

## **THE CONGREGATIONAL COACHES PROGRAM**

### **Requesting a Coach**

- Initial calls are usually directed to one of the congregational development officers (the Rev. Gregory Jacobs or the Rev. Cynthia Hubbard). They identify an appropriate coach who is available for the work requested. If an initial request is made by a congregation to one of the bishops or to a specific coach, it is immediately relayed to Greg or Cynthia, who identify an appropriate coach.
- The congregation's own initiative is crucial to the success of any coaching relationship. Hence, it is up to the congregation to make the first contact with the assigned coach.

### **Types of Consultation Offered**

The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts has recruited and trained a group of experienced laity and clergy members who have a base of skills in congregational development. The aim is to help healthy congregations to become even more so. Coaches are available for assignments such as:

- Leading a half-day or day-long vestry gathering for planning
- Goal setting
- Team building
- Leadership development
- Preparing for or follow-up from a bishop's visitation
- Conducting a mutual ministry review
- Assistance with evangelism or newcomer incorporation
- Planning a stewardship campaign

### **Role/Accountability of Consultant**

Congregational coaches act as consultants for our congregations and are provided by the Diocese as part of our resource system. In some circumstances, a congregation may wish to contract with a consultant from outside the system. The services and fees for such consultants vary, and a congregation is advised to be clear with the consultant about the terms and conditions of its engagement.

Congregational coaches do communicate with the designated staff officer as needed in order to provide high quality assistance to our congregations. However, it is primarily the responsibility of the congregational leaders to communicate with their designated staff officer about the congregation's progress, plans, follow-up, or issues needing attention.

## **Consultation Planning**

- Once the congregation has made initial contact with the coach, a planning meeting will be arranged with appropriate congregational leaders to determine the nature and scope of the project.
- The coach and the appropriate congregational leaders develop an agreement about the work, which is summarized in writing and confirmed by both the coach and the local leaders. This summary should answer these questions:
  - What is the overall purpose of the coaching work?
  - How will the work be carried out?
  - How many sessions are proposed, and how long will they be?
  - In brief, what will happen in each session?
  - What are the achievable outcomes for this work? (That is, how will congregation and coach measure progress when the work is complete?)
  - What coaching fees and expenses (based on diocesan guidelines) does the congregation agree to pay?
  - How will the results of the work be captured in writing?

## **Role of the Congregation**

- Throughout the coaching process, the congregation's initiative and commitment is essential. This includes:
  - Making sure the coach has a complete picture of what is happening in the congregation—all major issues, even if they may not seem to have a bearing on the specific subject of the coaching work.
  - Prompt communication with the coach if there is a question or concern about the project the coach is working on or about the coach's own work.
  - Making arrangements for appropriate meeting space, meals/refreshments, and other needs, such as flip charts or projectors.
  - Following through on agreed tasks, and immediately contacting the coach if there is doubt that a task can be completed as agreed.
  - Keeping in touch with the congregational development officers. They find it very helpful when congregations take the initiative to forward them summaries and plans that emerge from coaching work, as well as information about other congregational needs and initiatives.

## **Financial Responsibility**

- Every congregation is responsible to contribute financially to the cost of the coaching assistance it receives, to keep it clear that the congregation is requesting this service voluntarily and is committed to making good use of the help it receives. The modest payment received by the coaches acknowledges the time they have invested in initial training and ongoing learning, as well as the time spent with each congregation, and makes it possible to sustain this coaching service over the long-term.

- Every congregation will have access to coaching services, regardless of their financial capacity. Upon requesting coaching assistance, congregational leaders should discuss with one of the congregational development officers any concerns they have about covering the usual fees and expenses. Supplemental assistance is available when it is needed.

### **Consulting Fee Arrangement**

- Diocesan guidelines for fees are based on the number of time blocks the coach works with the congregation or its leaders, including the initial planning meeting. A time block is generally one meeting, up to three hours. An all-day meeting would involve two time blocks. Travel time to and from the work location is not included in the time block.
- The current fee for each time block is \$150. In addition to the fee, the congregation is responsible for covering the coach's travel expenses, and incidentals such as duplication of handouts.
- When the work is completed (or when one phase of the work is completed), the coach submits a statement of fees and expenses to the congregational development officers. Billings are sent from their offices to the congregation. All fees and expenses are paid by the congregation to the diocesan office address on the statement, *not* to the coach directly.

### **Further Information**

For further information about the Congregational Coaches Program or to arrange for a coach to be assigned to your congregation, please contact:

The Rev. Cynthia Hubbard 617-482-4826 x400 [chubbard@diomass.org](mailto:chubbard@diomass.org)  
The Rev. Gregory Jacobs 617-482-4826 x404 [gjacobs@diomass.org](mailto:gjacobs@diomass.org)

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