

1 **ALLIANCE FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF**
2 **LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTERS**
3 **(ACLEM)**

4
5 ***Member Organizations:***

6 **Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions**

7 **National Association for Lay Ministry**

8 **National Association of Pastoral Musicians**

9 **National Conference for Catechetical Leadership**

10 **National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry**

11
12
13 **NATIONAL CERTIFICATION STANDARDS**
14 **FOR LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTERS**
15 **AND**
16 **COMMON PROCESS FOR CERTIFICATION**
17 **OF LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTERS**

18
19 **Draft November 2009**

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21
22 In 2005 the Catholic bishops of the United States approved and published *Co-Workers in*
23 *the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource of Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial*
24 *Ministry* (CVL). This document recognizes the recent flowering of lay ecclesial ministry
25 and provides both a theological framework and practical guidance for its continuing
26 development.

27
28 CVL understands lay ecclesial ministers as collaborators with ordained ministers—
29 bishops, priests, and deacons—in serving the community of the faithful. The role of lay
30 ecclesial ministers often requires “a special level of professional competence and
31 presence to the community. . . . They are frequently employed on a full- or part-time
32 basis by parishes, dioceses, or church institutions. For these reasons, their roles often
33 require academic preparation, certification, credentialing, and a formation that integrates
34 personal, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions” (CVL, 13).

35
36 The following pages represent the efforts of five national Catholic ministry associations
37 in collaboration to produce common certification standards and a common certification
38 process for lay ecclesial ministers. These new standards are a revision of the *National*
39 *Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers* developed by the National
40 Association for Lay Ministry (NALM), the National Conference for Catechetical
41 Leadership (NCCL), and the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM)
42 and approved in 2003 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Commission
43 on Certification and Accreditation (USCCB/CCA). In 2005 the National Association of

1 Pastoral Musicians (NPM) adopted the *National Certification Standards* and received
2 approval from the USCCB/CCA for a certification process along with the standards.
3

4 As the time approached to seek renewal of approval for the certification standards from
5 the USCCB/CCA, the four organizations decided to embark on a thorough re-
6 examination of the standards and to cooperate in drawing up a common process for the
7 certification of lay ecclesial ministers based on the common standards. A fifth
8 organization, the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC), joined this
9 project in 2009. Together these five organizations have formed the Alliance for the
10 Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers (ACLEM) not only to produce common
11 standards and develop a common process but also to promote the certification of lay
12 ecclesial ministers and to work together in the implementation of the common standards
13 and procedures.
14

15 The following pages outline competency-based standards and a process of certification
16 for six specific lay ecclesial ministries:
17

- 18 • Director of Liturgy
 - 19 • Director of Music Ministries
 - 20 • Parish Catechetical Leader
 - 21 • Parish Life Coordinator
 - 22 • Pastoral Associate
 - 23 • Youth Ministry Leader
- 24

25 The standards affirm core competencies common to all lay ecclesial ministers, and they
26 also include specialized competencies for each of the ministries listed here. There is also
27 a common process for certification, yet there are specific elements of the process that are
28 unique to each particular ministry, which will be implemented by each of the respective
29 ministry organizations. No one is certified as a “generic” lay ecclesial minister; rather, a
30 minister is certified for a particular type of service to the Church.
31

32 There is an integral relationship between the certification standards and the certification
33 process described in the following pages. During the course of the certification process,
34 candidates will need to reflect carefully on each of the standards and discern how well the
35 various competencies are demonstrated in their own lives and ministries. They will not
36 only need to *know* about ministry but also to *demonstrate* the personal, spiritual,
37 intellectual, and pastoral competencies required for service to the community.
38

39 We hope that these standards and procedures will contribute to the continuing growth and
40 formation of men and women serving in lay ecclesial ministry and will in turn have a
41 positive impact on the communities that they serve. We also believe that the standard and
42 procedures described here can serve as a resource and a catalyst for further reflection
43 among various leaders and institutions that have a stake in the formation of lay ecclesial
44 ministers, including bishops, pastors, diocesan offices, academic institutions, and
45 ministry formation programs.
46

1 The member organizations of ACLEM and the task groups that prepared these proposed
2 standards and procedures acknowledge the context in which they have been developed
3 and the limitations inherent in this project. CVL speaks of certification as just one in a set
4 of activities related to lay ecclesial ministry. Other important elements include call and
5 discernment, pathways, formation, and authorization. Authentic ministry is not merely
6 competent fulfillment of tasks but is especially a response to God's call. We recognize
7 that as pastor of a local church, it is the role of the diocesan bishop to authorize men and
8 women for ecclesial ministry. Certification should not be understood as authorization for
9 ministry, but it can be an important dimension that needs to be considered in relation to
10 all of the other elements.

11
12 The variety of gifts that characterize lay ecclesial ministry is the work of the Holy Spirit
13 and cannot be fully captured even by the most careful attempt at systemization. The
14 member organizations of ACLEM recognize that what we have produced in this
15 document in no way exhausts the various kinds of ministries or the qualifications for lay
16 ministry in the Church. There are, for example, different understandings and approaches
17 that characterize lay ministry in different cultures; we respect and affirm those distinctive
18 understandings and approaches and welcome the enriching impact they continue to have
19 on the development of lay ministry in the United States.

20
21 The standards and procedures described here are in no way meant to supplant or negate
22 other ministries, certification programs, approaches, or practices. We hope instead that
23 our work and the ministry of those who may become certified through this process will
24 enrich the Church by their service, expand the circle of ministry to include a diversity of
25 gifted and committed men and women, and draw the people they serve into a richer life
26 of faith, prayer, and service.

27
28 The member organizations of ACLEM offer these standards and procedures in the hope
29 that certified lay ecclesial ministers will be effective co-workers in proclaiming the
30 Gospel of Jesus Christ and in serving the community of the Church.

1
2 **NATIONAL CERTIFICATION STANDARDS**
3 **FOR LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTERS**
4 **Revised Edition**
5 **November 2009 Draft Text for Consultation**
6

7 **INTRODUCTION**
8

9 The *National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers Serving as Parish*
10 *Catechetical Leaders, Youth Ministry Leaders, Pastoral Associates, Parish Life*
11 *Coordinators*, developed by the National Association for Lay Ministry (NALM), the
12 National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL), and the National Federation
13 for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM), received approval in 2003 from the United States
14 Conference of Catholic Bishops Commission on Certification and Accreditation
15 (USCCB/CCA). In 2005 the National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM) adopted
16 the *National Certification Standards*, as did the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical
17 Commissions (FDLC) in 2009.
18

19 The Commission's approval of the ministerial standards and competencies articulated in
20 the *National Certification Standards* was valid for seven years. At this time the five
21 national ministry associations which adopted the standards are collaborating, as the
22 Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers (ACLEM), in a joint process of
23 reviewing and revising those standards and competencies. The resulting text will be
24 submitted to the Commission for approval.
25

26 The material presented in this section is a draft of that text. It was prepared by a task
27 force made up of representatives of the five Alliance associations. The task force began
28 its work in the fall of 2007, and it has developed this material through a process that has
29 included consultation with the respective certification committees of the five associations
30 as well as with the Alliance task force preparing a common certification process.
31

32 In the format and content of this draft, there are both similarities to and differences from
33 the 2003 and 2006 editions. The format is similar in that, as in the earlier texts, each
34 standard is named and briefly identified; a vision statement describes its intended values,
35 concepts, and priorities; and core competencies applicable to the ministries represented
36 by all the participating associations are set forth, indicating the knowledge, skills, and
37 attitudes needed to fulfill the standard. In the previous editions, however, the specialized
38 competencies for the respective ministries were included under the individual standards;
39 in this revision, the specialized competences have been collected together in a single
40 section that is placed after the standards and core competencies. This was done to create a
41 cleaner, less complicated text.
42

43 Regarding content, the vision statements for the standards have been either rewritten or
44 newly composed. Individual core competencies in this revised edition are either the same

1 as in the previous edition; or revised, combined, and added from the prior specialized
2 competencies; or new. The specialized competencies for each ministry included in prior
3 editions have been revised to a greater or lesser extent; specialized competencies for the
4 other ministries are, of course, new.

5
6 One important change is that there are now four certification standards instead of the five
7 found in the 2003 and 2006 editions. The four standards are: human, spiritual,
8 intellectual, and pastoral. This corresponds to the framework used in *Co-Workers in the*
9 *Vineyard of the Lord* (2005), and in the church's documents for other ecclesial
10 ministers—*Pastores Dabo Vobis* (1992) by John Paul II on priestly formation and the
11 *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the*
12 *United States* (2005) and the *Program of Priestly Formation, Fifth Edition* (2006) by the
13 U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

14
15 Another change is that the list of core competencies is more concise and streamlined in
16 new Standards Three (corresponding to the prior Standard Three) and Four
17 (corresponding to the prior Standards Four and Five). At the same time, each Standard
18 includes a list of "Indicators"—statements offered to help clarify the meaning of the core
19 competencies, or to point out possible ways in which an applicant for certification could
20 demonstrate the competency, or to suggest sample criteria by which those reviewing
21 certification applications can assess whether an applicant has that competency. *Note:* this
22 list of indicators for each core competency is not intended to be inclusive (as though an
23 applicant needed to demonstrate all of them) or exhaustive (as though these and only
24 these items count); rather, they should be considered representative (giving examples of
25 what could indicate the competency) and suggestive (inviting applicants to realize how
26 broad the indicators can be and to discover in their own life and ministerial experience
27 other ways to demonstrate the competency). The intended purpose of this change in
28 format is to show and promote the flexibility of this resource and its adaptability to a
29 variety of contexts.

