



ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

Outreach Program Fact Sheet

Who is eligible for this mediation?

Any person who has a current lawsuit against the Archdiocese of Denver, as of May 20, 2006, claiming sexual abuse by a priest of the Archdiocese of Denver in the past, is eligible for this mediation.

What about persons who may file claims in the future, or those who may have settled claims in the past?

This mediation effort is a good will effort to resolve current claims. It applies only to those lawsuits currently pending against the Church in northern Colorado. It does not preclude any other outreach effort, to any other persons, in the future. The results of this effort will naturally influence future mediation efforts by the archdiocese.

The Archdiocese of Denver continues to encourage anyone who has experienced clergy sexual abuse in the past to contact Mr. Chris Pond, the archdiocesan victim outreach and support coordinator, at (303) 715-3226, immediately and report their experience to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. The Archdiocese of Denver remains committed to helping any victim of clergy sexual abuse promptly and sensitively.

Will the archdiocese control the mediation process?

No. The JAG-sponsored outreach panel is independent, professionally credible and predominantly non-Catholic. While the Archdiocese of Denver has committed a substantial sum to this mediation effort, the compensation amounts for each victim will be determined by the panel after receiving and analyzing all relevant information. No archdiocesan clergy, staff or attorneys will play any role in advising the panel beyond providing any information requested by panelists.

How will the mediation effort actually work?

Beginning May 25, current litigants have 90 days to contact Judge Richard Dana, meet with the mediation panel, present their claims and set the mediation process in motion. Individuals are welcome to bring a family member or friend to the mediation process for support. They are also welcome to bring their attorney to observe. No attorney of either side may take any part in the mediation discussions.

This process is voluntary. A litigant can withdraw from the process at any time, or reject a mediation offer without any prejudice to his or her case. No mediation settlement will be confidential except at the request of the individual bringing a claim. A successful mediation will bring closure to these matters, including a release of all parties from further legal action.

Every claim brought forward will be addressed and mediated as rapidly as possible. The mediation effort will end and the panel will dissolve no later than 150 days from May 25.

How much money has the archdiocese set aside to mediate the current sex abuse lawsuits?

The archdiocese has made a substantial financial sum available to mediators to hear and resolve all current cases appropriately. The actual figure will not be made public to ensure reasonable, case-by-case resolution of claims.

What happens if the money isn't used?

It returns to the Archdiocese of Denver to be used in ministry.

How will panelists make an informed decision about compensation?

Mediation panelists will have access to all relevant archdiocesan information involving every claim. If, in the view of Judge Dana and his colleagues, archdiocesan cooperation with the needs of the panel is inadequate at any point, he will publicly terminate mediation efforts.

Specific compensation offers will be guided by the panel's judgment of the substance and gravity of each claim. The panelists begin this process assuming the integrity of every litigant currently bringing a suit against the archdiocese.

Why would the archdiocese resist a change in the statutes of limitation on sexual abuse, and then offer to mediate these old claims?

In reality, the Archdiocese of Denver supported abolishing the criminal statute of limitation regarding childhood sexual abuse. The Church opposes retroactive civil liability for several serious reasons, among them the fact that such liability unfairly punishes innocent people and families today for events many years in the past – events in which they played no part.

For the purposes of this mediation only, the archdiocese has asked the outreach panel not to consider its statute-of-limitation defense. However, because of its obligations to the people of the archdiocese, the Church will necessarily pursue this defense in every case that finally goes to trial.

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