

Parish Service Program Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Parish Service Program?

The Parish Service Program strengthens the ability of Catholics throughout the Archdiocese of Washington to live their faith by serving the poor and vulnerable through ministry. It is a new effort where Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington lends its support and helps build the capacity of parishes and parishioners to start their own simple social service with our help. In its successful first 28 months of operation, Catholic Charities assisted 47 parishes with these programs that represented a variety of ministries.

What kind of services do parishes provide?

Each parish identifies a community need their volunteers have the passion and commitment to address. Current examples include food pantries, clothing closets, immigration services, veterans' assistance, services to those with different abilities, and substance abuse ministries. Please note, however, that programs are not limited to these examples, and we are happy to work with parishes in developing ministries to meet any need.

What assistance do parishes receive from Catholic Charities?

Catholic Charities will work with the parish ministry team – often some combination of parish staff, volunteers, parish council members and/or the pastor himself - to launch the program. Specifically, we can offer the following support:

1. Provide up to **60 hours staff time** assisting with a range of activities, including: planning and follow-up to meetings, connecting ministry to Catholic Charities and other community programs or resources, publicizing the new ministry.
2. Provide limited **one-time financial support** to cover initial set-up costs associated with the project.
3. Maintain ongoing relationship to sustain and grow the ministry.

How does my parish get started?

The enclosed *Letter of Interest* is meant to be a helpful starting point. The first step is usually for the pastor, key staff members and/or volunteers to identify a need in your parish community and outline a plan to meet that need. The second step is to identify the resources necessary to create and sustain your ministry, including volunteers, financial resources, physical resources (like a parish hall or school for meeting or program space), as well as community connections and partnerships. Each program will vary, and Catholic Charities will help you determine next steps and provide time and resources to assist you each step of the way.

Who do I contact with questions or to talk about next steps?

Deacon Jim Shanahan, the Parish/School Program Manager for Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington, is happy to talk to you about any aspect of the program. You can reach him by phone at 301-674-4091 or email at jim.shanahan@catholiccharitiesdc.org.



Parish Service Program
Letter of Interest

Parish Name _____ Pastor _____

Pastor's Email _____

Best Phone Contact for Pastor _____

Name and best contact for person to follow-up with regarding this letter: _____

1. Please identify the program (i.e., operate a food pantry, serve the veteran population, provide services to seniors, inclusion program for those with different abilities).
2. What has prevented the parish from starting this program?
3. These programs depend greatly on volunteers to operate. Do you have volunteers in place to support such a program? If not, do you believe there would be a positive response to creation of a program?
4. What resources does your parish have available for the program. (Any rooms, buildings, etc. that could be used for such a program, financial resources, particular staff or volunteer expertise)
5. Is there other information about the potential pilot program that you'd like us to know (i.e. capacity for youth involvement, existing or potential community connections or partnerships)?

Please forward your responses to:

Deacon Jim Shanahan

Parish/School Program Manager

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington

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301-674-4091

Jim.Shanahan@catholiccharitiesdc.org