

Lay Ecclesial Ministry Formation

In 2005, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops adopted *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*. In that document, the bishops note that they have been using the terminology of *lay ecclesial minister* and *lay ecclesial ministry* since 1980 in *Called and Gifted: The American Catholic Laity*.

In *Co-Workers*, the USCCB describes lay ecclesial ministry as characterized by:

- *Authorization* of the hierarchy to serve publicly in the local church
- *Leadership* in a particular area of ministry
- *Close mutual collaboration* with the pastoral ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons
- *Preparation and formation* appropriate to the level of responsibilities assigned to them

Lay ecclesial minister is intended to be a generic term, not a specific role description or title. *Co-Workers* states that the ministry is *lay* “because it is service done by lay persons [including vowed religious]. The Sacramental basis is the Sacraments of Initiation, not the Sacrament of Ordination.” It is *ecclesial* “because it has a place within the community of the Church, whose communion and mission it serves, and because it is submitted to the discernment, authorization, and supervision of the hierarchy.” It is *ministry* “because it is a participation in the threefold ministry of Christ who is priest, prophet and king.”

The longest section of *Co-Workers* is the one on formation for lay ecclesial ministry. It begins by noting that the Church has always required proper preparation of those who exercise a ministry and citing Canon 231, which states that “lay persons who devote themselves permanently or temporarily to some special service of the Church are obliged to acquire the appropriate formation which is required to fulfill their function properly.” This section of the Ministry Formation Directory documents the development of such formation programs for lay persons in the United States.

Trends

In 1986, the USCCB Committee on the Laity completed the first nationwide study of formation programs designed to prepare lay Catholics for parish-level church ministry. CARA has been conducting studies of lay ministry formation programs nearly every year since 1994. As it has in each of its previous studies, CARA limits the scope of its survey to programs of at least two years’ duration that provide training for professional lay ecclesial ministry.

The role of the laity and their participation in the ministry of the Church has evolved considerably in the decades since the Second Vatican Council. At the same time, the number of formation programs to train lay people for professional church ministry has increased, and many programs have expanded their scope. Since the first study of lay ministry formation in 1985-1986, the number of programs has increased by more than 50 percent, and the number of participants in these programs has grown more than threefold.

Beginning in 2003-2004, CARA collaborated with the USCCB to improve the data collection so that participants in ministry formation programs who are preparing themselves for lay ecclesial ministry can be differentiated more accurately from those who are participating in these programs primarily for adult faith formation. Since that time, CARA now asks programs to identify degree candidates and certificate candidates separately, rather than asking only for the total number enrolled in the program. In addition, CARA asks each program to identify more clearly its affiliation with a degree-granting institution, where appropriate. While adult faith formation is vitally important for the Church, the purpose of this part of the Directory is to provide a complete listing and monitor trends among the programs that prepare adults for lay ecclesial ministry in the Church.

Reported enrollments in lay ecclesial ministry formation programs have fluctuated over the more than 20 years that the data have been collected. This fluctuation in numbers is partly a function of CARA's work with the USCCB to distinguish more carefully lay ecclesial ministry formation from adult faith formation, as described above. The largest number reported in formation was in 2002-2003, when a record 36,048 total participants were identified.

A second reason for the fluctuation is that the number of active programs offering formation in lay ecclesial ministry has also varied widely. CARA works throughout the year to identify new programs that have not been previously listed in the Directory and to clarify the status of other programs that have been discontinued or that did not respond to the survey. In 2009-2010, CARA identified a total of 266 active lay ecclesial ministry formation programs. This is a decline of 3 percent from the 273 active programs identified in 2008-2009.

CARA received current enrollment information from 233 active programs, for a response of 88 percent. The 233 responding programs in 2009-2010 are nearly identical to the 234 active programs that responded in 2008-2009.

Among the directors of the 233 active programs that responded to repeated requests for information, 11 supplied program information but did not provide any information on their enrollments. The information provided in the table below does not include the participants enrolled in those 11 programs.

The total number of lay ecclesial ministry candidates enrolled in degree and certificate programs in 2009-2010 is 17,935, of which 12,462 (69 percent) are working toward a certificate in ministry and 5,473 (31 percent) are working toward a graduate degree in ministry. The total number of enrollees represents a 2 percent increase over the 17,538 candidates reported in 2008-2009.

