



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG

NEWS

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Roman Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg Officially Launches Survivor Compensation Program

HARRISBURG, Pa. – Today, Tuesday, February 12, 2019, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg is formally launching its Survivor Compensation Program. This Program will be administered by Commonwealth Mediation & Conciliation, Inc. (CMCI).

“The establishment of the Survivor Compensation Program is another step forward in our Diocese’s efforts to show our support to survivors of clergy child sexual abuse,” said Bishop Ronald W. Gainer. “While we understand that financial compensation will not repair or erase the heartache and damage done by the abuse these survivors have suffered, we hope and pray this support can help to improve their lives. These settlements will serve as further recognition that the Church acknowledges these terrible abuses did occur and we hope that this Program will help advance survivors on their path towards healing.

“As I have spoken with survivors and parishioners during our listening sessions on this subject, one consistent message was delivered and is that many survivors want a chance to sit down and tell their story. The Survivor Compensation Program we have established will allow survivors, if they so choose, to sit down with our Program Administrators (CMCI) and discuss the abuses that took place. We believe these discussions are an important part of this process and we hope they will aid in the healing process by providing the survivors an opportunity to be heard and a chance to know we believe them.

“In my own name, and in the name of the Diocesan Church of Harrisburg, I express our profound sorrow and apologize to the survivors of child sex abuse, the Catholic faithful and the general public for the abuses that took place and for those Church officials who failed to

protect children. We have and continue to take steps forward to ensure these abuses never occur again.”

Our Program will include settlements for abuse by Diocesan Priests, Deacons and Seminarians, as well as Priests of other dioceses and Religious Order Priests who had faculties in the Diocese of Harrisburg at the time of the abuse. To participate in the Program, a claimant must have previously identified themselves to the Diocese on or before February 11, 2019. The claims period will run for 90 days, from February 12 through May 13. Additional information regarding eligibility and the Program are detailed below. Survivors who come forward after the February 11, 2019 deadline will be considered for future participation in the Program.

To participate in the Survivor Compensation Program, please call our program administrator CMCI at 1-800-540-2624 or email Harrisburg@commonwealthmediation.com. Forms are available at www.commonwealthmediation.com or www.youthprotectionhbg.com.

Participation in the Survivor Compensation Program does not disqualify survivors from receiving additional counselling through the Victim Assistance Coordinator and Catholic Charities. Catholic Charities provides counselling services and/or reimbursement for counselling services with an approved provider for all survivors of child sexual abuse, not just clergy child sexual abuse, regardless of whether or not that abuse occurred in the Harrisburg Diocese.

Funding for the Survivor Compensation Program will come in the form of a loan from the Priest’s Retirement Fund, other existing Diocesan assets and hopefully from insurance proceeds. Money that is collected in the parishes and for the Diocesan Annual Campaign (formerly known as the Bishop’s Lenten Appeal) will not go towards the funding of this Program.

The Survivor Compensation Program will be administered independently from the Diocese by Paul Finn of Commonwealth Mediation & Conciliation, Inc.

Finn and his firm successfully oversaw similar programs in the Archdiocese of Boston, the Diocese of Fall River (MA), the Diocese of Providence (RI), the Diocese of Springfield (MA), the Diocese of Jackson (MS), the Archdiocese of Milwaukee (WI), as well as in the Horace Mann School (Bronx, NY), and the Kamehameha School (Honolulu, HI). Further, CMCI has mediated claims involving the Rhode Island Station Fire (Providence, RI), Deutsche Bank (New York, NY), and the Big Dig Tunnel Collapse (Boston, MA).

This Survivor Compensation Program is one piece of the Diocese’s efforts to address child sexual abuse within the Church. Under Bishop Gainer’s leadership, the Church has released all allegations received against priests, clergy or seminarians and posted that list publicly ([click here to view list](#)); removed names of clergy from positions of honor for abuses as well as the names of Bishops for not doing enough to stop these atrocities from occurring; waived all non-disclosure provisions from settlement agreements; implemented a new Youth Protection Policy; and contracted with retired State Police Captain Janet McNeal to oversee the Safe

Environment Program. During her career in the State Police, Janet oversaw the Megan's Law registry.

