

PASTORAL ASSOCIATE FOR LEADERSHIP FORMATION PROGRAM 2025-2026 General Information

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Sts. Aquila and Pricilla (l) and Lydia (r)
Pastoral associates of the Apostolic Church, but without the formal title

Formation Overview

The Pastoral Associate For Leadership Formation Program enables participants to develop knowledge and skills for a collaborative role with a pastor in the administrative, operational and pastoral needs of a parish or parish network. The program involves an eight-month series that starts on October 8th and ends with closing Mass and celebration in May. Ten learning modules are included along with special gatherings, a practicum experience, and an optional overnight retreat.

Special gatherings and learning modules are presented on Wednesday evenings at the Pastoral Center, except in January and February, when modules are presented online via Microsoft Teams. During other months, a hybrid option is offered via Microsoft Teams for those living a distance from the Pastoral Center or with other significant needs.

Due to the collaborative effort of diocesan staff and several parish leaders, lectures, gatherings and handouts are offered without charge, but participants will be responsible for obtaining some reading materials. Upon successful completion of the program, participants will receive a certificate of recognition from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany.

Program Calendar

Our full calendar is available at:

<https://www.rcda.org/offices/office-discipleship-formation/pastoral-associate-leadership-formation-program> .

Entrance Requirements

Program entrance requirements are intended to promote successful completion of the program. Some credentials are preferred or optional and could be useful in consideration of the participant's vocational goals and the needs of a specific parish or parish network. Keep in mind that successful completion of this program does not guarantee a job with a diocesan entity, but it does provide a diocesan credential for obtaining one.

Required participant attributes:

1. Three recommendations showing leadership ability and commitment to the people, Church teaching and synodality (that is, a participatory and co-responsible Church). One recommendation is from your home or work pastor (or Parish Life Coordinator) and two are from a peer or friend who knows your talents. All references must be non-family members.
2. Full communion with the Roman Catholic Church.
3. Safe Environment credentials or the ability to obtain them. These credentials are required for employment within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany.
4. Parish or transferrable secular office experience.
5. Medium-level Microsoft Office application skills and access to the internet.

Preferred and optional participants attributes:

1. *Preferred:* College degree
2. *Optional:* Advanced education in business, theology or both; acquaintance with Parish Data Systems (PDS)

Application and references must be received by September 30 be considered for the 2025-2026 program. Forms are available on the RCDA website: Office for Discipleship Formation → Pastoral Associate for Leadership Formation, or by request to: PAFormation@rcda.org; (518) 453-6670.

Learning Modules

Learning modules consist of one or two Wednesday evening presentations at 6:00-8:00pm.

FALL 2025 LEARNING MODULES

1. Church: ReMade for Mission
2. Leadership for Mission/Discernment
3. Human Resources

SPRING 2026 LEARNING MODULES

4. Finance Part 1: Budgeting for Mission
Finance Part 2: Financial Reporting
5. Canon Law
6. Grace in the Numbers: Data & Demographics
7. Real Property
8. Stewardship
9. Insurance
10. Co-Responsibility

Practicum (Spring Semester)

Participants will spend time in a parish or other pastoral setting under the guidance of an appropriate mentor, based on participants' goals from the experience. Alternative venues will be arranged for those with weekday scheduling conflicts or other needs. Toward the end of the program, participants will share their experience with the group.

Absentee Policy

Given the energetic pace of the program, participants are expected to attend all class sessions and special events. Please arrive on time and plan to stay for the entire class. If you are sick, and feel well enough, you may join presentations via **Microsoft Teams**. However, special events are in-person only.

Absences should be reserved for seriously limiting reasons. Contact a **program staff member** in advance or as soon as possible to report an absence. We will arrange a make-up alternative which will likely involve viewing a recorded presentation.

Suggested Reading List

A Concise Guide to Canon Law; A Practical Handbook for Pastoral Ministers (2000), Kevin E. McKenna
Best Practices for Parish Stewardship (2008), Charles E. Zech
Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (2002), USCC
Church Money (2019), Fr. Michael White and Tom Corcoran
Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium, 2013), Pope Francis
Redeeming Administration (2013), Ann M. Garrido
Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest (Rev. Ed. 2012), USCCB
What Makes Us Catholic - Eight Gifts for Life (2002), Thomas H. Groom

Contact Information

For more information, please go to our webpage noted on page 1 and 2 or contact Erin Muir at: PAFormation@rcda.org; (518) 453-6670.