

Part I: Introduction

The Alliance for the Certification of
Lay Ecclesial Ministers (ACLEM)



**Revised National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial
Ministers**

serving as

Diocesan Director of Worship
Parish Director of Liturgy
Parish Life Coordinator
Pastoral Associate
Parish Business Manager
Director of Music Ministries
Parish Catechetical Leader
Parish Director of Evangelization
Youth Ministry Leader, incl. *Pastoral Juvenil Hispana* and/or High School
Campus Ministry Leader
Diocesan Youth Ministry Leader, including *Pastoral Juvenil Hispana*
~~High School Campus Ministry Leader~~

and

National Certification Procedures

submitted by

The Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers

Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions
National Association for Lay Ministry
National Association of Pastoral Musicians
National Conference for Catechetical Leadership
National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry

for approval by

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service

August 3, 2018

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Introductory Material

The member organizations of the Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers (“the Alliance”) present to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service (“SCEMS”) these revised *National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers* (“*National Certification Standards*”) and proposed procedures for certification of the following lay ecclesial ministries:

- Diocesan Director of Worship
- Parish Director of Liturgy
- Parish Life Coordinator
- Pastoral Associate
- Parish Business Manager
- Director of Music Ministries
- Parish Catechetical Leader
- Parish Director of Evangelization
- Youth Ministry Leader, including *Pastoral Juvenil Hispana* and/or High School Campus Ministry Leader
- Diocesan Youth Ministry Leader, including *Pastoral Juvenil Hispana*
- ~~High School Campus Ministry Leader~~

Five national Catholic ministry associations have come together to form the Alliance, including the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC), the National Association for Lay Ministry (NALM), the National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM), the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL), and the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM).

Task groups of the Alliance consisting of representatives from the five partner organizations and representatives from the Association of Graduate Programs in Ministry (AGPIM) have been working together for the past year to review and revise the certification standards and procedures described in the following pages. The standards and procedures have been approved by each of the Alliance partner organizations, and are hereby submitted to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesial Ministry and Service for review and approval, in accord with Subcommittee requirements.

Introduction: National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers

(2018 revision)

Certification standards¹ give evidence of a profession's focus and activities and the values to which it is committed; designate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes it deems desirable or necessary for effective functioning as a practitioner of the profession; and may be used as educational criteria in a process of formation and assessment criteria in a process of certification.

History and Background

Beginning in the late 1980s, several national Catholic ministry organizations in the USA developed standards for certain key ministerial roles, doing so in order to recognize the importance of the roles, to foster ministerial excellence, and to give direction to the future development of lay ecclesial ministry. The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry developed such standards for persons serving as youth ministry leaders. Subsequently, the National Association for Lay Ministry did the same for pastoral associates and parish life coordinators, and the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership did so for parish catechetical leaders. Each organization had its standards separately reviewed and approved by the Commission on Certification and Accreditation of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB/CCA).

In the late 1990s, pivotal work was done in aligning the various articulations of standards in use by the three ministry organizations and in identifying an initial listing of common ministerial competencies shared among the three.² Developing this work still further, the organizations jointly prepared the document, *National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers Serving as Parish Catechetical Leaders, Youth Ministry Leaders, Pastoral Associates, Parish Life Coordinators*. The document outlined five ministerial standards including core competencies relevant for all the ministries named and specialized competencies relevant for each of the ministries named. The document was approved in 2003 by the USCCB/CCA for a period of seven years, after which time a renewal of approval would be required.

¹ For the purposes of this document, each “standard” includes a brief statement identifying the standard, a vision statement, a set of core competencies (relevant for all the ministerial roles represented by the member organizations of the Alliance), and specialized competencies (specific to each ministerial role represented by the member organizations of the Alliance). The competencies are considered a part of and a further explication of the standards.

² Rev. Joseph T. Merkt, ed., *Common Formation Goals for Ministry: Rooted in the Competency-Based Certification Standards of the National Association for Lay Ministry, National Conference for Catechetical Leadership, and National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, Inc.* (Chicago and Washington, DC: National Association for Lay Ministry, National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry, Inc., and National Conference for Catechetical Leadership, 2000).

