



National Certification for Lay Ecclesial Ministers

PROMOTING PROFESSIONAL, COMPETENT,
AND FAITHFUL MINISTRY

What Is Certification?

Certification is a credential you earn by demonstrating compliance with standards for professional competence. To “be certified” is a professional acknowledgement that you have met nationally recognized standards for competence in lay ecclesial ministry.

Certification is one part of a robust process of authorizing lay ecclesial ministers for ministry in the church. Certification is designed only to assess and acknowledge the competence of lay ecclesial ministers for a specific ministerial role, and should not be confused with any form of authorization for ministry, which is the province of the local bishop.

In describing certification, the United States’ bishops state: “Ensuring the quality of pastoral care provided by lay ecclesial ministers requires a process for deciding that a given candidate has the education, formation, and professional skills necessary to serve in a particular role. This involves establishing the requirements for education, formation, and experience for specific ministerial roles and evaluating the extent to which individuals meet these requirements.” (*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, USCCB, 2005, p. 39)

National Certification Provides . . .

National Certification provides:

- a chance for you to be affirmed and lifted up in your ministry and to have your ministry professionally acknowledged by an outside authority.
- an opportunity for you to affirm your commitment to ministry in the church. It also offers you a professional identity within your field and a connection with the national ministerial organization for your field.
- a professional credential that is portable to other dioceses around the country.
- an occasion for you to be an agent of change and contribute to the development and strengthening of your field.

Your participation in this process supports the building of a “culture of competence” in lay ecclesial ministry and helps to raise the bar for competent, faithful and professional ministry with the people of God.

Who Can Be Certified?

National certification is available to lay ecclesial ministers serving in the following roles:

- Director of Worship
- Parish Life Coordinator
- Pastoral Associate
- Director of Music Ministries
- Parish Catechetical Leader
- Youth Ministry Leader, including Pastoral Juvenil Hispana
- Diocesan Youth Ministry Leader, including Pastoral Juvenil Hispana



Who Grants Certification?

Certification for lay ecclesial ministers is granted by the Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers (The Alliance) which is a partnership of five national ministry organizations:

- Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions
- National Association for Lay Ministry
- National Association of Pastoral Musicians
- National Conference for Catechetical Leadership
- National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry

The USCCB Commission on Certification and Accreditation has recognized the work of the Alliance and approved the national certification standards and certification process.

It is important to note that certification is not the same as receiving a certificate. A certificate is a statement that a program or course of studies has been completed through attendance, participation, or fulfillment of requirements.

Three Steps to Certification

STEP 1: APPLY

Sign up for an online account, and submit your application materials and fee to the ministry organization that represents your ministry role.

STEP 2: PREPARE

After your application has been approved and you have been accepted as a candidate for certification, build your online ministry portfolio that documents how you meet the national certification standards.

STEP 3: SUBMIT

When your portfolio is complete, submit your materials for review. If approved by your national ministry organization and the Alliance, you will receive notification that you are certified!

For more information
Visit www.LEMCertification.org