

Women in Diocesan Leadership Positions: A Progress Report

(The following is an edited version of a report prepared by William Daly, National Association of Church Personnel Administrators, at the request of the Committee on Women in Society and in the Church, National Conference of Catholic Bishops. For a complete copy please e-mail: women@usccb.org)

In *From Words to Deeds*, its most recent statement on the role of women in the church, the US Bishops' Committee on Women in Society and the Church established three goals for promoting an increased appreciation of women in church life. The second goal focuses on the appointment of women to church leadership positions. The Bishops' Committee also suggested that progress on this second goal be tracked and evaluated.

In light of these initiatives, the Bishops' Committee asked the [National Association of Church Personnel Administrators](#) (NACPA) to share information it has gathered concerning the employment of women in positions of leadership in dioceses and archdioceses. Since 1990, NACPA has annually compiled data on the gender of persons in diocesan administrative and professional positions. This data is gathered as part of a survey of salaries paid to diocesan staff members.

Survey Results: 1995 - 1998

The survey statistics for the 1995 through 1998 period are interesting. They show women holding approximately one-quarter of top diocesan positions, 40% to 50% of middle management positions and 60% of non-supervisory professional positions in the 50% of US Catholic dioceses that participated in the survey. The position levels are defined fully in Exhibit 2 but can be briefly sketched with Level 1 corresponding to top positions, Levels 2 and 3 to middle management positions, and Level 4 to nonsupervisory professional positions. Some growth appears to have occurred at most levels in most of the years reviewed. Overall, small but steady growth in women's employment transpired in the participating dioceses, judging from the summary for all positions.

Table 1. - Diocesan Workforce Statistics, NACPA Survey, 1995-98

Year	Gender Category	Level 1 Positions	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Total in All 55 Positions
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1995	Employees Women % Women	319 75 23.5%	686 274 39.9%	504 247 49.0%	471 285 60.5%	1,980 881 44.5%
1996	Employees Women % Women	344 92 26.7%	790 316 40.0%	553 271 49.0%	552 335 60.7%	2,239 1,014 45.3%
1997	Employees Women % Women	359 92 25.6%	805 331 41.1%	582 302 51.9%	548 337 61.5%	2,294 1,062 46.3%
1998	Employees Women % Women	350 91 26.0%	851 341 40.1%	572 300 52.4%	564 358 63.5%	2,337 1,090 46.6%

Table 1 displays the total positions and the numbers and percentages of women employees reported by participating dioceses during the period from 1995 through 1998. The data on Table 1 give evidence of a very gradual increase in the percentage of women in the US diocesan workforce, especially at Levels 1, 3 and 4, each of which increased by approximately 3%. Level 2 remained static during this period.

Similar growth is seen when viewing together the total of all positions surveyed. Women occupied 44.5% of all surveyed positions in 1995. That percentage grew to 46.6% by 1998. These percentages of women's employment in dioceses fluctuated in a narrow range around the averages for the period which are displayed below.

Table 2. - Average Percentage of Women in Diocesan Workplaces, NACPA Survey 1995-98

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
25.5%	40.3%	50.6%	61.5%	45.7%

The percentage of women occupying positions at various levels of diocesan employment can be better understood by reviewing the types of positions that make up each level in diocesan offices. This is most easily seen by examining Table 3. It lists the fifty-five specific positions covered by the survey during the 1995-98 period. For the survey, individual dioceses determine the placement of positions into the levels. As can be seen on Table 3, the independent decisions of dioceses result in largely consistent placement into levels with a number of positions falling into more than one level, depending on the structure of the diocese.

In addition to describing the positions in this study, Table 3 displays the percentages of women incumbents in survey positions for the most recent survey (1998). The percentages of women incumbents are relatively high for pastoral and educational positions and lower for financial and facilities positions.