In 2005, the National Association of Pastoral Musicians adopted the *National Certification Standards*. In 2007, the four organizations, joining together under the name of the “Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers,” agreed to work together on two related projects: a revision of the standards and, as a new initiative, the creation of a process for national ministry certification. A Standards Task Group and a Certification Task Group were formed to do this work (see rosters in Appendix 4), composed of members from each organization. In 2009, the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions adopted the National Certification Standards and became a fifth organizational partner of the Alliance.

Section 1.0: Content and Format (Replace here- Certification by the Alliance)

The standards presented here, including their vision statements and core competencies, are the fruit of the efforts of the Standards Task Group, which also prepared the sample indicators. The specialized competencies were prepared by each of the member organizations of the Alliance. This work is based on and developed from:

- the previously approved standards
- material in the U.S. Catholic Bishops’ document *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry* (2005)
- input from the boards, executive directors, standards or certification committees, and members of the organizations comprising the Alliance
- feedback from a wide-ranging consultation held between November 2009 and March 2010, and
- the advice of other consultants who generously advised the Task Force, including USCCB staff members.

In this new edition, some of the material previously approved remains unchanged, while some has been revised; other material has been newly composed.

Instead of five ministerial standards there are now four—human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. This change was made to correspond with the four formational categories used in *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* (“*Co-Workers*”) as well as in various national and Vatican documents pertaining to the formation of priests and deacons.³ In each case the standard is named and briefly identified, and a vision statement describes its intended values, concepts, and priorities.

Then, for each standard, core competencies applicable to all the ministries represented by the participating organizations are set forth, indicating the knowledge, skills, and attitudes identified as relevant to that standard. Where possible, effort was made to make the articulation of core

³ See Pope John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis: I Will Give You Shepherds* (1992) and United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* (2005) and the *Program of Priestly Formation, Fifth Edition* (2005).

competencies more concise and measurable so as to better serve the certification process, and also more reflective of and useful for the rich diversity of cultural contexts in which Church life and ministry take place in the U.S. today. This latter intention especially has been a concern of the Task Force and the Alliance throughout the process of revision, and whenever the competencies can be interpreted or used in a way that recognizes and fosters ministry in forms appropriate in and for diverse cultural contexts, they should be interpreted and used in that way.

Following the listing of standards with their vision statements and core competencies for all the ministries are lists of specialized ministerial competencies for the distinctive ministries represented by the member organizations of the Alliance. Persons who apply for Alliance certification through their respective ministry organization will make use of and need to demonstrate that they possess both the core competencies and the relevant specialized ministerial competencies.

It was recognized and suggested in the 2003 edition of National Certification Standards that “~~measurable~~ measurable indicators for assessing one's progress toward the core and specialized competencies need to be developed by national associations, (arch)diocesan offices, and education and formation programs” (page ix, note 4). An attempt to provide some sample indicators of this nature is a new feature of this edition of the National Certification Standards, and as such, calls for explanation.

The indicators (see Appendix 2) have been developed and provided solely as a resource for people using the standards, so they should be understood to be “suggestive” rather than “definitive.” Thus, the indicators are not formally part of the standards being submitted to the SCEMS for approval, nor are they specific requirements that must be met by those applying for certification.

The indicators can be read as statements to help clarify the meaning of the core competencies; they can also, and even more importantly, serve to point out some of the possible ways in which applicants for certification might demonstrate their competence, or to suggest sample criteria which the Partner Certification Review Committees and the National Certification Review Committee could recognize as evidence that an applicant has demonstrated competence.

The list of indicators is not intended to be inclusive, as though an applicant needed to demonstrate all of them. Nor is the list meant to be exclusive and exhaustive, as though these and only these indicators will be accepted as evidence of competence. Rather, these indicators are merely representative, giving a few examples of what could indicate competence. They are only suggestive, leaving candidates for certification free to identify and present, as evidence of their competence, indicators more relevant to their cultural context or ministerial experience.

