



CATHOLIC DIOCESE
OF LEXINGTON

Roman Catholic Diocese of Lexington, KY

GUIDE FOR THE USE OF COUNCILS, COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES, & TASK FORCES
Roman Catholic Diocese of Lexington

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Guide for the Use of Councils, Commissions, Committees, & Task Forces Roman Catholic Diocese of Lexington

The Bishop and his pastors, rectors, and parish life directors have recourse to certain internal ecclesial bodies to aid them in pastoral ministry and the temporal administration. In the Catholic Diocese of Lexington, these bodies include councils, commissions, committees, and task forces. These bodies are either provided for in the Code of Canon Law or established by the diocesan bishop.

The purpose of this guide is twofold. First, it seeks to describe the particular function of each group in order to clarify its role and, thereby, assist diocesan and parish/school leadership in discerning which may be the most appropriate in a given set of circumstances. Second, the guide aims to help those who are appointed or elected to these bodies to better understand their purpose and scope, i.e. to better understand what is being asked of them by the Church.

I. Councils

A. Role

1. At the diocesan level, a council serves as a **consultative** body to the Bishop.
2. At the parish level, a council serves as a **consultative** body to the pastor/rector/parish life director.

B. Types/General Functions of Councils

1. Pastoral Council

- a. The Code of Canon Law (536) provides for the establishment of a pastoral council.
- b. The pastoral council assists in the creation of a long-term vision and plan that aligns with the diocesan pastoral plan and that addresses the seven elements that form the essence of parish life:

- Evangelization
- Worship
- Word
- Community
- Service
- Stewardship
- Leadership



c. See the Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines at www.cdlex.org for more detail.

2. Finance Council

a. The Code of Canon Law (537) **requires** the establishment of a finance council.

b. The finance council advises in matters pertaining to the financial affairs and the administration of the temporalities of the chancery, parish, and school.

c. The finance council has **deliberative** power to approve or to decline to approve the annual budget. However, the decision of the finance council must be **accepted** and **ratified** by the bishop (chancery level) or the pastor/rector/parish life director (parish/school level).

d. See the Finance Council Guidelines at www.cdlex.org for more details.

3. School Council

a. Participates in strategic planning, develops/defends/evaluates school policy approved by the pastor and implemented by the principal, and develops and monitors plans/means to finance education programs including tuition, development and fundraising, and resource allocation.

b. Serves as a public relations resource and assists in the selection of the principal as needed.

c. See the School Council Guidelines at www.cdlex.org for more details.

C. Beyond the Purview of Councils

1. Councils do not review decisions of the administration (e.g. the councils do not hear appeals from employees involved in a conflict resolution process).

2. Councils do not implement, regulate, or enforce policies and procedures.

3. Councils do not get involved in specific personnel or student issues.

4. School councils do not select curriculum.

II. Commissions

A. Role

1. Commissions are formed for and charged with leading specific **diocesan-wide** mission under the oversight of a specific chancery office.
2. Diocesan commissions are to utilize the [Diocesan Pastoral Plan Process](#) by assessing the needs of the diocese, developing ministry initiatives, implementing an action plan, and continually evaluating commission efforts.

B. Types of Commissions

1. Ministry-Related Commissions

- a) Seek to advance the ministerial work and outreach of chancery-level ministry offices.
- b) Ministry-related commissions include the Peace and Justice Commission, African-American Concerns Commission, *Laudato Si* Commission, and the LGBT Outreach Commission which operated out of the Peace and Justice office at the chancery.

2. Administration-Related Commissions

- a) Seek to assist chancery-level offices with the administration of the Catholic Diocese of Lexington through contributing subject matter expertise.
- b) Administration-related commissions include the Building Commission operating out of the Finance office at the chancery.

III. Committees

A. Role

1. Committees are convened to accomplish a specific purpose through investigation, research, direct action, and/or reporting so as to contribute to greater operating efficiency or aid in the decision-making process of leadership.
2. Committees are typically formed by and report to councils or diocesan/parish/school offices. For example, a pastoral council is required to have three standing committees: formation, service/social concerns, and liturgy.

B. Types of Committees

1. A standing committee is a permanent committee established to address recurring needs within the life of the Church.
2. An ad hoc committee is a temporary committee formed to address short-term, non-recurring tasks or needs of the Church.

IV. Task Forces

A. Role

1. Similar to an ad hoc committee, a task force is a temporary body created to accomplish a definite objective. A task force is time-bound and outcome-focused.
2. A task force exists to support the mission, strategic objectives, or program activities of a particular chancery, parish, or school office.

Appendix 1: Councils and Reporting Relationships

A System of Checks & Balances



Appendix 2: Inter-Council Relationships