Table 3. Specific Positions in Survey, Common Level, Gender Composition

Survey Position Titles	Most Common Level in Organization	Total Positions in Survey	Positions Held by Women	
			Number	Percent
Pastoral Services Positions				
Chief Pastoral Services		32	17	
Director Liturgy/Worship	1	64	29	53.1%
Director Youth Ministry	2, 3	69	30	43.5%
Director Family Life	2, 3	56	33	43.5%
Director Ethnic Ministry	2, 3	59	31	58.9%
Director Campus Ministry	2, 3	25	7	52.5%
Director Evangelization	2, 3	20	14	28.0%
	2			70.0%
Administrative Positions				
Chief Operations Position		63	8	
Chief Financial/Administrative	1	80	5	12.7%
Director Finance/Treasurer	1	36	8	6.3%
Manager Payroll	2	32	26	22.2%
Director Accounting	3, 4	57	35	81.3%
Staff Accountant	3, 4	99	65	61.4%
Internal Auditor	4	28	16	65.7%
Chief Personnel Position	3, 4	21	7	57.1%
Director Personnel/HR	1	55	27	33.3%
Assistant Director Personnel	2	14	13	49.1%
Employee Benefits Coordinator	3, 4	38	33	92.9%
Director Insurance Programs	4	23	11	86.8%
Director Computer Center	2, 3	45	11	47.8%
P.C. Specialist/Technician	2, 3	40	20	24.4%
Programmer Analyst	3, 4	22	8	50.0%
Director Cemeteries	4	27	3	36.4%
Plant/Facilities Officer	2	37	2	11.1%
Building/Grounds Superintendent	2, 3	53	2	5.4%
Director Purchasing	3, 4	5	0	3.8%
Manager Printing Services	3, 4	14	4	0.0%
Executive Secretary to Bishop	3, 4	60	53	28.6%
Director Planning/Research	3, 4	23	9	88.3%
Archivist	2, 3	38	9	39.1%
	3, 4		18	47.4%
Education Services Positions				
Chief Education Services	1	37	21	
Superintendent of Schools	1, 2	72	43	56.8%
Assoc. Supt./Curriculum Specialist	3, 4	64	54	59.7%
Director Religious Education	2	77	49	84.4%
Religious Education Consultant	3, 4	63	50	63.6%
Media Services Coordinator	3, 4	22	17	79.4%
Director of Lay Ministry Formation	2, 3	32	25	77.3%
				78.1%
Community Services Positions				
Chief Community Services	1	36	9	
Exec. Director Catholic Charities	1, 2	65	29	25.0%
Director Catholic Social Action	2, 3	38	24	44.6%
Asst. Dir. Catholic Social Action	4	19	9	63.2%
Director Rural Life	3, 4	8	4	47.4%

				50.0%
External Affairs Positions				
Chief External Affairs	1	26	6	
Director Development	1, 2, 3	69	21	23.1%
Director Annual Giving	3	21	11	30.4%
Director Planned/Estate Giving	3	14	2	52.4%
Director Communications/PR	2	46	23	14.3%
Chief Editor Newspaper	2	55	22	50.0%
Staff Writer	4	58	39	40.0%
				67.2%
Clergy Services Positions				
Director Vocations	2, 3	53	2	
Director Permanent Deacon Formation	2, 3	18	2	3.8%
Director Permanent Diaconate	2, 3	23	2	11.1%
				8.7%
Tribunal Positions				
Director Tribunal	1, 2	64	13	
Canon Lawyer	3, 4	62	22	20.3%
Tribunal Auditor	4	60	46	35.5%
				76.7%
TOTAL POSITIONS IN SURVEY		2,337	1,090	46.6%

Exhibit 2. Descriptions of Levels as Utilized in NACPA Salary Surveys

(Dioceses differ in organizational structure. Some do not have positions at all the levels described below.)

Level 1: Positions at this level typically report directly to the Arch/Bishop and oversee a major segment of the Arch/diocesan central offices including several major offices or departments. Level 1 positions oversee Level 2 positions, themselves responsible for offices with staffing. Examples of Level 1 positions include the chief position responsible for the entire diocesan education program, including schools and religious education, or the chief position responsible for administrative and financial affairs in a diocese. The Chief of Staff position which supervises most other diocesan positions, sometimes filled by the Vicar General or Moderator of the Curia would be placed here.

Level 2: Positions at this level report either to the Bishop, to the Moderator of the Curia, Chief of Staff, or a Level 1 position. They supervise other staff including Program Directors, Associate Directors and professional staff as well as support staff positions. Level 2 positions direct large or major offices and are typically responsible for budget, staff supervision and program content for their offices. Examples of positions at this level include the positions responsible for the diocesan finance office or the diocesan religious education office.

Level 3: Positions at this level report directly to Level 1 or Level 2 positions. One or more Level 4 positions may report to this level. Level 3 positions are responsible for managing a small or medium sized program or for supervising a portion of a large office and are typically responsible for program content and staff supervision. Positions at this level include Program Directors who may supervise secretarial staff or Associate Directors responsible for supervising other professional staff.