1.1 Uses of the National Certification Standards

The preparation of these revised standards has been guided by awareness that they will be used in the Alliance national certification process. Even so they also remain, as before, a valuable tool for those involved in the formation, support, and supervision of lay ecclesial ministers.

Formation institutions (academic, diocesan, or agency) can continue to use them for curriculum review and design and for setting formational goals—as *Co-Workers* itself recommends (page 30). Lay ecclesial ministers can use these standards and competencies for self-assessment and ongoing ministerial growth. Supervisors can use them in a collaborative process of assessment (for lay ecclesial ministers individually or pastoral teams collectively) and to affirm, guide, and support individual staff members and efforts in staff development.

It is the hope and intention of the member organizations of the Alliance that the material presented here—a revised edition of ministry standards with their core and specialized competencies, carefully crafted and approved by lay ecclesial ministers themselves—will support the recognition and ongoing development of lay ecclesial ministers who devote themselves to serve the communion and the mission of the Church.

National Certification Process and Procedures

A.1.2 History and Background

When it adopted the *National Certification Standards* in 2005, the National Association of Pastoral Musicians received approval from the USCCB/CCA for its specialized competencies for directors of music ministries and for certification procedures which have been in use since that approval. When the Alliance was formed in 2007, the partner organizations decided not only to seek Subcommittee approval for revised National Certification Standards but also to work together on common procedures for certification of lay ecclesial ministers represented by their respective organizations, including:

- Diocesan Director of Worship
- Parish Director of Liturgy
- Pastoral Associate
- Parish Life Coordinator
- Parish Business Manager
- Director of Music Ministries
- Parish Catechetical Leader
- Parish Director of Evangelization
- Youth Ministry Leader, including *Pastoral Juvenil Hispana* and/or High School Campus Ministry Leader
- Diocesan Youth Ministry Leader, including *Pastoral Juvenil Hispana*
- ~~High School Campus Ministry Leader~~

The Alliance established a task group charged with the revision of existing certification procedures that takes a common approach to assessing the core competencies for lay ecclesial ministry while also providing ways to assess the specialized competencies for each ministry.

In the course of its work to establish and revise certification procedures, the task group consulted widely with members of the partner organizations, leaders of other ministry associations, directors of academic and (arch)diocesan programs of ministerial formation, various USCCB offices, and leaders of organizations representing the concerns of cultural and ethnic groups and those who had already been certified under the approved process.

Most of the comments expressed concerns regarding simplification, clarity, attention to cultural differences, and how best to demonstrate intellectual competence.

Based on the concerns, comments, and suggestions that it received, the task group set out to establish certification procedures that:

- are as clear and simple as possible

- are based on a candidate’s demonstration of competence in ministry as described in the *National Certification Standards*, including the core competencies for all lay ecclesial ministers and the specialized competencies for each group of ministers to be certified
- require holistic formation in both core and specialized competencies, and
- are accessible to persons of various educational, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds.

These certification procedures are designed only to assess the competence of lay ecclesial ministers and should not be confused with any form of authorization for ministry, which is the province of the local bishop. The certification of lay ecclesial ministers may be included by a given (arch)diocese as a means for assessing competence as part of a(n) (arch)diocesan process of authorization, but they are in no way to be understood to encroach on the authority of the local bishop in authorizing lay ecclesial ministers.

A.1.3 Certification Portfolio

In order to establish certification procedures that provide clarity and flexibility while adhering to rigorous standards, the task group decided that competence for the various lay ecclesial ministries would best be demonstrated through a certification portfolio. The certification portfolio is a collection of documents assembled by the candidate that provides various types of evidence of one’s competence for a particular lay ecclesial ministry. Based on the *National Certification Standards*, the portfolio includes several different ways by which the candidate can demonstrate his or her competence, including:

- *testimony*, in the form of assessments provided by the candidate, a supervisor, a peer in ministry, and a subordinate
- *evidence of successful academic study* in theology, pastoral ministry, and other fields appropriate to each ministry, or other methods (equivalencies) that manifest competence in these areas of study
- *demonstration* of ability in one’s own particular ministerial specialization, such as a project, program description, or recital, and
- *integration paper* that shows the candidate’s ability to approach ministry in a way that includes one’s personal, spiritual, intellectual, pastoral, and specialized competencies

The task group developed a portfolio structure that includes a number of common elements. Within that common structure, each organization has also specified elements particular to individual ministries. For example, while specifying the number of hours of course work expected in theology, pastoral ministry, and other areas of intellectual formation, each organization has also provided for equivalencies—various ways that intellectual competence may be demonstrated.