30
31 Finally, the task force has kept foremost in mind the use of these standards and
32 competencies in the process of certification for lay ecclesial ministry. For this reason the
33 competencies were, wherever possible, formulated so as to be measurable, and the
34 indicators were added. The standards can also be a valuable tool for those involved in the
35 formation, support, and supervision of lay ecclesial ministers. Formation institutions
36 (academic, diocesan, or agency) can continue to use them for curriculum review and
37 design, as suggested by *Co-Workers* (page 30). Lay ecclesial ministers themselves can
38 use them for self-assessment and ongoing ministerial growth. Supervisors can use them
39 in a collaborative process of assessment (for lay ecclesial ministers individually or
40 pastoral teams collectively) and to affirm, guide, and support efforts in staff development.

41
42 The current consultation is an important step in the process of reviewing and revising the
43 *National Certification Standards* so that they may better serve lay ecclesial ministers and
44 the ministerial life of the Church. The task force looks forward to receiving and using
45 consultation feedback to further refine and improve this resource.

46

STANDARD ONE: HUMAN

1.0 Standard One

Lay ecclesial ministers demonstrate the qualities of human maturity needed for fruitful ministry with the people of God.

Vision Statement

Lay ecclesial ministers, like all ecclesial ministers, develop their human character and relational abilities so that they can be "a bridge and not an obstacle" for people in their encounter with Jesus Christ.* This development entails the twofold dynamic of strengthening positive traits that foster ministerial effectiveness and lessening negative traits that hinder it. Accordingly, lay ecclesial ministers strive to deepen their knowledge of self and others, grow from experiences of suffering and challenge, maintain a balanced lifestyle and positive relationships, appreciate and value diversity, and demonstrate basic human virtues. Cultivating such traits and skills within a Christ-centered community contributes to the development of "a healthy and well-balanced personality, for the sake of both personal growth and ministerial service" (*Co-Workers*, page 36).

* Pope John Paul II, *I Will Give You Shepherds: Pastores Dabo Vobis* (1992), 43.

Core Competencies

A lay ecclesial minister:

- 1.1 Appreciates and affirms the dignity of the human person and the positive values of cultural diversity in its different forms.
- 1.2 Identifies personal gifts and limitations through self-reflection, collaboration with others, peer feedback, supervisory assessment processes, and/or spiritual companionship.
- 1.3 Engages in programs or practices of continuing ministerial formation and lifelong personal growth.
- 1.4 Recognizes both the reality of sin with its personal and social consequences and the power of forgiveness and reconciliation to heal persons and relationships.
- 1.5 Maintains a healthy lifestyle and a reasonable balance among the legitimate claims of family, community, personal relationships, and ministry.
- 1.6 Manifests "*psychological health*, marked by integrity, appropriate interpersonal boundaries, and the ability to honor and safeguard the trust that people place in them as Church ministers" (*Co-Workers*, page 36).
- 1.7 Understands the power inherent in positions of pastoral leadership and is diligent in the responsible exercise of such power, for example, regarding sexuality, confidentiality, supervision of others, and decision making.

1 1.8 Demonstrates such virtues as honesty and responsibility, generosity and
 2 compassion, affirmation of others, humility, patience, a passion for justice, and a spirit of
 3 service.

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6
 7 **Standard One: Indicators**

8 A lay ecclesial minister:

9
 10 1.1 Appreciates and affirms the dignity of the human person and the positive values
 11 of cultural diversity in its different forms.

- 12
- 13 a. Studies the sources and implications of the first principle of Catholic social
 14 teaching—the life and dignity of the human person—and seeks to shape one's
 15 ministerial goals and relationships in light of this teaching.
- 16 b. Cultivates a fundamentally positive regard for self and others and consistently
 17 manifests this regard in ministerial relationships, treating others with respect and
 18 courtesy.
- 19 c. Understands that "cultural diversity" can mean culture in various dimensions: the
 20 culture of different ethnic or national communities, of different age cohorts, of
 21 different life circumstances (e.g., the differing cultures of urban, suburban, or
 22 rural life), of different socio-economic levels, etc.
- 23 d. Takes steps to learn in various ways about cultures other than one's own.

24
 25 1.2 Identifies personal gifts and limitations through self-reflection, collaboration with
 26 others, peer or community feedback, supervisory assessment processes, and/or spiritual
 27 companionship.

- 28
- 29 a. Cultivates a contemplative, self-reflective attitude, engaging in practices of
 30 discernment (e.g., daily examen, spiritual direction or companionship, personal
 31 and communal theological reflection).
- 32 b. Seeks out the advice and counsel of others and uses appropriate self-assessment
 33 instruments for the sake of a better understanding of personal strengths and
 34 weaknesses.
- 35 c. Shows a willingness to act on such counsel and take appropriate measures to
 36 cultivate gifts and strengths and address limitations.
- 37 d. Creates and uses—and periodically evaluates and modifies—a personal spiritual
 38 growth plan.

39
 40 1.3 Engages in programs or practices of continuing ministerial formation and lifelong
 41 personal growth.

- 42
- 43 a. Participates in ministry formation opportunities.
- 44 b. Is a member of and takes part in the formational offerings of local and national
 45 ministry associations.

- 1 c. Reads (subscribes to) books, journals, church documents, and other resources that
2 address the human, spiritual, theological, or pastoral dimensions of ministry.
3 d. Pursues interests (artistic/cultural, educational, hobbies, crafts, sports, etc.)
4 outside the ministerial workplace.
5
- 6 1.4 Recognizes both the reality of sin with its personal and social consequences and
7 the power of forgiveness and reconciliation to heal persons and relationships.
8
- 9 a. Understands the place of personal moral responsibility in human affairs.
10 ("Without the knowledge Revelation gives of God we cannot recognize sin clearly
11 and are tempted to explain it as merely a developmental flaw, a psychological
12 weakness, a mistake, or the necessary consequence of an inadequate social
13 structure, etc." *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 387.)
14 b. Recognizes structures of sin and illustrates the way social sin is rooted in personal
15 choices and acts.
16 c. Understands and can explain the role of forgiveness in the life and ministry of
17 Jesus and in the sacramental life and social and moral teachings of the Church.
18 d. Affirms the power of forgiveness to transform the hearts of those who sin and of
19 those sinned against.
20 e. Understands and promotes restorative justice.
21
- 22 1.5 Maintains a healthy lifestyle and a reasonable balance among the legitimate
23 claims of family, community, personal relationships, and ministry.
24
- 25 a. Attends to personal physical and mental health through sound practices of
26 wellness, such as sufficient sleep and exercise, well-balanced diet, appropriate
27 time off, and counseling when helpful.
28 b. Practices effective time management, systematically making time for all four
29 areas of responsibility (family, community, personal relationships, and ministry).
30 c. Cultivates a network of supportive relationships (a support system, a circle of
31 friends).
32
- 33 1.6 Manifests "*psychological health*, marked by integrity, appropriate interpersonal
34 boundaries, and the ability to honor and safeguard the trust that people place in them as
35 Church ministers" (*Co-Workers*, page 36).
36
- 37 a. Demonstrates sexual maturity and the virtue of chastity in relationships with
38 others.
39 b. Relates well with persons of diverse personality types and temperaments.
40 c. Shows a capacity to honor commitments and fulfill responsibilities.
41 d. Engages in ministry to serve Christ and his people more than to satisfy personal
42 psychological needs.
43
- 44 1.7 Understands the power inherent in positions of pastoral leadership and is diligent
45 in the responsible exercise of such power, for example, regarding sexuality,
46 confidentiality, supervision of others, and decision making.

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- a. Cultivates a philosophy or a spirituality of leadership based on service.
- b. Has sought out education or training in sound leadership/management theory and practice.
- c. Is aware of and can explain the rationale for the provisions of one's ministerial code of ethics.

1.8 Demonstrates such virtues as honesty and responsibility, generosity and compassion, affirmation of others, humility, patience, a passion for justice, and a spirit of service.

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STANDARD TWO: SPIRITUAL

2.0 Standard Two

Sharing in the common priesthood of all the baptized, a lay ecclesial minister demonstrates Christian spirituality as foundational to ministry, integrated in service with the people of God, and possessing a sacramental view of the world that recognizes the world can be a vessel of God's presence and God's transforming grace.

