



DIOCESE OF AUSTIN

GUEST SPEAKERS



DIocese of Austin

Policy on Lay Presenter Approval Process

2017

NOTE: This policy does not apply to clergy or religious, who must instead provide a testimonial of suitability to the Vicar General prior to conducting any form of ministry within the Diocese of Austin.

In order to serve the needs of the people of God in the Diocese of Austin and to be responsible stewards of the gifts given to the diocese, the Diocese of Austin issues the following policy:

- I. A presenter must be on the diocesan list of approved presenters if the presenter will make a presentation at:
 - A. An event hosted or sponsored by a diocesan office; or
 - B. An event hosted or sponsored by two or more parishes; or
 - C. A parish event advertised in any media outside the parish's regular media (for example, the Catholic Spirit, the E-Pistle, a website other than the parish's own website, social media or other media).

- II. For the purposes of this policy:
 - A. "*Presenter*" means a speaker, presenter, performer, musician, or prayer leader, whether a lay person, clergy, or religious;
 - B. "*Parish*" means a parish, mission, university campus ministry center, parish school, or a diocesan school;
 - C. "*Parish's regular media*" means the parish's own website, bulletins, e-mails, and newsletters to parishioners or parents, whether in print or electronic format ("*parish's regular media*" does not include communications distributed through social media or on websites of other organizations);

- D. A parish “*sponsors*” an event when a parish pays for or plans or carries out the event; and
 - E. A parish “*hosts*” an event when the parish provides a location for the event either directly on parish property or indirectly by arranging for such a location (e.g., a hotel facility).
- III. To be placed on the diocesan list of approved presenters, a lay person must submit the written application to the Office of Human Resources and receive approval from the Chancellor.
- IV. The Chancellor shall consult with the Vicar General before disapproving an application.
- V. The diocesan list of approved presenters may have restrictions related to the approval (for example, subject matter, location, or audience restrictions). If no restrictions apply, the presenter may be engaged for any topic before any audience provided, however, that the parish or diocesan office should be prudent in engaging the appropriate presenter based on the presenter’s qualifications and expertise. To request a change to restrictions, a presenter may submit additional information to the Office of Human Resources as appropriate. The Vicar General and Chancellor retain discretion as to whether to alter any restrictions or approvals.
- VI. The diocesan list of approved presenters will be maintained by the Office of Human Resources. Parishes or diocesan offices may call the Office of Human Resources to determine if a particular presenter is on the list and whether any restrictions apply.
- VII. Names appearing on the diocesan list of approved presenters will be purged after 3 (three) years from the date of approval unless:
- A. The presenter submits a new application and receives an approval for an extension; or
 - B. The Chancellor, in consultation with the Vicar General, determines that the name is to be removed before the end of 3 (three) years or may remain on the list beyond the 3-year period.
- VIII. Inclusion of a name on the diocesan list of approved presenters is not an endorsement of the presenter or the presenter’s qualifications. It is intended to determine only whether there exists cause that the presenter should not make a presentation at an event hosted by a diocesan office, an event sponsored by two or more parishes or schools, or an event advertised beyond the parish’s regular media.
- IX. Parishes and diocesan offices should take note of:
- A. The time it may take to obtain approval if the presenter is not on the list; and

- B. The importance of obtaining approval before asking for the placement of advertisement in diocesan or any other media.
- X. This policy applies to musicians and bands, especially at events at which youth will or may be present.
- A. The musician and all members of a band must satisfy Ethics in Ministry (EIM) requirements.
 - B. The approved presenter is the musician in the case of a solo musician and is the band (as an entity) in the case of a band.
 - C. If a musician or band is hired to perform at a larger function, such as a festival or jamaica, approval of the musician or band is not required unless the musician or band is featured in the advertisements outside the parish's regular media.
- XI. Parishes should note that the bishop retains the discretion, for any reason, to deny or restrict any person from publically speaking on parish property or at a parish event.
- XII. A presenter at an event that is hosted and sponsored by only one parish is not required to obtain lay presenter approval if the announcements about the event are contained only in the parish's regular media, although a parish may still seek to have the presenter undergo the approval process. If a particular presenter's suitability is at all questionable, a parish would be encouraged to have the presenter undergo the approval process.