

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESES OF
**Western New York
& Northwestern
Pennsylvania**

**Request for Proposal
Evaluation Services**

Organizational Background

At a joint convention in October 2018, the Episcopal Dioceses of Northwestern Pennsylvania and Western New York voted by an overwhelming margin to begin an experiment for the sake of the gospel. In this experiment, our two dioceses share a bishop, the Rt. Rev. Sean W. Rowe, and a staff as we explore a deeper relationship focused on creating new opportunities for mission.

The vote, which established an initial five-year partnership subject to evaluation after three years, was the culmination of a 14-month process during which more than 500 people attended one of eight listening sessions to discuss this new initiative.

The partnership, which is the first of its kind in the Episcopal Church, is about more than sharing a bishop, said Jim Isaac, who was president of the Standing Committee in Western New York when the vote was taken. "Our two dioceses have complementary strengths and we face similar challenges. Together, we are well aligned to respond to what God is doing in our corner of the church."

Jack Malovich, then president of the Standing Committee in Northwestern Pennsylvania, says the partnership offers not only financial efficiencies, but opportunities for the two dioceses to work together on region-wide ministries. "The people of our dioceses share an industrial past, a respect for the beauty of the Lake Erie region and a history of resilience," he says. "We are committed to being part of the Rust Belt resurrection that is already underway in Buffalo, Erie and elsewhere."

In the first years of the partnership, our two dioceses have worked together to deepen relationships and develop shared mission priorities. The governing bodies of each diocese work separately under Bishop Rowe's leadership and with the support of a common staff.

The two dioceses do, however, maintain a single Commission on Ministry, and committees and boards representing both dioceses handle numerous other administrative and strategic functions.

In 2021, the Standing Committees of both dioceses agreed to extend the partnership by two years, saying that the COVID-19 pandemic has rendered the initial timeline impractical. During 2023, we are seeking to begin developing an evaluation process that, during 2024 and 2025, will provide data to inform a vote about whether to continue the partnership.

More information about the process that led to the partnership is available on the [Rust Belt Episcopal website](#).

Project Description

In 2017, when the Dioceses of Western New York and Northwestern Pennsylvania began to consider entering a partnership, Bishop Sean Rowe termed the proposal “an experiment for the sake of the gospel.” Now, four years after our partnership began, we seek proposals for a comprehensive evaluation of this experiment that will include standard elements of a Mutual Ministry Review as well as evaluations of the diocesan partnership’s strategies for:

- Operations and staffing
- Financial plan and mission funding
- Racial justice and reconciliation
- Leadership development
- Culture change
- Regional collaboration.

Project Requirements and Objectives

We seek proposals for evaluation services that will:

- Be broadly consultative, including qualitative and quantitative data gathered from a wide cross-section of lay and clergy leaders in our dioceses.
- Provide standard MMR feedback on the relationships, successes and failures of the diocesan partnership’s ministry.
- Go beyond a standard MMR format to evaluate the partnership’s strategies outlined above (Project Description).
- Make substantive use of the dioceses’ [Human Synergistics](#) Organizational Culture Inventory (OCI) and the Organizational Effectiveness Inventory (OEI) current state and ideal culture data.

- Ground evaluation methods and results in the context of the 21st century Episcopal Church and the economic, cultural and political contexts of Northwestern Pennsylvania and Western New York.

The final evaluation report should include detailed data reports, conclusions and recommendations for leadership as well as an executive summary suitable for public distribution. We anticipate that the evaluation report will play an important part in the discernment that lies ahead as the partnership's initial term concludes.

Budget

Successful proposals will include a detailed budget that defines all consulting fees and reimbursement rates for the services proposed.

Milestones and Deadlines

July 15, 2023: Proposals due

July 15-September 15, 2023: Proposals reviewed by bishop, standing committees, senior staff

September-October, 2023: Evaluation letter of agreement drafted

October 20-21, 2023: Evaluation plan presented to diocesan conventions by selected consultants

November-December 2023: Evaluation letter of agreement revised and finalized

January-June 2024: Detailed evaluation structure and timetable developed with bishop, standing committees, senior staff

July 2024: Evaluation begins

October 2024: Evaluation midpoint report to diocesan conventions

March 2025: Evaluation draft report to bishop, standing committees

June 2025: Final evaluation report completed

Required Information

Complete proposals will include:

- A statement of the proposed theoretical and methodological approach to the evaluation
- An outline of a clear process for gathering and analyzing qualitative and quantitative evaluation data and a detailed discussion of the data analysis tools proposed
- Profiles of the members of the proposed evaluation team
- Evidence of the evaluation team's competence in and familiarity with the Episcopal Church and the geographic regions of the dioceses

- Evidence of the evaluation team's experience and competence in, and commitment to, diversity, equity and inclusion and the Episcopal Church's work to dismantle racism and discrimination.
- Evidence of the evaluation team's competence in and familiarity with diocesan and congregational ministry; contemporary missional imperatives; adaptive leadership principles and practices; and church financial structures.

Deadline

Proposals are due by July 15, 2023.

Contact

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