



Guide to Cluster Plan Organization Options

This guide is a companion to the “Cluster Plan Organization Options” so the form can be easily reviewed and discussed in order for the cluster leadership to reach consensus on the organizational model for the cluster. The completion of a plan can be accomplished in three (3) easy steps.

1. Each pastoral council member should be given a copy of the “Cluster Plan Organization Options” and the “Guide.” The member should complete his or her option preferences prior to the parish pastoral council meeting which will determine the preferred plan of the parish.
2. Each parish pastoral council meets to reach consensus on their preferred options for the cluster. *(If the parishes already have a shared council, this step can be skipped.)*
3. All the parish pastoral councils in the cluster *(or a pre-determined number of representatives from each parish pastoral council)* meet to reach consensus on the plan. After final review and signatures, the plan is submitted to the Office for Planning and Councils for review and then approval by the Archbishop.

Each option under a specific aspect of parish ministry is explained below.

Pastoral Leadership	One Pastor – When a cluster is put in place, the Archbishop will assign one pastor for the entire cluster.
	Associate Pastor/Parochial Vicar – if the cluster is of a size where additional priests are available/needed, other priest(s) can be assigned.
Deacon(s)	Serve All Parishes – When a cluster is put in place, the assignments of deacons will be changed so that they serve all the parishes in the cluster.
	Request a Deacon for All Parishes – Cluster’s which do not have any deacons may request the assignment of a deacon. The request is not a guarantee that a deacon will be available.
Pastoral Staff	Separate Staffs – Parishes in a cluster can function with their own staffs.
	Some Shared Staff – Parishes may find it advantageous to look at ways of combining some ministries or allowing some staff to specialize in certain areas of ministry at all the parishes in the cluster.
	One Staff – Parishes can plan to eventually have one staff for all the parishes in the cluster.
Administrative Services	One Certified Director of Administrative Services – One DAS for all the parishes.
	Certified DAS in each parish – Each parish has its own Director.



Parish Office	Separate Offices – Each parish retains its own office or there are multiple office sites, not necessarily at every site.
	One Office – All the parish offices are combined at one site.
Catholic School(s)	Single School Supported by Single Parish – Each parish school is operated and funded by a single parish.
	Single School Supported by Area Parishes – All the parishes in the cluster support the Catholic school by promoting enrollment and providing a financial subsidy.
	Area Schools Sharing Positions and/or Governance – School ministry is shared by all the parishes and includes shared governance and staffing.
	Consolidated/Regionalization of Schools – Cluster participates in a larger school entity serving a geographical area which may be achieved by the consolidation of school sites.
Trustees	Both on Pastoral and Finance Councils – Both trustees serve on both councils.
	One on Pastoral, one on Finance – In clusters with larger numbers of parishes, pastoral councils can be primarily made up of trustees. Splitting the trustee assignments can provide for more “at large” members.
Pastoral Council	Joint Meeting and Separate Council Meetings – The pastoral councils meet on same evening jointly to discuss cluster items and then separately to discuss parish issues.
	Combined Council – There is one pastoral council with includes representatives from each parish in the cluster.
Finance Council	Joint meeting with separate council meetings – Each parish must retain its own financial council. However, the councils meet jointly to discuss cluster items and then separately to discuss parish issues.
Committees	Separate Committees – Each parish retains its own committees.
	Some Shared – Some committees may be shared because of shared staff or a desire for greater committee effectiveness.
	Combined Committees – All committees are shared for greater committee effectiveness.
Funding for Shared Ministers/ Ministries	Equal Assessment – When there are parishes of equal sizes in a cluster, each parish can be assessed an equal share of joint expenses.
	Proportional Assessment Based on Number of Parishioners – When there are parishes of varying memberships, assessments are determined by a formula based on the total number of parishioners in the cluster and the percentage of members from each parish.