

Policies & Procedures

Requirements for Continuing Formation

Priests and deacons under the age of 65 and assigned by the Archdiocese of Seattle to work within the Archdiocese are expected to complete at least 45 documented hours of continuing formation in the course of three years; priests and deacons over 65 are expected to complete 30 documented hours in the course of three years. Priests and deacons who have achieved senior status are exempt from the expectation but are encouraged to continue their continuing formation as a significant means of personal development. Since new assignments take effect on July 1st, a year is calculated from July 1st to June 30th.

Criteria for Continuing Formation

To qualify as continuing formation, a program or event should be public or accounted for publicly and should develop the priest's or deacon's personal and professional capacity for ministry. For that reason, spiritual direction and membership in fraternal associations like Jesu Caritas are strongly encouraged but do not qualify as continuing formation since they occur in the internal forum.

Participation in events which are part of one's pastoral duties – including prayer services and retreats with parish staff – do not qualify as continuing formation because, to be effective, continuing formation should occur, in the spirit of the Gospel, in a “place apart” – where there is the chance for refreshment and reflection outside the pressing context of the ministry.

However, study and research that result in a substantial project to use to a parish, such as a catechism or a new design for a youth program or a curriculum for RCIA are strongly encouraged and should be claimed as continuing formation.

Continuing Formation Units

Events or programs are assigned a certain number of continuing formation units (CFUs) as listed in “The Whetstone.” Courses taken for audit or for academic credit receive 5 CFUs with a maximum of 15 CFUs per year. Special seminars for clergy whether coordinated by the Archdiocese or self-directed receive 1 CFU for each hour that the seminar meets for a maximum of 5 CFUs. Half-day workshops receive 2 CFUs; full-day workshops receive 4 CFUs. Conventions/conferences receive a maximum of 5 CFUs. Self-directed study that results in a substantial project of use to a parish receives 5 CFUs.

The following projects/programs fulfill the continuing formation requirement for the year (15 CFUs): a language immersion program (at least two months); New Priest Program; and a sabbatical program.

Advisory Board

The Continuing Formation of Clergy Advisory Board is composed of priests, deacons and lay people with expertise in theology and education. Members of the Advisory Board, four of whom are appointed by the Archbishop and three of whom are elected by the presbyterate and diaconate community, usually in the spring, serve for staggered three-year terms. The Archbishop approves the programs and speakers proposed by the Continuing Formation of Clergy Advisory Board.

Recommendations for Speakers/Programs

Clergy are invited to suggest speakers or programs at any time to the Vicar for Clergy. A request for suggestions is also included in the priest's or deacon's annual personal report.

Continuing Formation Funds

All priests and deacons are entitled to a stipend for continuing formation, provided by the place of assignment, if they are assigned by the Archdiocese of Seattle to work within the Archdiocese on July 1st of any given year. Priests are entitled to \$700.00; deacons to \$500.00.

Use of Continuing Formation Funds

Continuing Formation Funds are provided to assist clergy in attaining the purposes of the continuing formation program. Therefore, funds may be used to purchase books or periodicals, to attend classes or professional conferences or workshops, which relate to ministerial responsibilities, or to travel abroad and to visit sites that relate to the study of the scriptures or to the history of the Church and its development.

Continuing Formation Funds should not be used to pay for the Annual Retreat for Priests, the Annual Retreat for Deacons, or for expenses associated with Priest Days, or the Deacon Convocation which are already paid for by the source of salary (priests)/place of assignment (deacons), or for workshops and seminars in which parish staff are expected to participate.

Finally, Continuing Formation Funds are not to be used for personal vacations or to purchase computer hardware. However, funds may be used to purchase software programs that support ministry.

Unused Balance

Unused funds may be claimed at any time for purposes relating to continuing formation, such as travel to conferences and sabbatical expenses, by contacting the Office of the Vicar for Clergy.

Priests- When the fiscal year ends (June 30th), any unused portion of the priest's Continuing Formation Funds will be remitted to the Office of the Vicar for Clergy to be deposited into a separate bank account. The maximum amount that may be

accumulated is \$3500.00 for each priest. A statement of the account balance will be provided to each priest by the Office of the Vicar for Clergy annually.

Deacons- When the fiscal year ends (June 30th), any unused portion of the deacon's Continuing Formation Funds will be remitted to the Office of the Vicar for Clergy to be deposited into a separate bank account. The maximum amount that may be accumulated is \$2500.00 for each deacon. A statement of the account balance will be provided to each deacon by the Office of the Vicar for Clergy annually.

Special Provisions and Appeals

At his discretion, the Archbishop may grant a priest or deacon extended time for study and renewal which shall not be considered either an administrative leave or sabbatical. The Archbishop will ask the Vicar for Clergy to assign an appropriate number of CFUs for the program he has authorized. The Advisory Board advises the Vicar for Clergy concerning all appeals to the policies of continuing formation.