



EXPLANATION OF PROGRAM AND POLICY FOR ELIGIBILITY

The Diocese recognizes the benefits derived from the continued education of parish Directors of Youth Ministry (DYMs), Directors of Religious Education (DREs), and other diocesan youth workers. The Diocese supports the additional effort and commitment of those employees wishing to increase their knowledge, skills, and abilities by enrolling in courses for academic credit outside of the workplace.

A long-standing collaborative partnership exists between the Catholic Diocese of Arlington (CDA) and Franciscan University of Steubenville (FUS). Through the Office of Youth, Campus, and Young Adult Ministries and in collaboration with FUS, the CDA provides a certificate in youth ministry. The certificate provides training and formation in the knowledge and skills necessary for effective youth ministry. In addition, the CDA has had a long tradition of participation in the Catechetics and Evangelization conferences offered for adults at FUS.

With the creation of the new Master of Arts in Catechetics and Evangelization (“MACE”) program at FUS, the CDA will now offer a new opportunity for DYMs, DREs, and other eligible Religious Education and campus ministry staff to work toward this Master’s degree. This will enrich ministry leaders in catechesis and evangelization and equip individuals with the means necessary to build up the Kingdom of God for the New Evangelization.

A fully online program, classes are taught by the same professors who teach on campus in Steubenville and the diploma received is identical to the one received on campus. The degree requires 36 credit hours (nine foundational courses and three electives). Classes are asynchronous which means there are no set times to be “in class” and students can log-in whenever it is convenient for them. The Program will consist of three classes per year (15 week sessions in the Fall, Spring, and Summer), requiring a total of four years to complete the Program. After completing the Master’s degree, the students are required to work for a parish, campus ministry, or CAO in the CDA for a period of 36 months.

Endowments created through the 2001 *Rooted in Faith ~ Forward in Hope* campaign exist to support the formation and training of religious education and youth ministry leaders. (Additional contributions to these endowments are welcomed to ensure their continued growth in the future.) With funds from these endowments, the CDA will pay for 95% of the tuition costs (approximately \$1425 per course) of the MACE degree for up to 20 parish DYMs, DREs, and other diocesan youth workers accepted into the Program. All additional actual and associated costs of the Program are the responsibility of the Employee, including but not limited to: application fees, course fees, books, supplies, materials, and transportation.

This Program is intended to be a qualified plan under IRS Code Section 127. The tuition paid to FUS for the Program is considered non-taxable educational assistance provided to the employee for the sake of improving employee skills. The Program must be taken on the employee's own time and not during regular working hours.

To be eligible for the Program, the following criteria must be met:

- a. The employee must be scheduled to work in youth ministry or religious education at least 20 hours per week on a regular basis. Employees who are classified as temporary, on-call or seasonal as well as those who regularly work fewer than 20 hours per week, and volunteers are not eligible for the Program.
- b. A one-year service requirement with the parish or Central Administrative Office (CAO) must be met prior to the start of the Program.
- c. The employee must have a satisfactory work and attendance record.

There are limited spots in the Program. Priority for acceptance into each cohort (of not more than 20 people) will, therefore, be based upon the following criteria:

- a. Pastor attestation to work and attendance record (Chaplain for Campus Ministry employees, Principal for High School employees)
- b. Seniority
- c. Number and type of leadership positions held within the Diocese
- d. Progress towards the CDA Youth Ministry Certificate, Master Catechist certification, and/or Advanced Catechetical certification
- e. Essay response

Employees enrolled in the Program must sign a legally binding agreement that they will make repayment of a portion of the tuition assistance they have received, in the event of:

- Voluntary withdrawal from the Program
- Voluntary resignation of employment at any time during the Program or within 36 months of Program completion (repayment will be prorated based on time in service after completion of the Program).
- Termination of employment for gross misconduct at any time during the Program or within 36 months of Program completion (repayment will be prorated based on time in service after completion of the Program).

The CDA will evaluate all Agreements prior to the start of each semester and may terminate Agreements at any time prior to the first day of any course. Termination of an Agreement will be automatic if Employee separates from employment with Diocese. Termination of an Agreement will be strongly considered if the employee no longer participates in diocesan programs, is no longer employed as a DYM, DRE, or equivalent ministry position, and/or if the parish or school program no longer follows the vision of youth ministry or religious education encouraged by the Diocese.

The CDA reserves the right to amend or discontinue this program at any time.



APPLICATION

Please complete this application and send with attachments to:

Catholic Diocese of Arlington
200 North Glebe Rd. Suite 540
Arlington, VA 22203

Or send via email with electronic attachments to: OYCYAM@arlingtondiocese.org

Name: _____

Home address: _____

Work e-mail: _____

Work phone number: _____

Cell phone number: _____

Parish/School: _____

Position: _____

Years Worked in Current Position: _____

Attach on separate pages:

1. Your employment history within the Catholic Diocese of Arlington (include start and end dates of employment). Also include any volunteer or leadership positions that you have held within your parish or Diocese.
2. A well-written essay (1-2 pages, single spaced). Please indicate why you would like to enroll in Franciscan University's MACE program in collaboration with the Catholic Diocese of Arlington. Please indicate how you see your education in the MACE program fitting into your long term goals for your ministry. In addition, please explain how you are certain that you are able to make a seven year commitment to this program (four years in the Program to attain the Master's degree and three years of service in the Diocese after completing the Program).
3. A signed letter from your Pastor recognizing your satisfactory work and attendance record, and his support of your participation in this Program (Chaplain for Campus Ministry employees, Principal for High School employees).