I. Introduction

“The Ministry Coordinator, must always be qualified and well trained, as well as have an excellent reputation. He or she facilitates the people, programming, and resources of the parish or school community in a comprehensive ministry effort. The coordinator is primarily responsible for facilitating planning, administering programs, developing a leadership system for adult and youth leaders (recruitment, training, and support), and serving as an advocate and link for young people to the faith community and wider community.” (Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry, p. 41)

“Training for youth ministry should be as comprehensive as the responsibilities are and should employ all the principles of sound adult faith formation. Adequate training in the Church’s mission of evangelization and catechesis in general and youth catechesis in particular should be a minimum requirement for all youth ministers. Dioceses with the help of Catholic universities and organizations should provide that training for youth ministers and, if possible, develop certification programs in which all dimensions of youth ministry can be developed over a period of time. Whether coordinators of youth ministry work full-time or part-time, they should be provided compensation and benefits appropriate to their efforts.” (National Directory for Catechesis, p.226)

“Lay persons who permanently or temporarily devote themselves to special service of the Church are obliged to acquire the appropriate formation required to fulfill their function properly and to carry out this function conscientiously, eagerly, and diligently.” (Code of Canon Law 231, §1)

In the Diocese of Columbus, youth ministry is the responsibility of parishes and schools in collaboration with the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry and other diocesan offices and agencies. The goal of this certification process, in conjunction with other opportunities for continuous improvement, is to foster the total formation of the coordinator of youth ministry and other adult leaders in youth ministry. The objectives of this process are based upon the National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers serving as Youth Ministry Leaders (see Appendix G), created by The Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers (including the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry) and approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Commission on Certification and Accreditation.

The certification of lay ecclesial ministers yields many compelling benefits, including providing coordinators of youth ministry with a meaningful credential. While this process is designed for parish coordinators of youth ministry and high school campus ministers, the process would also be beneficial for DREs/CREs, youth ministry team members, pastoral ministers and others who work with adolescents in the Catholic Diocese of Columbus.

Formation is an on-going process. While the handbook outlines the courses and procedures developed by the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry (OYYAM), this certification process and the individuals seeking this certification have benefited greatly from the work of our
collaborative partners in the Office of Religious Education and Catechesis (OREC) and other diocesan offices.

The certification process includes an Introductory, Basic, and Advanced Diocesan Certificate in Youth Ministry, and a Diocesan Certificate in Pastoral Juvenil Hispana, as well as a diocesan process for the completion of National Certification* as a Lay Ecclesial Minister serving as a Youth Ministry Leader. As indicated in OCS Policy #411.24, all High School Campus Ministers shall be certified in youth ministry. All Parish Coordinators of Youth Ministry are expected to attain and maintain certification in youth ministry and Advanced Certification in Catechesis. Volunteers in youth ministry, DREs, and other pastoral ministers are encouraged to get an Introductory and/or Basic Diocesan Certificate in Youth Ministry.

* Note: **Certification** differs from a **certificate**, such as those certificates which are granted at the conclusion of the diocesan certificate processes. Certification is the result of a formal assessment process and granted by a duly authorized agency, such as the National Certification granted by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, as part of the Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers, approved by the USCCB. Certification also requires renewal in order to be maintained, which requires continuing education and development. By completing the requirements for the Diocesan Advanced Certificate in Youth Ministry through the courses offered by the Diocese, or other approved courses, an individual will have all the core and specialized competencies required to apply for National Certification as a Youth Ministry Leader. The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry will assist any individuals working toward National Certification, and has laid out the following Diocesan Certification Process to help individuals in these efforts.