly update the subcommittee and the body of bishops on the work accomplished by the subcommittee.

Offer consultations, workshops, presentations and updates at national ministry conferences and via online or related engagements about the work of the subcommittee and related topics.

Develop and promote formation resources for seminaries and programs of deacon formation on the role and experiences of lay ecclesial ministers in the church.

Improve and promote existing resources and surface or create new online resources to assist in the formation and certification of lay ecclesial ministers.

Objective 2: Support intentional efforts to recruit, form and certify lay ecclesial ministers from among underrepresented groups in dioceses, professional ministry organizations and ecclesial movements.

Activities for Objective 2

Provide a means for national ministry organizations to report and for the subcommittee to review aspects of their ministry resourcing which related to intercultural competencies and how their membership and leadership reflect the full range of diversity in the U.S. church.

Enhance awareness of competency-based certification and lifelong formation opportunities for lay ecclesial ministers and promote greater use of *Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers*.

Improve and promote resources and opportunities to assist leaders of arch/diocesan offices and professional ministry organizations in recruiting and supporting lay ecclesial ministers in general and from among underrepresented groups and ecclesial movements. Marshall existing and new intercultural competencies and related resources to assist Catholic ministers in responding to the systemic realities of racism and religious bigotry. Assist in resourcing the ecclesial movements, regarding the value of certification, and the organizations which offer it, and engage a dialogue with them about their own formational practices in light of the national certification standards.

Work with approved arch/diocesan programs and ministry organizations to facilitate enhanced engagement with the ecclesial movements.

Resource developments of *V Encuentro* related to enhancing and developing pathways to ministry formation among the Hispanic community to further these endeavors.

Assess and respond to efforts to academically accredit Catholic ministry formation programs for Hispanics, as it relates to further developing pathways in ministry formation among the Hispanic community.

Consult with other USCCB-lead initiatives related to ministry formation and certification.

Objective 3: Foster, utilize and implement administrative structures and procedures, and enhance institutional relationships to assist the subcommittee, collaborating secretariats and committees, and other strategic partners in the promotion of certification and ministry formation best practices.

Activities for Objective 3

Consult and resource relevant USCCB committees and staff, as well as external partners on considerations of strategic updates to the 2005 statement, *CoWorkers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, with special attention to areas of concern expressed by respondents in surveys and feedback garnered to resource this effort.

Guide regular internal collaborative group meetings with secretariat staff resourcing the committees represented on the subcommittee and others in identifying progress on collaborative activities, implementing strategic plan objectives and sharing project updates.

Establish and orient an informal advisory group, drawn from the subcommittee-approved arch/dioceses and organizations, as well as associated partners and collaborators in ministry formation, which can serve as a resource to the subcommittee

Assess and implement opportunities to modernize office procedures, including remote work and remote meetings necessitated by Covid-19, file management and archives, collaborator tracking (database), as well as online services to assist the subcommittee and the office in streamlining costs and increasing efficiency.