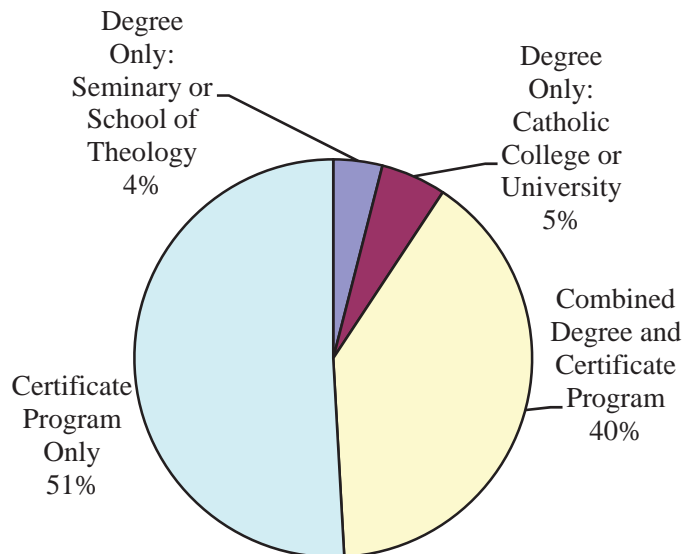
Lay Ecclesial Ministry Formation Programs, 1985-2010				
Year	States*	Dioceses	Programs	Enrollments
1985-1986	43	110	206	10,500
1994-1995	51	135	265	21,800
1996-1997	46	134	281	20,281
1997-1998	46	135	287	23,333
1998-1999	49	145	295	29,137
1999-2000	46	134	331	31,168
2000-2001	48	142	314	35,582
2001-2002	49	144	314	34,414
2002-2003	49	147	320	36,048
2003-2004	45	142	290	25,964**
2004-2005	46	143	289	18,847
2005-2006	45	122	226	16,037
2006-2007	44	126	253	20,240
2007-2008	44	130	240	18,622
2008-2009	44	119	234	17,538
2009-2010	47	123	233	17,935

* Includes the District of Columbia.

**Includes 7,630 estimated participants likely enrolled in the 23 programs that did not report enrollments.

Program Profile

A number of different types of lay ecclesial ministry formation programs offer either a degree or a certificate in a ministry-related field. CARA asked program directors to classify their program into one of four categories, according to the program’s relationship with a degree-granting institution. The figure at right shows the proportion of programs that place themselves in each of the four categories. Half of all responding programs offer only a certificate.



The table below presents average number of faculty and students in these four types of programs.

Lay Ecclesial Ministry Programs, 2009-2010				
Type of Program	Average Number of Faculty		Average Number of Program Participants	
	Full-time	Part-time	Degree	Certificate
Degree Program associated with a Catholic Seminary or School of Theology – no certificates	9	11	27	—
Degree Program associated with a Catholic College or University – no certificates	16	8	74	—
Combined Degree and Certificate Program	5	10	50	38
Certificate Program only – no degrees	2	14	—	79

Many lay ecclesial ministry formation programs can be classified as either exclusively diocesan-based or academic-based. Currently, 148 active programs are sponsored or co-sponsored by a diocese and 54 active programs are sponsored by a Catholic college or university. Other programs are the result of collaboration between a diocese and an academic institution. In these cases, the diocese assumes responsibility for the human, spiritual, and pastoral formation, while the academic institution is responsible for the intellectual formation. Some diocesan-sponsored programs are affiliated with a seminary (9 programs) and another 68 are affiliated with a college or university. Loyola University in New Orleans operates 44 active programs that are both diocesan-sponsored and college or university-affiliated as Loyola Institute for Ministry Extension (LIMEX) or Certificate in Specialized Studies (CSS) programs. CARA received program information from 30 of these programs in 2009-2010. In addition to academic and diocesan-based programs, independent Catholic organizations sponsor several other programs. Four of these independent programs are related to Education for Parish Service (EPS), based at Trinity University in Washington, DC. Another 17 independent programs in clinical pastoral education (CPE) are offered by Catholic hospitals to train ministers who serve as chaplains in medical settings. Finally, CARA received information from seven programs operated by the Center for Ministry Development (CMD) in Naugatuck, CT, which sponsors diocesan-based certificate programs in youth ministry.

