

ARCHDIOCESE

Annual Report from the Archdiocese of Washington's Child Protection Advisory Board

For July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019



Archdiocese of
Washington

CHILD PROTECTION & SAFE ENVIRONMENT

(The following is the text of the annual report from the Archdiocese of Washington's Child Protection Advisory Board for July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019.)

The Archdiocese of Washington's Child Protection & Safe Environment Office continues to expand its mission to create and implement effective programs and initiatives to educate and empower community members on the issues of child protection and safe environment. The office's priority is to provide the most current information to ensure and promote the safety and well-being of all community members while in the presence of the Catholic faith. Some important aspects of the office:

- The Archdiocese of Washington has had a written Child Protection Policy for more than 30 years.
- The Office of Child Protection & Safe Environment handles both allegations and reports of child abuse as well as adult misconduct.
- The Archdiocese of Washington's Child Protection & Safe Environment Office continues to conduct thorough criminal background checks on individuals who have contact with children.
- All employees, religious, and volunteers who have contact with children in the Archdiocese of Washington are required to complete a safe environment training session.
- The Archdiocese of Washington

provides important and current information pertaining to the Child Protection & Safe Environment Policy, as well as best practices online at www.adw.org.

One of the most valuable resources in the Archdiocese of Washington is its Advisory Board of lay experts. The board consists of one victim-survivor, a retired chief of police, and experts in child sexual abuse, trauma, and sexual assault. The board actively monitors the archdiocese's outreach and compliance with the Child Protection & Safe Environment Policy. This highly involved board consults with the Child Protection & Safe Environment Office regularly to offer expertise and recommendations as well as guidance to critical reports made to the office.

In addition, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) audits the Archdiocese of Washington on its compliance with the U.S. Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. The auditors from a third-party independent company conduct interviews with archdiocesan staff and review records of safe environment practices, background checks, compliance monitoring, reporting abuse, adult misconduct, and healing. This audit year was on-site and involved an extremely thorough review of all past records of compliance, background checks, and reports of abuse. The archdiocese has been in full compliance with the audit every year, including this reporting year of 2018-2019.

There are three essential components of the Child Protection & Safe Environment Policy: accountability, transparency, and independence. Every year, the Executive

Director of Child Protection & Safe Environment compiles a report for the Vicar General of the Archdiocese to present to the Child Protection Advisory Board. The Advisory Board reviews the report, recommends modifications if needed, and approves the report. The final report is widely shared with media outlets and published on the archdiocese's website.

EDUCATION

The Archdiocese of Washington embraces its opportunity to teach community members the importance of keeping children safe and protected in all environments whether at home, school, religious institutions, and communities. The Child Protection & Safe Environment Policy mandates child-abuse awareness and prevention education for all adults who have contact with children or vulnerable adults, as well as age-appropriate safe-environment education for all young people. It is vital that all adults are well trained so they are equipped to identify signs and symptoms of possible abuse, neglect, or assault.

Adult Education. *Protecting God's Children* is the safe environment training program implemented by the Archdiocese of Washington. The program is nationally recognized and was developed by the National Catholic Risk Retention Group/Virtus. Twenty Virtus-trained facilitators, including several bilingual in English and Spanish, led this year's training sessions. Between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019:

- 82 *Protecting God's Children* training sessions, including 11 sessions in Spanish, were held at various locations

throughout the archdiocese.

- 3,819 individuals, including volunteers, new employees, religious, seminarians, and clergy were trained.

Child Education. The archdiocese, under the direction of the Superintendent of Schools and the Director of Catechesis, continued to provide safe-environment education for the children in archdiocesan Catholic schools and parish religious education programs. The Catholic Schools Office and the Office of Catechesis used materials developed by Virtus, the same company that provides the adult materials. For the 2018-2019 school year:

- 14,678 Catholic school students and 23,569 children in parish religious education programs received safe environment education.

FINGERPRINTING AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

The Archdiocese of Washington recognizes that background checks are a crucial element in ensuring the safety of children and helping to protect them from the inappropriate actions or behaviors of others. All clergy, religious, seminarians, employees, and volunteers who will have contact with minors while working or volunteering are required to undergo state and federal criminal history record checks before they begin working or volunteering with minors.

Since 2002, fingerprinting has been done through state-of-the-art scanning using LiveScan equipment at two archdiocesan

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locations. All fingerprints are sent to the State and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for review and alerts are sent to the Archdiocese of Washington:

- 1,241 employees, religious, seminarians and clergy were fingerprinted.
- 3,935 electronic background checks were conducted on clergy, religious, employees, seminarians, and volunteers including: federal, state, district federal, and county record checks.
- Re-checks were performed on a monthly basis.

Effective July 1, 2019, the archdiocese requires all volunteers, employees, clergy, religious, and seminarians who have contact with children to be fingerprinted.

CHILD-ABUSE ALLEGATIONS

The Archdiocese of Washington works with law enforcement and civil authorities to protect children by preventing child abuse and neglect, reporting alleged incidents of abuse or neglect, cooperating in investigations of allegations, as well as advising victims of their right to report independently and supporting their exercise of that right. Archdiocesan policy requires all archdiocesan personnel and volunteers to report any suspected abuse to civil

authorities. Reporting requirements, both civil and internal, are described in the Archdiocese of Washington's Child Protection & Safe Environment Policy, which is available as a handbook and online at www.adw.org.

