

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

HIRING A RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LEADER

INTRODUCTION

STEP I: DEFINING THE POSITION

In this definition of the position it is important to describe how the position fulfills the goals and objectives of the parish. How does the parish describe its responsibility for the faith formation of its children and youth and what does the parish need in terms of personnel to meet that responsibility? The pastoral council, with the pastor, through its respective committees should assess this need regularly and with some objectivity. First use “Qualities ...” to review the areas that are identified by the American Bishops as important for the person who leads a religious education program. Then complete the the “Needs Assessment Form” to help develop a profile of the person suitable for the parish.

STEP II: TITLE

Using the Diocesan criteria for titles select the title that best matches the position as defined by the parish. This is dependent on the responsibilities, competencies and qualifications required of the person for the position. Definitions for the various titles can be found at: http://www.eriercd.org/re_fourlevels.html

STEP III: CONFIGURE THE DIOCESAN JOB DESCRIPTION AND PROFESSIONAL AGREEMENT

The diocesan Professional Agreement process is designed to allow the parish to modify the Agreement to meet it’s particular requirements. It is the responsibility of a parish personnel committee or the appropriate parish council committee to configure the job description and Professional Agreement in concert with the Pastor. The Professional Agreement recommended by the Diocese can be found at: http://www.eriercd.org/re_agreement.html

STEP IV: SEARCH AND SELECTION

An ad hoc search committee is established to identify a core of suitable candidates for the position.

If the parish is interested, a member of the diocesan Religious Education Office staff would be willing to serve as a member of the committee or serve as a consultant to the committee.

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STEP IV: SEARCH AND SELECTION, CONT'D

The responsibilities of the search committee include:

- developing a reasonable timeline for the hiring process
- advertising locally and nationally for candidates
- screening each candidate who applies for the position
- submitting appropriate candidates for interviews to the pastor, Christian formation committees or personnel committee.



An ad should request a current resume and a list of three references from applicants. It should also specify to whom they are to be sent and the deadline for their arrival. See the “Anatomy of an Ad” in the “Job Posting and Advertising” resources in Policy 201 to help craft an ad to advertise the position.

The search committee should acknowledge in writing each candidate who has applied for the position. To acknowledge each resume is an important courtesy to people who are in transition.

STEP V: INTERVIEW PROCESS

Develop a realistic interview format (see “Interview Helps / Legal Guidelines” resources in Policy 201) with a reasonable number of interviewers. Schedule each interview for a short time frame (approximately 45 minutes). Try to hold all of the interviews within a day or two of each other so the interviewers can realistically compare candidates. Be sure to review the information concerning reference checking in “Reference Checking” resources in Policy 201.

The interview is a two-way process that exposes the strengths and limitations of both employer and perspective employee. Interviewers should prepare for an interview by studying the job description and by preparing relevant questions pertaining to the position and the parish. The pastor is encouraged to be actively involved in the interview process. It is strongly suggested that search committee members be involved in the interview process

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STEP VI: NEGOTIATIONS

Prior to offering a position the pastor should personally call the references of the candidate recommended by the interview committee.

It is also essential that prior to offering the position the candidate be informed of the necessity of producing or procuring PA State Police and DPW child abuse clearances and completing an Application. If the candidate is coming from outside the State of PA an FBI clearance should be requested. If the position is offered prior to seeing these clearances it should be noted **in writing** that if the clearances are not produced by a specific deadline or fails that the Professional Agreement is null and void. (see Personnel File Contents in Policy 205)

Once a pastor offers a position to an individual, negotiation of the terms of the professional agreement (including salary, benefits, working conditions, evaluation and assessment process) should commence promptly. A written Professional Agreement including a job description should be completed under mutual agreement. Also to be taken into consideration at this time: appropriate starting date, location of office within parish grounds, the program budget, meeting key religious education personnel, etc.

Once the candidate and pastor come to agreement on all the issues within the Professional Agreement, the candidate and pastor sign the Agreement and are given copies.

All other interviewees should be informed the same day that the position has been filled. This contact should be by phone, if possible, with a letter following. This is an important courtesy that enables the parish to maintain a positive relationship with those who were not chosen. This is significant in the event the first choice changes their mind and the parish must go back to the second choice and offer the position. The reason for not choosing a candidate should be given in the following manner: "a candidate that more closely meets our needs at this time has been found."

STEP VII: PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

How the job will be evaluated, who will conduct the evaluation, and when it will occur needs to be outlined and explained at the time of hiring. See Policy 233 for details and resources.