WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE AT DIOCESAN CONVENTION?

The Constitution & Canons of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles governs representation at the Annual Meeting of Convention.

How representation is decided has undergone very little change in the last two decades, with most of Article VI of the Constitution having been amended most recently in 2003.

Here is an overview of who is entitled to seat, voice and/or vote at Diocesan Convention. (The full text of Article VI is at the end of this document.)

LAY DELEGATES

Parishes and Missions

Each parish and mission of the diocese is entitled to at least one lay delegate, with the total number based off the number of communicants reported on the Parochial Report from two years prior (so for *Diocesan Convention **2026***, it's based off the ***2024** Parochial Report*).

Up to 100 communicants = 1 lay delegate
101-200 communicants = 2 lay delegates
201-400 communicants = 3 lay delegates
401-700 communicants = 4 lay delegates
701-1000 communicants = 5 lay delegates
>1000 communicants = 6 lay delegates

If a congregation is entitled to two or more delegates, at least one of them must also be a member of the Vestry/Bishop's Committee.

There is no limit to the number of alternates that a congregation can have, but they must be registered in advance in order to take the place of a delegate. All information must be received at least **10 days** before Convention is called to order.

Ministry Centers aka Missions "not in union" with Convention

"Each Mission recognized by the Bishop and not in union with Convention shall be entitled to one Lay Delegate chosen by its members."

As of 2026, the Missions recognized by the Bishop that are not in union with Convention are: Holy Spirit; Thad's; St. Luke's, Fontana; St. Michael's, Riverside; and St. Francis', San Bernardino.

Diocesan Institutions

Diocesan Institutions (for example, Neighborhood Youth Association, Episcopal Communities & Services, and HFS Adoption & Foster Care) are each entitled to one lay delegate. Same procedure applies for alternates.

Deanery Youth Delegates

Each Deanery in the Diocese is entitled to one lay youth delegate. The current language in the C&C is out of date and so a proposed amendment clarifying the procedure for selecting deanery youth delegates will be brought to Convention 2026 for a second reading. In the meantime, a qualified elector up to 22 years old can be selected from their Deanery to serve as a lay delegate to Convention.

Other lay active in the diocese

Lay members of Diocesan Council, Standing Committee, and Corporation of the Diocese are entitled to seat and voice (but not vote) at Convention.

Deanery Presidents are also entitled to seat and voice (but not vote) at Convention.

Lay Chairs of Committees of Convention (for example, the Committee on Resolutions) are members *ex-officio*; that is, they are entitled to seat and voice to the extent that they require to perform their office.

CLERGY DELEGATES

All **canonically resident clergy**, or clergy **licensed to officiate**, in **regular standing** are entitled to a **seat** at Convention (as are seminarians, members of monastic orders, and visiting Bishops).

The general criteria to be eligible for **voice and vote**, is that a clergyperson must be **canonically resident**, **actually resident**, **parochial, and stipendiary**, which means EDLA clergy living within the geographic bounds of the diocese, employed as the rector/vicar/priest-in-charge/assistant minister at a parish or mission in the diocese, and be paid for their work such that they "qualify for enrollment in the Church Pension Fund."

There are a bunch of exceptions to this however!

What if I'm…

…not canonically resident?

If you are LTO in charge of an EDLA congregation, you get seat, voice, and vote.

If you are LTO but *not* in charge of a congregation, you get a seat.

If you are neither and just visiting, you are welcome to watch the livestream on Facebook and YouTube or join us in the visitors' section next to the floor of Convention.

…not actually resident?

If you are a priest-in-charge of an EDLA congregation, a seminary instructor, or chaplain in the Armed Forces of the United States, or if you are an employee of the diocese, a diocesan institution, or The Episcopal Church, you are still entitled to seat, voice, and vote.

If you don't fall under these exceptions, you are entitled to seat only at Convention.

…not parochial?

If you are active in ordained ministry but are not assigned to a specific congregation (for example, because you are employed at an institution or serving as a supply at multiple congregations), you are still entitled to seat, voice, and vote at Convention.

Please file your Annual Ministry Report form to keep the diocese informed of your work in the last year. If you file it at least one week before Convention, your credentials will be ready and waiting for you!

…not stipendiary?

