



The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington

Archdiocesan Pastoral Center: 5001 Eastern Avenue, Hyattsville, MD 20782-3447

Mailing Address: Post Office Box 29260, Washington, DC 20017-0260

(301) 853-4500 | adw.org

Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington's Safe Environment Program Annual Report July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington (Archdiocese of Washington) is committed to maintaining a comprehensive and effective program to ensure a safe environment for the protection of all minors and vulnerable adults entrusted to our care. The Archdiocese of Washington continued to abide by that commitment in the 2024-2025 audit year. This report explains the key aspects of the Archdiocese of Washington's safe environment program (which includes extensive training, background checks, and mandatory reporting), provides data related to our compliance efforts, and discloses other important information about our efforts to maintain accountability and transparency with our faith communities and the public.

1) Key Aspects of the Archdiocese of Washington's Safe Environment Program

- In December 2024, the revised policy, *Safe Environment Policy for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults* ("Policy") was published in English and in Spanish on the ADW's website and distributed to all of our parishes, schools, and ministries. While the Policy was updated to clarify terminology, streamline information improve processes, and offer additional guidance, the key substantive requirements of the Policy remained unchanged. The Policy continues to require training and background checks, mandates reporting of all allegations of sexual abuse, prescribes a clear process for the prompt and fair handling of allegations, and reinforces our commitment to provide pastoral care to survivors and their families. This Policy and other important information and resources about the Archdiocese's safe environment program are published online at www.adw.org.
- The Archdiocese of Washington also maintains a Pastoral Code of Conduct that provides supplemental guidance for its clergy, seminarians, volunteers, and employees.
- Clergy, principals, directors of religious education, and other lay leaders were trained on the new Policy in several sessions held throughout the year.
- Child Protection and Safe Environment Coordinators from parishes and schools participated in a live training workshop pertaining to their jobs and how best to ensure compliance of the Policy.

- The Archdiocese of Washington maintains a dedicated Office of Victim Assistance staffed by a Victim Assistance Coordinator whose duties involve providing support to survivors and their families by arranging for counseling and other pastoral support.
- The Archdiocese of Washington continues to collaborate with an advisory board comprised primarily of subject matter experts who are not employed by the Church.
- The Archdiocese of Washington cooperates with law enforcement and other civil authorities to protect children through its abuse prevention efforts, by mandating reporting all alleged incidents of abuse or neglect, by cooperating in investigations of allegations, and by advising victims of their right to report independently and supporting their exercise of that right.
- The Archdiocese of Washington's compliance with the requirements set forth by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is audited annually by a third-party auditing firm. This annual report gathers the data provided in conjunction with the audit, is reviewed with the Advisory Board, and published on the Archdiocese of Washington's website.

2) Data Related to the Archdiocese of Washington's Compliance Efforts

- 28,417 Catholic school students and children in parish religious education programs received safe environment education. Both Circle of Grace and Empowering God's Children are age-appropriate training for our youth, is our source for educating on the importance of keeping children safe and protected in all environments – at homes, schools, religious institutions, and communities.
- 3,522 adults (clergy, seminarians, religious, volunteers, and employees) working with minors or vulnerable adults are appropriately trained using Protecting God's Children safe environment training program. All volunteers and employees who work with minors or vulnerable adults are required to be compliant with the Policy.
- 3,335 (clergy, seminarians, religious, volunteers, and employees) who may 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. The Archdiocese utilizes a fingerprinting background check, and results are processed through State and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) databases. The Archdiocese is notified of any updates through system alerts that are promptly sent to the Archdiocese's Office of Safe Environment for review. All individuals who are fingerprinted remain in the FBI database for continual monitoring, and the Archdiocese receives alerts of any record of criminal activity.
- 815 electronic background checks were conducted on new clergy, religious, employees, seminarians, and volunteers, including federal, state, district federal, and county record checks.

3) Archdiocese of Washington's Commitment to Accountability and Transparency

A) Allegations of sexual abuse of a minor made against Archdiocesan clergy between July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025.

In 2023, the State of Maryland enacted the Child Victims Act (CVA), which eliminated the statutory time limits applicable to claims arising from allegations of sexual abuse of a minor and revived any claims that had expired under the prior statute of limitations. As a result, there have been more than ten thousand lawsuits filed across the State of Maryland against various public and private entities, including government agencies, public school systems, private schools, churches, and other public and private entities.

During the 2024-2025 audit year, the Archdiocese of Washington received 89 new historical allegations of sexual abuse made against Archdiocesan clergy and clergy serving within the Archdiocese, and 85 of these allegations were brought in CVA lawsuits. None of the reports involved allegations of ongoing abuse, and none of the lawsuits involved alleged abuse within the past 20 years. Below is additional data on the status of the accused clergy members:¹

- Allegations made against unknown clergy members (or who could not be identified based upon the allegations made in the lawsuit): 15
- Allegations made against clergy members who are deceased or permanently removed from ministry: 66
- Allegations made against religious order clergy or clergy from other dioceses: 10
- Allegations made against Archdiocesan clergy members who are living and in active ministry: 3

In accordance with Archdiocesan policy, each of the allegations made in these lawsuits were promptly reported to law enforcement and therapeutic support was offered to the survivor. The Archdiocese provides this pastoral support apart from the legal process through its Office of Victim Assistance (which is not involved in the vetting or resolution of legal claims or lawsuits).