Vision Statement

Having encountered the person and message of Jesus Christ, the hunger of the lay ecclesial minister for union with the Triune God is constant. The result of this hunger is the call to holiness; built on the Word of God, experienced in the liturgy and sacraments, formed through suffering, nurtured in joy, and sustained in community with all the baptized and through the Church as Mystical Body. The minister gives witness to a well-formed spirituality through a rich and diversified prayer life, theological reflection, and action rooted in Catholic social teaching. Spiritual formation is grounded in the understanding that "if ministry does not flow from a personal encounter and ongoing relationship with the Lord, then no matter how 'accomplished' it may be in its methods and activities, that ministry will lack the vital soul and source needed to bear lasting fruit" (*Co-Workers*, page 38). Therefore, open to the mystery of God's love and in touch with the world's realities, all actions of the lay ecclesial minister flow from "that fundamental conversion that places God, and not oneself, at the center of one's life" (*Co-Workers*, page 38).

Core Competencies

A lay ecclesial minister:

- 2.1 Gives witness to an integrated spirituality formed by Scripture, theological reflection, sacramental celebration, communal worship, and active participation in parish life.
- 2.2 Lives a life of private and communal prayer that is both formed by and reflective of the breadth and depth of the Catholic spiritual tradition.
- 2.3 Bears witness to the profound significance of Eucharist in one's own life, in the life of one's parish, and in the life of the whole Catholic community.
- 2.4 Demonstrates sensitivity to the spirituality of the sacred arts, i.e. art, music, architecture, and the value of their expression in liturgical and communal prayer.
- 2.5 Honors the call to ministry that is rooted in baptism by developing ministerial goals that flow from one's spirituality and reflect an integration of Gospel values
- 2.6 Demonstrates an ability to discern and address current realities in the Church and the world in light of the Gospel.

1 2.7 Accepts and articulates one’s ministerial vocation as coming from God and
 2 confirmed by the ecclesial community.

3
 4 2.8 Displays an openness to ecumenical prayer, work, and practices that promotes
 5 Christian unity and acknowledges the gifts afforded the human community from the
 6 various world religions.

7
 8 2.9 Models the spirit of Jesus in daily life and identifies with and promotes the
 9 universal Church and its global mission so that all prayer and ministerial activity flow
 10 from that mission.

11
 12 =====

13
 14 **Standard Two: Indicators**

15 A lay ecclesial minister:

16
 17 2.1 Gives witness to an integrated spirituality formed by Scripture, theological
 18 reflection, communal worship, and active participation in parish life.

- 19
 20 a. Reflects a commitment to the Gospel through ongoing study and theological
 21 reflection, action on behalf of justice, and fulfillment of ministerial
 22 responsibilities.
 23 b. Discerns and responds to the call of the Holy Spirit to live as a disciple of
 24 Jesus Christ.

25
 26 2.2 Lives a life of private and communal prayer that is both formed by and reflective
 27 of the breadth and depth of the Catholic spiritual tradition.

- 28
 29 a. Engages in various forms of personal prayer.
 30 b. Prays *The Liturgy of the Hours*.
 31 c. Engages in *lectio divina* and other expressions of contemplative prayer, both
 32 as a participant and as a leader/guide.
 33 d. Gives expression to a rich range of ethnic and cultural prayer practices, both
 34 personal and communal, that respects and encourages diverse spiritualities and
 35 authentic expressions of popular piety.
 36 e. Participates in days of spiritual renewal and/or reflection, attends spiritual
 37 retreats, and elicits the guidance of a spiritual mentor or the services of a
 38 spiritual director.

39
 40 2.3 Bears witness to the profound significance of Eucharist in one’s own life, in the
 41 life of one’s parish, and in the life of the whole Catholic community.

- 42
 43 a. Is a member of a Catholic parish, worshiping on a weekly basis and
 44 participating in a full, active, and conscious manner.
 45 b. Boldly proclaims the celebration and sacrifice of the Mass as the source and
 46 summit of one’s faith.

- 1 c. Participates in Eucharistic adoration.
2
- 3 2.4 Demonstrates sensitivity to the spirituality of the sacred arts, i.e. art, music,
4 architecture, and the value of their expression in liturgical and communal prayer.
5
- 6 a. Integrates art and music in the creation of communal prayer.
7 b. Supports the use of music and instrumentation from an array of styles.
8
- 9 2.5 Honors the call to ministry that is rooted in baptism by developing ministerial
10 goals that flow from one’s spirituality and reflect an integration of Gospel values.
11
- 12 a. Performs and advocates the practices outlined in the corporal and spiritual
13 works of mercy.
14 b. Shares the discernment process and “the work” behind the creation of one’s
15 ministerial goals.
16
- 17 2.6 Demonstrates an ability to discern and address current realities in the Church and
18 the world in light of the Gospel.
19
- 20 a. Stays abreast of current issues through regular contact with various news
21 media and Catholic information sources.
22 b. Approaches contemporary moral issues pastorally (with a balance of
23 psychological and sociological principles) and theologically (with a
24 foundation from Church teachings and the guidance of the United States
25 Conference of Catholic Bishops).
26
- 27 2.7 Accepts and articulates one’s ministerial vocation as coming from God and
28 confirmed by the ecclesial community.
29
- 30 a. Witnesses to personal faith by participating in faith-sharing groups.
31 b. Publicly expresses and explains one’s “call” to lay ecclesial ministry, for
32 example, through talks during Vocation Awareness Week or by articles in a
33 parish newsletter or diocesan paper.
34
- 35 2.8 Displays openness to ecumenical prayer, work, and practices that promote
36 Christian unity and acknowledge the gifts afforded the human community from the
37 various world religions.
38
- 39 a. Promotes and participates in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.
40 b. Supports activities and projects with other Christian communities.
41 c. Participates in opportunities for interfaith dialogue and collaboration.
42
- 43 2.9 Models the spirit of Jesus in daily life and identifies with and promotes the
44 universal Church and its global mission so that all prayer and ministerial activity are in
45 communion with that mission.
46

- 1 a. Supports the mission activities of various causes and programs of the United
- 2 States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), including but not limited to the
- 3 Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Catholic Charities USA, Catholic
- 4 Relief Services, Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa, and World Mission
- 5 Sunday.
- 6 b. Promotes opportunities for parishioners to engage in service projects not only
- 7 locally but also beyond the borders of the United States.
- 8 c. Advocates for connections with parishes outside of the United States, for
- 9 example, through parish twinning, adopt a parish, sister parish, and parish
- 10 exchange.
- 11
- 12

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STANDARD THREE: INTELLECTUAL

3.0 Standard Three

A lay ecclesial minister demonstrates an understanding of the breadth of Catholic theological and pastoral studies as well as the intellectual skill to use that knowledge in ministry with God's people from diverse populations and cultures.

Vision Statement

"Formation for lay ecclesial ministry is a journey beyond catechesis into theological study" (*Co-Workers*, page 43). A lay ecclesial minister's faith and ministry is formed by the study of the Catholic theological tradition focusing on the following core elements: Scripture and its interpretation, dogmatic theology, Church history, liturgical and sacramental theology, moral theology and Catholic social teaching, pastoral theology, spirituality, canon law, and ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue. Based on this study, a theologically competent minister can articulate and interpret this Catholic theological tradition with disciples from diverse communities. A key dynamic of effective lay ecclesial ministry is the integration into ministry practices of the key documents and principal theories of pastoral ministry.

Core Competencies

A lay ecclesial minister:

3.1 *Scripture and revelation.* Knows and integrates into ministerial practice a theology of revelation as embodied in Scripture, tradition, and creation.

3.2 *Dogmatic theology.* Knows and integrates into ministerial practice Trinitarian theology, Christology, pneumatology, missiology, Christian anthropology, and ecclesiology.

3.3 *Church history.* Knows and integrates into ministerial practice a foundational understanding of the major events in the history of the Church, with special attention to the Second Vatican Council and the perspective those events provide on the life of the Church today.

3.4 *Liturgical and sacramental theology.* Knows and integrates into ministerial practice theologies of liturgy, worship, and sacraments.

3.5 *Moral theology and Catholic social teaching.* Knows and integrates into ministerial practice a theology of the moral life, including Catholic social teaching for the transformation of church and society.

3.6 *Pastoral theology.* Knows and integrates into ministerial practice a theology of pastoral ministry as well as guiding principles for the practice of ministry in a given context.

1 3.7 *Spirituality*. Knows and integrates the history and theology of Catholic spirituality
 2 into prayer and ministerial practice.

3
 4 3.8 *Canon law*. Knows and integrates into ministerial practice a foundational
 5 understanding of canon law.

6
 7 3.9 *Ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue*. Knows and integrates into ministerial
 8 practice a respect for other Christian communities and other religious traditions.

9
 10 3.10 *Social sciences and humanities*. Knows and integrates into ministerial practice a
 11 foundational understanding of the social sciences and humanities.

12
 13 =====

14
 15 **Standard Three: Indicators**

16 A lay ecclesial minister:

17
 18 3.1 *Scripture and revelation*. Knows and integrates into ministerial practice a
 19 theology of revelation as embodied in Scripture, tradition, and creation.

