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Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington's Safe Environment Program Annual Report July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

The Roman Catholic 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 2025-26 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

- The bishops of the United States agreed upon a *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* ("Charter"), which was published in 2002 and revised periodically, most recently in June 2026.

- The Archdiocese of Washington has maintained written safe environment policies for over forty years, and the Archdiocese has implemented the requirements of the Charter with a policy that was first published in 2002 and was most recently updated in December 2024. The Archdiocese's *Safe Environment Policy for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults* ("Policy") is published in English and in Spanish on www.adw.org, and it has been distributed to all Archdiocesan parishes, schools, and ministries. The Policy requires training and background checks for clergy, seminarians, employees, and volunteers; mandates reporting of all allegations of sexual abuse; prescribes a clear process for the prompt and fair handling of allegations; reinforces our commitment to provide pastoral care to survivors and their families; and ensures ongoing transparency and accountability related to the Archdiocese's safe environment efforts.

- The Archdiocese maintains a Pastoral Code of Conduct that provides supplemental guidance for its clergy, seminarians, volunteers, and employees. The Code of Conduct was first promulgated in 2016, and an updated version was published in the fall of 2026.

- Each parish has a designated Safe Environment Coordinator who assists the pastor in ensuring compliance with the Policy. The Archdiocese provides coordinators with ongoing training and assistance.

- The Archdiocese 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 continues to collaborate with an advisory board comprised primarily of subject matter experts who are not employed by the Church.

- The Archdiocese utilizes a robust background check process for clergy, seminarians, employees, and volunteers, and it provides training on abuse prevention.

- The Archdiocese provides age-appropriate safe environment education for young people enrolled in archdiocesan schools and religious education programs.

- The Archdiocese cooperates with law enforcement and other civil authorities to protect children through its abuse prevention efforts, by mandating reporting of all alleged incidents of abuse or neglect, by cooperating in investigations of allegations, and by advising victims of their right to make a report directly to the authorities and supporting their exercise of that right.

- The Archdiocese remains in compliance with the requirements set forth by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). To ensure its ongoing compliance, the Archdiocese is audited annually by Stonebridge Business Partners, the firm retained by the USCCB to audit the safe environment programs of dioceses and archdioceses across the nation.

- The Archdiocese publishes this annual report, which summarizes the data provided in conjunction with the annual audit and shares other important information about the Archdiocese's safe environment program. Each year, the Archdiocese reviews the data contained in this report with its Advisory Board as part of its ongoing efforts to ensure the efficacy of its safe environment program. This report is published on the Archdiocese of Washington's website in both English and Spanish along with prior reports spanning more than two decades.

2) Data Related to the Archdiocese of Washington's Compliance Program for the 2025-26 Audit Year.

- 30,376 Catholic school students and children in parish religious education programs received safe environment education. The Archdiocese utilizes *Circle of Grace* and *Empowering God's Children*, both of which provide age-appropriate education to empower young people to actively participate in a safe environment for themselves and others.

- 3,168 adults (including clergy, seminarians, employees, and volunteers) received safe environment training. The Archdiocese trains adults using the *Protecting God's Children* program provided by Virtus. All clergy and seminarians, and all volunteers and employees who work with minors or vulnerable adults, are required to receive this training.

- The Archdiocese requires all clergy and seminarians, and all employees and volunteers who work with minors or vulnerable adults, to undergo state and federal criminal history checks before they begin their service with minors. The Archdiocese utilizes a two-pronged process for background checks: (i) All clergy and seminarians, as well as all employees and volunteers who work with minors and vulnerable adults, undergo a fingerprinting background check that is processed through state and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) databases; and (ii) All clergy and seminarians, as well as all employees who work with minors or vulnerable adults, also undergo a comprehensive electronic background check, which searches additional state and federal databases. This process includes continual monitoring to ensure that the Archdiocese is promptly notified of any system alerts.

  In the 2025-26 audit year:

  - 3,355 adults completed the FBI fingerprinting background check; and
  - 808 adults completed the additional electronic background check.

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, 2025 – June 30, 2026.

During the 2025-26 audit year, the Archdiocese received two new historical allegations of sexual abuse against a deceased priest related to conduct alleged to have occurred over forty years ago. In accordance with Archdiocesan policy, every clergy allegation is promptly reported to law enforcement, and therapeutic support is offered to the survivor. The Archdiocese provides this pastoral support apart from the legal process through its Office of Victim Assistance.

In addition, the Archdiocese completed its investigation of the remaining allegation involving a priest in active ministry that was still pending when the 2024-25 Annual Report was published. The Archdiocese had been investigating an allegation made against a retired priest in active ministry in another diocese who had been the subject of a lawsuit alleging sexual abuse of a minor in the early 1980s when the priest was serving in the Archdiocese of Washington. In accordance with its Policy, the Archdiocese reported this allegation to law enforcement and cooperated with the civil authorities, which declined to bring any criminal charges. The Archdiocese subsequently completed its own process under Canon Law, which entailed a thorough investigation of the allegations and a review of the available evidence in consultation with the Archdiocese's Advisory Board. At the conclusion of this process, and in accord with the advice of the Advisory Board, the Archdiocese determined that there was insufficient evidence to support the allegation.

B) Allegations of sexual abuse of a minor made against Archdiocesan religious and lay employees and volunteers between July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026.

During the 2025-26 audit year, the Archdiocese received one new allegation of historical sexual abuse made against a deceased lay employee of the Archdiocese related to conduct alleged to have occurred over fifty years ago. In accordance with Archdiocesan policy, every allegation involving an employee or volunteer of the Archdiocese is promptly reported to law enforcement, and therapeutic support is offered to the survivor. The Archdiocese provides this pastoral support apart

from the legal process through its Office of Victim Assistance.

C) Financial resources devoted to the Archdiocese of Washington's Safe Environment Program between July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026.

During the 2025-26 audit year, the Archdiocese devoted $281,932 in furtherance of its safe environment program. This includes the financial support necessary to implement the Policy, including salaries and benefits for the Office of Safe Environment and the Office of Victim Assistance, and the cost of training programs, materials, background checks, professional fees, equipment, and other costs associated with its safe environment program. In addition, during the 2025-26 audit year, the Archdiocese paid $157,209 for therapeutic services and other pastoral assistance for victims and survivors.

Each parish also devotes additional financial resources to meet the requirements of the Policy, including costs for background checks, salaries, benefits, and expenses for its dedicated compliance coordinator, and other costs to ensure compliance with the Policy.

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

During the 2025-26 audit year, the Archdiocese of Washington once again participated in the annual data gathering process administered by Stonebridge Business Partners, the firm retained by the USCCB to audit the safe environment programs of dioceses and archdioceses across the nation. The Archdiocese fully and timely responded with all the data requested by Stonebridge to remain in compliance with its obligation under the Charter.

E) Communications.

During the 2025-26 audit year, the Archdiocese of Washington maintained a website that publishes the Policy and 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. Each 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. The Archdiocese also publishes 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.

During the 2025-26 audit year, the Archdiocese of Washington continued to collaborate with its Advisory Board, which is comprised of a majority of lay people 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 2025-26:

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