In responding to the three allegations involving clergy in active ministry, the Archdiocese cooperated with law enforcement and deferred to the civil authorities to investigate before undertaking its own review of the allegations. To date, law enforcement has not brought criminal charges arising from any of these three allegations. The Archdiocese has also undertaken its own investigation of the three allegations under Canon Law, a process which includes a thorough review and consultation with the Archdiocese's Advisory Board. The historical allegations against two of the accused clergy members were found to be without any semblance of truth, and thus the two accused priests are presently in active ministry. A third allegation made against a retired clergy member remains under review, and the clergy member remains out of active ministry pending the outcome of this process.

B) Allegations of sexual abuse of a minor made against Archdiocesan religious and lay employees and volunteers between July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025.

During the 2024 - 2025 audit year, the Archdiocese received 12 new allegations of historical

¹ The total number of accused clergy is higher than the total number of allegations because certain allegations were made against multiple clergy members.

sexual abuse made against religious and lay employees and volunteers of the Archdiocese. All 12 of these allegations were brought in CVA lawsuits. None of the reports involved allegations of ongoing abuse or alleged abuse within the past 20 years, and none of the accused are current employees or volunteers.

C) Financial resources devoted to the Archdiocese of Washington’s Safe Environment Program.

Between July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025, the Archdiocese devoted \$281,975 to support its safe environment program. This includes the financial support necessary to implement the Policy, including salaries and benefits for the Office of Safe Environment, the cost of materials, fingerprinting costs, and other equipment purchases and maintenance, and professional fees for the training program. The Archdiocese also paid \$66,742 to cover the cost of therapeutic services and other assistance for victims and survivors and paid \$96,350 in settlements to survivors of sexual abuse.

To ensure that all clergy, religious, seminarians, employees, and volunteers who have contact with minors and vulnerable adults in our parishes are compliant with the Policy, the Archdiocese also requires that each parish and school designate a child protection compliance coordinator. The coordinator is responsible for assisting the pastor in maintaining the records for the parish/school location to ensure volunteers and lay employees are in compliance. Coordinators have immediate online access to compliance information for their location as well as support from the Office of Human Resources and Safe Environment Team.

D) Archdiocese of Washington’s annual participation in a comprehensive national audit.

The Archdiocese of Washington once again participated in an annual data gathering process and on-site audit performed by Stonebridge Business Partners, the firm retained by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to audit the safe environment programs of dioceses and archdioceses across the nation. This year’s audit, which was completed between May and August 2025, included the verification of compliance data submitted by the Archdiocese of Washington, as well as an in-person component that consisted of an extensive review of supporting compliance records, the review of policy materials, and interviews with key clergy, staff, and lay leadership from the Central Pastoral Administration and from randomly selected parishes. The Archdiocese of Washington has been in full compliance with the audit every year since it began, including the 2024-2025 audit year.

E) Communications.

The Archdiocese of Washington updated its website to reflect the changes to the Policy and to provide guidance for parishes, schools, ministries, and the public. The Policy and accompanying materials are published both in English and Spanish and can be found on the Archdiocese of Washington’s website, www.adw.org. Every year, The Archdiocese also shares information about its safe environment efforts through archdiocesan newspapers (in English and Spanish), archdiocesan and parish social media, church bulletins, priest/parish/school newsletters, other updates to clergy and personnel, as well as on parish websites. This includes publishing this Annual Report in English and Spanish in the *Catholic Standard* and *El Pregonero* as well as the archdiocesan website, www.adw.org.

F) Archdiocese of Washington's Safe Environment Advisory Board.

The Archdiocese of Washington maintains an Advisory Board comprised of a majority of lay persons not employed by the Archdiocese who are experts in relevant fields, including psychology, social work, counseling, law, and law enforcement. The board also includes an experienced pastor. This committed group of experts meets regularly with the Archbishop and key staff to provide valuable input regarding the Archdiocese's policies and safe environment practices, and the Advisory Board also provides advice to the Archbishop to assist in his assessment of specific allegations of sexual abuse of minors or vulnerable adults made against clergy in accordance with Canon Law, the U.S. Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (Charter)*, and the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies for Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons (Essential Norms)*.

Members of the Child Protection & Safe Environment Advisory Board in 2024-2025:

- Chief J. Thomas Manger, Chair
- The Honorable Kyle Duncan
- Rev. William Gurnee
- Michael Nugent
- Deacon Joe Petrizzo, LCSW
- The Honorable Karla Smith
- Jessie Tappel, LPC, LCPC, ACS
- Josue Zelaya