- 20
 21 a. Explains the historical and social contexts of the biblical writings, with
 22 recognition of their literary forms, and shows awareness of the Catholic exegetical
 23 tradition of the early teachers of the Church and the medieval commentaries.
 24 b. Identifies major themes in Scripture and tradition in light of Church teaching,
 25 diverse cultural interpretations, and contemporary critical exegesis and
 26 hermeneutics.
 27 c. Uses Scripture as an essential source in pastoral ministry.

28
 29 3.2 *Dogmatic theology*. Knows and integrates into ministerial practice Trinitarian
 30 theology, Christology, pneumatology, missiology, Christian anthropology, and
 31 ecclesiology.

- 32
 33 a. Describes the nature and structure of the Roman Catholic Church, including its
 34 apostolic origins, church as communion and sacrament, magisterium and
 35 authority, and mission.
 36 b. Summarizes a theology of God as One and Triune by articulating an
 37 understanding of the relations of the persons of the Trinity.
 38 c. Articulates the paschal mystery as the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of
 39 Jesus Christ and our participation in it.
 40 d. Integrates basic principles of Christian anthropology—an understanding of human
 41 existence, nature, grace, sin, and redemption.
 42 e. Demonstrates an ecclesiology of domestic church, parish, (arch)diocese/eparchy,
 43 and universal Church in light of the nature and structure of the Catholic Church,
 44 including its apostolic origins, Church as mystery and sacrament, communion and
 45 mission, and authority.

- 1 f. Identifies the mission of the Church as evangelization and articulates a vision for
2 the inculturation of the Gospel into every nation and race.
3

4 3.3 *Church history*. Knows and integrates into ministerial practice a foundational
5 understanding of the major events in the history of the Church, with special attention to
6 the Second Vatican Council and the perspective those events provide on the life of the
7 Church today.
8

- 9 a. Identifies major events, councils, persons, and time periods in the history of the
10 Roman Catholic Church.
11 b. Interprets ecclesial events in the light of Church history, Vatican II documents,
12 and subsequent Church teaching.
13 c. Promotes the ecclesiological renewal confirmed by Vatican II and expanded by
14 subsequent Church documents.
15

16 3.4 *Liturgical and sacramental theology*. Knows and integrates into ministerial
17 practice theologies of liturgy, worship, and sacraments.
18

- 19 a. Articulates major sacramental concepts, including Jesus as the primordial
20 sacrament, the sacramental nature of the Church, and the development and
21 meaning of the seven sacraments.
22 b. Explains basic liturgical principles, the liturgical year, liturgical ministries, and
23 components of liturgical celebrations.
24

25 3.5 *Moral theology and Catholic social teaching*. Knows and integrates into
26 ministerial practice a theology of the moral life, including Catholic social teaching for the
27 transformation of Church and society.
28

- 29 a. Identifies the major theological themes relating to peace, justice, and Christian
30 living found in the Sacred Scriptures, the documents of Vatican Council II,
31 encyclicals, and statements of the U.S. bishops.
32 b. Articulates the principles of Catholic moral teaching and conveys a Catholic
33 understanding of conscience, conscience formation, and the process of moral
34 decision making.
35 c. Utilizes the principles of Catholic social teaching in a pastoral ministry setting by
36 analyzing modern culture in light of these teachings.
37

38 3.6 *Pastoral theology*. Knows and integrates into ministerial practice a theology of
39 pastoral ministry as well as guiding principles for the practice of ministry in a given
40 context.
41

- 42 a. Demonstrates skill in theological reflection by utilizing the insights of Scripture
43 and tradition as a resource for worship, evangelization, social justice, and
44 catechesis.
45 b. Understands key pastoral theories related to the ministerial context and the
46 specialized practice of lay ecclesial ministry.

- 1 c. Develops pastoral responses that invite the community into discipleship and
- 2 witness according to the pastoral needs of people from diverse cultures, family,
- 3 and theological perspectives.
- 4 d. Embraces a theology of pastoral ministry that supports collaboration and
- 5 communion among bishops, priests, deacons, lay ecclesial ministers, and all the
- 6 people of God.
- 7
- 8 3.7 *Spirituality*. Knows and integrates the history and theology of Catholic spirituality
- 9 into prayer and ministerial practice.
- 10
- 11 a. Identifies the history of Christian religious experience and diverse types of
- 12 spirituality.
- 13 b. Integrates into ministry an appreciation of diverse expressions of individual and
- 14 communal Catholic spirituality and prayer.
- 15 c. Summarizes the role of Mary and the saints in Church tradition.
- 16
- 17 3.8 *Canon law*. Knows and integrates into ministerial practice a foundational
- 18 understanding of canon law.
- 19
- 20 a. Identifies those elements of canon law that inform the lives of the faithful, such as
- 21 their canonical rights and responsibilities, the sacramental life of the Church, and
- 22 diocesan and parish structures.
- 23 b. Understands and applies specific canons in specialized ministry contexts and
- 24 situations.
- 25
- 26 3.9 *Ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue*. Knows and integrates into ministerial
- 27 practice a respect for other Christian communities and other religious traditions.
- 28
- 29 a. Appreciates our common heritage and our shared practices.
- 30 b. Identifies key moments and figures in Church history that precipitated separation
- 31 and/or made efforts toward unity.
- 32 c. Promotes opportunities for dialogue, prayer, and action on behalf of social justice
- 33 with others in ecumenical and inter-religious communities.
- 34
- 35 3.10 *Social sciences and humanities*. Knows and integrates into ministerial practice a
- 36 foundational understanding of the social sciences and humanities.
- 37
- 38 a. Understands and applies the theories of human and psychological development in
- 39 ministry with persons of all ages.
- 40 b. Understands the fundamental aspects of sociological study in order to interpret
- 41 and apply current research into the practice of ministry.
- 42 c. Integrates personal experiences and academic study of the humanities (e.g.,
- 43 philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology, social work, cultural studies,
- 44 literature, the arts) into ministerial practice.

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STANDARD FOUR: PASTORAL

4.0 Standard Four

A lay ecclesial minister demonstrates a range of leadership and pastoral skills needed for functioning effectively in ministry.

Vision Statement

As a response to their baptismal call, lay ecclesial ministers accept the grace of leadership and manifest a range of skills and pastoral gifts which allow them to function effectively in ministry. In their role as evangelizers, they operate in a parochial setting which has various dimensions—faith formation, worship, cultural diversity, community life, social justice, and apostolic service. They are effective listeners who foster respect and offer compassionate care within varied family, community, and cultural settings. In the spirit of the Gospel, they serve others as companions on the journey of faith. These ministers demonstrate good stewardship, work collaboratively with other lay and ordained ministers, and exhibit human resource and management skills. They have an ability to discern and nurture the gifts of all the baptized in order to build the Kingdom of God. Lastly, these ministers embrace a professional code of ethics worthy of Catholic ministry and abide by civil and Church law. “Pastoral formation cultivates the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that directly pertain to effective functioning in the ministry setting and that also pertain to pastoral administration that supports direct ministry” (*Co-Workers*, page 47).

Core Competencies

A lay ecclesial minister:

- 4.1 Exercises sound practices of compassionate pastoral care.
- 4.2 Fosters pastoral ministry with, empowerment of, and respect for persons of diverse cultures.
- 4.3 Implements the principles and processes of evangelization and faith formation as outlined in national and universal Church documents.
- 4.4 Works effectively with others.
- 4.5 Continually seeks opportunities to improve skills.
- 4.6 Develops and nurtures a life of prayer in the community in which one serves.

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Standard Four: Indicators

A lay ecclesial minister:

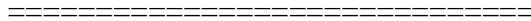
- 4.1 Exercises sound practices of compassionate pastoral care.