Level 4: Positions at this level report directly to a higher level administrator and do not supervise other professional staff but may supervise support staff positions. Level 4 positions are professional staff members, responsible for operating as technical experts in an area of specialization and/or for managing a small or medium sized work unit comprised primarily of support staff positions. In many dioceses positions at this level include religious education consultants, curriculum specialists, accountants and computer programmers.

Comparisons: 1991 - 1994 and 1995 - 1998

As indicated earlier, NACPA has gathered information about the numbers of women occupying diocesan positions since 1990. An analysis of the period from 1991 through 1995 was published in 1996. This earlier study makes possible a comparison of two four year periods. Such a comparison can yield a better sense of movement, if any, in the employment of women in diocesan positions. When the two four year periods, 1991-94 and 1995-98, are compared, we find increases in the top (Level 1) positions and the non-supervisory professional (Level 4) positions. The middle management (Levels 2 and 3) positions show no statistical change between the two periods.

The statistics for the period from 1991-1995 were based on a smaller group of 39 representative positions. In 1995 the diocesan survey was expanded to include 16 additional positions. Expanding to 55 positions allowed greater coverage of level 3 and level 4 positions and a more balanced database.

Diocesan workforce demographics were estimated during the earlier time period on the basis of fewer positions. Does this affect the resulting analysis? The 1995 database was examined to calculate the impact of the added positions on the data, to ascertain whether this change would skew the results in one direction or the other. Analysis of the 1995 database using the 39 position set and the 55 position set produced very similar results.

The percentage of women in the reporting dioceses for Level 1 positions is identical, using either the 39 or 55 position database. The percentage of women is slightly lower for Level 2 positions using the 55 position database. The percentage of women is slightly higher for Level 3 and 4 positions using the 55 position database. The difference for all positions, 2.5% higher for the 55 position database, is primarily due to the greater number of positions at levels 3 and 4 in the 55 position database. This is due to the following factors: Level 3 and 4 positions have the highest ratio of women employees; a higher ratio of such positions in the database will increase the overall percentage of women correspondingly.

The 39 position database includes an unrealistically small proportion of lower management and professional positions. For this reason, the 39 position database appears to understate the overall representation of women in diocesan administrative and professional positions during the 1991-94 period. The 55 position database appears to better reflect the reality of diocesan workplaces. Thus, the percentages shown on Exhibit 4 for the 1991-94 period may be slightly low for the Level 3 and 4 positions as well as for the all position data. To put it another way, the all position

data would undoubtedly have been higher if the 55 position database were available and used at that time.

Comparisons by Diocesan Size and Geographical Region

The responses of dioceses participating in the survey can be examined to identify workforce demographics by size of diocese and by region. The Catholic population within a diocese is used to determine diocesan size categories. Large dioceses serve Catholic populations over 350,000. Medium sized dioceses serve between 150,000 and 350,000 Catholics. Small dioceses serve Catholic populations under 150,000.

There are only small differences based on size. Interestingly, the large dioceses consistently report smaller percentages of women administrative and professional staff, averaging 42% over the four years between 1995 and 1998. The small and medium size dioceses averaged 47% to 48% over the same period. Turning to regional analysis of the database, the South is the strongest employer of women administrative and professional staff, averaging 52.3% over the four year period. The West follows closely at 50.6%. The Midwest and Central regions both averaged close to the overall average at 44%. Finally, the Northeast reported the smallest ratio of women administrators at 38.2%. Definitions of the regions can be found at the end of this report.

Comparison With US Workforce

How does the diocesan workplace compare to society-at-large? The US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) regularly produces information about the US workforce which can help answer this question. The BLS reports annually on the number and percentage of women in the workforce. In 1998, women made up 46.2% of the overall US workforce and 44.4% of the executive, administrative and managerial employment category of US workers. These percentages were very similar to the percentage of women working in responding diocesan central offices in 1998 (46.6%).

Geographical Regions

The geographical breakdown by regions used in this report is as follows:

Northeast	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont (NCCB Regions 1-3)
South	Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington DC, West Virginia (NCCB Regions 4-5)
Midwest	Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin (NCCB Regions 6-7)

Central Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota,
Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas (NCCB Regions 8-10)

West Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana,
Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming (NCCB
Regions 11-13)