A.1.4 Administration of the Certification Process

The Alliance certification procedures require the creation of committees and other entities to administer and monitor the process, accept applications, review portfolios, and make certification decisions. During the course of their work toward certification in one of the specialized ministries, candidates will encounter three groups involved in the administration of the process:

- *Partner Certification Review Committee (PCRC)*. Each of the five Alliance partner organizations has established its PCRC that receives, reviews, and approves applications to begin the certification process; appoints and monitors the work of certification advisors; receives, reviews, and formulates a recommendation on completed portfolios of certification candidates; and forwards recommendations and portfolios to the National Certification Review Committee;
- *National Certification Review Committee (NCRC)*. The Alliance has established an NCRC made up of one representative from each of the PCRCs. The NCRC receives, reviews and finalizes recommendations on portfolios forwarded by PCRCs, and forwards recommendations with portfolios to the Alliance Commission; and
- *Alliance Commission (AC)*. The Alliance Commission is the governing body of the Alliance. In addition to its governance role, the AC reviews recommendations for certification from the NCRC and is responsible for final approval and granting of certification for each of the specialized ministries. Certification for each specialized ministry is granted in the name of both the Alliance and the respective partner organization. In addition, an Alliance Appeals Panel has been established to address grievances and appeals from candidates when these have not been resolved to their satisfaction by the NCRC and the AC. In each case the determination of the Appeals Panel is to be considered final.

Conclusion

The ministry leaders who developed these standards and procedures did so to contribute to the continuing development and formation of men and women who serve the Catholic Church in the USA as lay ecclesial ministers. The work presented here is a testament to a powerful shared commitment to well-prepared and fruitful lay ecclesial ministry. We trust that this work will in turn have an enduring positive impact on our Catholic faith communities. The standards and procedures described here may also serve as a resource for the leaders and institutions that form persons for lay ecclesial ministry, including bishops, pastors, diocesan offices, academic institutions, and ministry formation programs.

The women and men who developed these standards and procedures on behalf of the Alliance believe that this work, a product of unprecedented national cooperation and collaboration, represents a significant contribution to the unfolding reality of lay ecclesial ministry here in the United States.

Section One: General Information about the Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers

1.1 Mission

The Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers (or, “the Alliance”) includes the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC), the National Association for Lay Ministry (NALM), the National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM), the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL), and the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM). The Alliance seeks to affirm and promote lay ecclesial ministry in parishes and dioceses throughout the United States.

In fulfilling its mission, the Alliance has revised and updated the 2011 *National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers* and has revised procedures for the certification of lay ecclesial ministers serving in the specialized ministries represented by the Alliance partners and added new roles for certification, as follows:

Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions

Diocesan Director of Worship
Parish Director of Liturgy

National Association for Lay Ministry

Parish Life Coordinator
Pastoral Associate
Parish Business Manager

National Association of Pastoral Musicians

Director of Music Ministries

National Conference for Catechetical Leadership

Parish Catechetical Leader
Parish Director of Evangelization

National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry

Youth Ministry Leader, including *Pastoral Juvenil Hispana* and/or High School Campus Ministry Leader
Diocesan Youth Ministry Leader, including *Pastoral Juvenil Hispana*
~~High School Campus Ministry Leader~~

1.2 Brief History of the Alliance

The Alliance has its roots in the collaborative work of NALM, NCCL, and NFCYM in developing the previous edition of *National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers*, approved by the USCCB/CCA in 2003. In 2005 NPM adopted the *National Certification Standards* and received approval from the USCCB/CCA for its specialized standards and for certification procedures.