- 1
- 2 a. Listens with empathy and solidarity in the spirit of Gospel values.
- 3 b. Works toward inclusion of persons with disabilities in every area of parish life.
- 4 c. Recognizes when an individual requires professional help and offers resources for
- 5 assistance.
- 6 d. Knows the signs of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and adheres to civil
- 7 and ecclesial procedures for reporting abuse.
- 8 e. Nurtures communities of wellness and responds to persons at-risk in collaboration
- 9 with other pastoral ministers through programs of prevention and pastoral care.
- 10 f. Develops ways to respond to community crises and personnel issues in
- 11 collaboration with other pastoral ministers and community resources.
- 12
- 13 4.2 Fosters pastoral ministry with, empowerment of, and respect for persons of
- 14 diverse cultures.
- 15
- 16 a. Understands and appreciates the gifts diverse cultures bring to the faith
- 17 community.
- 18 b. Calls all community leaders of various cultural groups present within the parish or
- 19 diocese/eparchy to collaborate in developing culturally appropriate responses to
- 20 particular pastoral needs.
- 21 c. Engages in culture and language studies to the fullest extent possible.
- 22 d. Facilitates prayer experiences that express the cultural diversity of the
- 23 community.
- 24 e. Facilitates intercultural dialogue and understanding as well as multicultural faith
- 25 experiences.
- 26 f. Finds ways to exercise shared leadership with people from the various cultures
- 27 present in the ecclesial setting where one serves, respecting the leadership styles
- 28 of each cultural community.
- 29
- 30 4.3 Implements the principles and processes of evangelization and faith formation as
- 31 outlined in national and universal Church documents.
- 32
- 33 a. Empowers others to identify and utilize their unique gifts and to develop and
- 34 articulate their faith.
- 35 b. Calls forth, forms, supports, supervises, and engages in the ongoing development
- 36 and evaluation of ministers.
- 37 c. Involves the family as an essential partner in all areas of ministry and promotes a
- 38 societal perspective that respects the family.
- 39 d. Develops the parish as an evangelizing and catechizing community.
- 40 e. Employs the use of modern means of communication technology to proclaim the
- 41 Gospel.
- 42 f. Supports the Church's commitment to ecumenism and cultivates ecumenical as
- 43 well as interfaith relations.
- 44
- 45 4.4 Works effectively with others.
- 46

- 1 a. Utilizes leadership skills of collaboration, visioning, planning, communication,
2 decision making, delegation, and conflict management.
 - 3 b. Demonstrates proficiency in the organization, supervision, and administration of
4 programs.
 - 5 c. Works effectively and creatively within parish and (arch)diocesan/eparchial
6 systems and structures.
 - 7 d. Exhibits a spirit of discipleship in ministerial service.
 - 8 e. Develops and implements a unified approach to liturgical, catechetical, and other
9 pastoral work in the ministry setting.
 - 10 f. Appropriately and clearly communicates to all concerned the responsibilities and
11 duties of the various ministerial roles.
 - 12
 - 13 4.5 Continually seeks opportunities to improve skills.
 - 14
 - 15 a. Updates a personal understanding and practice of ministry.
 - 16 b. Studies Scripture and appropriate Church documents.
 - 17 c. Seeks opportunities for spiritual development including retreats, reading, and
18 spiritual direction.
 - 19
 - 20 4.6 Develops and nurtures a life of prayer in the community in which one serves.
 - 21
 - 22 a. Utilizes pastoral and liturgical skills to design, implement, and, when appropriate,
23 lead community prayer and worship.
 - 24 b. Promotes authentic celebrations of the sacraments.
 - 25 c. Ritualizes significant moments of the lives of individuals, groups, and cultures.
 - 26
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- =====

SPECIALIZED COMPETENCIES

Specific ministries require specific competencies in addition to the core competencies required in all ministries. Here are the specialized competencies for a catechetical leader, director of liturgy, director of music ministries, parish life coordinator, pastoral associate, and youth ministry leader.



Specialized Competencies for a Catechetical Leader

By baptism every Christian is called to proclaim the Good News. The Spirit singles out persons and invites them to the specialized role of a catechetical leader within their faith community, and many respond in faith to that invitation. Competent catechetical leaders collaborate with others in creating a culture of formation in their faith communities that enables each committed Christian to nurture and grow in a relationship with God. The catechetical leader will be well formed in the study of catechesis—its theology, history, and right praxis.

A parish catechetical leader will:

CL 1 Direct the parish catechetical program through design, implementation, and evaluation of parish catechetical processes.

CL 2 Implement the catechumenate as inspiration for catechesis in age-appropriate ways.

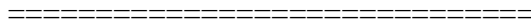
CL 3 Develop a comprehensive life-long vision and plan for parish catechesis based on ecclesial catechetical documents.

CL 4 Contribute to developing the parish as an evangelizing and catechizing community.

CL 5 Develop parish catechetical policies in accord with (arch)diocesan/eparchial policies and guidelines.

CL 6 Provide orientations and in-servicing of catechetical committee members and formation teams in their areas of responsibility.

CL 7 Exercise effective supervision of catechetical employees and volunteers while fostering leadership abilities.



Specialized Competencies for a Director of Liturgy

1 The bishop is the chief liturgist of his diocese/eparchy. He appoints pastors and other
2 ministers to care for the liturgical life of his people. In collaboration with these ministers,
3 a competent lay liturgist in a parish will prepare and execute liturgies with style and
4 grace. The liturgist will be responsible for the liturgical formation of the parish's
5 assemblies, especially of those ministers who serve the assemblies in liturgical
6 celebrations. The lay liturgist will be well formed in the study of sacred liturgy—its
7 theology, history, and right praxis.

8
9 A parish liturgist will:

10
11 DL 1 Demonstrate an ability to evaluate liturgical celebrations in fidelity to the official
12 liturgical books and Catholic liturgical theology.

13
14 DL 2 Demonstrate an ability to explain the history of Catholic liturgy and the cultural
15 contexts which impact it.

16
17 DL 3 Demonstrate proficiency and cultural sensitivity in preparing, coordinating, and
18 implementing parish prayer and liturgy by appropriately celebrating the seasons, weeks,
19 days, and hours of the liturgical year and the sanctoral cycle.

20
21 DL 4 Demonstrate facility with the Church's official liturgical books and be able to
22 implement the various rites used in celebrating the sacraments of the Church in their
23 appropriate liturgical contexts.

24
25 DL 5 Demonstrate familiarity with the richness of the devotional and sacramental life
26 of the Church and guide its authentic celebration in a parish context.

27
28 DL 6 Develop a parish program for the effective formation, training, enrichment,
29 supervision, and evaluation of liturgical ministers and a similar program for a
30 parish worship committee.

31
32 DL 7 Create opportunities for liturgical catechesis: catechesis through liturgy,
33 catechesis for liturgy, and the link between liturgy and social justice.

34
35 DL 8 Demonstrate an understanding of the ritual, spiritual, and cultural dimensions of
36 music as integral to the sacred liturgy, and an ability to collaborate in evaluating its
37 musical, liturgical, and pastoral appropriateness in a particular rite.

38
39 DL 9 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of current legislation, documentation,
40 and pastoral practice in order to prepare liturgical rites and celebrations.

41
42 DL 10 Develop parish liturgical and music guidelines and policies in accord with
43 universal and (arch)diocesan/eparchial norms.

44
45 DL 11 Develop a comprehensive and long-range vision for parish liturgical life based on
46 Church documents and directives.

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It is assumed that an (arch)diocesan/eparchial director of liturgy, one who serves the bishop and clergy and the faithful of the diocese/eparchy, will possess at least a master's degree in liturgical studies from an accredited university program.

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Specialized Competencies for a Director of Music Ministries

The parish or diocesan/eparchial director of music ministries is the person who organizes and directs the program of sacred music for the liturgical and devotional life of the parish or diocese/eparchy under the direction of the pastor or bishop and in collaboration with the pastoral staff. This director will be well formed in the art of music and study of liturgy.

A director of music ministries will:

DMM 1 Demonstrate knowledge of music theory and harmony including basic understandings of orchestration, counterpoint, and harmonic analysis.

DMM 2 Have knowledge of and competence in the historical treasury, contemporary body, and multi-cultural expressions of church music and demonstrate skills to use them effectively in the worship life of the parish or diocesan/eparchial community.

DMM 3 Demonstrate knowledge of liturgical history, legislation, documentation, and current pastoral practice in order to prepare liturgical rites and celebrations.

DMM 4 Demonstrate knowledge of the rites of the Church and their theological underpinnings for preparing and planning parish and diocesan/eparchial prayer and liturgical celebrations.

DMM 5 Promote and develop the art of music as an integral and necessary part of the sacred liturgy and as a constitutive element of the Catholic faith experience.

DMM 6 Demonstrate skills in leading congregational song, choral conducting, and at least one other musical specialization (organ, piano, guitar, voice).

DMM 7 Develop parish music and liturgy guidelines and policies in accord with universal and diocesan norms.

DMM 8 Develop a comprehensive and long-range vision for the parish music and liturgical life based on Church documents and directives and sensitivity to intercultural needs in order to promote full, conscious, and active participation by the people.

DMM 9 Recognize, motivate, and empower musical talent and skills from the parish community with special attention to children, youth, and young adults.

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Specialized Competencies for a Parish Life Coordinator

A parish life coordinator is a professional minister who is entrusted by the diocesan bishop with the pastoral care of a parish (Canon 517.2). In collaboration with a presbyteral moderator appointed by the diocesan bishop, the parish life coordinator has the responsibility of overseeing the entire Catholic community within a specific locale. The parish life coordinator enables and empowers the community to be a sign of the reality of the Kingdom of God.

