

Diocese of La Crosse



Communication Policies & Procedures

The Communications Department of the Diocese of La Crosse is committed to sending the right message to the right people at the right time. To accomplish this, we put these policies and procedures in place to ensure effective use of diocesan communication resources.

Purpose:

This policies and procedures document contains the particulars for diocesan communication within the curia, to member parishes, to the public media and to the surrounding community. Content of all communications must follow the doctrinal and moral teaching of the Church. All communication is a reflection of the entire diocese and must be developed with the highest ethical and legal standards consistent with Catholic teachings.

Distribution:

This document will be made available to all pastors, parish staff, and the general public on the diocesan website diolc.org.

Scope:

These policies and procedures apply to the following types of communication:

Internal Communication: Communication that occurs within the curia and to member parishes.

Examples:

- Chancery Bulletin
- General announcements
- Email communications
- Printed materials

External Communication: Communication that occurs between the Office for Communications and the public media or the curia offices to the surrounding community.

Examples:

- Crisis communications
- Press releases
- Media interviews
- Diocesan magazine
- Diocesan website
- Diocesan social media
- Diocesan radio program
- Diocesan and parish event promotion

Procedures

Requests to the Communications Department:

1. All communication requests must be submitted a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the date the information needs to be released/delivered and entered into the project management system Basecamp®.
2. All communication requests must be reviewed by the Communications Director.
3. A response and schedule for all communication requests will be provided by the Communications Department within 5 business days of the request.
4. Should any person make a request that is denied and the person feels the communication request is vital, the person may request a meeting with the Moderator of the Curia.

Internal communications

1. Chancery Bulletin
 - a. All entries should follow the submission guidelines, be entered as early as possible and no later than noon on the Monday prior to the Tuesday date of delivery.
 - b. The Chancellor or his representative will review each bulletin before delivery and make edits as appropriate.

2. General announcements

- a. Announcements of general interest will be limited. The preferred communication method for such announcements will be the Chancery Bulletin.

3. Email communications

- a. It is recommended that all electronic communications coming from a diocesan office, parish or school be on a domain for the corresponding organization. Example: Secretary@allsaintsparish.org, or Info@allsaintsparish.org.
- b. It is recommended that clergy use an email with the diocesan domain diolclergy.org or one from their parish domain.
- c. It is recommended that parish and school staff eliminate the use of free domains such as Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo, and other such services when representing the diocese/parish/school via email correspondence. Adherence to this recommendation will establish an authenticity of the correspondence and reduce the potential for misrepresentation or impersonation.
- d. All email sent or received using a diocesan issued account is the property of the diocese and not the property of the recipient or the sender.
- e. Email communication should be related to diocesan business only, maintain email etiquette, and respect the privacy of individuals.
- f. An email archive should be maintained by each account holder as appropriate.
- g. Approved messages for large distributions (i.e. parishes, schools or parishioners) will be sent by the Office for Communications and will include a subject line, necessary verbiage and images. Large distributions consist of diocesan or parish wide communication or communication sent in bulk.
- h. Complete email protocol can be found in the diocesan computer policy diolc.org/files/safe-environment/ComputerPolicy.pdf.

4. Printed materials

- a. Intended final formatted document(s) must be submitted along with the planned method for distribution for approval by the Communications Director.
- b. Printed materials are typically created by the diocesan Graphic Manager who will use an approved production method.
- c. Printing costs must fall within the requesting department's budget.
- d. Final documents can be printed via use of department equipment or an approved printing company.

- e. Final printed documents will be distributed by the office making the request.

External Communications

1. Crisis communications

- a. There may be times when a situation is threatening or could threaten to harm people or property, seriously disrupt operations or have the potential to significantly damage the reputation of the Diocese of La Crosse, its parishes or its schools. If you experience such a situation, or suspect one will develop, immediately contact the Director of the Office for Communications.
- b. All media inquiries should be directed to the Office for Communications, the official diocesan outlet.
- c. Crisis communications will be developed following these guidelines:
 - 1. Verify the situation
 - 2. Gather a response team
 - 3. Assess the channels to be used
 - 4. Create the messages
 - 5. Review messages with the response team for approval
 - 6. Release the messages
 - 7. Monitor the feedback
- d. It is vital during crisis situations that everyone has a coordinated voice to minimize inaccurate versions of the crisis or the response. If you have questions or concerns about the situation, contact the Office for Communications.
- e. For policies and procedures on the publication of clergy names with sufficiently confirmed allegations of child sexual abuse, please refer to Chapter 2 found on page 13 of the Sept. 25, 2019, Child Sexual Abuse Policy and Procedures (Green Book).