As the time approached to seek renewal for the National Certification Standards from the USCCB/CCA, the four organizations decided to embark on a thorough re-examination of the standards and to cooperate in drawing up common procedures. A fifth organization, the FDLC, joined this project in 2009. Together these five organizations have formed the Alliance not only to produce common standards and procedures but also to promote the certification of lay ecclesial ministers and to work together in the implementation of the common standards and procedures.

1.3 Authority and Responsibilities

The Alliance operates according to the Memorandum of Understanding approved by the boards of directors of the partner organizations and signed by the Executive Directors on March 22, 2011. The boards have also designated the Alliance to be the certifying body along with each of the organizations for each of the specialized lay ecclesial ministries.

1.4 Membership

Other national Catholic lay ecclesial ministry associations are eligible for membership in the Alliance provided they (1) have dues-paying members; (2) have a duly constituted board of directors; (3) employ a salaried executive officer; (4) agree to the terms of the Alliance Memorandum of Understanding; (5) formally adopt the National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers and the common procedures for certifying them; (6) agree to a process for approval of specialized standards and procedures; and (7) are accepted by the members of the Alliance Commission. If other ministry organizations that wish to join the Alliance do not employ a salaried executive director, the Chair of the Board of that organization must present to the Alliance a resolution approved by the organization board stating that the organization wishes to join the Alliance, and agrees to items (4) through (6) above.

1.5 The Alliance Commission

1.5.1 Role

The Alliance Commission (AC) serves as the governing body of the Alliance and is responsible for establishing policies to carry out the mission of the Alliance; oversees the development of the national certification standards and procedures; coordinates the work of the partner certification commissions in the development of specialized ministerial standards and the participation of each organization in the national certification process; and grants certification in a lay ecclesial ministry specialization and renewal of certification.

1.5.2 Membership

The Alliance Commission is composed of two members from each partner organization: the chief executive officer or Board Chair (if no Executive Director) and the chair of the organization's certification commission or some other non-staff representative selected according to that organization's procedures. The terms of executive officers and certification commission chairs are coterminous with these positions. Other representatives serve terms determined by the partner organization.

1.5.3 Convener

The convener chairs the Alliance Commission. He or she coordinates the scheduling of at least one meeting each year and other meetings as needed, prepares the agenda, chairs the meetings, and oversees implementation of any actions directed by the AC. The convener is chosen by the members of the AC during the annual meeting for a term of two years, renewable once.

1.5.4 Dismissal

The Alliance Commission may dismiss one of its own members in the case of misconduct or a breach of ethics in carrying out his or her responsibilities as an AC member.

1.5.5 Resignation

A member of the Alliance Commission may resign by submitting a letter to the proper person or body in the partner organization that he or she is representing. The convener may resign by submitting a letter to the members of the AC. A special meeting of the AC is then held to select a new convener.

1.5.6 Meetings

The Alliance Commission is required to meet at least once a year but may meet more frequently as needed.

1.5.7 Code of Confidentiality and Professional Responsibility

Members of the Alliance Commission sign a code of confidentiality and professional responsibility that governs members of the Alliance Commission, the certification commissions of the partner organizations, the certification review committees, and the Alliance Appeal Panel.

1.6 Relationship of Partner Organizations to the Alliance and the Alliance Commission

The boards of directors of the five partner organizations have delegated to the Alliance Commission the authority to make policies for the Alliance and for the development and implementation of the common standards and procedures, subject to terms of the Memorandum of Understanding. The partner organizations have designated the Alliance along with themselves as the certifying bodies for each of the specialized lay ecclesial ministries; and they have designated the Alliance Commission as the body which grants final approval of certification.

1.6.1 Approval and Acceptance of Certification Standards and Procedures

The governing body of each partner organization has given formal approval to the standards and procedures developed by the Alliance task groups and submitted to the USCCB/CCA following an extensive process of development and consultation that involved the members of each organization and a variety of persons with expertise in ministry, ministerial formation, certification, and cultural issues.