Some programs are specially designed to meet particular needs in lay ecclesial ministry formation, including several programs designed for ministry formation in a multicultural Church (such as the M.A. in Ministry for a Multicultural Church in Oakland, CA), nine programs designed specifically for ministry with and to the Hispanic community (such as the Escuela de Ministerios Pastorales of the Diocese of Oakland), one program designed for ministry formation in the African American community (the Institute for Black Catholic Studies in New Orleans, LA), and one program designed for ministry formation in the Native American community (the Native American Lay Ministry Formation Program in Chinle, AZ). Another program, offered by the National Association of Pastoral Musicians, prepares pastoral musicians for certification as a Director of Music Ministries. A new program at Villanova University now grants an M.S. in Church Management.

Degrees and Certificates Offered

Academic-based programs offer academic degrees but many also offer certificates. Similarly, diocesan-based programs affiliated with a seminary, college, or university typically offer opportunities for both academic degrees and certificates. Programs that are exclusively diocesan-sponsored typically offer only non-degree certificates.

Most of the degree-granting programs offer graduate degrees, although a few grant associate or baccalaureate degrees. The most commonly offered graduate degrees in degree-granting lay ministry programs are the M.A. in Pastoral Studies or Pastoral Ministry (68 programs), the M.A. in Theology or Theological Studies (49 programs), the M.A. in Religious Education (39 programs), the M.A. in Religious Studies (21 programs), and the M.Div. (19 programs).

Master’s Degrees Available in Lay Ecclesial Ministry, 2009-2010	
Type of Degree	Number of Programs
M.A. in Pastoral Studies or Pastoral Ministry	68
M.A. in Theology or Theological Studies	49
M.A. in Religious Education	39
M.A. in Religious Studies	21
M.Div.	19
M.A. in Spirituality	8
M.A. in Pastoral Counseling	5
M.A. in Pastoral Theology	5

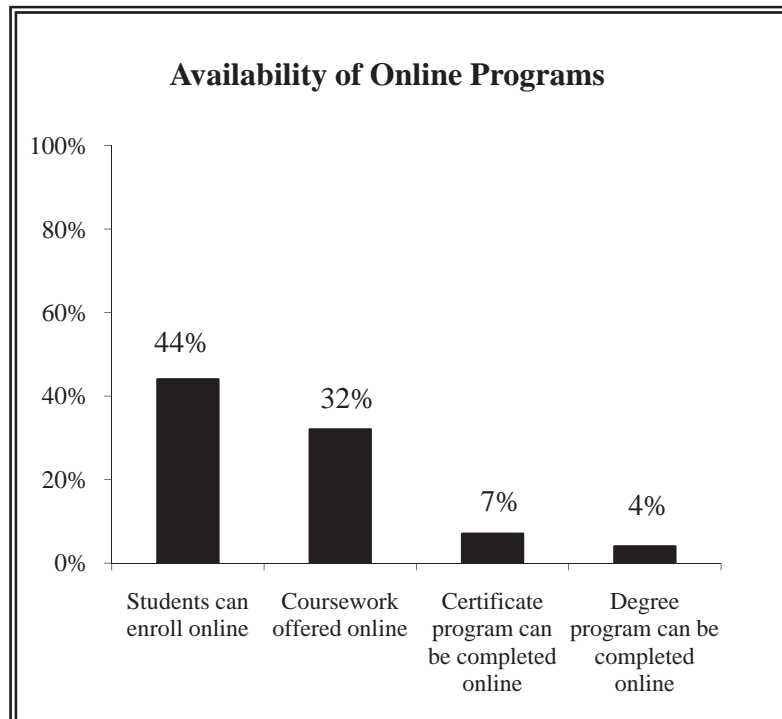
In addition to the degrees listed above, one program grants the licentiate and the doctorate in Canon Law (J.C.L. and J.C.D.). Another 12 programs grant a doctorate in ministry (D.Min.).

Most lay ecclesial ministry programs grant certificates of completion. The most common certificate programs are in Pastoral Ministry (106 programs), Religious Education (73 programs), Youth Ministry (68 programs), and Catechetics (54 programs).