2. Press Releases

- a. All press releases from the Diocese of La Crosse will be disseminated from the Office for Communications.
- b. The Office for Communications will develop and maintain lists of media who should receive messages from the Diocese of La Crosse.
- c. If you wish to have a press release developed to promote a significant diocesan event, please contact the Office for Communications at least two weeks prior to the anticipated date of the release to allow for time to develop and get the necessary approvals.

3. Media Interviews

- a. All requests for media interviews should be coordinated by the Office for Communications.
4. Diocesan magazine
 - a. The two-part focus of *Catholic Life* is to inform and enrich those active in their Catholic Faith and to inspire and awaken those who are not.
 - b. *Catholic Life* magazine, the official diocesan publication, is sent to all families. Catholiclife.dioc.org is its companion website.
 - c. Diocesan clergy provide recommendations for witness stories while all curia department directors are encouraged to provide articles for the printed magazine or electronic distribution.
 5. Diocesan website dioc.org
 - a. The content of the diocesan website dioc.org will be maintained primarily by the curia ministry office the content pertains to.
 - b. The Communications Department will oversee effective management and maintenance of dioc.org. Particular visual or navigational changes will be coordinated with the curia office.
 - c. Every effort will be made to ensure that all information on dioc.org is accurate and timely.
 6. Diocesan social media
 - a. All requests for information to be displayed on social media sites should be submitted to the Communications Director.
 - b. All requests for posting information should be submitted at least two days prior to the date of the actual post. As postings can be scheduled, more advance notice is appreciated.
 7. Diocesan radio program
 - a. *Connecting the Diocese* radio program is a weekly ministry outreach to the people of the Diocese of La Crosse. Topic and guest suggestions should be coordinated through the Office for Communications.
 8. Diocesan and parish events
 - a. A general electronic diocesan calendar can be found at dioc.org/calendar. Each curia department should list their events as soon as the date has been reserved.

- b. A Facebook event will be created for all diocesan events listed on diolc.org/calendar.
- c. Parishes are encouraged to add their events to the diocesan calendar by sending a message to datebook@diolc.org.
- d. If your event includes a speaker on faith or morals, please ensure you are complying with the diocesan [speaker policy](#).

Use and dissemination of staff and parishioner lists and contact information:

1. The primary record of parish staff and parishioner information is contained in the ParishSOFT census database and is considered the single source of truth. Other systems containing duplicate information will rely on the ParishSOFT census database for accuracy and should have a scheme to synchronize changes to maintain accuracy. All edits will be done in the ParishSOFT database, typically at the parish level.
2. The confidentiality of staff and parishioner contact information should be maintained. Lists containing any information including addresses, phone numbers or email addresses should never be disseminated to any outside source or vendor.
3. Should an individual request to be taken off a contact list, the individual's parish should be notified so they can correctly acknowledge and fulfill the request using the ParishSOFT census database. Diocesan edits to the ParishSOFT database should be done only in communication with the respective parish.
4. Curia members should have access to parish staff and parishioner contact information contained in the ParishSOFT census database.

Roles & Responsibilities

Communications Director

Develop and implement the communication strategies of the Diocese of La Crosse, consistent with the Mission and Vision, to create positive community relations and inform curia, parish staff and parishioners of the diocesan initiatives and successes. Design, implement, and update an annual communications plan. Communicate with a wide range of diocesan stakeholders through various broadcast, print, and online media to promote the work of the diocese and ensure a positive image is represented in all communications.

Facilitate development and production of a wide variety of materials (e.g. long and short form video projects, diocesan publications, newsletters, websites, booklets, brochures, posters, etc.)
Oversee and maintain the diocesan use of social media. Coordinate all public and media

relations. Prepare and distribute news releases, arrange media interviews. and responds to media requests. Oversee and maintain the diocesan web site.

Communications Committee

As an advisory committee to the diocesan bishop, the committee is comprised of a mix of curia leadership staff, parish clergy and lay members. The purpose of the Communications Committee is to build better bridges in communication between diocesan efforts and the parish communities. One goal is to establish better communication processes and maintain these processes in accordance with the needs of the parishioners of the Diocese of La Crosse. The Communications Committee's scope of responsibilities includes developing, updating and/or maintaining multiple communication channels for the Diocese of La Crosse.

Quality Updates

This document should be reviewed by the Diocesan Communications Committee every two years and updated accordingly. Last revised September 2021.

Should there be a change in the policies or procedures at any point in time prior to the two-year cycle, the document should be updated and redistributed to inform users of changes to this document.