

Diocese of Cheyenne Diaconal Formation Program Requirements and Expectations for Wives of Aspirants and Candidates

The married deacon and his wife live out a dual commitment. One forged in their shared Sacrament of Matrimony and the other given to the Church at the time of his Ordination. As such, a deacon's wife should be supportive and participatory within a mutually affirmed framework that enhances and does not detract from her husband's ministry. Only this way can a married deacon's priority of marriage and family life be lived out in productive harmony with his ordained ministry. With this end in mind, the period of diaconal formation should be a time for the prospective deacon and his wife to grow in their witness to Christian marriage while discerning and developing a shared outlook and set of desires for his future ministry and its role in their family life. This can only happen if the couple continually renews and augments their faithfulness and fidelity to each other, their families, and Christ. To assist in this endeavor, encourage shared development in spirituality and cultivate fruitfulness in the married deacon's marriage and future ministry, the wife of any aspirant or candidate shall comply with the following:

1. She should have a temperament and faith life that act as a bridge and not an obstacle to Christ, and consequently enhances her husband's ministry rather than detracts from it.¹
2. She must be Catholic and in full communion with the Church by the time her husband begins his second year of formation.²
3. She must be cleared to minister to youth and at-risk adults within the Diocese. This involves a criminal background check and completion of the "Safe Environments Training (SET)" workshop.³
4. She will need to complete and submit any requested or required forms and applications by respective due dates.⁴
5. Participate in any interviews requested by the Formation Board, including any psychological interviews or diagnostic exams.⁵
6. She should have a sound knowledge and understanding of the ministry of service inherent in the life of a deacon, and understand the time commitment her husband's formation and ministry will likely entail. This should include a willingness to accept a significant allocation of her husband's time and talent for study during formation. Her understanding and agreement to this commitment should be evident.⁶
7. Attend the majority of aspirancy weekends; all couple days / couple retreats; and all retreats scheduled exclusively for wives of aspirants and candidates - unless excused ahead of time by the Director of Diaconal Formation.⁷ *One (1) unexcused absence during the formation period and two (2) or more excused absences in any single year may be grounds for calling into question a wife's support for her husband's formation and ministry.*

8. Subsequent to the year of Aspirancy, attendance at formation weekends (beginning Sept. 2017) is optional, but encouraged. However, attendance by wives on these weekends may be limited due to available classroom space or other considerations.⁸
9. Understand that aspirants and candidates are responsible for all travel and lodging costs associated with formation. In addition, they will be responsible for covering the cost of their tuition and academic resources (including, but not limited to books, supplies, computers, and internet service). Some financial assistance may become available based upon need, and parishes or other organizations, or individual may sponsor some (or all) of an aspirant or candidate's out of pocket expenses.⁹
10. Agree not to assist by writing, significantly editing / correcting, or completing any course work related to the formation program for her husband, unless permitted by an instructor.¹⁰
11. In her own handwriting and by her signature express her free and full consent for her husband to enter formation,¹¹ become a candidate for Holy Orders,¹² and receive Holy Orders.¹³
12. Understand that permanent deacons must be economically stable and self-sufficient. It is expected that diaconal ministry will be part time for most deacons. As such, each deacon must have a source of income for support of self and family, including providing for their retirement needs. Deacons are not paid for their ministry, but some sundry expenses may be reimbursed.¹⁴

ABBREVIATIONS:

- CIC** 1983 Code of Canon Law
- DN** Diocesan Norm - Requires approval of Bishop for change or dispensation.
- ND** National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States. Including the Secondary Documents; Basic Standards for Readiness; and Visit of Consultation Teams to Diocesan Permanent Diaconate Formation Programs. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (Effective 12/26/2004).
- PR** Diocese of Cheyenne, diaconal formation program requirement, set by Formation Board, but may be altered or waived by board action.

¹ DN
² DN
³ DN
⁴ PR
⁵ PR
⁶ DN
⁷ PR
⁸ PR
⁹ DN
¹⁰ PR
¹¹ ND 138
¹² DN

¹³ CIC 1031 §2

¹⁴ DN