Details Regarding the Survivor Compensation Program:

The Program is intended to provide compensation to those survivors of childhood sexual abuse committed by clergy and certain other persons associated with the Diocese of Harrisburg.

I. Eligibility for the Program:

A. Claimants eligible:

1. The person is alleging childhood sexual abuse. "Childhood sexual abuse" means sexual molestation or sexual exploitation of a child (a person under the age of 18) and other behavior by which an adult uses a child as an object of sexual gratification, including attempted behavior.

2. The allegation is against a priest, deacon, or seminarian of the Diocese; OR the allegation is against a priest or deacon from another diocese who had faculties in the Diocese at the time of the abuse; OR the allegation is against a priest or brother from a religious order who had faculties in the Diocese at the time of the abuse.

3. The person has previously identified themselves as a survivor of childhood sexual abuse to the Diocese on or before **February 11, 2019**.

B. Claimants NOT eligible:

1. The person has previously settled the claim with the Diocese.

2. The childhood sexual abuse has no connection to the Diocese of Harrisburg (e.g., a claim of abuse in New Mexico by clergy in New Mexico).

II. Program Administration

A. Administrators

1. The Program will be administered by Commonwealth Mediation and Conciliation, Inc. (CMCI), including Paul Finn, Jon Prouty, Brian Mone, and Robert Berks.

2. **The administrators will be completely independent from the Diocese.**

III. Program Process

A. Claims Period

1. The Claims Period of the Program will run for 90 days: from **February 12, 2019** through **May 13, 2019**.

2. Within 14 days of the close of the Claims Period, CMCI shall notify all claimants as to their eligibility, under the criteria set forth above.

3. CMCI will hear all claims, and make settlement offers to the claimants **on or before June 28, 2019**.

B. Claims Submission

1. Claims will be made by eligible claimants on a Program questionnaire.

2. Claims will be submitted directly to CMCI.

3. CMCI also has a telephone number that claimants or potential claimants can call.
4. Regardless of whether the claimant is eligible for the Program, any claim submitted by a claimant to the Program that involves a victim whose claim has not been previously reported to law enforcement will be reported by the Diocese to ChildLine and the appropriate District Attorney.

C. **Claims Administration**

1. CMCI will administer all claims through in-person meetings with claimants in central Pennsylvania, at a venue to be announced. This venue will not be a Diocesan property.
 - a) Claimants who decline an in-person meeting will still be eligible for a settlement offer.
 - b) The Diocese will not attend or otherwise participate in the in-person meetings; the meetings will solely involve CMCI administrators, the claimant, and any persons the claimant invites to attend, including counsel, spouses, witnesses, etc.
2. Claimants can participate in the Program with or without an attorney.
3. After hearing all claims, CMCI will make final settlement offers to those claimants that CMCI, and CMCI alone, deems entitled to an offer.
 - a) The Diocese has no veto power over, or input into, the settlement offers.
 - b) CMCI will make settlement offers to those claimants that CMCI deems have sufficiently established the veracity of their claim.
 - c) The offers by the administrators are final.
4. If the claimant accepts the settlement offer, the claimant must execute a standard release of claims against the Diocese before the offer is paid by the Diocese.
 - a) Claimants who participate in the Program without an attorney must be advised by an attorney about the meaning of the release before the release is executed by the claimant. If needed, such attorney review will be supplied at no cost to the claimant.
 - b) In all cases, the Diocese must receive a separately executed form stating that the claimant has been advised about the release by an attorney.
 - c) All releases must be notarized when executed.
5. The Diocese will pay all accepted offers within 30 days after receipt of the executed release from the claimant.
6. Regardless of whether a settlement is entered into with a survivor, counseling services will still be made available to the survivor through the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator. Even if the survivor executes a release of claims against the Diocese and receives a settlement payment, the survivor can still seek counseling services.