A parish life coordinator:

- PLC 1 Integrates Catholic social justice teachings within ministry by incorporating opportunities for justice and service to the Church and broader community, with theological reflection on those opportunities.
- PLC 2 Preaches effectively in appropriate pastoral settings in accord with national and diocesan/eparchial norms.
- PLC 3 Presides at liturgies, including Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest, in accord with liturgical principles and national and diocesan/eparchial norms.
- PLC 4 Provides pastoral care and assistance to petitioners and respondents in marriage nullity cases.
- PLC 5 Collaborates in the catechesis and pastoral care of those preparing for sacraments.
- PLC 6 Exercises effective pastoral care for the sick, the dying, and the grieving in the parish community.
- PLC 7 Initiates, develops, and supports specialized pastoral ministries according to the needs of the parish community.
- PLC 8 Collaborates with the worship committee and the sacramental minister (Canon 517.2) to provide for the liturgical and sacramental life of the parish.
- PLC 9 Collaborates effectively with organizations, diocesan and parish staff and groups, parish lay ecclesial ministers, the presbyteral moderator and the sacramental moderator (Canon 517.2).
- PLC 10 Ensures the observance of all applicable civil laws in accepted non-profit management practices.
- PLC 11 Oversees the proper care for and use of parish’s facilities in accord with diocesan/eparchial norms and civil law.

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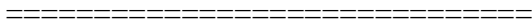
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Specialized Competencies for a Pastoral Associate

A pastoral associate is a professional minister who shares with the pastor or on-site pastoral team the overall care of the parish. He or she is a member of the parish staff, usually full-time, and is accountable to the pastor. The ministry of the pastoral associate is comprehensive, relating to all aspects of parish life, but with designated responsibilities, e.g., liturgy, faith formation and development, administration, pastoral care, or social outreach. The responsibilities designated to the pastoral associate depend on the needs of the parish and the gifts of the pastoral associate as well as the gifts of the other members of the pastoral staff.

A pastoral associate:

PA 1 Integrates Catholic social justice teachings within ministry by incorporating opportunities for justice and service to the Church and broader community, with theological reflection on those opportunities.

PA 2 Preaches effectively in appropriate pastoral settings in accord with national and diocesan norms.

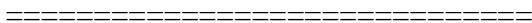
PA 3 Presides at liturgies, including Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest, in accord with liturgical principles and national and diocesan/eparchial norms.

PA 4 Provides pastoral care and assistance to petitioners and respondents in marriage nullity cases.

PA 5 Collaborates in the catechesis and pastoral care of those preparing for sacraments.

PA 6 Exercises effective pastoral care for the sick, the dying, and the grieving in the parish community.

PA 7 Initiates, develops, and supports specialized pastoral ministries according to the needs of the parish community.



Specialized Competencies for a Youth Ministry Leader

A youth ministry leader is the person who organizes, animates, and coordinates the people, programming, and resources in parish, school, and/or community-based settings to provide a comprehensive ministry effort with youth. These individuals may conduct ministry under a variety of titles, including but not limited to “coordinator of youth ministry,” “director of youth ministry,” “parish youth minister,” “campus minister to *jóvenes líderes*” (young adults sharing the responsibility of youth ministry), and “advisers of pastoral juvenile”* (persons with more maturity and formation who serves as a guide

1 to *jóvenes líderes*). Some pastoral associates, parish life coordinators, and catechetical
2 leaders may also share responsibility for youth ministry and so may be considered lay
3 ecclesial ministers serving as youth ministry leaders.

4
5 *The cultural and social diversity in our Church lends itself to variation in the roles and populations served by youth ministry leaders.
6 For instance, leaders serving in *pastoral juvenil* will encounter *jóvenes* or young adults and will need to consider the appropriate
7 developmental and cultural needs of this demographic in addition to youth. Leaders in other cultural or social settings may find similar
8 expansion or variation in their roles and may need to acquire other or additional competencies to fulfill their role well (i.e.,
9 competencies in youth and young adult ministry).

10
11 A youth ministry leader shall:

12
13 YML 1.0 Demonstrate an understanding of the history, vision, goals, themes, and
14 components of Catholic youth ministry and/or *pastoral juvenil* as outlined in the U.S.
15 bishops' pastoral plans and related Church documents.

16
17 YML 2.0 Demonstrate an understanding of the developmental needs of youth and young
18 adults in the contexts of popular, ethnic, and family cultures as appropriate to the faith
19 community being served.

20
21 YML 3.0 Use theories, models, processes and methods of Catholic youth ministry and/or
22 *pastoral juvenil* in the ministry setting.

23
24 YML 4.0 Model for and collaborate with the faith community in implementing the
25 components of Catholic youth ministry and/or *pastoral juvenil* by:

26
27 YML 4.1 Utilizing the aims, principles, processes, and methods of catechesis
28 with youth in implementing faith formation.

29
30 YML 4.2 Facilitating the development of community among youth, their
31 families, and within the Church and society, including the development of
32 small faith communities by youth from different cultures, spiritualities, or
33 pastoral models.

34
35 YML 4.3 Inviting youth into intimate relationship with Jesus Christ and
36 empowering them to live and witness as disciples in today's world.

37
38 YML 4.4 Engaging youth in the social mission of the Church in accord with
39 Catholic social teaching.

40
41 YML 4.5 Enabling healing and healthy growth and development with youth
42 in their relationships as a vital part of their human and Christian maturity
43 process.

44
45 YML 4.6 Enabling youth to celebrate and deepen their relationship with the
46 triune God through individual and communal prayer and participation in the
47 liturgical and devotional life of the Church.
48

- 1 YML 4.7 Engaging the Church and the broader community in voicing and
- 2 addressing the rights, responsibilities, and needs of youth.
- 3
- 4 YML 4.8 Affirming and calling forth the unique gifts of youth by providing
- 5 opportunities for their ongoing spiritual and leadership development.

1 INTRODUCTION TO THE ALLIANCE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

2
3 With the 2003 approval and publication of the *National Certification Standards for Lay*
4 *Ecclesial Ministers* by the National Association for Lay Ministry (NALM), the National
5 Conference of Catechetical Leaders (NCCL), the National Federation for Catholic Youth
6 Ministry (NFCYM), and subsequently the National Association of Pastoral Musicians
7 (NPM), the foundation was laid for a national certification process that could be
8 implemented by these partner organizations.

9
10 Representatives of these partner organizations met in 2007 to set in motion a process of
11 development that has unfolded since then, the fruits of which are available here in draft
12 form. This development was carried out by a Certification Process Task Group made up
13 of representative leaders of the partner organizations, including the Federation of
14 Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC), which joined the work in progress. They met
15 regularly via conference calls over a two-year period, in close cooperation with the task
16 group responsible for the development of the draft of the revised *National Certification*
17 *Standards*, also included here.

18
19 The Certification Process Task Group organized its work around the framework provided
20 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Commission on Certification and
21 Accreditation (USCCB/CCA) and in regular communication with its leadership. This was
22 done so that the development of the certification process would reflect the best current
23 thinking on the certification of pastoral ministry leaders and would meet the
24 Commission's requirements for approval on conclusion of the work.

25
26 It is important to be clear that this draft National Certification Process remains a work in
27 progress. It has undergone initial reviews by the various certification bodies of the
28 respective partner organizations and has been reworked in response to the feedback
29 received. It is now ready for broader review and consultation, so that the final product
30 will reflect and be responsive to the Catholic Church in the United States and the lay
31 ecclesial ministers who serve its people.

32 Why National Certification?

33
34
35 National certification establishes a consistent standard of quality among lay ecclesial
36 ministers to ensure that the people of God will benefit from the leadership of well-
37 trained, competent, and capable lay ministry leaders. Specifically, it will provide these
38 benefits:

- 39
- 40 ■ To the Catholic Church in the United States: The Alliance certification process
41 implements comprehensive national standards of ministerial excellence for
42 participating lay pastoral leaders and the Catholic institutions they serve. The process
43 applies the proposed draft revised *National Certification Standards* in assessing
44 candidates, thereby providing a nationally-recognized and systematic means for
45 assessing the competence and capabilities of lay ecclesial ministers serving as pastoral
46 associates, catechetical leaders, youth ministry leaders, directors of music ministries,

1 and directors of liturgy.

- 2
- 3 ■ To the Dioceses/Eparchies, Provinces, Regions, and State Conferences: The Alliance
4 certification process provides a standardized system of competency assessment that is
5 available to all dioceses/eparchies, provinces, regions, and state conferences,
6 regardless of location or relative affluence. Locales that cannot afford to implement
7 their own systems of assessment and certification can do so through the Alliance
8 certification process.
- 9
- 10 ■ To Academic Institutions and Formation Programs: The certification process provides
11 to academic institutions and formation programs that prepare lay ecclesial ministers a
12 national assessment framework that establishes clear earmarks of ministry excellence
13 while honoring the unique character and contributions of individual institutions.
- 14
- 15 ■ To Mentors of Candidates and Review Groups: The Alliance certification process
16 provides to all of those involved in the support of candidates and the review of their
17 materials, including mentors and review groups, the training they will need to exercise
18 their roles with competence and consistency. In this way the certification process
19 builds toward a consistent standard of ministry excellence not only for candidates but
20 also for those who implement the process.
- 21
- 22 ■ To Certified Ministers: The lay ecclesial ministers who avail themselves of the
23 certification process will receive a national credential through a certification process
24 that has been reviewed and approved by the USCCB Commission on Certification and
25 Accreditation, thereby recognizing their manifest competence in their respective
26 ministry specializations. Moreover, the process promotes an environment of ongoing
27 learning for lay ecclesial ministers and enables partnerships with colleges and
28 universities in the task of ongoing formation and education for ministry. To be
29 certified is to be committed to ongoing ministerial growth, formation, and
30 development.