1.6.2 Funding

The Alliance and the work of the AC are funded by the member organizations in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding into which they have entered.

1.6.3 Diversity

The Alliance and its member organizations are committed to gender, cultural, racial and disability inclusion at all levels.

1.7 Certification Commissions of the Partner Organizations

Purpose

Each partner organization has a certification commission that:

- establishes and implements policies on certification subject to the policies of the partner's board of directors and the Alliance Commission
- oversees the implementation of the national certification process in its own organization
- in cooperation with the Alliance Commission, develops specialized ministerial competencies and the criteria for demonstrating those competencies in the national certification process
- establishes and oversees the Partner Certification Review Committee (PCRC)

1.7.1 Membership

Membership of the partner certification commissions, including criteria and terms, are determined by the constitution and bylaws of each partner organization.

1.7.2 Meetings

Each of the partner certification commissions is required to meet at least once a year but may meet more frequently as needed.

1.7.3 Code of Confidentiality and Professional Responsibility

Members of the partner certification commissions sign a code of confidentiality and professional responsibility that governs members of the Alliance Commission, the certification commissions of the partner organizations, the certification review committees, and the Alliance Appeal Panel.

1.7.4 Dismissal and Resignation

Members of certification commissions may be dismissed for breach of ethical or professional standards. The normal processes for dismissal and resignation of each respective partner organization shall be in effect.

1.8 National Certification Review Committee

Purpose

The National Certification Review Committee (NCRC):

- reviews and approves the submission of final applications and portfolios that have been approved by the partner certification review committees
- makes the recommendation for certification of candidates to the Alliance Commission
- receives and reviews annual reports of the partner certification review committees, and
- submits an annual report to the Alliance Commission, including activities during the year along with any policy and procedural recommendations.

1.8.1 Membership

The National Certification Review Committee is made up of one member, preferably the chairperson, from each of the partner certification review committees. The process for appointing members to the NCRC is determined by the certification commission of each partner organization. Criteria for membership on the NCRC are:

- leadership and experience in ministry and
- understanding of the mission, goals, policies, and procedures of the Alliance and of the national certification process.

It is also recommended, but not required, that members be certified in their own lay ecclesial ministry specialization.

1.8.2 Meetings

The National Certification Review Committee is required to meet at least once a year but may meet more frequently as needed.

1.8.3 Code of Confidentiality and Professional Responsibility

Members of the NCRC sign a code of confidentiality and professional responsibility that governs members of the Alliance Commission, the certification commissions of the partner organizations, the certification review committees, and the Alliance Appeal Panel.

1.8.4 Dismissal and Resignation

Members of the National Certification Review Committee may be dismissed by the Alliance Commission for breach of ethical or professional standards. Resignations from the NCRC are made to the Alliance Commission and to the partner organization that the member is representing.

1.9 Partner Certification Review Committees

Purpose

Each of the partner organizations has a Partner Certification Review Committee (PCRC) established by its own Certification Commission. Each PCRC:

- receives, reviews and approves initial certification applications at least once per year
- appoints and monitors the work of certification advisors
- receives, reviews, and approves the completed portfolios of certification candidates
- sends completed and approved portfolios for review and approval by the NCRC, and
- submits an annual report to the Alliance Commission, including policy and procedural recommendations.

1.9.1 Membership

Each PCRC has at least three members, appointed according to procedures determined by the partner certification commission. Criteria for membership on each PCRC include:\

- leadership and experience in ministry and
- understanding of the mission, goals, policies, and procedures of the Alliance and of the national certification process.

It is also recommended, but not required, that members be certified in their own lay ecclesial ministry specialization. A chair and other officers of each PCRC are chosen according to the procedures of its own partner organization.

1.9.2 Meetings

Each Partner Certification Review Committee is required to meet at least once a year, but may meet more frequently as needed.

