

**THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE, NEW YORK  
INDEPENDENT RECONCILIATION AND COMPENSATION PROGRAM  
FOR COMPENSATION OF CLAIMS OF CLERGY SEXUAL ABUSE**

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**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS  
("FAQs")**

FEBRUARY 14, 2018

## **FAQs Pertaining to the Terms and Conditions of the Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program Protocol.**

### **1. What Is The Independent Reconciliation And Compensation Program?**

The Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program (the “IRCP” or the “Program”) is an independent settlement program administered by mediators Kenneth R. Feinberg and Camille Biros. The goal of the Program is to resolve unsettled sexual abuse claims of a minor by clergy reported to the Diocese of Syracuse, New York (the “Diocese”) by individual claimants prior to February 14, 2018. The Administrators of the Program have complete autonomy to determine eligibility of individual claims and the amount of compensation for victims that come forward with a claim.

### **2. Who May File A Claim?**

To be eligible to file a claim with the Program, the claimant must have notified the Diocese prior to February 14, 2018 of the alleged sexual abuse of a minor by clergy of the Diocese. A claim may be made only against a clergy member of the Diocese. Claims against a member of a religious order, or clergy of a diocese other than the Syracuse Diocese, are not eligible to participate in the IRCP.

### **3. Will Filing A Claim Cost Money?**

No. There is no fee associated with filing a claim with the Program. You may, however, incur fees from professionals such as lawyers or accountants should you choose to engage their services. The Program will not pay for or reimburse you for such fees. However, the Program will provide you a lawyer free of charge, if you so request, for the sole purpose of explaining to you the nature of the release which an eligible individual claimant must sign in return for receiving Program compensation.

### **4. What Proof Will I Have To Submit To Receive Compensation From The Program?**

You must have previously notified the Diocese of an allegation of abuse of a minor by a Diocese clergy member prior to February 14, 2018. In addition, you should submit supporting documentation or other corroborating information sufficient to substantiate the claim and to show evidence of the nature, frequency, location(s), and date(s) of the alleged sexual abuse.

### **5. What Happens After A Claim Is Filed?**

Once your Claim Form and supporting documentation are received, the Administrators will process your claim promptly. You will receive written notice by mail or by email of the receipt of your claim. The Administrators will make payments to eligible claimants after the expiration of the claims filing deadline on May 16, 2018.

### **6. How Will Settlement Amounts Be Determined?**

The IRCP will be administered by Kenneth R. Feinberg and Camille Biros. They have final decision-making authority to determine who is eligible and the amount of the compensation. The compensation will be just and fair, based on the experience and judgment of Mr. Feinberg and Ms. Biros and consistent with the guidelines established and agreed to by the Administrators and the Diocese.

The Administrators will evaluate claims submitted with the required documentation in a prompt and fair manner.

- Any documentation previously submitted to the Diocese in connection with claims of sexual abuse will be made available to the Administrators consistent with the Protocol. All documents and other information provided the Administrators by individual claimants and/or the Diocese will remain confidential and will not be disclosed except in connection with the processing of the claim, the prevention of fraud, the protection of children under the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, and as required by law.
- Consistent with the terms and conditions of the Protocol, any final decision rendered by the Administrators pertaining to an individual claim will be fully binding on the Diocese. The Diocese has no authority to reject any final decisions rendered by the Administrators.
- The Administrators will send each claimant and the Diocese notification of the determination of the claim's eligibility, including, if applicable, the proposed settlement amount.
- Acceptance of payment from the Administrators will require the claimant to execute a full release of liability.

#### **7. When Will Victims Receive Payment?**

The IRCP will immediately begin to reach out to claimants and begin to review the cases of those who have already come forward prior to February 14, 2018 and who voluntarily decide to participate in the Program. Upon completion of the review of your claim by the Administrators, you will be notified of any deficiencies in documentation and/or requests for additional documentation, if necessary. After the expiration of the claims filing deadline on May 16, 2018 you will be notified of the determination of your claim's eligibility and the amount of the offered compensation.

#### **8. How Will Payments Be Made?**

Payments will be issued by the Program following the final processing of an eligible claimant's Claim Form and acceptance by the claimant of the settlement amount. The Program will authorize the payment, by check or electronic funds transfer, to each eligible claimant upon receipt of the required release signed by the claimant. Checks will be sent by overnight courier service.