31 32 **Understanding the National Certification Process**

33
34 In order to understand what follows, one must be familiar with the terminology of
35 certification as well as with language related to certification that is frequently
36 misunderstood or misused.

37
38 The following terms and definitions are adapted from handbooks of USCCB Commission
39 on Certification and Accreditation. Those terms that are frequently and mistakenly
40 interchanged are distinguished as follows:

41

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| <p>Certification: The process whereby a person demonstrates compliance with standards for professional competence. A person who has been <i>certified</i> has undergone some kind of formal assessment process and has been determined to be satisfactorily competent relative to an approved set of standards.</p> | <p>Accreditation: The process whereby a duly constituted accrediting body gives recognition to education and/or service centers/programs which meet established standards. Whereas <i>accreditation</i> is always used in regard to programs, schools, academic institutions and the like, <i>certification</i> refers to individual persons. An <i>accredited program</i> is one that has been determined to have successfully met certain established standards.</p> | <p>Certificate: A statement that a program or course of studies has been completed through attendance, participation, or fulfillment of requirements. A <i>certificate</i> is usually acquired at the conclusion of an educational program to indicate successful completion of that program. A <i>certificate</i> does not establish that an individual is competent, only that the person has completed a course of study.</p> |
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| <p>Competence: Proven ability to meet specific standards established by a certifying body. In the language of certification, <i>competence</i> is always understood in relation to an established set of standards. Moreover, the standards identify specific <i>competencies</i> (areas of knowledge, attitudes, and skills) that need to be assessed to determine whether an individual merits certification.</p> | <p>Assessment: The means by which competence is evaluated, measured, and/or judged relative to approved standards. In an <i>assessment</i> process, the competence of a candidate for certification is evaluated with respect to the approved standards, using certain specific criteria. This is perhaps the most challenging aspect of certification: establishing objective and fair ways to assess competence.</p> | <p>Criterion: A norm of judgment by which competence may be evaluated; the ultimate basis for a judgment. <i>Criteria</i> are specific identifiable indicators used in the assessment of competence. An area of competence is assessed by weighing how well an individual has met specific criteria.</p> |
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The Alliance certification process is a means by which lay ecclesial ministers are assessed relative to the national certification standards and the core and specialized competencies contained in them. To this end, each of the partner organizations has developed its own respective approach to assessing the specialized competencies of its member ministers, and all of the partner organizations will employ the same approaches to assessment using the core competencies.

Finally, a very important consideration: *National certification does not constitute authorization for ministry*, which is the province of the local ordinary of a given (arch)diocese/eparchy. Rather, certification as defined here and used throughout these materials is solely devoted to the assessment of competence relative to approved national

1 standards. Should a particular bishop decide routinely to use national certification in his
2 authorization of individuals for ministry in that diocese or not, that is entirely his
3 decision.

4 5 **Consistency, Subsidiarity, Communication, and Quality**

6
7 The proposed process for a national certification system includes appropriate provisions
8 for:

- 9
- 10 ▪ **Consistency:** The Alliance Commission, composed of representatives from each of the
11 partner ministry associations, will oversee and govern the national certification
12 process, making final decisions on national certification policies and procedures as
13 well as granting certification and handling appeals. In this way the integrity of the
14 certification process as a truly national entity will be maintained, ensuring appropriate
15 uniformity and consistency for the partner organizations and their members.
 - 16
17 ▪ **Subsidiarity:** Each partner organization will maintain its own respective certification
18 agencies, subgroups, leadership, organization, and procedures so as best to
19 accommodate the various ministry specializations represented. In this way the
20 principle of subsidiarity is honored and integrated into the process.
 - 21
22 ▪ **Communication:** The certification process has been designed to facilitate
23 communication, as appropriate, at all levels and between levels, so that information
24 regarding the efficacy of the certification process or any problems therein will freely
25 move between the partner organizations and from the partner organizations to the
26 national governing structure.
 - 27
28 ▪ **Quality:** All of the above has been developed to ensure, insofar as is possible, the
29 quality of the certification experience on the part of the individuals who seek it and the
30 quality of the outcome, in terms of competent lay ecclesial ministers in service to the
31 U.S. Catholic Church.

32
33 The member organizations of ACLEM offer the following proposed national certification
34 process in the hope that it will provide a practical, comprehensive framework that will
35 assist lay ecclesial ministers in assessing and acknowledging their competence relative to
36 the National Certification Standards. The proposal is organized in two sections. The first
37 presents the overall certification framework, and the second presents a template to be
38 used by each of the ACLEM organizations in developing its respective internal
39 certification procedures.

1 **DRAFT OF NATIONAL CERTIFICATION PROCESS**
2 **FOR LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTERS**
3 **IN SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES**
4
5

6 **The Mission of the Alliance for Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers**
7

8 The Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers (ACLEM) includes the
9 Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC), the National Association for
10 Lay Ministry (NALM), the National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM), the
11 National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL), and the National Federation
12 for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM). The Alliance seeks to affirm and promote lay
13 ecclesial ministry in parishes and dioceses throughout the United States.
14

15 In fulfilling its mission, the Alliance is developing a national process to offer individuals
16 the opportunity to receive certification in the ministries represented by the Alliance
17 partners and based on the *National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers*
18 *Serving as:*

- 19 ▪ *Director of Liturgy*
- 20 ▪ *Director of Music Ministries*
- 21 ▪ *Parish Catechetical Leader*
- 22 ▪ *Parish Life Coordinator*
- 23 ▪ *Pastoral Associate*
- 24 ▪ *Youth Ministry Leader*
- 25

26 **Organizational Structures for the Certification Process**
27

28 The Alliance envisions the following organizational structures for implementation of the
29 national certification process:
30

- 31 1. ***Partner Certification Review Committees (PCRC)***—Each partner organization
32 establishes a PCRC with a minimum of three members to:
33
 - 34 a. Review and approve applications for admission to the certification
35 process;
 - 36 b. Appoint and monitor certification advisors;
 - 37 c. Assess each candidate’s progress on an annual basis;
 - 38 d. Review completed certification applications and portfolios and make
39 recommendations to the National Certification Review Committee.
 - 40
- 41 2. ***National Certification Review Committee (NCRC)***—The Alliance Commission
42 establishes the NCRC with a minimum of one representative from each of the
43 partner organizations, selected from its PCRC, to:
44

- 1 a. Review and approve final applications/portfolios submitted by each
- 2 PCRC;
- 3 b. Forward applications for certification to the Alliance Commission.
- 4
- 5 3. ***Alliance Commission (AC)***—The Alliance Commission serves as the governing
- 6 body of the Alliance for Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers (ACLEM). It
- 7 consists of two members from each partner organization: the chief executive
- 8 officer and the chair of its certification commission/committee (or similar entity).
- 9 The Alliance Commission:
- 10
- 11 a. Receives the recommendations from the NCRC and makes final decisions
- 12 on certification and renewal applications;
- 13 b. Communicates decisions in writing to each candidate;
- 14 c. Approves policies and procedures related to the certification process;
- 15 d. Promotes the implementation of the standards and coordinates their
- 16 revision as called for by the USCCB Commission on Certification and
- 17 Accreditation.

THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

The Alliance envisions this three-step certification process:

Step One. Application for Admission to the Certification Process

Candidates for admission to the certification process submit initial applications to their respective PCRC.

Pre-requisites

1. Competency in the specialized ministry or related field normally fulfilled by a bachelor's degree;
2. A minimum of three years of full-time (minimum thirty hours per week) pastoral ministry experience (or equivalent) in the particular ministry specialization.

Application

1. The application form and fee (to be determined) are sent to the PCRC.
2. Documentation:
 - a. Baptismal certificate with notations for Confirmation/Chrismation and Eucharist;
 - b. An official transcript of undergraduate and graduate studies;
 - c. Three references: one from the pastor or equivalent and two from colleagues in ministry who have observed the candidate in ministry;
 - d. Ministerial autobiography with information on the applicant's human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation and experience.