1.9.3 Code of Confidentiality and Professional Responsibility

Members of Partner Certification Review Committees sign a code of confidentiality and professional responsibility that governs members of the Alliance Commission, the certification commissions of the partner organizations, the certification review committees, and the Alliance Appeals Panel.

1.9.4 Dismissal and Resignation

Members of Partner Certification Review Committees may be dismissed for breach of ethical or professional standards. The normal processes for dismissal and resignation of each respective partner organization shall be in effect.

1.10 Role of Chief Executive Officers and Staff

The chief executive officer and staff of each partner organization:

- carry out the policies of the Alliance Commission and of their own certification commissions
- assist the PCRC as needed by keeping records, responding to inquiries, directing communications, and other tasks related to the implementation of the certification process, and
- assist the NCRC and AC as needed with tasks related to the implementation of the certification process.

1.11 Alliance Appeals Panel

Purpose

The Alliance Appeals Panel:

- receives grievances from certification candidates if they have a complaint that has not been resolved to their satisfaction by the NCRC and the Alliance Commission
- receives appeals from candidates who have been denied certification if their appeal has not been resolved to their satisfaction by the NCRC and the Alliance Commission, and
- evaluates and makes a determination in each case, the results of which are to be considered final

1.11.1 Membership

The Alliance Appeals Panel is composed of three members appointed according to procedures established by the Alliance Commission. The members of the Appeals Panel shall not simultaneously be members of the Alliance Commission, the NCRC, or any of the Partner Certification Review Committees. Other criteria include:

- leadership and experience in ministry;
- understanding of the mission, goals, policies, and procedures of the Alliance and of the national certification process.
- three years of experience serving on a certification commission or review committee.

1.11.2 Meetings

The Alliance Appeals Panel is required to meet at least once a year but may meet more frequently as needed.

1.11.3 Code of Confidentiality and Professional Responsibility

Members of the Appeals Panel sign a code of confidentiality and professional responsibility that governs members of the Alliance Commission, the certification commissions of the partner organizations, the certification review committees, and the Alliance Appeal Panel.

1.11.4 Dismissal and Resignation

Members of the Alliance Appeals Panel may be dismissed by the Alliance Commission for breach of ethical or professional standards. Resignations from the Alliance Appeals Panel are made to the Alliance Commission.

1.12 Certification Advisors

1.12.1 Role

The certification advisor:

- assists the applicant in a comprehensive competency assessment and planning process leading to satisfactory attainment and documentation of competence relative to the common and specialized standards
- coaches, advises, assists in problem solving, and suggests resources as needed
- assists and supports the candidate through the preparation process, and
- helps the candidates to determine when the portfolio is suitable for submission.

1.12.2 Selection

Each PCRC is responsible for the selection of certification advisors according to the following criteria:

- demonstrated competence in the ministry specialization
- if possible, certification in the ministry specialization, and
- willingness to become thoroughly knowledgeable about the certification process.

1.12.3 Orientation and Ongoing Formation

Orientation and ongoing formation for certification advisors shall include the following:

- mission of the organization and how certification fits into that mission
- purpose, goals, policies, and procedures of the certification process
- how to facilitate learning through assessment and planning
- skills in coaching, advising, problem solving, and resourcing, and
- how to track progress in learning.

1.12.4 Evaluation

As part of his or her annual report to the PCRC, each advisor submits a self-evaluation. Each certification candidate also submits an evaluation of the advisor to the PCRC. The evaluations are considered by the PCRC in deciding whether or not an advisor should continue in his or her role.

1.12.5 Dismissal and Resignation

Certification advisors may be dismissed for breach of ethical or professional standards. The normal processes for dismissal and resignation of each respective partner organization shall be in effect for their respective members.

1.13 Consultants

In preparing this current revision of the certification standards and revision of certification procedures, the Alliance and its member organizations conducted broad consultations. An initial draft of the revised standards and procedures was circulated to leaders of the member

organizations and membership where necessary. Online questionnaires were provided to each group and yielded a large body of comments and recommendations. A thorough revision of the proposed standards and procedures was carried out based on these comments. In addition, the revisions were reviewed by the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD) to comment on the document and offer consultation.