## **9. What About New Claims Not Previously Submitted To The Diocese?**

Individuals who did not report a claim alleging sexual abuse by a clergy member of the Diocese prior to February 14, 2018 should contact the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator at 1-800-680-5040. Each individual will be asked to provide the Diocese with the following information: his/her name and contact information, a summary description of the nature of their claim, including the dates, time, and location of the alleged abuse and the name of the alleged perpetrator. Such information will be forwarded to the local District Attorney by the Diocese. In addition, where appropriate, the Diocese will have the matter investigated by its own independent investigators and examined by the Diocesan Review Board. Claims of abuse that were not reported to the Diocese prior to February 14, 2018 are not eligible for participation in the IRCP. At the conclusion of the IRCP Program, a decision will be made as to whether or not the Program will be expanded to include these newly received complaints.

## **10. What if my claim is against clergy of another diocese or religious order?**

If your claim is directed against clergy of another diocese or religious order, your information will be forwarded to that entity.

## **11. How Do I Apply?**

Eligible claimants will be sent, via overnight delivery, a copy of the Program Protocol, the Claim Form and a copy of these FAQs.

Completed Claim Forms may be sent to the Administrators via US mail or overnight courier service to the address shown on the Claim Form. The completed Claim Forms will be reviewed by the Administrators for a determination of eligibility and a determination of the amount of compensation. The Diocese and the claimant will be notified of each determination made by the Administrators. The claimant will review the offer and determine whether or not to accept the offered compensation.

If a claimant chooses to accept a final payment pursuant to this Protocol, the claimant will be required to sign a full release of liability of all past and future claims against any party relating to such allegations of sexual abuse. Before signing such a release of liability, the individual claimant will be required to consult with an attorney selected by the claimant, or if the claimant does not have an attorney, the Administrators shall provide an attorney to provide free, pro bono legal counseling to the claimant for the sole purpose of advising the claimant concerning the nature, language, and significance of the release of liability.

## **12. How Can I Obtain A Claim Form?**

Copies of the Claim Form will be mailed to each potentially eligible claimant who submitted a claim of sexual abuse of a minor to the Diocese prior to February 14, 2018. If an individual is not contacted within two weeks after the commencement of the Program on February 14, 2018, and believes he or she should have received a Claim Form for the Program, the individual should

e-mail the Administrator at [claimantservices@SyracuseDioceseIRCP.com](mailto:claimantservices@SyracuseDioceseIRCP.com), or telephone at 1-833-718-2718.

### **13. Where Should I Send My Claim Form?**

Completed Claim Forms and the required supporting documentation should be submitted to the Administrators at the following address:

c/o The Law Offices of Kenneth R. Feinberg, PC  
1455 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW – Suite 390  
Washington, DC 20004  
Attention: IRCP – Syracuse Diocese

(A pre-paid postage return addressed envelope will be provided in your packet for submission of your completed Claim Form and documentation to the Administrator.)

### **14. Are Claim Materials Available in Languages Other Than English?**

The Program Protocol, Claim Form and Frequently Asked Questions will be made available in Spanish at the request of the Claimant. Such a request should be made by contacting the Program Administrators by calling the toll free telephone line at 1-833-718-2718.

### **15. What If I Have Questions About The Claim Form Or The Claim Submission Process?**

You can contact the Administrators by either sending your message or questions via email to: [ClaimantServices@SyracuseDioceseIRCP.com](mailto:ClaimantServices@SyracuseDioceseIRCP.com) or by calling toll free 1-833 718-2718.

### **16. How Will I Know If My Claim Is Missing Information Or Documents?**

You will be notified of any deficiency in your documentation or any missing required documentation once you have submitted your Claim Form. Please ensure that your full name, address, and other contact information appear on every communication submitted to the Program.

### **17. How Can I Update Or Supplement My Claim Form?**

If you need to supplement your submission or correct or remedy a deficiency with your submission, you will be able to do so by sending the supplemental documentation to the Administrators at the address shown above. Also, the Administrators may contact you and state that your claim is deficient and must be supplemented with additional information. You will be afforded an opportunity to do so.

### **18. How Long Will Victims Be Able To Apply For Compensation?**

The deadline for submission of your claim is May 16, 2018.

### **19. Do Victims Waive Their Right To Legal Action If They Accept Money From The Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program?**

Yes, as already indicated, any individual claimant who accepts compensation pursuant to the Program must surrender any right to go to court to sue any party relating to the alleged sexual abuse.