Certificates Available in Lay Ecclesial Ministry, 2009-2010	
Type of Certificate	Number of Programs
Certificate in Pastoral Ministry	106
Certificate in Religious Education	73
Certificate in Youth Ministry	68
Certificate in Catechetics	54
Certificate in Liturgy	38
Certificate in Theology	30
Certificate in Clinical Pastoral Education	25
Certificate in Pastoral Administration or Business Management	16
Certificate in Pastoral Counseling	11
Certificate in Spiritual Direction	8
Certificate in Hispanic Ministry	7
Certificate in Liturgical Music	5

Distance Learning and Online Coursework

In addition to the extension programs described earlier, a number of programs are being developed to take advantage of the Internet as a tool for expanding their reach to a wider audience. Several programs offer some coursework online and a few offer their entire program online. Fifteen programs report that their certificate program can be completed online and nine programs report that they have a degree program that can be completed online. The figure at right shows the proportion of programs that report offering some part of their program online.



Language of Instruction

Lay ecclesial ministry formation programs are conducted in a variety of languages. Nearly all use English as the primary language of instruction, but 12 programs are taught only in Spanish, 35 use both English and Spanish, and two more make some accommodation for use of Spanish. In addition, one program uses English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole; another uses English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole; two others use English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Korean; one uses English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese; and one uses English and Navajo.

Spiritual Formation and Field Education

Although academic formation is indispensable to lay ecclesial ministry formation, human, spiritual, and pastoral formation are also essential components of formation for ministry. Of the 233 active programs, about half (52 percent) say that formal spiritual formation is required of program participants. Nearly as many (46 percent) report that the program includes a field education/internship requirement. Fewer programs (33 percent) require both.

Requirements of Lay Ecclesial Ministry Programs, 2009-2010		
Type of Program	Percentage of Programs Requiring	
	Spiritual Formation Component	Field Education/Internship
Degree Program associated with a Catholic Seminary or School of Theology – no certificates	78%	78%
Degree Program associated with a Catholic College or University – no certificates	25	33
Combined Degree and Certificate Program	54	49
Certificate Program only – no degrees	48	42

Size of Program

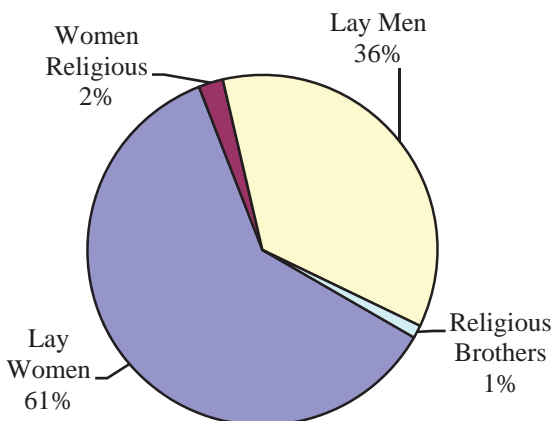
Fifteen programs report more than 100 degree candidates enrolled in 2009-2010. The 2,929 degree candidates enrolled in these programs are 54 percent of all degree candidates enrolled in reporting programs. These 15 programs also report 607 students working toward a certificate (5 percent of all certificate candidates reported).

Lay Ecclesial Ministry Programs with Highest Degree Program Enrollments, 2009-2010		
Program	Candidates for Degree Certificate	
School of Theology and Religious Studies – The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC	394	—
School of Theology and Ministry – Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA	286	18
Graduate Programs in Theology – The Catholic Distance University, Arlington, VA	270	194
Institute of Pastoral Studies, Loyola University of Chicago, Chicago, IL	262	6
Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, IL	257	10
School of Theology and Ministry – Seattle University, Seattle, WA	231	41
Loyola Institute for Ministry Extension (LIMEX), all U.S. programs combined	220	165
Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education – Fordham University, New York, NY	165	21
Aquinas Institute of Theology, St. Louis, MO	148	19
Institute for Ministry – Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit, MI	131	73
M.A. in Theology and Christian Ministry – Franciscan University of Steubenville, Steubenville, OH	128	—
Lay Formation Degree Program – Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI	120	10
School of Ministry, University of Dallas, Dallas, TX	116	9
Graduate Program in Pastoral Ministries – Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA	101	—
Washington Theological Union, Washington, DC	100	41