If you are active in ordained ministry but are not receiving compensation for your work such that you "qualify for enrollment in the Church Pension Fund," you are still entitled to seat, voice, and vote at Convention **as long as you file your Annual Ministry Report form** to keep the diocese informed of your work in the last year.

…not active in ministry?

If you are not active in ordained ministry because you are primarily engaged in secular work, you are not eligible to vote at Convention.

However, if you are not active due to age or health, or if you are only temporarily without charge, this does not affect your eligibility to vote. **Please file your Annual Ministry Report** to keep the diocese up to date with your status.

What about retired clergy?

Canonically resident and actually resident retired clergy are entitled to vote at Convention.

(Article VI, Section 15 specifies that clergy "shall not be deprived of these privileges because disabled from the functions of the office to which ordained, by age or infirmity," so if you were previously eligible to vote, being retired because of age or health won't take that away from you. Canonically resident and actually resident still applies though unless you fall under one of the exceptions listed above.)

If you are retired and still associated with a congregation, please make sure the person registering your congregation's delegates to Convention lists you on their form. (Lay and Clergy are registered on the same form now.) That'll ensure you're seated with your congregation's delegation.

If you are *not* associated with a congregation, you need to **file an Annual Ministry Report here**, regardless of employment status or activity.

Annual Ministry Reports are due December 31, but if you file by November 6 (at least one week before Convention) that'll ensure that your credentials are ready and waiting for you at Registration.

Why is this so complicated?

Answering the call of ordained ministry is complicated and being an active part of the diocese doesn't look the same for everyone.

Are these rules new?

Not at all. The rules governing clergy eligibility to vote have not been revised in over 20 years.

ARTICLE VI

THE MEMBERS OF CONVENTION

13. The Convention shall be composed of members of the clergy and members of the laity as specified in Sections 14, 15 and 16.

BISHOPS HAVE SEAT AND VOTE

14. The Bishop (and the Bishop Coadjutor and the Bishops Suffragan, if there be such), shall have a seat, voice and vote in the Meeting of Convention.

(AMENDED February 6, 1976 and December 5, 2003)

CLERICAL DELEGATES

15. Every member of the clergy in regular standing, who is canonically resident or licensed to officiate in the Diocese, shall be entitled to a seat in every Annual or Special Meeting of Convention. The right to speak and vote shall belong only to each member of the clergy in regular standing actually and canonically a resident of this Diocese; provided, that at the day of every Annual or Special Meeting of Convention, the member involved shall be:

(AMENDED December 5, 2003)

(a) Rector, Vicar, Priest-in-Charge, or Interim Pastor of a Parish or Mission of the Diocese, or

(AMENDED December 5, 2003)

(b) employed as an assistant minister in a Parish or Mission of the Diocese, to the extent that such employment qualifies for enrollment in the Church Pension Fund, or

(AMENDED December 5, 2003 and December 1, 2006)

(c) recognized as a Missionary by the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese, or shall be

(d) engaged in one of the following:

(1) as an instructor in some seminary or college, or

(2) as a Chaplain in the Armed Forces of the United States, or

(3) as a full time officer, agent, or employee of General Convention, the Executive Council (or a Department thereof) canonically resident in this Diocese, but prevented by these religious duties from being actually resident in this Diocese, or

(4) as a full time officer or employee of the Diocese or of an institution of the Diocese (Canon XXIV), or

(AMENDED December 5, 2003)

(e) if not presently engaged in ecclesiastical employment, a member of the clergy who the Ecclesiastical Authority is satisfied continues to use reasonable opportunities for the exercise of the office to which ordained, and also provided that the member of the clergy shall report such exercises of office in writing to the Ecclesiastical Authority, in the manner prescribed by the Ecclesiastical Authority. When the decision is made by a Bishop, it shall be with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee, or

(AMENDED December 5, 2003)

(f) if not canonically resident, or not actually resident within this Diocese, a Rector of a Parish of this Diocese or a Vicar of a Mission of this Diocese, or recognized by the Ecclesiastical Authority to be in charge of a congregation of this Diocese and actively serving as such.