Step Two. Certification Preparation Process

Guided by an advisor appointed by the PCRC and using the *Instructions for Developing Your Certification Portfolio*, the candidate assembles a portfolio that attests to his or her competence in ministry relative to the approved standards. The portfolio includes the following documentation:

1. Evidence of *human formation*, including testimonies by pastor and peers along with the reflections in the candidate's ministerial autobiography (all submitted previously with the application to the certification process).
2. Evidence of *spiritual formation*, including reflections in the candidate's ministerial autobiography along with the testimonies of pastor and peers (all submitted previously with the application to the certification process) and a report

- 1 of retreats, spiritual direction, and other spiritual formation activities during the
2 previous five years.
- 3
- 4 3. Evidence of *intellectual formation*, including transcripts of graduate-level course
5 work or evidence of equivalent study in at least three of the core theological areas.
6 By the time of the first renewal of certification (after seven years), such evidence
7 must be provided in all the core areas of theological study. In addition, the
8 candidate will provide transcripts of graduate-level course work or evidence of
9 equivalent study in other areas of intellectual formation related to his or her
10 particular ministry (e.g., catechetics, youth ministry, liturgy, music).
- 11
- 12 4. Evidence of *pastoral formation*, including a self-assessment by the candidate and
13 ministerial assessments by pastor (or other supervisor) and peers. Other evidence
14 includes the candidate's reflections in the ministerial autobiography and a report
15 of courses in pastoral ministry, supervised ministry experiences, and other
16 pastoral formation activities. The candidate may also be required to demonstrate
17 competence in skills related to his or her ministry.
- 18
- 19 5. An *integration paper* that demonstrates the application and incorporation of the
20 certification standards in one's practice of ministry.
- 21
- 22 6. Evidence of child protection training and criminal background check.
- 23

24 **Step Three. Submission of Certification Documentation for Review and** 25 **Decision**

- 26
- 27 1. Documentation is submitted to the Partner Certification Review Committee for
28 review and approval. Decisions are based on the following criteria:
- 29
- 30 a. Satisfactory documentation of competence relative to approved standards
31 in the portfolio;
- 32 b. Recommendation of the Certification Advisor.
- 33
- 34 2. Approved applications and portfolios are forwarded to the National Certification
35 Review Committee.
- 36
- 37 a. All documentation is reviewed.
- 38 b. The approval of the PCRC is accepted or modified.
- 39 c. Applications and portfolios that meet the approval of the NCRC are
40 forwarded to the Alliance Commission.
- 41 d. Applications and portfolios that need further modification are returned to
42 the PCRC.
- 43
- 44 3. The Alliance Commission renders final decisions based on the recommendation
45 of the NCRC.
- 46

- 1 a. Candidates receive written notice from the AC regarding their certification
- 2 status.
- 3 b. Initial certification, if granted, is for a period of seven years, and subject to
- 4 renewal at that time.
- 5
- 6 *See the schema on the following page for further information on the certification process*
- 7 *and procedures.*

1 **Draft Overview of National Certification Process for Lay Ecclesial**
 2 **Ministers in Specialized Ministries**
 3
 4

| CANDIDATE | REVIEW BODIES |
|--|---|
| Candidate receives application from one of the five partner organizations. | Partner organizations post information about the certification process and procedures on their websites. Information is disseminated at national meetings and to appropriate diocesan/eparchial personnel. |
| Application with requisite documentation is sent to the Partner Certification Review Committee (a minimum of three persons, one of whom serves on the National Certification Review Committee) that relates to the candidate’s ministry specialization. | <p>The PCRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reviews and approves initial applications; ▪ Assigns an advisor to each applicant; ▪ Tracks candidates’ progress in completing documentation for portfolio. <p>The PCRC provides orientation for all advisors.</p> |
| <p>Candidate, with the guidance of the advisor, develops a portfolio that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment of competence based on the four pillars of the <i>National Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers</i>: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral; ▪ An integration paper to demonstrate integration of the four standards into one’s ministry; ▪ Additional evidence of competence. | The PCRC provides each candidate and advisor with instructions for developing and submitting the portfolio. |
| Candidate completes portfolio and submits it to the PCRC . | The PCRC reviews and approves candidate’s portfolio. Decisions are based on established criteria. |
| | <p>Approved applications and portfolios are forwarded to the National Certification Review Committee (NCRC) composed of a minimum of one representative from each of the five PCRCs.</p> <p>The NCRC reviews all documentation and submits a recommendation to the Alliance Commission (AC) composed of the executive directors of the five partner organizations and the chairpersons of their certification commission/committee (or similar entity).</p> |
| | The AC renders a final decision and notifies candidate in writing of the results of the process. Initial certification is granted for a period of seven years, subject to renewal. |

**TEMPLATE FOR PARTNER CERTIFICATION REVIEW
COMMITTEES OF MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS**

-
1. Each partner will adapt this template to fit specific organizational needs and timelines, while honoring the general process and requirements.
 2. The portfolio requirements are described in a separate document.
-

Definitions:

LEM—Lay ecclesial minister.

PCRC— Partner Certification Review Committee. Members of the PCRC are selected by the partner. The PCRC should include a diverse group of people including parish ministers and diocesan/eparchial leaders and should reflect the diversity of our Church.

NCRC— National Certification Review Committee. Comprised of members of each partner’s PCRC

ACC—Alliance Certification Commission. Comprised of each partner organization’s executive director and certification committee chair.

| | Partner | Alliance |
|--|---|---|
| 1 | | Creates certification promotional materials. Creates certification applications. |
| 2 | Promotes certification process and makes materials (brochures, applications) available. | |
| Step One: Application for <u>Admission</u> to the Certification Process | | |
| 3 | LEM submits initial application and fee to partner national office. | |
| 4 | Reviewed by a staff member/designate for completeness. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If complete, staff/designate forwards the application packet to the members of the PCRC. • If incomplete, staff/designate contacts applicant requesting additional information. | |
| 5 | The members of the PCRC review the application and provide an | |

| | | |
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| | <p>independent evaluation to the chair. Assessed for appropriateness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair assigns a minimum of three people to review each application. • If a majority of reviewers approves, the application is accepted. • If a majority does not approve, the PCRC discusses the application together and creates a joint recommendation. • If the application is not approved, application is returned to the applicant with concerns documented or further instructions about how to complete. | |
| <p>Step Two: <u>Certification</u> Preparation Process</p> | | |
| <p>6</p> | <p>If applicant is approved as a candidate, PCRC chair communicates with candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informs candidate of acceptance into process. • Assigns advisor.* • Assigns a member of the PCRC to serve as liaison for both advisor and candidate (person from PCRC who is available to answer questions from candidate and advisor or whom either can contact if it's not going well). <p><small>*Note: PCRC has responsibility for recruiting, orienting and training advisors.</small></p> | <p>NCRC has responsibility for overseeing and developing the process for recruiting, orienting, and training advisors.</p> <p>NCRC is responsible for developing principles and procedures for recruitment, orientation and training of certification advisors across the organizations.</p> |
| <p>7</p> | <p>PCRC chair begins to recruit members of interview team</p> | |
| <p>8</p> | <p>Candidate gathers materials and assembles the portfolio. Advisor is available as a resource and to provide counsel when necessary. Advisor determines when the portfolio</p> | |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| | is ready for submission. | |
| Step Three: <u>Submission of Portfolio</u> | | |
| 9 | Candidate submits the portfolio to partner national office either as a PDF or paper document. If submitted as a paper document, the national office will convert the portfolio to a PDF format for distribution to the PCRC. A paper copy of the portfolio is retained at the national office for the permanent file. | |
| 10 | Partner staff/designate tracks receipt of all materials, ensuring that all required materials have been received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If complete, staff/designate sends the application with portfolio to the PCRC chair. • If incomplete, candidate, advisor and chair of PCRC are notified of missing materials. | |
| 11 | Upon receipt of the completed portfolio, the chair of PCRC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arranges for a team of at least two persons, chaired by the candidate’s liaison and including the advisor, to conduct the interview. • Sends the portfolio to all members of the PCRC and to the interview team. • Staff /designate notes on checklist to whom the copies are sent and the date sent. | |
| 12 | Convener of interview team schedules a sixty- to ninety-minute interview, preferably face-to-face, but alternatives such as Skype or other technology are acceptable. | |
| 13 | Interview team members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review portfolio. | |

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct interview. • Discuss the candidate. • Formulate recommendation. | |
| 14 | The secretary of the interview team takes notes and prepares a written report and recommendation, approved by the interview team convener, and sent to the PCRC chair. | |
| 15 | The candidate’s liaison on the PCRC presents the portfolio and recommendations of the interview team to the PCRC. | |
| 16 | <p>The PCRC reviews recommendation from interview team (not portfolio), hears presentation from PCRC reviewer, and makes decision whether to approve the candidate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If approved, certification documentation (including portfolio) are forwarded to the NCRC (National Certification Review Committee) • If the portfolio is deemed incomplete, the liaison contacts the candidate and advisor to plan the actions needed for approval. • If denied, the chair of the PCRC prepares a report explaining the reasons for denial, with copies to the advisor and the NCRC. | |
| 17 | | <p>NCRC reviews materials and recommendation from PCRC. Approval of PCRC is accepted or modified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials that meet approval of the NCRC are forwarded to the ACC (Alliance Certification Commission). • Materials that need further modification are returned to the PCRC. |

| | | |
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| 18 | If materials are returned to the PCRC, Chair of PCRC must communicate the results/recommendations of the NCRC to the candidate. | |
| 19 | | AC renders final decisions based on the recommendations of the NCRC and sends written notice to candidates regarding their certification status. |
| 20 | | Initial certification, if granted, is for a period of seven years and is subject to renewal at the end of that time. |