Profile of Lay Ecclesial Ministry Program Participants

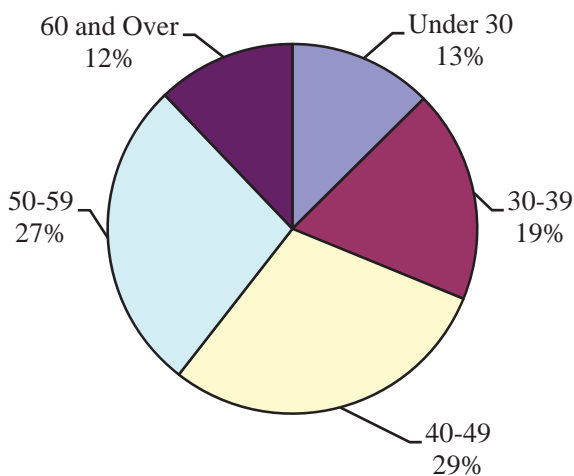
To reflect more accurately the lay composition of these programs, CARA asked program directors to exclude any priests and deacons from their reported statistics about program participants. Almost two in three lay program participants (63 percent) are women.

The figure at right displays all lay participants in these lay ecclesial ministry programs according to their ecclesial status.



Women and men religious are slightly more likely to be enrolled in degree programs than to be enrolled in certificate programs. Lay women who are not members of a religious institute are more likely to be enrolled in a certificate program than in a degree program. Lay women who are enrolled in a degree program make up 22 percent and lay women enrolled in a certificate program make up 39 percent of all lay ecclesial ministry program participants. Lay men are also more likely to be enrolled in a certificate program (22 percent of all lay ecclesial ministry program participants) than in a degree program (14 percent).

Age Distribution of Lay Ecclesial Ministry Program Participants

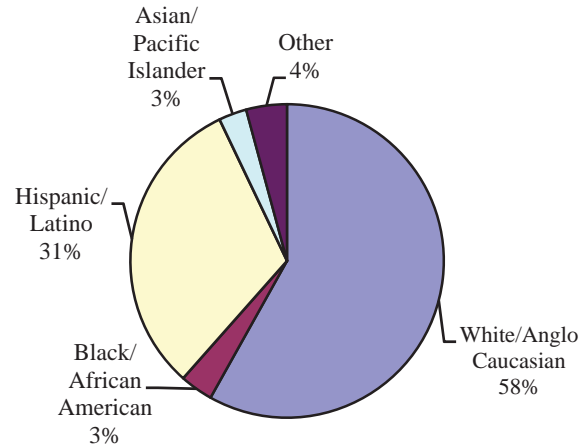


Nearly six in ten (56 percent) students in lay ecclesial ministry formation programs are in their forties and fifties. Almost a third (32 percent) are under the age of 40 and about one in eight (12 percent) are age 60 and older.

Students enrolled in degree programs are typically somewhat younger than those enrolled in certificate programs. Four in ten degree program enrollees (39 percent) are under age 40, compared to 23 percent of certificate program enrollees. Only 8 percent of degree program enrollees are age 60 and older, while 13 percent of certificate students are age 60 or older.

Racial and Ethnic Backgrounds of Lay Ecclesial Ministry Program Participants

Six in ten participants in lay ecclesial ministry formation programs are white/Anglo/Caucasian (58 percent). Hispanics/Latinos make up about a third of all program participants (31 percent). Blacks/African Americans, Asians/Pacific Islanders, and others (including Native Americans) each make up another 3 percent of enrollees in these programs. Altogether, these three groups constitute 10 percent of lay ministry enrollments.



Hispanics/Latinos are much less likely to be enrolled in degree programs than in certificate programs. By contrast, whites/Anglos/Caucasians are much more likely to be enrolled in degree programs than in certificate programs. Hispanics/Latinos comprise 10 percent of students enrolled in degree programs and 44 percent of students enrolled in certificate programs. Whites/Anglos/Caucasians make up 73 percent of degree candidates and 49 percent of certificate candidates. Blacks/African Americans, Asians/Pacific Islanders, and others are about equally likely to be enrolled in a degree program as in a certificate program.