The Office of Child Protection and Safe Environment works within the community reporting obligations, as well as to offer guidance on navigating the reporting process. Staff can be contacted by telephone, email or fax, 24 hours a day, to receive allegations of current or past-suspected abuse, and to report such allegations to civil authorities. Between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019:

• Allegations against archdiocesan clergy in this reporting period:

The Archdiocese of Washington's Child Protection & Safe Environment office received 15 allegations of sexual abuse during the 2018-2019 audit year. There were 14 reports of historic child sexual abuse and one report involving a current allegation of child sexual abuse. In August 2019, Father Urbano Vasquez was found guilty of child sexual abuse and is serving jail time for his crime. All allegations were immediately reported to law enforcement and therapeutic support was offered to all survivors and victims.

• Allegations against lay employees, contract workers and others in this reporting period:

There were no allegations of sexual abuse made against any lay employees, contract workers or vendors during this year.

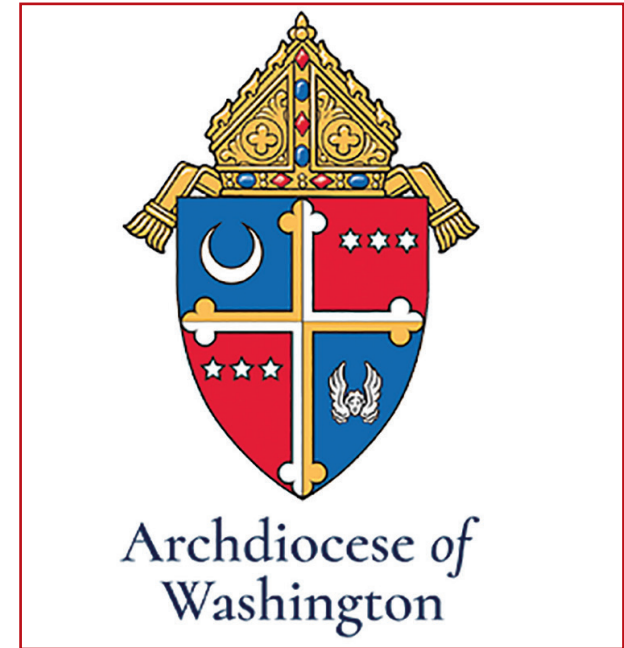
FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR CHILD PROTECTION

Between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019, the Archdiocese of Washington invested \$316,072 in child protection efforts. This included implementing the child protection policy and providing appropriate resources to community members pertaining to this essential initiative. Additionally, this amount included salaries and benefits for the Office of Child Protection & Safe Environment and the Office of Employee and Volunteer Services, materials, training stipends, fingerprinting and other equipment purchases and maintenance, and professional fees for the training program. An additional \$57,340 was allocated towards therapeutic services and other assistance for victims and survivors.

To ensure that all clergy, religious, seminarians, employees, and volunteers who have contact with children and vulnerable adults are compliant with archdiocesan child protection and safe environment requirements, the archdiocese requires each parish and school designate a child protection compliance coordinator. The coordinator maintains compliance records for the parish/school location so only those who are fully compliant may work or volunteer with children and vulnerable. Coordinators have immediate online access to compliance information for their location. Child Protection Coordinators are managed and supported by the Office of Child Protection & Safe Environment.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Archdiocese of Washington's website contains information about the policies and procedures outlined in the Child Protection & Safe Environment Policy. Child Protection information continues to be available through the archdiocesan newspapers, church bulletins, priest/parish/school newsletters, as well as on parish websites. The Office of Child Protection & Safe Environment's online supplemental training series "Focus on the Child" continues to be a valuable training resource for community members. This seven-video safe environment training resource provides fundamental information that educates and empowers the broader community. Because of its easy online access, anyone can learn about identifying signs



and symptoms of child abuse and how to report suspected abuse to civil authorities. A top priority for the Office of Child Protection & Safe Environment is to provide vital information on child safety to the broader community regardless of religious affiliation.

On the archdiocesan website under the Child Protection tab, several resources are available, including parent resources about the Archdiocesan Child Protection & Safe Environment Policy, safety tips for parents, as well as information about internet safety, cyber bullying, sexting, a "kid's guide" to bullying, and healthy teen relationships. The archdiocesan website also includes other important resources to help protect children and provide guidance on creating and maintaining safe environments.

CONCLUSION AND DIRECTION FOR THE FUTURE

The Office of Child Protection and Safe Environment continues to focus on educating the community on the practices and protocols of Archdiocese of Washington's Child Protection & Safe Environment Policy. Additionally, the office constantly works to offer support and guidance to survivors and victims who seek healing and empowerment. Team members continually work with parishes and schools to implement the strict application of the policy. In order to better serve the Archdiocese of Washington's community, the structure of the office was expanded to include the intake of allegations of adult misconduct or assault of those in archdiocesan ministry, including Bishops. The Office of Child Protection and Safe Environment's top priority is the safety and well-being of all members of the Archdiocese of Washington.

NATIONAL AUDIT

As stated previously, for this reporting period of 2018-2019, the Archdiocese of Washington was once again found in compliance with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, enacted by the U.S. bishops in 2002. The Archdiocese has been found in compliance every year since the audits were initiated.

Members of the Child Protection Advisory Board:

- Eileen Dombo, Ph.D., LICSW, Chair
- Rev. Msgr. William English
- Anne Hoffman, LCSW-C
 - J. Thomas Manger
 - Michael Nugent