

## Application and Selection Process

**Pre-requisites:** A solid catechetical foundation is an integral part of diaconal formation. A pastor will need to indicate in his letter of support that he feels his applicant is serious about the theological study that will be required and a commitment to the spiritual growth necessary.

**Levels of Admission:** It is important to understand that diaconal formation involves four stages: Inquirer, Applicant, and Aspirant, and Candidate.

- **Inquirer**—Recommended by Pastor—no obligation or commitment
- **Applicant**—Submitted an application—commitment to prayer, reading and discernment—Application is reviewed
- **Aspirant**—Application accepted as complete – Aspirant is evaluated by psychological, background, marriage evaluations
- **Candidate**—Formal Diaconal formation with advanced theological studies

**Inquirer:** Is an individual who has met with, written to, telephoned or otherwise communicated with an official of the Office of the Diaconate indicating a serious interest in exploring admission to the diaconate; and/or an individual nominated by his pastor. Individuals are verbally quick screened for such eligibility factors as age, marital status, residence, and ministry experience. Inquirers who have received a recommendation from their pastor will be interviewed (with their family) and receive assistance in completing the application. Formation meetings begin in the fall (of odd-numbered years).

The inquirer who seeks consideration for ordination to the diaconate needs to enter into dialogue with his parish community. It is the pastor who initially presents him for consideration into diaconal formation through a letter that confirms he is a practicing Catholic of good repute and in good standing.

**Applicant:** Is an individual who has completed and filed the forms for admission to the diaconate and has been notified in writing that the admission packet has been received. Applications are generally accepted only during the months of March through July, every odd year, unless a special arrangement has been made with the Diaconate Office. The notification of acceptance as an official applicant comes from the Formation Office.

## General Criteria for Deacon Applicants

*“...deacons must be respectable men whose word can be trusted, moderate in the amount of wine they drink and with no squalid greed for money. They must be conscientious believers in the mystery of faith. They are to be examined first, and only admitted to serve as deacons if there is nothing against them...” I Tim. 3:8-12*

The applicant for the Diaconate in the Diocese of Phoenix should be a man who:

- Is committed to and lives out Gospel values of justice, charity and service.
- Has shown leadership qualities in parish/diocesan ministry for the past five years.
- Has a prayerful disposition.
- If married, is in a stable and happy marriage (2 years minimum) and whose wife and children support him in pursuing the diaconate.
- If not married, is willing to commit to celibacy.
- Situations of divorce/annulment will require special approval; in general, no more than one divorce/annulment and no children from the first marriage. Any who have had a civil marriage are not eligible for the diaconate.
- If a convert to the faith; baptism or profession must have been made more than 5 years prior to application.
- Is living within the geographical boundaries of the Diocese of Gallup as a permanent resident of the United States.
- Is capable of college level work in theological studies and is open to spiritual and ministerial formation. (Has at least a high school diploma or GED.
- Can successfully pass a thorough criminal and financial background check.
- Is no younger than 30 and no older than 61 years to enter the process.
- Is capable of giving serious attention and time to theological study, spiritual formation and ministry.
- Has a stable work history (2 years min.).
- Has a positive attitude towards the Church and is flexible in adapting to the future needs of the Church.
- Is formally presented for the diaconate by his pastor who will see that he is mentored during the 4 years of formation.
- Must be physically and psychologically healthy.
- Should demonstrate grateful fidelity to all that the Church teaches.

It is expected that applicants have been actively involved in the Church’s apostolate in their parish or Catholic agency. This may include programs of educational ministry, liturgical ministry, parish council, social ministry and so forth. Social ministries include serving the poor, the hungry, the sick, the homeless, the handicapped, the elderly, the imprisoned, life issues, etc.

**Aspirant.** Admission as an Aspirant means that the petitioner has been admitted to the (typically) year-long propaedeutic period (preparation for study or instruction). It is marked by participation in the formation meetings, practicum in outreach and justice and completion of a

battery of tests and interviews. Spiritual reading, reflection, prayer and discernment will continue. Admission to Aspirancy requires the following criteria:

- Application has been audited and found complete.
- Staff Screening for disqualifiers and impediments.
- Letter of petition from the individual to the Bishop has been received.
- Letter of approval from his wife has been received if he is married.
- Letters of recommendation have been received.
- Transcripts from high school and college have been received
- Participation in required formation meetings.
- Testing and Examinations completed including but not necessarily limited to the following:
  - Medical Examination
  - Educational Examinations as appropriate.
- An interview with Director of Director of Formation or his delegate, has been completed
- The Director of the Office of the Diaconate Formation reviews the recommendation and the application to determine whether to forward it to the Bishop.
- The Bishop reviews the applicant's file and decides whether to invite the individual to continue the discernment process as an Aspirant.

**Candidate.** Admission as a Candidate means that the Aspirant has been invited by the Bishop to enter a time of formal preparation for ordination that requires 3 years or more.

During this period the Candidate will receive advanced theological education and practical diaconal formation. After the first year as he progresses in discernment and formation he will be installed into the Ministry of Lector and then approximately a year later to the Ministry of Acolyte.