(AMENDED December 3, 2005)

The canonical residence of a member of the clergy shall date from ordination within the Diocese, or from the date of acceptance of Letters Dimissory by the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese. A competent member of the clergy, once entitled to a seat and vote, shall not be deprived of these privileges because disabled from the functions of the office to which ordained, by age or infirmity, or being temporarily without charge; provided that the latter reason shall not apply to a member of the clergy exclusively engaged in secular work and provided further that if such member of the clergy is not registered as present at a Meeting of Convention, such member shall not be counted for a quorum or other purposes.

(AMENDED February 6, 1976, February 4, 1977, November 30, 1990, December 6, 1991 and December 6, 1997)

LAY DELEGATES

16. The lay members shall consist of Delegates chosen in proportion to the number of communicants reported to the Annual Meeting of Convention of the previous year. Each Parish or Mission in union with Convention shall be entitled to at least one Lay Delegate. Those Parishes and Missions reporting from 101 to 200 communicants shall be entitled to two Lay Delegates; from 201 to 400 communicants, three Lay Delegates; from 401 to 700 communicants, four Lay Delegates; from 8 Constitution and Canons of the Diocese 701 to 1000 communicants, five Lay Delegates; and all over 1,000, six Lay Delegates. The Lay Delegates from each Parish and Mission shall be chosen by the members thereof; unless its Bylaws (or other governing instrument) provide for choice by its Vestry or Bishop's Committee. Such Delegates shall be elected annually or at such time as provided in the Bylaws or other governing instrument of the respective Parish or Mission. No person shall be competent to serve as a Lay Delegate, unless that person has been a qualified Elector of the Parish or Mission represented during the six calendar months next before the election. Each Parish and Mission may, at its discretion, elect Alternate Delegates. Each Parochial Mission established in accordance with Canon II and

reporting its membership to the Diocese separately from, and not included in the reported membership of the sponsoring Parish, shall be entitled to Lay Delegates to the same extent and elected in the same manner as a Mission in union with Convention. Each Mission recognized by the Bishop and not in union with Convention shall be entitled to one Lay Delegate chosen by its members. The Diocesan Cathedral, if not otherwise a Parish or Mission, shall be entitled to Lay Delegates to the Convention if and as provided by the Canons of the Diocese respecting the Diocesan Cathedral; provided, however, that such Canon shall not provide for election of a number of Lay Delegates of the Diocesan Cathedral in excess of the number to which it would be entitled if it were a Parish in union with Convention.

(AMENDED January 6, 1973, February 15, 1974, February 6, 1976, December 6, 1991, and December 5, 2003)

Each institution of the Diocese qualified and in good standing as such, under Canon XXIV, shall be entitled to one Lay Delegate. This Delegate and an Alternate Delegate (if elected) shall be elected by the institution's governing board from among its members, directors or employees, provided that the person so elected shall be a qualified Elector of a Parish or Mission in union with Convention. The names of the Delegate and Alternate so elected shall be reported to the Secretary of Convention in the manner prescribed by the Secretary of Convention.

(AMENDED December 2, 1994 and December 5, 2003)

In addition to the lay members described above, one youth or young adult person, aged 14 to 22, from each Deanery chosen by the Program Group on Youth and Young Adult Ministries, with the consent of the Pastoral/Liturgical Authority of their ecclesial community, shall be entitled to seat, voice, and vote at each meeting of Convention.

(AMENDED December 1, 2000, and December 5, 2014)

The following persons shall be extended seat and voice at a Meeting of Convention unless otherwise entitled thereto: The Judge of Elections as to the exercise of the duties and only the duties pertaining to the office; The lay members of the Diocesan Council, the Standing Committee, the Corporation of the Diocese, Deanery Presidents and the chief executive officers of the institutions of the Diocese; and The Chairs of the following committees: the Committee on Dispatch of Business, the Committee on Constitution and Canons, the Committee on Resolutions and the Committee on Rules of Order as to the exercise of the duties and only the duties pertaining to the offices. The following persons shall be extended a seat, but not voice, at a Meeting of Convention which they attend: visiting and assisting Bishops, Seminarians of the Diocese, members of the monastic communities within the Diocese, recognized by the Bishop, and any chaplains of the Armed Forces serving in that capacity within the Diocese, but canonically resident in other jurisdictions of the Episcopal Church.

(AMENDED February 6, 1976 and November 30, 2018)